

Chapter Six: Growing Pains in the Colonies

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Chapter Six: Growing Pains in the Colonies

6.1 INTRODUCTION

By the beginning of the eighteenth century, the fortunes of many colonists in British North America had changed for the better. Although they still faced somewhat trying conditions, migrants could earn their own keep without being beholden to anyone, own land, and practice their faith openly. The colonists became somewhat self-sufficient because of their economic ties to the mother country through the mercantilist system. Moreover, the colonists defined their rights by the British political system they lived under, which they considered truly enlightened. Likewise, intellectual trends and religious developments helped to increase ties between the colonists that did not exist in the seventeenth century. Finally, the imperial wars between Britain, France, and Spain brought the colonists' similarities sharply into focus because the wars exacerbated the tensions between the colonies and the mother country. In the end, the road to the revolution originated in the early eighteenth century as the British colonies began to mature economically, politically, and socially.

6.1.1 Learning Outcomes

After completing this chapter, you should be able to:

- Describe and analyze the evolution of British colonial policy towards the North American colonies from the mid-seventeenth century to the Revolution.
- Describe the structure of colonial governments in British North America and explain how the colonial political system differed from that of the mother country.
- Analyze the impact of the Enlightenment and the Great Awakening on British colonial society in North America.
- Explain how the Colonial Wars reflected both European and colonial political struggles.

6.2 COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION

By the mid-seventeenth century, the British actively sought ways to expand their overseas empire. To achieve this goal, they needed a strong navy and a healthy commercial network. The navy helped protect British merchants at home and in the colonies; meanwhile, duties on commerce funded much of the navy's rapid growth. As these military and commercial interests melded together, the government developed policies based on the theory of mercantilism to meet the needs of the empire.¹ By the early eighteenth century, the British worked out a system that enlarged the prestige and power of the empire as well as provided benefits to many people in the mother country and the colonies. The system also helped set the foundations for the American Revolution.

6.2.1 Developing a Commercial Empire

During the 1650s, Parliament thought more about the commercial interests of England. Merchants in and out of the government sought ways to extend English control over the carrying trade, or shipping, to the New World while also improving their own financial situation. To undercut the Dutch monopoly, Parliament passed the Navigation Act of 1651. The measure required all goods going to and from the colonies to be transported on English or colonial ships. In theory, it closed colonial ports to foreign ships, but Parliament neglected to include a strong enforcement provision in the act. Therefore, the colonists routinely smuggled in goods from the Dutch and the French.² After the Restoration of 1660, Charles II examined the commercial potential of the empire. Merchants and manufactures continued to support the expansion of trade, but so too did many of the king's loyal supporters. Oliver Cromwell's rule left many royalists, including the king, in dire financial situations. Thus, economic motives pushed Charles II to implement policies based on the theory of mercantilism.

The Mercantilist System

Generally, mercantilism sought to strengthen a nation at the expense of its competitors by increasing its wealth, population, and shipping capabilities. In some ways, mercantilism was the ultimate expression of national greed. A country could increase its wealth by accumulating gold and silver. Short of resorting to piracy to steal such precious metals, a country needed a favorable trade balance. In England, this effort led the government to encourage domestic manufacturing. To enlarge the merchant marine, the government sought to monopolize the carrying trade between the mother country and the colonies. With a monopoly, British shippers would need more ships and trained sailors, both of which the navy could use in times

of war. Finally, population increases at home and in the colonies helped to provide more consumers for manufactured goods; some of the growth came from natural increase while some came from immigration.³

In the mercantilist system, colonies played an important role in developing a successful empire; consequently, most European nations sought New World colonies in the seventeenth century. Colonies provided the raw materials to fuel industrial growth. In the British North America, most settlers chose to farm because of the availability of fertile land. Initially, they did so out of necessity. The distance to England, coupled with the smaller size of ships in the seventeenth century, meant the colonists needed to provide for themselves. For much of the colonial period, however, they continued to farm because, under mercantilism, it could be quite profitable. At the same time, they engaged in some manufacturing for local markets; they did not compete directly with the industries developing in England. Most of their finished goods such as flour or iron required only slight changes from their raw state and aided colonists in growing more raw materials. Over time, regional differences developed in the colonial economies that stemmed from the availability of land and labor.⁴

In the New England colonies, most farmers grew for self-sufficiency rather than for the market because of the long winters and the rocky soil. However, the region engaged in whaling and fishing for the export market. It also became a leader in shipbuilding. In the middle colonies, most farmers grew grains such as wheat, rye, oats, barley, buckwheat, and corn. They also grew a wide variety of vegetables, flax, and hemp. Additionally, they raised livestock. By the mid-eighteenth century, the region also led the colonies in iron manufacturing. In the Chesapeake colonies, most colonists remained committed to tobacco production. However, they also raised wheat, corn, flax, hemp, and apples to help offset bad tobacco harvests. In the southern colonies, North Carolina turned to its forests for export goods, which yielded the tar, pitch, and timber necessary for shipbuilding. Besides these naval



Trade Routes in the Atlantic World

Figure 6.1 Trade Routes in the Atlantic World | Using the mercantilist system, the British government sought to obtain a favorable balance of trade. Africa provided the slaves necessary to grow large amounts of raw materials in the American colonies, which then went to England to support domestic manufacturing. In addition to the international trade depicted in this map, the colonies also trade goods with one another.

Author: Sarah Mergel
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Figure 6.2 New England Ship-building

| Regional differences developed in the colonial economies that stemmed from the availability of land and labor. In this picture, New England colonists work on constructing a ship.

Artist: Ray Brown

Source: *American Merchant Ships and Sailors*

stores, interior settlers ran pottery shops and tanneries. The shorter winters in South Carolina and Georgia allowed colonists to export rice, indigo, and salt pork often to the Caribbean colonies, goods which they exchanged for slaves. The southern colonies also actively participated in the deerskin trade.⁵

Extending Imperial Control

Knowing colonies served a vital role in the success of any empire, the British set out to expand their presence in the New World during the Restoration period. Through proprietary arrangements, Charles II closed the gap between the New England and Chesapeake colonies as well as extended the crown's control south of Virginia by the early 1680s. By eliminating the Dutch from North America, the British paved the way for increasing their volume of trade with their North American and Caribbean colonies. To further that goal, the government proposed a series of trade laws to improve the British position vis-à-vis their imperial rivals.

First, Parliament passed the Navigation Act of 1660. The measure reiterated the provisions of the 1651 act, which restricted all shipping in the empire to English and colonial vessels. It also added a provision listing several “enumerated articles” that could only be traded within the empire. These goods included sugar, tobacco, cotton, wool, and indigo. Theoretically, the restrictions helped make England more self-sufficient and increased the crown's tax revenue. Second, Parliament approved the Staple Act of 1663. It placed restrictions on foreign goods imported into the colonies by requiring merchants to ship through an English port. The act made the colonies more dependent on the mother country because England became their staple, or market, for all foreign goods. Finally, Parliament voted in favor of the Plantation Duty Act of 1673. Designed to cut down on smuggling, the act established provisions to collect customs duties in colonial ports before the goods shipped to other colonial ports. Under the measure, the British government stationed customs collectors in the colonies for the first time. These agents reported to their superiors in England, not to the colonial governor or assembly.⁶

The Glorious Revolution, when William and Mary came to power, brought about new mercantilist policies for three reasons. First, the government wanted to quell the unrest in the colonies caused by James II's efforts to consolidate royal control. William and Mary hoped to find a solution that

would meet both the economic and political needs of English merchants and colonial planters. Second, lax enforcement of the Navigation Acts during King William's War (1689-1697) increased smuggling and privateering, which put the economic health of the empire at risk. Third, after the adoption of the English Constitution, Parliament determined the empire's fiscal policy. Dominated by wealthy landowners and merchants, the House of Commons wanted to assure political and economic strength. Thus, Parliament, with the crown's approval, took measures to strengthen the trade restrictions on the colonies.⁷

Parliament passed the Navigation Act of 1696 and the Trade Act of 1696. The Navigation Act sought to shore up previous acts by closing the loopholes that contributed to lax enforcement. In order to improve the collection of duties in the colonies, the law granted royal officials in the colonies the right to seek writs of assistance to search for and to seize illegal goods. The Trade Act created the Board of Trade, an administrative agency, to replace the more informal Lords of Trade created under Charles II. British merchants wanted a stronger body to develop and supervise commerce, since the Lords of Trade failed to devote enough attention to the colonies. William and Mary approved the change largely because, like many merchants, they believed stronger control over colonial development would have a positive effect on the British economy.

In 1697, the Board of Trade recommended the creation of Vice Admiralty Courts in the colonies. By using these courts, the Board denied colonists accused of violating the Navigation Acts the right to a jury trial because most colonial juries would not convict people accused of smuggling. The Board also recommended several other measures to restrict colonial industry and trade. For example, the Woolens Act of 1699 prevented colonists from producing wool goods for export; the Hat Act of 1732 did the same for hats. The most controversial of these measures was the Molasses Act of 1733, which raised the duties on rum, molasses, and sugar imported into the colonies from foreign countries. In time, most merchants realized that the duties on molasses did more to harm than help trade. Seeing as the act largely defied the logic of mercantilism, Robert Walpole, the king's chief



Figure 6.3 The Board of Trade | Created by the Trade Act of 1696, the Board of Trade advised the British government on all matters relating to colonial trade and politics. This picture from Ackermann's *Microcosm of London* (1808-1811) depicts the members hard at work in London.

Authors: Rudolph Ackermann, William Henry Pyne, and William Combe
Source: *Microcosm of London*

minister from 1720 to 1742, chose not to enforce the measure. His decision led to a period of “salutary neglect,” where government officials largely ignored economic development in the colonies.⁸ In instances where the British government chose to enforce its economic policies, many colonists simply evaded the law by smuggling. In the years leading up to the American Revolution, some merchants—especially those in Boston—found the Dutch, French, and Spanish more than willing to help them evade British trade laws. While certainly not the only reason for tensions between the colonists and the crown in the mid-eighteenth century, the decision to enforce the Navigation Acts and add additional regulations caused problems.⁹

Trade and the Consumer Culture

While many colonists objected in principle to trade restrictions imposed by Parliament in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, few had reason to complain about the positive economic benefits of being part of the British Empire. Policymakers designed the Navigation Acts to increase trade relationships between the mother country and her colonies. If the policies significantly harmed colonial economies, they became pointless because colonists would not buy British goods. Imbedded into the trade acts were benefits for the colonists. First, the colonies had a monopoly over the enumerated articles. No one in England, for instance, could grow tobacco or indigo. Second, the colonists received rebates on goods imported from England, so they tended to pay lower prices for finished products. Third, the colonists did not need to worry about piracy because they fell under the protection of the Royal Navy.¹⁰

Greed and self-interest underscored the theory of mercantilism at the national and the personal level. British merchants clearly had a stake in seeing imperial commerce thrive, but so too did the colonial farmers and shippers. With the exception of the Puritans, most people migrating to North America wanted to improve their economic position. American colonists, according to historian T.H. Breen, “obeyed the Navigation Acts because it was convenient and profitable for them to do so, not because they were coerced.” In the eighteenth century, economic growth, coupled with lower tax rates in British North America, provided the colonists with not only a decent standard of living but also more disposable income. Most colonists wanted very much to participate in the consumer revolution happening in Europe. In other words, they wanted to purchase consumer goods considered luxuries in the seventeenth century such as table and bed linens, ceramic cups and saucers, pewter cutlery, and manufactured cloth and clothing.¹¹

Throughout the eighteenth century, the demand for imported consumer items grew in the North American colonies. The more raw materials the

colonists exported, the more necessities and luxury items they could purchase on credit. British and colonial merchants also worked to fuel demand for goods by advertising in the growing number of colonial newspapers. Likewise, hundreds of peddlers spread trade goods from colonial seaports to the interior. Despite the self-sufficient farmer's image carrying a great deal of weight in popular memory of colonial America, the colonists never achieved the means to take care of all of their own needs. So, they imported basic necessities and niceties.¹²

The fluid nature of colonial society meant that the elite wanted to set the standards for polite society, marked especially by the rise of a tea culture, as a means to distance themselves from the lower classes. They used their ability to purchase luxury items as a way to display their status. At the same time, the lowering sorts used their disposable income to erase the line between the elites and the commoners. Colonial women took a leading role in the consumer revolution. They had a good deal to gain from importing household items because they would no longer have to produce them in the home and could use those goods to mark their families' place in American society.¹³

Over time, the large number of imports helped to deepen the connection between the mother country and the colonies, and in some respect, helped to build a common identity among the colonies because everywhere people purchased the same goods. The consumer culture effectively created material uniformity. Moreover, the expanding coastal and overland trade



Figure 6.4 The Consumer Culture | Economic growth in the eighteenth century allowed American colonists to participate in a consumer revolution. Colonists routinely imported necessities and luxury items from Britain. With the rise of a tea culture, tea sets were a much sought after item. This Wedgwood tea set, on display at the Victorian and Albert Museum in London, typifies the style of tea set found in homes of the colonial elite.

Author: Valerie McGlinchey
Source: Wikimedia Commons
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brought colonists of different backgrounds into greater contact with one another. It gave them added opportunities to exchange ideas and experiences, even though they remained largely unaware of the importance of such connections as they continued to see themselves as New Yorkers, Virginians, and Carolinians, not Americans. T.H. Breen concluded that “the road to Americanization ran through Anglicization.” In other words, the colonists had to become more integrated in the British Empire before they could develop a common cultural identity as Americans.¹⁴

6.2.2 Developing a Political System

Throughout the colonial period, the British struggled to determine how much authority to exert over the colonies. As England settled the New World, expedience usually determined the political system of each colony. As such, three models of government emerged: the royal colony, the proprietary colony, and the corporate colony. In each system, a governor shared power with a legislature usually composed of an upper house appointed by the governor and a lower house elected by the property-holding men. The chief difference between the models came in the selection of the governor. In the royal colonies, the crown appointed the governor. In the proprietary colonies, the proprietor chose the governor with the crown's approval. In the corporate colonies, the voters selected the governor and did not need the crown's approval. By the late seventeenth century, to further the goals of mercantilism, the crown and Parliament looked for ways to achieve greater control while also balancing the expectations of the colonies.¹⁵

Colonial Administration

Initially the British administration of the colonies was somewhat haphazard, which explained why the different models of government emerged. However, the monarchy needed to find an arrangement to administer the colonies that would benefit all interested parties so as to successfully use the colonies to promote the economic development of the mother country. In the 1650s, Parliament began to tinker with the administrative system when they passed the Navigation Act of 1651 but largely left the colonies to govern themselves. During the Restoration period, Charles II and James II attempted to assert greater control over the colonies. They reorganized the existing colonies as royal colonies and created new proprietary colonies subject to greater royal authority.¹⁶

The unrest caused by the creation of the Dominion of New England, whereby James II eliminated the vestiges of self-government by creating one administrative unit to oversee the northern colonies, suggested the mother country needed a new governmental policy. During the reign of William and Mary, the British finally found a working arrangement to manage its colonies that pleased merchants and colonists; the government retained some of the previous policies when it came to trade issues in an effort to bind the colonies more closely with the mother country. Thus, Parliament passed a revised Navigation Act and created the Board of Trade. At the same time, William and Mary restored the colonial assemblies, which their predecessor had disbanded. This compromise met the needs of both the colonies and the empire. Under the system, says historian Oliver Chitwood, "neither liberty nor security would be sacrificed" because "each province was to rotate on its own axis, but all of them were to revolve around England as the center of the

imperial system.” The compromise would only work so long as the mother country could keep the colonies in line. Sentimental attachment to England helped in this effort, but so too did economic self-interest on the part of the colonies and the threat of force on the part of the mother country.¹⁷

After the Glorious Revolution, Parliament held more power over matters of taxation and expenditures. However, the monarchy still largely supervised the colonies. Over the course of the eighteenth century, several different administrative bodies had their hand in colonial affairs. The Privy Council, the king’s official advisers, took the lead in colonial matters such as making royal appointments, issuing orders to governors, disallowing colonial laws in violation of English law, and hearing appeals from the colonial courts. Through a variety of secretaries, subcommittees, and boards, the Privy Council handled these tasks. The Treasury Board, which oversaw the empire’s money, was responsible for enforcing all trade restrictions and collecting all customs duties. The Admiralty supervised the Royal Navy that protected trade to and from the colonies. Further, the High Court of Admiralty, or its subsidiary Vice Admiralty Courts, tried cases relating to violations of the Navigations Acts. Finally, the Board of Trade advised the monarchy and Parliament on most colonial matters relating to commerce, industry, and government. Although the Board of Trade could not make any laws or official policies, the Privy Council frequently accepted its recommendations about appointments, laws passed by the colonial assemblies, and complaints made by the assemblies.¹⁸

Colonial Governments

The system of colonial administration set up in the late seventeenth century provided for British oversight and local autonomy regardless of whether the colonies were royal, proprietary, or corporate. By the mid-eighteenth century, the royal colonies included New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. The proprietary colonies included Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland. The corporate colonies included Connecticut and Rhode Island.¹⁹ Each colony developed governmental structures that resembled the structure of the British government with the king, his council, and Parliament in the form of the governor, the upper house, and the lower house. A colonial agent, who represented the colonies’ interests in London, also aided the governor and the assembly. Moreover, each colony had a judiciary modeled on the British system with justices of the peace, county courts, and circuit courts. Finally, in each colony the county or the township dominated local politics. The county system prevailed in the southern and middle colonies, while the township system prevailed in the northern colonies. Both took responsibility for issues such as local taxation, defense, public health, and probate.²⁰

Governors, who served at the pleasure of the king or the proprietor, functioned as the chief royal officials in the colonies. They had the power to do what the king did at home without seeking prior approval from Parliament. In the eighteenth century, the Board of Trade drafted the governors' orders for most of the colonies. These instructions underscored the mercantilist system in that they guided the governor to promote legislation to benefit the mother country while also seeking to improve the general welfare of the colony. Once in office, the governor became the commander of the colonial militia. He also held the power to decide when the assembly would meet and when it would disband and to approve or to veto all legislation passed by the assembly. Furthermore, the governor sent all official communication to London, which included sending colonial laws for approval by the crown. Finally, he appointed all judges, magistrates, and other officials, and he made recommendations to the crown or the proprietor regarding the composition of his advisory council. The governor's council had three functions: it advised the governor on all executive decisions, it acted as the upper house of the legislature, and in conjunction with the governor, it served as the highest appeals court in the colony.²¹

The colonial assemblies had the power to initiate legislation. More importantly, they controlled the budget because they voted on all taxes and expenditures, including colonial officials' salaries and defense appropriations. Members were immune from arrest during assembly sessions and could speak freely and openly in those meetings. Finally, the assemblies had the right to petition the monarchy for the redress of grievances. By modern standards, the colonial assemblies were far from democratic. Nevertheless, more men could vote in America than in England because of the wider distribution of land ownership. At the local level, the county or township administrators supervised the election of the assembly. Those chosen increasingly believed they had the obligation to represent the local entity that elected them. This idea of direct representation differed from the British system, where Parliament supported the concept of indirect or virtual representation. Members believed they represented the whole empire, not just the region they hailed from.²²

Colonial Politics

As in England, during the eighteenth century the power of the assembly in the colonies grew in relation to the governor, meaning the colonists expected lax enforcement of royal dictates as well as control over most colonial matters. At the same time that Parliament adopted a policy of salutary neglect when it came to trade, the crown allowed the colonies greater political control over their affairs. This habit of self-government stemmed from two factors. First, the distance between the mother country



Figure 6.5 The Colonial Assemblies | During the eighteenth century, representative assemblies in the colonies looked to expand their power and responsibility over colonial affairs. Whenever possible, they used financial pressure to bend the colonial governor to their will. This photograph, taken by Frances Benjamin Johnston, shows the chamber where the House of Burgesses, Virginia's representative assembly, met in Williamsburg.

Author: Frances Benjamin Johnston
Source: Wikimedia Commons

and her colonies mitigated the ability to keep tight control over colonial affairs. Colonial assemblies often made decisions because the time lag in communication between the two continents simply made waiting on answers from London infeasible. Moreover, in the eighteenth century the crown often found itself distracted by other problems such as the wars with France and Spain. Second, more men met the property qualifications to vote in the colonies, therefore felt a more direct connection to their government. As such, the well-to-do who served in the assemblies needed to be more responsive to the needs of their constituents to stay in office.

Like their counterparts in Britain, colonial leaders engaged in patronage where they awarded commissions, judgeships, and land grants to their supporters. In turn, most colonists put greater faith in their assemblies than in their governors because the colonists helped elect or appoint members to serve in those assemblies. As historian Jack P. Greene points out, “coherent, effective, acknowledged, and authoritative political elites” dominated local politics. They possessed “considerable social and economic power, extensive political experience, confidence in their capacity to govern, and...broad public support.”²³

To maximize the interests of their fellow colonists, the assemblies frequently used the power granted by their colonial charters to put pressure on the governor. On several occasions, the assemblies made official complaints about their governors' power to determine when and for how long they could meet. When the monarchy refused to address the problem, the assemblies used their power to control the budget. Should a governor veto legislation the assembly favored, it slowed and sometimes stopped the appropriation of funds for the governor's salary or defense measures. In the 1720s and 1730s, the governors in New York, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire went without pay for several years. According to historian Alan Taylor, the colonists also “could effectively play...dirty politics.” They sometimes resorted to rumors and gossip to undermine the authority of their governor and force his recall by officials in London. In the 1700s, New Yorkers exposed the then governor, Lord Cornbury, as a cross-dresser, so soon British officials removed him from office. Many governors tried to use their powers to grant land or bestow patronage to counter the power of the assembly, but their efforts rarely worked.²⁴

In the colonies, political tension was common because the assemblies constantly looked for ways to expand their power and responsibility over colonial affairs. Meanwhile when new governors arrived from England, they looked to shuffle the local power structure to win colonists over to their policies. In the end, most governors accepted the assemblies' demands in order to retain their position, thus perpetuating the idea of self-government in the colonies.²⁵ Many colonists believed they lived under the most enlightened form of government in Europe. Like their counterparts in England, the colonists believed the Bill of Rights protected their liberties. In the eighteenth century, the colonists concluded that they were free to protest against objectionable policies and laws emanating from Parliament because they were British citizens. Moreover, they expected the balance of power to remain in their favor since the governors often came around to their position.

6.2.3 Before You Move On...

Key Concepts

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the British sought to expand their empire. Using the theory of mercantilism, they set up an economic and political system designed to benefit the mother country and her colonies. Through the passage of the Navigation Acts and the creation of the Board of Trade, the government sought to increase the nation's wealth through commercial ties with the New World. The colonies provided raw materials for British industry and, in turn, purchased finished goods produced in the mother country. To further their economic goals, the monarchy also sought to extend greater political control over the colonies. Colonial resistance to James II's policies prompted William and Mary, as well as their successors, to blend royal control with representative assemblies. The large volume of trade brought benefits to most people involved in the system and thereby increased Britain's power over its European rivals. However, lax enforcement of many of the regulations, plus the growing power of the colonial assemblies, planted seeds of discontent that boiled over in the 1760s.

Test Yourself

1. The Navigation Acts specified enumerated goods that
 - a. colonists could not export.
 - b. colonists could manufacture the same goods as produced in Britain.
 - c. colonists could only ship within the British Empire.
 - d. colonists could only trade to other colonists.

2. Most colonists in eighteenth century North America were largely self-sufficient, so they did not need to import consumer goods from Britain.
 - a. True
 - b. False

3. Colonial governors possessed the right to veto legislation passed by the colonial assemblies.
 - a. True
 - b. False

4. During the eighteenth century, colonial assemblies
 - a. lost their power to appropriate taxes.
 - b. were appointed by the king.
 - c. included both men and women.
 - d. expanded their power and influence.

[Click here to see answers](#)

6.3 THE ENLIGHTENMENT AND THE GREAT AWAKENING

To understand the Enlightenment and fully appreciate its significance, we must review the state of the western world before the Scientific Revolution. Today most people believe the earth is a round planet orbiting in a solar system around a star known as the sun. We tend to accept this view without question. In the 1400s, people's view of the world differed from ours. For most of that century, many Europeans believed the earth might be flat and that all the planets and stars and even the sun revolved around it. The centrality of the earth to the universe was a religious as much as a scientific concept for many, while the flat earth concept had existed since ancient times.

The ancient astronomer Ptolemy's geocentric theory, that Earth was the center of the universe, remained accepted as fact over 1,200 years after his death. Nicolaus Copernicus, whose varied interests in theology, medicine, law, language, mathematics, and especially astronomy marked him as a true Renaissance man, observed the heavens and studied Ptolemy's theories. Believing Ptolemy wrong, Copernicus took what he knew to be fact and developed a heliocentric theory where the sun and not the earth

was at the center of the universe. Copernicus appears to have conceived his basic model before 1514 and spent the rest of his life developing his theory, which was published shortly before his death in 1543. His work, *On the Revolutions*, touched off the Scientific Revolution which continued well into the seventeenth century.

Among all the great figures of the Scientific Revolution, Sir Isaac Newton most importantly distilled the theories and discoveries of the Scientific Revolution from Copernicus to himself. His greatest work, *Philosophia Naturalis Principia Mathematica*, published in 1687, presented a reasonable, understandable, and demonstrable model for the workings of the universe, which was based on science and excluded theology. Newton's concepts, such as his Law of Gravity, gave a predictable and comprehensible framework from which to view the world and beyond.

6.3.1 The Enlightenment

The ideas of the Scientific Revolution inspired people in many fields besides science. With Newton demonstrating rational explanations for the functions of the universe, philosophers were inspired to re-think humanity and its place in the universe. The Scientific Revolution, then, was at the root of the Enlightenment.

With the Enlightenment came a new spirit of thought and intellectual investigation. Old ideas and theories could be questioned and new ones proposed on virtually any subject. Acceptance of what had always been was no longer sufficient support for belief; instead, understanding with reasoned explanations and arguments were needed. Of the many great thinkers of the Enlightenment, including Rousseau, Voltaire, and Hume, the one whose works on politics and philosophy had the greatest direct impact on the revolutionary spirit in the Colonies was an Englishman, John Locke.

In 1690, two of Locke's greatest works were published. In the first, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Locke explained that humans learn only from experience. We experience things through sensation, with our senses giving us information, and through reflection, with our pondering what we have learned through sensation. Experience then leads to simple ideas which lead to complex ones. Locke discounted the commonly-held idea that humans are born with innate knowledge. His revolutionary view was that we are born instead knowing nothing at all. For Locke, humans possessed no innate concepts, ideas, or morals. At birth, our minds are complete blanks, a *tabula rasa*, which by being completely empty can be filled with what we know to be true through experience.

His other great work of that year was *Two Treatises of Government*. In the first treatise, Locke rejected the theory of the divine right of kings; in

the second, he explained his beliefs concerning government, democracy, and the rights of men. Locke believed that government should be for the benefit of the people, and if the government or the leader of the government failed in their duty to the people, then the people had the right to remove or overthrow that government. He believed that to safeguard against corruption and failure to serve the people, a government should have multiple branches with each serving to check the others. His ideas would continue to resonate long after his death in 1704 and would profoundly influence our Founding Fathers who used Locke's ideas to frame their reasons for the American Revolution and thereby justify their cause. Locke's ideas later formed the basis of the U. S. Constitution. From Locke came the concept that all people have the right to Life, Liberty, and Estate or Property.

6.3.2 The Enlightenment in America

The Enlightenment, with its ideas and ideals of human rights and the relationship of citizens and governments as expressed by such writers as Locke, formed the basis of thought of the American Revolution. Thomas Paine, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and other Founding Fathers were influenced by the Enlightenment and took those ideals, that a government has a duty to the people, and used that as a lens through which to view the relationship between the American colonies and the British government of King George III. With the concept of a duty to the people firmly in mind, the failings of the British government to respond to the needs of the colony became more than mere points of contention and instead became causes for revolution. Thomas Paine, in his critical work *Common Sense*, made the case in clear language that spoke to the average colonist that equality was a natural condition for humans and having a king was not. Paine put forth the idea that while a king could be useful, there was no justification for a hereditary monarchy and ultimately, if the king did not see to the interest of his subjects, the subjects had no reason to have a king. The British government, according to Paine, had put its own interests ahead of the interests of the colonies, thereby failing in its duty to the colonists. Further, whereas the colonies in their infancy had needed the guidance and protection of the British, now they were able to stand on their own. Indeed, the British government had evolved from promoting the growth of the colonies to prohibiting that growth and becoming an obstacle to their economic development by inhibiting trade between the colonies and other nations around the globe. By covering the economic realities as well as the higher principles of natural rights, Paine's pamphlet appealed to both the practical-minded merchant and the principled philosopher. His writing was a hit and helped the colonists restless under British rule to understand exactly why continuing as colonies was not the solution to the situation.²⁶

The Enlightenment provided a moral justification for revolution and the end of British rule in the colonies—at least in the view of the revolutionary thinkers such as Franklin and Jefferson. Humanity’s natural rights could not be denied to any well-reasoned mind. The colonists had the right to determine for themselves where their loyalties lay and what form their government would take. They had the right to be heard, to have their concerns addressed in a way not possible for the British over the seas. Yet, the break was not easy. Many in the colonies, even if they felt their rights had been violated, remained loyal to England and hoped for a reconciliation. The relationship was often described in terms of a parent and child. To the leaders of the revolution, the child had grown up and was ready to have its independence, with a new government, one not seen before that would be guided by the principles of the Enlightenment.²⁷

6.3.3 The Great Awakening

The Great Awakening was a religious revival in the American colonies triggered by a belief among Calvinists that the spiritual life of the colonists was endangered. With a focus on the material rather than the spiritual, the pursuit of wealth rather than the pursuit of a good Christian life, the lifestyle choices of the colonists alarmed and then invigorated evangelical ministers, launching the Great Awakening. Ultimately, ministers from both sides of the Atlantic would inspire each other and be involved in this spiritual revival.

The Church of England—The Anglican Church

Like much of Europe, England had been a Catholic country until the Protestant Reformation. Henry VIII had at first defended the Catholic Church from the criticisms of Martin Luther, but later broke with the Catholic Church in order to divorce Ann Boleyn and, in 1534, declared himself the head of the Church of England. Unlike other Protestant movements, in which churches were formed based on the ideas of their founders such as Luther or Calvin, the Anglican Church alternated in concept from Catholicism to Protestantism, depending on what religious views were held by the current monarch and his or her advisors, since the Church and State were then tied together. The result was a church caught in the middle, blending Catholicism and Protestantism. The Anglican Church remained Catholic in its administrative structure and in the ritualized nature of its services, with Protestantism influencing its architecture, theology, and conduct of services. Because the Anglicans retained a detailed liturgical structure, any Anglican, whether in England or in the colonies, would know what Scriptures would be read and what prayers would be said on any given Sunday, as all Anglican churches followed a common guide. For many, this formal, predictable

style of worship did not meet their spiritual needs. Indeed, some felt England to be almost a spiritual desert.

The Wesley Brothers and Their Conversion

The Wesleys attended Oxford and, in 1729, Charles founded the Holy Club, a group of students who were devout in their religious practices. In fact, they were absolutely methodical in the way they carried on their religious devotions and other activities, a practice which led to their nickname, Methodist. The name eventually served to identify the Protestant denomination they founded. The Wesleys, who practiced what they preached, believed in public service and missionary work, even going to the colonies in the 1730s as missionaries. On their return to England, John and Charles encountered Moravian passengers, Moravians being a Protestant group with German roots extending back to Jan Huss. This encounter led the brothers to associate with Moravians in England and to read the writings of Martin Luther, in particular his *Justification by Faith*. In 1738, within just a few days of each other, both brothers experienced a deep religious conversion which led them to preach of a personal, emotional relationship with God; this preaching would carry over to the colonies.



Figure 6.6 John Wesley | This portrait is of John Wesley, the founder of Methodism

Artist: Unknown
Source: Library of Congress

George Whitefield, a Powerful Voice in New England and the Colonies

George Whitefield, who attended Oxford, also joined the Holy Club and was influenced by the Wesleys. Still, for Whitefield, not Luther but Calvin was the key to his conversion. Another great influence on Whitefield was Jonathan Edwards. Whitefield read Edwards's *A Faithful Narrative*, and found it inspirational.²⁸ For the Wesleys and Whitefield, the old Anglican Sunday services no longer sufficed, so they began preaching revivals and in the open air. They preached to people who did not normally attend church and to anyone who listened. They believed the Holy Spirit could be felt at work in their hearts; this very personal, emotional religious experience was also felt by those whom they converted. As one might expect, these services were not the calm, quiet services of the traditional Anglican Church but

emotional services during which the congregation openly wept, especially when listening to Whitefield. Whitefield became famous on both sides of the Atlantic for his sermons, which he preferred to deliver in the open air. Whitefield's preaching was considered remarkable for several reasons: his voice carried for a tremendous distance, enabling him to be clearly heard by thousands; his style was such as to impress even those who, like Benjamin Franklin, did not agree with his theology; and he was able to stir up a storm of emotions in his audience so that they were often left weeping.

He preached daily, usually multiple times a day, for the rest of his life, inspiring many to a religious awakening, and inspired many who, if they did not become Methodists, at least experienced the Great Awakening. Unfortunately, while many welcomed this new evangelical form of worship, others did not. In the Colonies, those who preferred to stay with their old religious practices were called the Old Lights, while those who favored the new were called New Lights. The division between Old and New Lights crossed denominational boundaries, for while the Methodists were in the forefront of the Awakening, this was a spiritual matter rather than a doctrinal one. People could stay with their own church and still have the same deeply personal, internal conversion as the Wesleys. Even so, new denominations, including Methodists, Presbyterians, and Baptists, did take hold in the Colonies even where they were prohibited by law. All these denominations originated in the Old World and flowered in the Colonies powered by the zeal of the Awakening, thus changing the face of Colonial religion.

6.3.4 The Great Awakening Begins in the Middle Colonies

In the 1730s the Great Awakening began with the Tennents, a Presbyterian family of preachers who reached out to Presbyterians in their home of Pennsylvania and on into New Jersey. The Tennents and others were so successful in their revivals that they led to the founding of Princeton and to the inspiration of Jonathan Edwards. Their revivals spread from Pennsylvania northwards into New England, striking a cord with the Congregationalists or Puritans and Baptists there, leading ministers in New England to have their own revivals by the 1740s.²⁹

Jonathan Edwards

Jonathan Edwards, a Connecticut preacher well educated in theology and philosophy, and who read Locke and Newton, came to be one of the most important theologians of his day. Inspired by Gilbert Tennent, Edwards was preaching successful revivals by 1735, when, tragically, his uncle committed suicide due to his despair concerning salvation. This proved a temporary setback to Edwards's revivals.³⁰ As Edwards was temporarily quieted,

George Whitefield arrived from England in 1739, full of revival spirit. Just as Edwards writing had inspired Whitefield, Whitefield's emotional preaching inspired Edwards. Edwards greatly admired Whitefield who, as we might expect, touched him emotionally and made him weep. Edwards's own style was far more restrained than Whitefield's. Edwards reached his listeners through reason rather than through sermons infused with overt emotion, though the effect of his sermons on his audience could be very emotional. Edwards is most famous for his sermon entitled *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*. When he delivered this sermon at a meeting in Enfield, Connecticut in 1741, the reaction was overwhelming, with people crying out for salvation. Weeping, shouting, and fainting all occurred at these meetings in a tide of passion never before seen in Colonial churches. The Great Awakening in the Colonies was felt everywhere, yet New England stands out, due in no small part to Edwards. Conversions increased as church attendance exploded, with very few, if any, who did not know someone who had recently converted in this time of religious fever.

6.3.5 Before You Move On...

Key Concepts

The Scientific Revolution led to the Enlightenment. In both, an emphasis on reason was key. Ideas from the Enlightenment concerning human nature and that of government put forth by philosophers such as John Locke helped to inspire the American Revolution and shape the United States. The Great Awakening, a spiritual revival felt both in Britain and the colonies, focused on an individual's personal relationship with God. The Tennents, Jonathan Edwards, and George Whitefield all were key figures in the Great Awakening in the colonies, which resulted in the spread of new evangelical Protestant denominations.

Test Yourself

1. What are the three rights of every person as listed by Locke?
2. Early Methodists were called that because they were so methodical.
 - a. True
 - b. False
3. The Wesleys began as Anglicans but were inspired to conversion by the writing of whom?

4. Unlike with the Wesleys, who was key to Whitefield's conversion?

[Click here to see answers](#)

6.4 COLONIAL CONFLICTS AND WARS

From 1675 to 1748, violence and warfare plagued the British colonies. Several conflicts were fought in North America during this period. The first of these was Metacom's War, also known as King Philip's War (1675-1676), a brutal engagement between the New Englanders and the Wampanoag Indians. Shortly thereafter, Bacon's Rebellion (1676) broke out in Virginia, which also involved disputes with the Indians and the colonial government. Following these conflicts were King William's War (1689-1697), Queen Anne's War (1702-1713), and King George's War (1744-1748). These wars were the North American theater of European wars between the British, French, and Spanish. Escalating imperial tensions at the end of the seventeenth century contributed to each of these wars. In the case of Metacom's War and Bacon's Rebellion, the expanding colonial population increased tensions over land between the British colonies and the Indians. In the case of the remaining three wars, tensions between European powers translated into conflict between their colonial possessions.

6.4.1 Metacom's War

In the early years of British settlement in New England, the colonists and the Indians had a fairly stable relationship because of trade. However, a dramatic increase in migration to the British colonies in the 1630s changed the relationship. When new colonists arrived en masse, hungry for land, it could lead to armed conflict. In 1636, settlers viciously attacked the Pequot in southeastern Connecticut when they refused to pay a tribute to colonial leaders. When the Pequot War ended, the Pequot lost the bulk of their land. Similar problems led to Metacom's War approximately thirty years later. Ill feelings were compounded by British religious proselytizing amongst the Indians. In 1646, the General Court of Massachusetts passed "An Act for the Propagation of the Gospel Among the Indians."³¹ Over the next decades, a small population of "praying Indians" grew in the New England colonies, primarily in Massachusetts. These Christian Indians were a part of both Indian and colonial society; nevertheless, they were not seen by others as completely belonging to either group. Religious tensions between colonists and Indians, and Indians and praying Indians, also contributed to the outbreak of the war.

Tensions came to a boiling point in 1662 when Wamsutta, the sachem, or political leader, of the Wampanoag, was taken into Plymouth at gunpoint, only to die shortly thereafter of a sudden illness. Many of the Wampanoag suspected that their sachem had been poisoned. Wamsutta's successor, his brother Metacom, who was called King Philip by the colonists, took advantage of the situation by beginning to build an alliance against English expansionism. Colonists were informed of the alliance by a group of praying Indians. When a group of Indians was found with firearms, the government of Massachusetts forced Metacom to sign a new treaty which bound the Wampanoag to consult with the colonists in the disposal of Indian land and in the affairs of war, and to abide by their decisions. The treaty also named the Wampanoag as subjects of the royal government, bound by the laws of the colony. This 1671 treaty deepened the hostilities.

In 1675, war broke out in the aftermath of the trial and execution of three Wampanoag Indians convicted of the murder of John Sassamon, a praying Indian. Sassamon, a graduate of Harvard, had been an adviser to Metacom and often acted as a mediator for the Wampanoag and the colonial government. In early 1675, Sassamon informed the colonial government that Metacom was gathering alliances for an attack on expanding colonial towns; days after this, he was found dead. Many speculated that Metacom was behind the assassination. The Pilgrims responded by trying and hanging the three Wampanoag responsible for the death of Sassamon. In retaliation, Wampanoag warriors began to loot and burn colonial villages. Better armed than in the Pequot War, the Indians attacked during the summer and fall of 1675 and burned fifty-two of the region's ninety towns.

The war was short, lasting little more than a year, and brutal for both sides. The Indian alliance grew to include many New England tribes, such as the Narragansett, Nipmuck, Podunk, and Pocanoket. Colonies banded together to form the New England Confederation, which consisted of the Plymouth Colony, Massachusetts Bay Colony, New Haven Colony, and Connecticut Colony. Although the New England Confederacy won the war, their victory was extremely costly. By the end of the war, twelve colonial towns lay in ruins, and many more were heavily damaged. At least 600 colonists died in the conflict, which comprised about 10 percent of the colonies' men. The war also crippled the colonial economy, costing about £100,000, an incredible sum for the time. For the Indians, about 3,000 died, and more were tried in colonial court and executed or sold as slaves to Bermuda. Some were forced into servitude to local families. Metacom himself was one of the war's casualties. After he was shot in battle, Metacom's body was beheaded, then drawn and quartered. Colonists displayed his head in Plymouth for the next decade as a warning against further uprisings. Most significantly,

many historians see Metacom's War as a tipping point in Indian relations; after this conflict, wars against Indians were fought with the purpose of extinction.

6.4.2 Bacon's Rebellion

As the New England colonists wrapped up their conflict with the Wampanoag, trouble began between Indians, from various tribes, and the Virginia colonists, which eventually produced a civil war in Virginia. The leading protagonists in the conflict were Governor William Berkeley and Nathaniel Bacon, Jr., his cousin by marriage. The war stemmed from their difference on the colony's Indian policy, but also from larger political and economic tensions in Virginia. Berkeley had been the governor of Virginia since 1641, and so he wielded a great deal of power. For years, he used that power to build support among the wealthiest colonists. He granted them the best public office, the best public land, and a near monopoly over the lucrative Indian trade. When Bacon arrived in the colony in 1675, Berkeley gave him

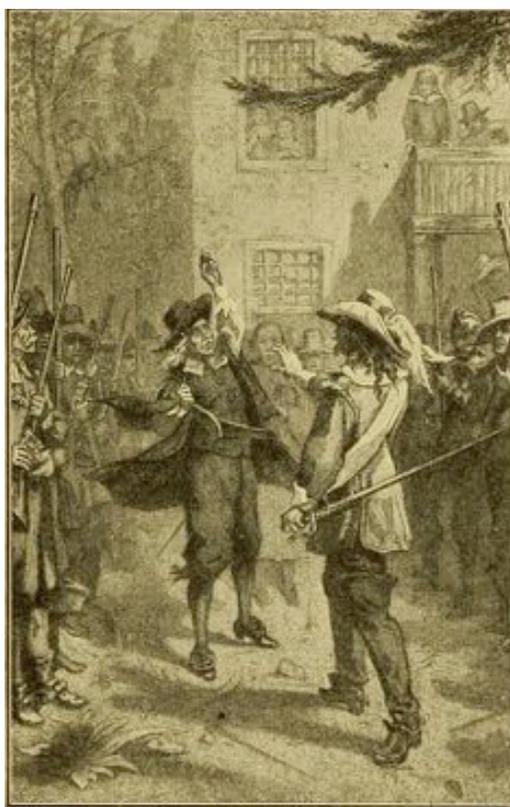


Figure 6.7 Bacon's Rebellion | In 1676, Nathaniel Bacon led a rebellion against Governor William Berkeley. This illustration, from the *Makers of Virginia History* (1904), captured the showdown between the two men outside the statehouse on June 23, 1676.

Author: J.A.C. Chandler after painting by unidentified "Kelley"
Source: *Makers of Virginia History*

a large land grant and appointed him to the governor's council (after all, he was family). Bacon, who was a bit of a troublemaker, wanted more power. He sensed weakness in his aging cousin and sought to exploit it. Bacon's social pedigree rivaled Berkeley's; thus, he thought he could win support among the smaller planters who Berkeley had overlooked.³²

As Bacon schemed, tensions mounted between frontier colonists and the Indians. The trouble began in the northern part of the colony. Thomas Mathew, a Potomac River land owner, found himself in a dispute with nearby Algonquian Doeg, and violence ensued. The Virginia militia tracked the Doeg into Maryland where they killed not only their supposed enemy, but also innocent Iroquoian Susquehannock. The resulting Susquehannock War led to a dispute over Indian policy between the governor and his

cousin. Berkeley wanted to fight a defensive war by building nine new forts on the frontier; the frontier residents, however, preferred an offensive war. Not only did it give them an opportunity to attack the Indians, whom many blamed for all of their problems, but it was a far less expensive prospect. The frontier residents found a leader in Nathaniel Bacon, who subsequently sought a commission from his cousin to lead forces against the Indians, but Berkeley refused. Bacon proceeded to lead attacks against the Doeg anyway, as well as the Susquehannock and the other tribes in the area, without the commission.³³

Bacon's actions prompted the governor to label him a traitor and to expel him from the governor's council in May 1676. The following month, Bacon's supporters elected him to the colony's House of Burgesses which prompted a showdown between Bacon and Berkeley on June 23 in Jamestown. Bacon and his supporters surrounded the statehouse and raised their weapons against the governor. Berkeley then dared Bacon to shoot him on the spot. Bacon chose not to do so, but the burgesses, clearly fearing for their lives, awarded Bacon the commission he wanted and pushed Berkeley to pardon him for his treasonous activities. Berkeley agreed, and then fled the capital. Having won the first round, Bacon turned his attention back to the Indians. He launched an attack on the Powhatan, who had been allies of the English since the 1640s, that forced most of them off their land. Meanwhile, in September, Berkeley briefly took the capital back; however, he lost it almost immediately. At that point, Bacon decided rather than to hold the city he would burn it and go off to attack more Indians. During his hunt, Bacon died of natural causes on October 26, 1676. The rebellion, however, continued until January 22, 1677 when Berkeley finally managed to reestablish his control. English officials then recalled Berkeley to explain the situation; before he had a chance to defend his actions he died on June 16, 1677.³⁴

While Bacon's Rebellion stemmed from a small dispute between a Virginia land owner and the Doeg, its causes ran much deeper. Resentment against Governor Berkeley's rule had been growing long before Bacon arrived in the colony. Berkeley had curried favor from the wealthiest residents at the expense of the smaller planters and landless tenants. Not only did these "commoners" receive the worst land, they paid high taxes to support the inflated salaries of the governor and the burgesses. Most of the colonists could afford those taxes, just barely, when the price of tobacco was high. However, the price began a steady decline in the 1660s because of the implementation of the Navigation Acts as well as the crown's trade war with the Dutch.

Since the governor refused to address their grievances, many former indentured servants moved to the frontier. There they faced the sometimes hostile Indians, and, frustrated with their situation, they blamed those

Indians for all their troubles. When the Susquehannock War began, Berkeley's defensive posture proved more than most residents could take because it would invariably mean an increase in their taxes. They turned to Bacon to lead a rebellion. He willingly accepted leadership, because he needed troops to help in his effort to unseat Berkeley and gain more power for the colony's smaller planters. Not long after the rebellion ended, Lieutenant Governor Alexander Spotswood noted that Berkeley's refusal "to let the people go out against the Indians" caused the conflict.³⁵

For years, contemporaries and historians viewed Bacon's Rebellion as the first phase of the American Revolution. But in reality, Bacon's intent and even the intent of his followers was not to end English rule in Virginia. On several occasions Bacon suggested his effort would eliminate a corrupt governor and benefit the crown. Bacon's Rebellion did little to shift the center of power in Virginia; smaller planters still found themselves marginalized. In fact, it consolidated power in the hands of fewer powerful families such as the Washingtons, the Lees, and the Randolphs. They quickly moved to lower taxes, to implement Bacon's Indian policy, and to encourage a shift from indentured servitude to slavery. While both forms of labor existed in the colony before 1676, Virginia's leaders reasoned after the rebellion that if they relied more on slavery than servitude they would have fewer men competing for the available land. The slave population increased rapidly and much of the very poor white population left Virginia for North Carolina.³⁶ Bacon's Rebellion in no way marked the end of the colonists' confrontations with the Indians. In the eighteenth century various tribes became involved in the brewing tensions between Britain and the other European powers in the New World.

6.4.3 The Colonial Wars

Towards the end of the seventeenth century, North America became a front of expansion for European wars as military engagements between imperial powers spilled over into their colonial holdings. Each of the wars began in Europe and spread to the colonial holdings, involving not only the British, French, and Spanish colonists, but also their Indian allies. With each conflict, the European powers hoped to eliminate their competition from the New World. None of the conflicts did much to redraw the map of the Americas; however, they did create tensions between the colonies and their respective mother countries.

King William's War (1688-1697)

King William's War began when the Protestant monarch William of England joined the League of Augsburg in a war against Catholic France,

expanding into modern-day Maine, and the colonists of Acadia in New France, who laid claim to much of the same area. The most contested area was the region around the Kennebec River; British and colonial forces led several raids into the Acadian territory. In each instance, they suffered an embarrassing defeat in part because each colony had their own agenda. The war ended with the Treaty of Ryswick of 1697, which returned the colonial borders to what they had been before the war. The treaty failed to establish a lasting peace in North America, and tensions remained; within five years, war had broken out once again in the colonies. More importantly, the British colonists felt disappointed that the crown did not do more to help them assault Acadia. William was more concerned with maintaining an English presence in Ireland than with expanding his holdings in North America. Therefore, his military leaders could not send soldiers or ships to the American colonies.³⁷

Queen Anne's War (1702-1713)

Like King William's War, Queen Anne's War emerged in North America when the War of Spanish Succession spilled over into the colonies. In this case, the war was being waged over the possible merging of France and Spain under the Bourbon monarchs. Anne, who succeeded William and Mary to the English throne, sought to prevent a Catholic dominated Europe. While the English won numerous victories in Europe, they struggled to do the same in North America. The war there once again focused on control of the continent. France, Spain, and their Indian allies fought the British and their Indian allies. The war was fought on two fronts throughout the North American colonies. In the south, the English, French, and Spanish fought over control of *la Florida*; in the north, border disputes once again emerged in Acadia, with the war stretching as far north as Newfoundland.³⁸

In 1702, James Moore, governor of the Carolinas, led an attack on Spanish Florida. Although the British forces managed to sack and burn the town of St. Augustine, they were unable to take the city stronghold, the Castillo San Marcos. British and Indian forces were forced to withdraw when a fleet from Havana arrived to reinforce the town. The greatest blow to Spanish Florida came not from the attack on St. Augustine, but with the destruction of dozens of Indian missions. The Spanish population relied on these missions and their populations for labor and for corn; their destruction was quite a blow to the already weakened St. Augustine. Spanish Florida never really recovered from the war either economically or populationally.

In the north, the main combatants were the British and French colonists, along with their Indian allies. From the perspective of the American colonists, one of the more noteworthy events of the conflict came in 1704 when French commanders leading mostly Indian soldiers attacked Deerfield, in

western Massachusetts. In the early hours on March 1, the enemy crept into the snowy village. Before they could defend themselves, the attackers set about destroying the village. Within a matter of hours, what historian John Demos calls “a village size holocaust” had ended. The French and Indians took those that survived the onslaught, including the village’s minister John Williams, prisoner and forced them on a long march back to Canada. For those who managed to escape the attack, they returned to find their homes destroyed. More significantly, they found loved ones slaughtered in most gruesome ways or missing entirely. After burying the dead in a mass grave, the villagers worked to secure the release of their family and friends. One of the last to return home was John Williams; however, his daughter Eunice, also a captive, decided to remain with the Indians and she married into their community.³⁹

The Deerfield Massacre, though exceedingly brutal, was not exceptional. As Demos notes, “Much of the actual fighting was small-scale, hit-and-run, more a matter of improvisation than of formal strategy and tactics.”⁴⁰ However, on occasion other towns in New Hampshire and Massachusetts became targets of the French. On a larger-scale in the region, like King William’s War, most of the hostilities in the north focused on control of the area of Acadia. The British campaign to take Acadia culminated in the 1710 Siege of Port Royal, the capital of Acadia. After a successful campaign, the British gained control of Acadia, renaming it Nova Scotia. They also tried to take Quebec, but failed when the English admiral in charge of the operation deemed the St. Lawrence River too hazardous. In the Carolinas, Queen Anne’s War and its aftermath coincided with growing trouble regarding trade, land, and slavery between the British settlers and the Indians. In the Tuscarora War (1711) and the Yamasee War (1715-1716), both tribes lost their battle with the settlers and had to give much of their land away. The Tuscarora moved north to join the Iroquois Confederacy after their defeat; meanwhile, the Yamasee moved south and aligned themselves with the Spanish in Florida.

Queen Anne’s War ended with the negotiation of the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713. Anne accepted French control of the Spanish monarchy; however, she also secured more territory in North America, including Acadia and Newfoundland, and of the Atlantic slave trade for thirty years. Overall, this war confirmed the shifting balance of power in North America, with Britain on the rise and France and Spain on the wane. British conquest of Acadia and the weakening of Spanish Florida set the stage for both King George’s War and the more important French and Indian War (1754-1763) because after the Treaty of Utrecht the British focused more of their attention on maritime commerce than territorial acquisition in Europe. And so, securing the strength of their American colonies became of more interest.⁴¹

King George's War (1744-1748)

After Queen Anne's War came to an end, the European powers managed to check their rivalry for a number of years largely because their conflicts proved physically and economically exhausting. However, tensions between Britain, France, and Spain remained high, especially in their colonies. Ultimately, events in British Georgia and Spanish Florida sparked another imperial conflict. In the early 1730s, to undercut French power, the British decided to loot Spanish possessions in the Caribbean. When Spanish authorities caught British captains in acts of piracy, they meted out tough justice. For example, in 1731 the Spanish severed the ear of Robert Jenkins, who then presented his ear to Parliament to demonstrate Spanish treachery. In the coming years, the Spanish and the British worked to avoid an open conflict, but they could not contain their hostility. The War of Jenkins's Ear—the first imperial struggle tied directly to a colonial issue—broke out in 1739. The ongoing Anglo-Spanish rivalry over land in the South as well as the Anglo-French rivalry over the Caribbean sugar trade became interlaced with local concerns in the southern colonies.

Just before the war broke out, the governor of Florida announced that he would grant freedom to any slave who made their way to Spanish territory, which prompted the Stono Rebellion, where slaves took up arms and attempted to march to Spanish Florida. Residents in both British colonies recognized South Carolina's weakness in the British conflict with Spain. South Carolinians looked the recently founded Georgia to provide a buffer between slavery and freedom. In an effort to protect South Carolina, General James Oglethorpe, a leading trustee in Georgia, led several raids into Florida and managed to capture two forts. However, his efforts to capture St. Augustine failed in 1740. In 1742, the Spanish launched an attack on Georgia, resulting in two skirmishes which the British won. The last major battle in the war came in 1743 when Oglethorpe once again tried and failed to take St. Augustine. After that effort, the focus of the colonial conflict shifted to the northern colonies when the French finally decided to back their Spanish allies. The War of Jenkins's Ear morphed into King George's War or the War of Austrian Succession.⁴²

As in King William's War and Queen Anne's War, the British, French, and their Indian allies launched small-scale operations. The French tended to attack frontier towns in order to divert the British colonists' attention away from Canada. However, New England residents desperately wanted Canada. In 1745, William Shirley, the governor of Massachusetts, led a small contingent in an attack on Fort Louisburg and much to everyone's surprise managed to take the fort. The victory gave the British the advantage in the North American contest because it made it far more difficult for the French to supply their settlers and Indian allies living down the St. Lawrence River.

In 1746, the colonists sought to capitalize on their victory and move against Quebec. However, much-needed British reinforcements failed to arrive. Even more galling news came in 1748, when word reached the colonies that the war had ended. In the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, the British traded control of Louisburg, the one thing the colonists were truly proud of, back to the French in exchange for French withdrawal from Indian and Flanders. Essentially when the war came to an end, nothing had changed in North America, which meant the colonists had another war to look forward to.⁴³

6.4.4 Before You Move On...

Key Concepts

The era of the colonial wars was a period of shifting political influence in the colonies. During the course of these wars, colonists and Indian confederacies forged alliances and chose sides. Metacom's War was a significant engagement between British colonists and local New England native groups. The war was one of the most costly in American history, both in terms of its consequences for the colonial economy and population. It also proved devastating for natives. Bacon's Rebellion highlighted the ongoing tensions between the colony's residents and their government over the availability of land, which in turn caused problems with the native population. The remaining colonial wars were intercontinental engagements that saw military action both in Europe and in North America. Each of the three wars saw European political tensions and military action spill over into their colonial holdings. Although each of the wars was fought for different political reasons in Europe, in North America, the wars focused on the balance of political power and control of the continent. The North American war fronts emerged at the periphery where colonial boundaries met, such as Acadia and Florida. Overall, the results of King William's, Queen Anne's, and King George's Wars showed the balance of power in North America shifting to England, weakening the French and Spanish North American holdings.

Test Yourself

1. One of the most contentious areas of struggle in Queen Anne's War and King George's War was
 - a. Florida.
 - b. the Carolinas.
 - c. Acadia.
 - d. the Mississippi.

2. Metacom's War was significant because
 - a. it marked the shift in policy in Indian warfare to a policy of extinction.
 - b. it allowed the Wampanoag to retake much of Massachusetts.
 - c. although the British won, it devastated many towns and the colonial economy.
 - d. A and B
 - e. all of the above

3. Queen Anne's War was significant because the _____ helped shift the control of the continent to England.
 - a. conquest of Florida
 - b. conquest of the Carolinas
 - c. conquest of New England
 - d. conquest of Acadia

[Click here to see answers](#)

6.5 Conclusion

During the eighteenth century, British North American colonists experienced many economic, social, and political changes. In an attempt to expand the empire, the British adopted mercantilist policies to tie the colonies to the mother country. Through a series of Navigation Acts, the British pushed the colonies into a trade network that proved beneficial to most participants. The colonies produced raw materials and exchanged them for goods manufactured in the mother country. Such economic growth caused an increase in the colonists' standard of living. To underscore mercantilism, the British attempted to extend their political control over the colonies. Under the political system that gave power to the colonial governor and the colonial assembly, the colonists concluded they had certain political rights, including the right to protest policies they did not like.

The American colonists also experienced social changes stemming from the Great Awakening, a wave of religious revivalism, and the Enlightenment, a period of intellectual development promoting personal improvement and social betterment. Both led to positive developments in American society during the eighteenth century. They caused the American colonists to be distrustful of institutionalized authority, yet favorably disposed to education and the instruction of educators. Moreover, the Enlightenment caused America's educated elite to be suspicious of any attempt to shackle their minds or erode the rights of English citizens. Although different in their goals, the Great Awakening and the Enlightenment had similar motivations, largely in the way they revealed the fundamental pragmatism and practicality of the American people.

The attempt to expand the empire did not just affect internal colonial policy. The British wanted to eliminate France and Spain from the New World. Metacom's War centered on tensions between New England settlers and the Wampanoags as the number of settlers increased. Bacon's Rebellion focused on concerns about the availability of land in Virginia as more indentured servants survived their terms of service and looked to obtain their own plots. However, the remaining wars, King William's War (1689-1697), Queen Anne's War (1702-1713), and King George's War (1744-1748), stemmed from the tensions between the European powers. Many colonists paid a high price for their participation in these wars. Their losses certainly lent themselves to a feeling that the colonists had made significant sacrifices for England, and therefore deserved equal and fair treatment as citizens of the British crown. British attempts to expand their power in North America ultimately paved the way for the revolution.

6.6 CRITICAL THINKING EXERCISES

- By following mercantilism, the British government thought their policies would strengthen the empire. What factors helped to blunt the impact of mercantilism and cause unrest in the colonies? How might the problems contribute to the American desire for independence?
- John Locke believed we are born with our minds being a blank slate and learn only through experience. What do you think?
- How did the wars in seventeenth and eighteenth century America reflect the broader tensions between Great Britain and its rivals, the Netherlands, France, and Spain?

6.7 KEY TERMS

- Acadia
- Anglicans
- Bacon's Rebellion
- Board of Trade
- Colonial Government
- Deerfield Massacre
- Jonathan Edwards
- The Enlightenment
- The Great Awakening
- King George's War
- King William's War
- John Locke
- Mercantilism
- Metacom's War
- Methodists
- Moravians
- Navigation Acts
- Isaac Newton
- Protestants
- Queen Anne's War
- Salutary Neglect
- John Sassaman
- The Scientific Revolution
- Theology
- Vice Admiralty Courts
- War of Jenkins's Ear
- John and Charles Wesley
- George Whitefield
- Writs of Assistance

6.8 CHRONOLOGY

The following chronology is a list of important dates and events associated with this chapter.

Date	Event
1632	John Locke born
1642	Isaac Newton born
1651	Navigation Act of 1651 passed
1660	Navigation Act of 1660 passed
1663	Staple Act of 1663 passed
1673	Plantation Duty Act of 1673 passed
1675-1676	Metacom's War
1676	Bacon's Rebellion
1687	Newton's Principia
1689-1697	King William's War
1690	Locke's Essay and Two Treaties written
1696	Navigation Act of 1696 and Trade Act of 1696 passed
1702-1713	Queen Anne's War
1703	Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley born
1704	John Locke died
1707	Charles Wesley born
1714	George Whitefield born
1727	Isaac Newton died
1729	Holy Club founded
1733	Molasses Act of 1733 passed
1738	Conversion of the Wesleys
1739-1744	War of Jenkin's Ear
1741	Edwards delivered "In the Hands of an Angry God"
1744-1748	King George's War
1758	Jonathan Edwards died

Date	Event
1770	George Whitefield died
1788	Charles Wesley died
1791	John Wesley died

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- 4 Chitwood, *A History of Colonial America*, 356, 371.
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- 11 Breen, "An Empire of Goods," 470, 474, 476; Taylor, *American Colonies*, 310-311.

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- 15 Barck and Lefler, *Colonial America*, 238; Chitwood, *A History of Colonial America*, 406-407.
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ANSWER KEY FOR CHAPTER SIX: GROWING PAINS IN THE COLONIES

Check your answers to the questions in the Before You Move On Sections for this chapter. You can click on the questions to take you back to the chapter section.

Correct answers are **BOLDED**

Section 6.2.3 - p259

1. The Navigation Acts specified enumerated goods that
 - a. colonists could not export.
 - b. colonists could manufacture the same goods as produced in Britain.
 - c. COLONISTS COULD ONLY SHIP WITHIN THE BRITISH EMPIRE.**
 - d. colonists could only trade to other colonists.
2. Most colonists in eighteenth century North America were largely self-sufficient, so they did not need to import consumer goods from Britain.
 - a. True
 - B. FALSE**
3. Colonial governors possessed the right to veto legislation passed by the colonial assemblies.
 - A. TRUE**
 - b. False
4. During the eighteenth century, colonial assemblies
 - a. lost their power to appropriate taxes.
 - b. were appointed by the king.
 - c. included both men and women.
 - D. EXPANDED THEIR POWER AND INFLUENCE.**

Section 6.3.5 - p266

1. What are the three rights of every person as listed by Locke? **LIFE, LIBERTY, AND ESTATE**
2. Early Methodists were called that because they were so methodical.
 - A. TRUE**
 - b. False
3. The Wesleys began as Anglicans but were inspired to conversion by the writing of whom? **MARTIN LUTHER**
4. Unlike with the Wesleys, who was key to Whitefield's conversion? **JOHN CALVIN**

Section 6.4.4 - p276

1. One of the most contentious areas of struggle in Queen Anne's War and King George's War was
 - a. Florida.
 - b. the Carolinas.
 - C. ACADIA.**
 - d. the Mississippi.
2. Metacom's War was significant because
 - a. it marked the shift in policy in Indian warfare to a policy of extinction.
 - b. it allowed the Wampanoag to retake much of Massachusetts.
 - c. although the British won, it devastated many towns and the colonial economy.
 - D. A AND C**
 - e. all of the above

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3. Queen Anne's War was significant because the _____ helped shift the control of the continent to England.
- a. conquest of Florida
 - b. conquest of the Carolinas
 - c. conquest of New England
 - D. CONQUEST OF ACADIA**