

## 2: BRITISH COLONIAL AMERICA

### ESSENTIAL TERMS



#### KEY CONCEPTS

**Joint-Stock Company:** A business in which wealthy individuals invest in order to raise funds for a venture. The Virginia Company of London is a famous example.

**Primogenitor:** An English tradition that a family's property would pass down to the eldest son. Many of America's first settlers were second and third sons who did not inherit money or land in England.

**Divine Right:** The belief that a king or queen derived power from God. It contradicts the Enlightenment idea that governments derive power from the consent of the people.

**Headright System:** A legal system in the British American colonies in which men who paid for the passage of indentured servants were rewarded by the government with 50 acres of land per servant. The policy was designed to encourage immigration and was used by wealthy Americans to increase their landholdings.

**Atlantic Slave Trade:** The transport of African slaves from the West Coast of Africa to the Americas (mostly South America and the Caribbean Islands) from 1500s through the 1800s.

**Triangle Trade:** The trade of slaves, raw materials and finished products between Africa, Europe, the Caribbean and the British Colonies.

**Chattel Slavery:** System of slavery in which the slaves are considered property with no individual rights.

**Slave Codes:** Laws that regulated what slaves were allowed to do, including movement, gathering, learning, rights in court, etc.

**City Upon a Hill:** Phrase used by John Winthrop to describe the Massachusetts Bay Colony as an example for the world of a godly society.

**Predestination:** Puritan belief that God had chosen some people for heaven and some for hell before they were born. By doing good works on Earth, a person could come to know that he or she was among the Elect – the people bound for heaven.

**Protestant Work Ethic:** A belief common in New England that encouraged people to work hard as part of a godly life.



#### DOCUMENTS

**Mayflower Compact:** 1620 agreement signed by the Pilgrims outlining the government for the new colony, including the right to vote for church members.



#### BUSINESSES

**Virginia Company of London:** Joint-stock company that funded the Jamestown colony.



#### LOCATIONS

**London:** Capital city of England and the United Kingdom

**Jamestown:** First successful English colony in America. Settled in 1607, John Smith helped save the settlers from starvation. Eventually the colony became financially successful when John Rolfe learned to grow quality tobacco in Virginia's soil.

**Chesapeake Region:** The area around the Chesapeake Bay, including the modern states of Virginia, Maryland and the upper part of North Carolina.

**South Carolina:** Colony created by English planters from Barbados. It was established with chattel slavery as an explicit foundation for the economy.

**Appalachian Mountains:** Mountain range that runs north to south from Maine to Georgia. It divides the original 13 colonies from the interior.

**Massachusetts Bay Colony:** Colony created by Puritans in 1630. It was centered around the city of Boston and eventually absorbed Plymouth.

**Salem:** Massachusetts town that became famous because of witch trials that took place there in 1692 and 1693.



#### EVENTS

**Starving Time:** The winter of 1609-10 in Jamestown when many settlers starved to death. Later the colonists learned to grow their own food.

**Anglo-Powhatan Wars:** A series of three conflicts between 1609 and 1646 between the English settlers in Virginia and the neighboring Native Americans.

**Great Migration:** Nickname for the mass immigration of Puritans to Massachusetts beginning in 1630. Approximately 14,000 Puritans moved to America.

**King Philip's War:** Conflict between Puritans in New England and the surrounding Native American tribes in 1675 and 1676. The Puritan colonies were nearly wiped out before the Native Americans were defeated.

**First Great Awakening:** Revival in religious practice in the mid-1700s in both England and the English colonies in America. Ministers preached a more direct connection to God that did not rely on official church leaders. The movement weakened the power of established churches and led to the creation of new denominations such as the Methodists, Presbyterians and Baptists.



#### SPEECHES

**A Model of Christian Charity:** Sermon given by John Winthrop on the Arbella on the way to America in which he described the Puritan's covenant with God and described their colony as a "city upon a hill."



#### PEOPLE AND GROUPS

**John Smith:** Leader of the Jamestown colony. He is famous for ordering that the settlers would not eat if they did not work, and dealing with Powhatan. He also wrote a famous memoir his experience in the colony.

**Powhatan:** Leader of the Native America tribe that shared his name. They lived in Virginia around the Jamestown settlement and went to war with the English settlers. Pocahontas was his daughter.

**Virginia House of Burgesses:** A legislative body created in colonial Virginia. It was an early example of democracy in America.

**Indentured Servant:** White immigrants to America whose passage was paid for them. In turn, they worked for a set number of years in order to off the debt.

**Anglican Church:** The official Church of England. It is a Protestant church created by Henry VIII when he wanted a divorce. In America, it is called the Episcopal Church.

**Separatists:** English followers of John Calvin who wanted to leave the Anglican Church. They included the Pilgrims.

**Puritans:** English followers of John Calvin who wanted to fix problems with the Church of England. They founded the Massachusetts Bay Colony and were led by John Winthrop.

**Pilgrims:** English Separatists who founded the Plymouth Colony. They lived in the Netherlands briefly before coming to America on the Mayflower.

**John Winthrop:** Puritan minister and leader who described the colony as a "city upon a hill."

**Quakers:** Also called the Society of Friends, a religious group that believed in total equality and were pacifists. Their leader, William Penn, founded Pennsylvania as a haven in America.

**William Penn:** Quaker leader who established Pennsylvania as a haven for his followers.

**Benjamin Franklin:** The first truly famous American. He was a printer, scientist and politician.

**Scotch-Irish:** A group of immigrants from the borderlands of England who settled mostly in the interior regions of America, especially in the Appalachian Mountains. They are well known for their individualism and resistance to government control.