

CHAPTER THREE: GROWTH, SLAVERY, AND CONFLICT: COLONIAL AMERICA, 1710–1763

READING AND STUDY GUIDE

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Life in the seventeenth-century American colonies, even for the wealthiest, was crude and primitive. Beginning in the eighteenth century, a more cosmopolitan and refined culture began to emerge. Prosperous colonists sought out the latest British and European consumer goods, such as finely woven Turkish or English carpets, tea sets, and imported pattern books with English architectural and furniture styles.

Books, newspapers, and letters all were part of Atlantic commerce, and they facilitated a lively exchange of ideas on a wide array of subjects, including architecture, fashion, politics, religion, science, and philosophy. One highly influential set of ideas was associated with the

Enlightenment and its ideals of reason and social progress. These ideas fostered new social experiments, such as the founding of the colony of Georgia.

The English evangelical minister George Whitefield traveled to the colonies, crisscrossing them from New Hampshire to Georgia. His tour helped spread the ideas of the religious revival movement known as the Great Awakening. Enlightenment ideals of liberty, human dignity, and progress, and new religious ideas, even led some Americans to begin questioning the institution of slavery, which had become vital to the prosperity of the colonial economy. The stark contrast between the wealthy planters and wretchedly housed slaves was not the only divide in American life. As the overall wealth of the colonies increased, so did the disparity between the wealthy and the poor.

Land itself became scarce by the mid-eighteenth century. Expansion westward was hampered by the Appalachian Mountains and the rich lands of what is now America's Midwest were controlled by the French and a host of different Indian tribes.

Ultimately, the balance of power in North America was decided by the French and Indian War (1755–1763).

Learning Objectives

After a careful examination of Chapter 3, students should be able to do the following:

1. Explain the concept of mercantilism and offer examples of British trade legislation that was designed to promote this economic policy.
2. Explain the colonial system of credit and how it impacted colonial consumption of British goods.
3. Discuss the characteristics of eighteenth-century colonial urban centers.
4. Describe the intellectual development of the colonists, including literacy rates, the nature of popular literature, and the intellectual development of women.
5. Explain the Age of the Enlightenment and its impact on colonial intellectual development.
6. Explain the Great Awakening and its impact on theology and religious style in the American colonies.
7. Discuss the major trends in British colonial administration from the mid-seventeenth to the mid-eighteenth century.
8. Explain the terms *actual representation* and *virtual representation* and how they reflected the diverging political ideologies of the colonies and Britain.
9. Describe the settlement of the backcountry and explain the social tensions that emerged between the older, established eastern communities and the western backcountry.

10. Explain Spanish expansion into North America, particularly Texas and California, and speculate about what that expansion will mean to the colonies as well as the future United States.
11. Describe the French movement into the Mississippi Valley and connect that development to the future French and Indian War.
12. Explain the impact of colonial wars on the Iroquois League and the importance of the Grand Settlement of 1701.
13. Define the Albany Congress and the reasons for its successes and failures.
14. Explain the terms of the Treaty of Paris of 1763 and explain the treaty's potential for changing the relationship between the colonies and Britain after the French and Indian War.
15. Explain why some Georgians were so eager to import slaves. What advantages did slave labor have over free labor in their view?

Topics for Classroom Lectures

1. Discuss the Anglo-American transatlantic commerce. Explain the role of each continent, making a distinction between which regions imported raw materials and which exported finished goods. Discuss how each continent profited from the institution of slavery, regardless of how many slaves they actually possessed.
2. Create a slide presentation of American colonial dwellings from New England, the Middle colonies, and the South. Trace the various architectural features to their origins in England. Also, point out how the architectural distinctions reflect the cultural, social, and climate differences among the major colonial regions.
3. Discuss the settlement of the American backcountry during the early eighteenth century. How did the settlers of this area differ from the settlers of the seventeenth century? Consider the religious, regional, cultural, and moral backgrounds of the settlers. How would these characteristics define the relationship between the settlers of the backcountry and the established eastern population?
4. What difficult question did Quakers face during the Paxton Uprising?

Anglicization The colonial American desire to emulate English society, including English taste in foods, customs, and architecture. (67)

Virtual Representation A theory of representation in which legislators do not serve their localities but rather the whole nation. (71)

Enlightenment An international philosophical movement that extolled the virtues of reason and science and applied these new insights to politics and social reform. (72)

Great Awakening A religious revival movement that emphasized a more emotional style of religious practice. (72)

Old Lights Opponents of the Great Awakening who favored traditional forms of religious worship. (76)

New Lights Supporters of the Great Awakening and its more emotional style of worship. (76)

Middle Passage The harrowing voyage across the Atlantic from Africa to the Americas during which slaves endured meager rations and horrendously unsanitary conditions. (79)

Indentured Servants A form of bound labor in which servants had their passage to America paid in return for a specified number of years of service. (83)

Middle Ground A cultural and geographical region of the Great Lakes in which Indians and the French negotiated with each other for goods and neither side could impose its will on the other. (87)

Study Questions:

What do the Macphedris House murals tell us about colonial culture? (64)

Define Anglicization and give an example of an aspect of colonial life transformed by this process? (66)

Why did new pieces of furniture like drop-leaf bookcases become popular in the eighteenth century? (67)

How does Westover Plantation illustrate the growing wealth of the colonies? (68)

How is slavery represented in this portrait? (69)

How did the Pennsylvania State House reflect the Anglicization of the colonies? (70)

Why were colonial governments so weak? (71)

How did Georgia reflect Enlightenment ideals? (72)

What military function did Georgia serve? (73)

Why did Georgia's trustees wish to retain a ban on slavery? (74)

How does this portrait of Franklin reflect his reputation as a champion of the Enlightenment? (75)

What aspects of the Great Awakening encouraged democratization? (76)

Why was Moravian art so helpful to missionaries interested in converting American Indians? (77)

Which regions of the Atlantic world imported the most slaves? (78)

What was tight packing? (79)

What were the main differences between the task system and the gang system of labor? (80)

How did slaves resist the authority of their masters? (81)

What evidence exists for the persistence of African cultural traits among American slaves? (82)

How did the ethnic composition of eighteenth-century America change? (83)

Which region of colonial America was the most culturally diverse? (84)

What were the main cash crops produced by slave labor in the South? (85)

Why was American society becoming more unequal toward the end of the eighteenth century? (86)

What made the middle ground a distinctive region of colonial America? (87)

Why did British expansion threaten the middle ground? (88)

What was William Pitt's new policy for North America? (89)

What role does the Indian figure play in West's painting? (90)

How did the Proclamation of 1763 serve British interests? (91)

Why did Paxtonians demand that the Quakers create a militia? (92)