Society and culture in colonial America

1. Realities of Indentured Servitude
   1. Bound themselves to a master for a fixed period of time (5-7 years)
      1. In return: passage to America, clothing, shelter, and food
      2. Males: expected clothing, tools, and occasionally land in return
      3. Females: generally served as housemaids, could expect to marry after indenture
      4. Make-up of pop:
         1. Prisoners, orphans, vagrants, paupers, others who were “lewd or dangerous”, also, victims of kidnapping and impressment
   2. **Headright system**: masters received additional land holdings in the form of grants for every servant they brought in (more servants = more land)
   3. Life after servitude
      1. Many servants, males especially, found themselves without any land, family, or real hope in life after indenture was over
      2. There were often roving bands of landless, former servants who caused social unrest and turmoil in their search for money, land, or some sort of aspiration in life
   4. Shift from servants to slaves
      1. In 1670’s, decrease in English birth rate and increase in overall wealth in England caused less people to seek servitude
      2. Instability of former servants caused masters to look to other help (African labor)
         1. Ex. **Bacon’s Rebellion**
2. **Birth and Death Rates**
   1. At first, low birth rates and high death rates in the colonies due to disease, malnutrition, and poor water quality
   2. Over time, as conditions improved, white population began to increase and eventually surpass the native population
      1. At first, immigration was the greatest source of pop increase
      2. Over time, natural birth became the leading source of pop increase
   3. New England colonies
      1. Had exceptional life-spans (around 70 yrs old)
         1. Likely due to cool climate, disease free environment, and clean (accessible) drinking water
   4. South
      1. Conditions were not nearly as good in the south and thus population remained stunted in comparison to the north for quite some time
   5. Sex-ratio over time: by mid-18th century the sex ratio rivals that of England (women a slight majority)
3. Early Medical Knowledge
   1. Physician v. midwife
      1. Physicians (male) received an education in medicine, but medical knowledge was limited.
         1. Used “humoralism” logic
            1. Founded by Galen, a Roman physician
            2. Idea that human body governed by four “humors” which could be found in four types of bodily fluids (yellow bile, black bile, blood and phlegm)
            3. Often treated illness with “bleeding” techniques, amputation, and other extreme measures
      2. Midwives: females (generally community known)
         1. Used homeopathic treatments
            1. Methods including “pukes” and laxatives
4. Family life in the **Chesapeake**
   1. More men than women, so women often married young (20-21)
   2. Traditional ‘male-centered’ household found in England was hard to establish in colonies due to high mortality rate of women
   3. Pre-marital sexual relations in southern colonies
      1. Female indentured servants could be punished severely for becoming pregnant before the end of their indenture
      2. Over 1/3 of Chesapeake marriages occurred with the bride pregnant already
   4. Childbearing
      1. In general, every 2 years becoming pregnant
      2. Childbirth was the most frequent cause of female death
      3. Women had an average of 8 children (generally, 5 of whom died in infancy or early childhood)
   5. **Female power in the south** 
      1. Far more power in south than in north
      2. Women had considerable power because they were *outnumbered* (choose husbands)
         1. Also, many had no fathers who tried to control marriage choices (indentured servant women moved with no family background)
      3. Women also generally outlived their husbands (married younger), and thus inherited male estate when husband died
         1. Women would often remarry as well
   6. Over time (power shift)
      1. As the sex ratio balanced and as natural reproduction became the primary source of pop increase, traditional patterns of male authority revived
         1. Patriarchy develops once again
5. Family and social life in **New England**
   1. Much more stable and traditional family life in New England
      1. Families arrived to Americas together (intact) with religious morals, higher fertility rates and lower death rates
      2. Women had 6-8 children and raised all to maturity
      3. Women had less control over marriage (more equal sex ratio) and husbands rarely died early in excess of wives (thus wife rarely assumed independent roles
      4. Women were expected to be modest and submissive
         1. Ex. pop girls names Prudence, Patience, Chastity, and Comfort
6. Beginnings of **Slavery** in North America
   1. At first (1500’s) slave trade primarily served markets in central and south America
      1. Portuguese dominated the market
      2. Labor-intensive sugar plantations created huge demand for slaves
         1. Most slaves were transported to Brazil and Caribbean
   2. In 1600s the slave trade began to serve the southern colonies
      1. French and Dutch join in slave trade
      2. 1670’s marked the beginning of some direct import from Africa
      3. Most Africans to Americas actually lived and worked in West Indies first
   3. by 1820 (end of slave trade), there were 11 million Africans who were forcefully migrated to North, South, or Central America
   4. “**middle passage**” : the journey across the Atlantic to Americas
   5. Capture
      1. Slaves were captured by enemy African tribes and marched in “coffles” (long lines) to the coast to be bought by European merchants
   6. “**Royal African Company of England**”
      1. Slowed slave trade for quite some time as they had a monopoly on English market (prices high, supplies low)
   7. Turning Point for slaves in N. America
      1. Royal African Company monopoly is broken in mid 1690’s
      2. Between 1700 and 1760, the number of Africans increases tenfold (most of which were in the Southern colonies)
         1. Eventual goal is to make Africans self-perpetuating, so slave trade is no longer needed
   8. **Slave v. Indentured servant**
      1. At first, roles are very similar
         1. In South Carolina for example, some slaves lived in bondage for a period of time, became land owners, and even owned slaves themselves
         2. Eventually, there becomes definitive distinctions and slave came to mean “never free”
   9. Color
      1. White assumptions about color *inferiority* helped to build (and later ingrain) the system
         1. Assumptions already built up with Natives and Irish
         2. **Slave Codes** began passing in the early 1700’s, which limited the powers and autonomy of “colored (specifically African)” people legally
            1. This is in sharp contrast to the Spanish societies of the south, where Mestizos could actually enjoy a bit of favor in society (and later, become the dominant race)
         3. In English America, any African ancestry was enough to deem a person as “black”
   10. Other Non-African Sources of Immigration
       1. **Huguenots**: French protestants who came to Americas seeking religious tolerance
       2. **Pennsylvania “Dutch”:** German protestant migrants (Mennonites and Moravians) who settled in Pennsylvania mistaken by English as Dutch (Dutch was a corruption of Deutsch, which means German).
       3. **Scotts-Irish**: Presbyterians who lived in Northern Ireland. Were not accepted into English colonial society, thus moved to outer reaches of colonies. North Carolina Mountains specifically
       4. **Catholic Irish**: settled in New England areas
7. Colonial Economies
   1. Southern Economy
      1. **Chesapeake**
         1. Tobacco cultivation was the basis of economy
         2. Boom and bust cycle of development.
            1. Often overproduced, thus supply exceeded demand and crops would temporarily dip in price..
            2. Nevertheless, large plantations continued to develop with Slave labor as the primary actor
      2. Carolinas and Georgia
         1. Rice production: arduous work, standing in knee-deep malarial water
            1. High **demand** for **African slaves** because they were better at cultivation (experience) and higher natural resistance to disease
         2. Indigo: West Indian plant. A source of Blue Dye in Europe. High Demand.
      3. In the south, large demand for **Cash crops** stifled the development of large scale cities or commerce
   2. Northern Economies
      1. Agriculture was still dominant in the North; however, hard, rocky soil made it so Northerners also had to develop other commercial interests
      2. Thriving **commercial class** begins to develop
      3. New York, Pennsylvania and Connecticut River Valley were the primary producers of wheat in the colonies
      4. New England Artisan Efforts
         1. At home industries (pickling, hunting, etc)
         2. Blacksmiths, rifle makers, cabinet makers, silversmiths, printers, etc.
      5. Metalwork’s form (Massachusetts and New Jersey, eventually elsewhere)
         1. Inadequate labor supply, small domestic market, inadequate transportation facilities, English monopolistic laws all proved to be obstacles against large scale industrialization
      6. **Natural Resource Markets**
         1. Lumber, mining, fishing
   3. The Rise of Colonial Commerce
      1. Obstacles
         1. No commonly accepted medium of exchange
            1. Limited specie (gold or silver coins)
            2. Paper money was generally not “backed” by anything
            3. Crude substitutes such as beaver skins provided some stability
            4. Bartering was common
         2. Instability in markets
            1. No way of knowing what goods would be coming to port or in what quantities (made placing orders very difficult)
      2. “**Triangular Trade**”: a maze of highly diverse trade routes
         1. Middle Passage: slaves transported from Africa to West Indies
      3. **Merchant Class**: adventurous entrepreneurs who enjoyed protection from Foreign competition (Due to British Navigation Acts)
         1. *Monopolistic* in nature
         2. Also illegally transported and traded products to sell to French, Spanish, and people in West Indies to expand trade
   4. The Rise of Consumerism (18th century)
      1. **Consumerism**: consumption or material goods and of the association of possessions with social status
      2. Merchants began accepting credit
      3. Wealthy class of people wanted to show social status by owning “things”
      4. Although little manufacturing in America, the excess in Britain was easily marketable to American Gentry
      5. Advertisements and traveling salesmen also develop in this period
         1. Luxuries turned necessities (through consumerism)
            1. Teas, linens, glassware, manufactured cutlery, furniture, clothing, etc.
8. Patterns of Society
   1. There was a greater chance for social mobility in America than in Europe due to large availability of land and relatively small population
   2. **Plantation Model**
      1. Emerged first in Va. And Md. once tobacco rose to prominence
      2. Some plantations were extremely large (200+ workers), most were relatively small (30 avg)
      3. Generally self-sufficient
      4. Controlled the lives of those who worked on plantations as well as those in surrounding communities (ex. Small scale farmers couldn’t compete, thus had to learn to take credit and work with the plantation owners)
   3. **Plantation Slavery**
      1. Africans developed communities and cultures of their own on plantations
         1. Elaborate family and social structure developed
            1. Unstable at times since slaves could be sold off at any time
            2. Adapted themselves to difficult situations
            3. Developed languages and religions of their own

Gullah in South Carolina. Mix of English and African languages

* + - * 1. **Mulattos**: mixed children from sexual relations bw masters and slave women
    1. Africans developed resistance against their masters
       1. Stono Rebellion: (1739) S.C.
          1. 100 slaves rebel against masters to escape to Florida
          2. Eventually, rebellion is stopped and most are executed
    2. Africans developed skilled positions as well
       1. Smithing, carpentry, shoemaking, spinning, sewing, etc.
       2. Artisan trades helped some slaves earn their own actual money and some were even able to buy their freedom

1. Puritan Communities
   1. **Town** was hub of life (instead of the farm/plantation.. i.e. south)
      1. Strong sense of community
      2. **Covenant**= agreement among people in Puritan community
      3. Central part of town was called “Common” with the “**Meeting House**” (i.e. church) in the middle
         1. **Town Meetings**: direct democracy
            1. Chose “selectmen” who were those who governed
            2. Church membership was required
            3. Halfway Covenant: offered partial church membership to people
      4. No Primogenture in NE
         1. Instead, father divided land among all sons
      5. Father was the head of the household.
      6. Children and wife were seen as a source of labor for daily function
      7. Inequality
         1. Elites > poor
         2. Men > women
         3. Few servant rights
         4. “Some must be rich and some poor” John Winthrop
2. Competing Forces Driving Colonial Culture: The First Great Awakening and The Enlightenment
   1. Church of England is officially est. in Va, Md, NY, Car, and GA.
      1. Still, religious toleration is prevalent and many denominations develop
      2. However, by early 1700s, fervent puritans warned loss of religious piety among people
   2. Good stuff to know: Catholics v. Protestants

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| **Catholics** | **Protestants** |
| Pope is in charge | No head of church |
| Authority: only priests or religious heads have authority to interpret bible | Anyone can interpret the bible |
| Salvation (heaven) is attained through sacraments: baptism, eucharist, penance, etc. | Salvation is attained through faith in God alone |
| Communion: literally blood and flesh of Jesus | Communion: symbolically blood and flesh |
| Celibacy of priests | No celibacy |
| Purgatory (in between heaven and hell) | No Purgatory (in some denominations, no hell) |
| Saints (dead religious figures) are holy | Holy Trinity: God, Jesus, and Holy Ghost (only worshipped) |

* 1. **The First Great Awakening (early 1730s-40s):** a religious “revival”
     1. New spirit of religious fervor: **Revivalism**
     2. Highly emotional
     3. **Emphasis**: the potential for everyone to break away from constraints of the past and start anew in relationship with god
        1. Appealed to women and younger generations of people who had more to lose and less to inherit.
        2. Less bureaucratic or focused on church convention
           1. Anyone with proper conviction could be saved
        3. Focused on revamping the puritan community and its old ways
     4. Imp. People:
        1. **George Whitefield** (Methodist)– drew large crowds (up to 10,000 people)
           1. Stressed that God was all powerful and would only save believers
           2. Taught that ordinary people, with good faith could still be favorable in eyes of God
        2. **Jonathan Edwards** (Puritan)
           1. Attacked “new” doctrines of easy salvation for all

“*Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*”

Preached God was angry with human sin

* + - * 1. Preached traditional Puritan ideals

Predestination, Absolute Power of God, Terror filled messages of hell

* + 1. New Lights v Old Lights
       1. “**New lights**” people supporting new teachings such as Presbyterianism and Congregationalism (people who embraced revivals)
       2. “**Old lights**” people supporting original puritan doctrines
  1. **The Enlightenment**: a thought provoking revolution
     1. Product of scientific and intellectual discoveries in Europe
     2. The emergence of “**natural law**” and reason
        1. Ex. Issac Newton and the discovery of gravity
     3. New way of thinking: reason, not just faith, could create progress and advance knowledge
        1. Humans have a natural moral compass bw right and wrong: **rationality**
        2. God is not the only answer for guidance
        3. People, through their own power, could move society to new heights
     4. Helped to undermine the power of traditional authority
     5. New *focus*:
        1. Education and politics
     6. Imp. People:
        1. **John Locke**
           1. *Two Treatises of Government*: the state is supreme, but should follow natural laws that people have simply for being human (life, liberty and property)
           2. Popular sovereignty rather than state sovereignty
           3. People’s right to overthrow a government which fails to protect rights
  2. Education
     1. Elementary Education:
        1. Puritans developed the first tax supported schools
        2. Grammar schools required in Mass. Towns with 50+ families due to 1647 law
        3. Middle colonies: generally private ed.
        4. Southern: depended on the plantation
     2. Higher Ed:
        1. Dev. Out of need to train preachers
        2. Harvard (puritans), Anglicans (William and Mary), Yale (Congregationalists)
        3. Great Awakening starts:
           1. Princeton, Columbia, Brown, Rutgers, and Dartmouth
  3. The Press
     1. Newspapers
        1. 1725: 5 papers to 1776: 40+
        2. News, advertisements, runaways, eventually cartoons
     2. **Zenger Case**
        1. Libel case against New York Governor
        2. At the time, criminal law to damage gov. reputation (true or not)
        3. Jury acquits Peter Zenger
           1. Result: first moves toward freedom of the press
  4. Political Life
     1. Governors ruled over each colony
     2. Legislatures made up of 2 houses
        1. Lower house (elected by voters) was responsible for tax votes
           1. People became accustomed to paying taxes that reps were favorable toward
        2. Upper house generally appointed by king or proprietor
     3. **Voting**
        1. Barred from voting: women, poor white men, slaves and most free blacks.
        2. By the 17th century restrictions on voting based on church membership were being lifted
        3. Property ownership was necessary