

Topic 2.2

European Colonization in North America

If they desire that Piety and godliness should prosper; accompanied with sobriety, justice and love, let them choose a Country such as this is . . . which may yield sufficiency with hard labour and industry.

Reverend John White, *The Planter's Plea*, 1630

Learning Objective: Explain how and why various European colonies developed and expanded from 1607 to 1754.

Migration to the Americas during the 17th century and the first half of the 18th century was both influenced by the environment and had a lasting impact on it. The many different peoples that settled in North America from Europe, together with the Native Americans already living on the continent and the enslaved Africans brought there, would ultimately form a society unlike any previously seen.

Exploration in the new world by Europeans was quickly followed by colonization. The primary motivations for settling in the Americas in the 17th century were the desires for wealth, to spread Christianity, and to escape persecution.

Spanish Colonies

Spanish settlements developed slowly in North America as a result of limited mineral resources and strong opposition from American Indians. Missionary zeal was an important motivator as Roman Catholic Spain worked to counter the expanding influence of the Reformation and Protestantism. These colonies were largely populated by men, and they would gradually include Native Americans and Africans in their society.

Florida Juan Ponce de Leon claimed these lands for Spain in 1513. After a number of failures and the strong resistance of American Indians in the region, the Spanish established a permanent settlement at St. Augustine in 1565, more than 50 years before the English founded Jamestown. St. Augustine became the oldest city founded by Europeans in what became the mainland of the United States. Only a few small settlements developed as the Spanish found little silver and gold, a declining native population due to wars and disease, and periodic hurricanes.

New Mexico and Arizona In a region that had been settled by American Indians for about 700 years, Spanish colonists began arriving in 1598. They established Santa Fe as the capital of New Mexico in 1610.

Texas Between Florida and New Mexico, the Spanish established settlements in Texas. These communities grew in the early 1700s as Spain resisted French efforts to explore the lower Mississippi River.

California With Russians exploring from Alaska, the Spanish started a settlement at San Diego in 1769. By 1784, the Franciscan order and Father Junípero Serra had established missions along the California coast.

French Colonies

Similar to the Spanish, the French colonizers were mainly men. However, there were few French. Some came as Christian missionaries. Those who came for economic reasons mostly worked in the lucrative fur trade, traveling throughout the interior of North America purchasing furs gathered by American Indians. Many traders married American Indian women, who then provided valuable services as guides, translators, and negotiators with other American Indians. The reliance of the French on trade made rivers particularly important in their colonies.

- Quebec, the first French settlement in America was located on the St. Lawrence River. It was founded by Samuel de Champlain, the “Father of New France,” in 1608.
- In 1673, Louis Jolliet and Father Jacques Marquette explored the upper Mississippi River. Nine years later, Robert de La Salle explored the Mississippi basin, which he named Louisiana (after the French king, Louis XIV).
- By 1718, the French had moved southward down the Mississippi River and established a permanent settlement, New Orleans, where the river entered the Gulf of Mexico. New Orleans became a prosperous trade center.

Dutch Colonies

During the 1600s, the Netherlands sponsored voyages of exploration. The government hired Henry Hudson, an English sailor, to seek westward passage to Asia. In 1609, while searching for a northwest passage, Hudson sailed up a broad river that was later named for him, the Hudson River. This expedition established Dutch claims to the surrounding area, New Amsterdam (and later New York). The Dutch government granted a private company, the Dutch West India Company, the right to control the region for economic gain.

Like the French colonies, the Dutch colonies consisted of small numbers of traders who built strong trade networks among American Indians. However, the Dutch were more likely to settle in trading posts near the coast or along major rivers and less likely to intermarry with American Indians.

British Colonies

In the early 1600s, England was in a position to colonize the lands explored a century earlier by **John Cabot**. England’s population was growing more rapidly than its economy, so its number of poor and landless families was increasing. They were attracted to opportunities in the Americas. Using **joint-stock companies** to finance the risky enterprise of colonization, the English began settling colonies in the Americas.

Compared to other European colonists, those from England included a higher percentage of families and single females, and they were more interested in farming. As a result, English settlers were more likely to claim American Indian land and less likely to intermarry with Indians. In addition, the English colonies attracted a more diverse group of European settlers than did other colonies. Most of these settlers migrated in search of better lives or religious freedom.

REFLECT ON THE LEARNING OBJECTIVE

1. Explain what the motivations and methods were that supported European colonial growth during the period from 1607 to 1754.

KEY TERMS BY THEME

Settlements (ARC)

John Cabot

Authority (WOR)

joint-stock company

MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

Questions 1–2 refer to the following excerpt.

“As touching the quality of this country, three things there bee, which in fewe yeares may bring this Colony to perfection; the English plough, Vineyards, & Cattle. . . .

All our riches for the present doe consiste in Tobacco, wherein one man by his owne labour hath in one yeare, raised to himself to the value of 200 sterling; and another by the means of sixe servants hath cleared at one crop a thousand pound english. These be true, yet indeed rare examples, yet possible to be done by others. Our principall wealth (I should haue said) consisteth in servants: but they are chargeable to be furnished with armes, apparel, & bedding, and for their transportation, and casuall both at sea, & for their first yeare commonly at lande also: but if they escape, they proove very hardy, and sound able men.”

John Pory, Secretary of Virginia, Letter to Sir Dudley Carlton, 1619

1. The excerpt illustrates which of the following visions for Virginia?
 - (A) A land that would provide agricultural products that would enrich England
 - (B) A settlement designed to reproduce England's social structure and economy
 - (C) A haven where servants could escape bondage and live as free individuals
 - (D) A colony that would help expand England's empire and diplomatic power

2. Which of the following developments in the 17th century could best be used as evidence to support or modify the references to servants in the second paragraph?
 - (A) Colonists became more dependent on raids of Native American settlements to obtain workers.
 - (B) Europeans from outside of England became the majority of colonists who settled in Virginia.
 - (C) Large numbers of English citizens emigrated to the colonies as indentured laborers.
 - (D) The king started wars against other European powers to capture their citizens and send them to Virginia.

SHORT-ANSWER QUESTION

Use complete sentences; an outline or a bulleted list alone is not acceptable.

1. “[This colony] was for the most part at first peopled by persons of low circumstances. . . . Nor was it hardly possible it should be otherwise; for 'tis not likely that any man of a plentiful estate should voluntarily abandon a happy certainty to roam after imaginary advantages in a New World. Besides which uncertainty, must have proposed to himself to encounter the infinite difficulties and dangers that attend a new settlement. These discouragements were sufficient to terrify any man that could live easy in England from going to . . . a strange land.”

Robert Beverly, historian, *The History and Present State of Virginia*, 1705

Using the excerpt above, answer (a), (b), and (c).

- (a) Briefly explain Robert Beverly's perspective in the excerpt.
- (b) Briefly explain ONE example of historical evidence that supports Beverly's position.
- (c) Briefly explain ONE example of historical evidence that challenges Beverly's position.