

Colonial America

“The Great Awakening was . . . the first truly national event in American history. Thirteen once-isolated colonies, expanding . . . north and south as well as westward, were merging.”

—Historian John Garraty

THREE MYTH-UNDERSTANDINGS REVISITED

① *The colonies wanted independence from Britain.*

- ▶ Certainly some journeyed to New World for unhappy reasons.
- ▶ Various grievances were not a source of high conflict; England’s sovereignty was not questioned.
- ▶ Independence was (is) a radical notion.
- ▶ Even on the eve of the Revolutionary War, colonists did not wholeheartedly agree that independence was desired.

② *The colonies were oppressed by British policies.*

- ▶ Britain valued New World colonies, esp. of white population base.
- ▶ Hoped the colonies would benefit and enrich the Empire.
- ▶ Economic relationship renewed after the Revolutionary War.

③ *There was a sense of unity throughout the colonies.*

- ▶ Geographical vastness prohibited such a relationship.
- ▶ Colonies displayed varying life-styles, economies, religious flavors, societal norms, educational arrangements, etc.
- ▶ No two colonies were exactly alike.
- ▶ Three distinct regions (“sectionalism”) with some commonalities within.
- ▶ The Great Awakening can be considered America’s first truly nat’l event (1740s).

RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE OF COLONIAL AMERICA

- ◆ Anglican Church (aka Church of England)
 - ✓ Founded during 1530s under Henry VIII
 - ✓ Official religion in Southern Colonies & New York
- ◆ Puritans
 - ✓ Followed teachings of John Calvin
 - ✓ Advocated purification of Anglican Church
 - ✓ Dominated New England (esp. Massachusetts)
 - ✓ John Winthrop's "city upon a hill" (1630)
 - ✓ Predestination (good works & wealth & happy happenings = "signs")
 - ✓ No clear separation between church & state
 - ✓ Roger Williams & Anne Hutchinson
 - ✓ Halfway Covenant (1662)
- ◆ Separatists
 - ✓ Radical Puritans (inc. Pilgrims)
 - ✓ Sought complete break from Anglican Church



Thomas Sullivan, a blacksmith who attended the original Thanksgiving dinner, is generally credited as being the first person to stick olives on all his fingers.

- ◆ Quakers (aka Society of Friends)
 - ✓ Rejected predestination & original sin
 - ✓ No ministers, rituals, churches
 - ✓ William Penn's "Holy Experiment" (1681)
 - ✓ Religious tolerance (no coercion of soul)
- ◆ Roman Catholicism
 - ✓ Most numerous in Maryland
 - ✓ Lord Baltimore's Toleration Act (1649)
- ◆ Judaism
 - ✓ Scattered among the colonies
 - ✓ Largest group lived in New York City

COLONIAL RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

- ◆ Salem witchcraft trials (1692)
 - ✓ Witchcraft explained life's calamities
 - ✓ Clash between Salem Town & Salem Village
 - ✓ Many arrested & tried; 20 executed
 - ✓ Increase (father) & Cotton (son) Mather
 - ✓ Last witchcraft persecutions in America
 - ✓ Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* (1953)
- ◆ Great Awakening = emotional trend, esp. frontier
 - ✓ Late 1720s thru early 1760s; peaked in 1740s
 - ✓ Primarily affected New England & Virginia
 - ✓ George Whitefield & Jonathan Edwards
 - ✓ Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians all gained
 - ✓ Marked beginning of Christianization of blacks
 - ✓ First truly nat'l event in American history
- ◆ Enlightenment = intellectual trend, esp. urban
 - ✓ Direct observation & human reasoning (Deism)
 - ✓ Assault on blanket power & prestige of clergy
 - ✓ Increased personal responsibility for afterlife
 - ✓ Benjamin Franklin epitomizes Enlightenment

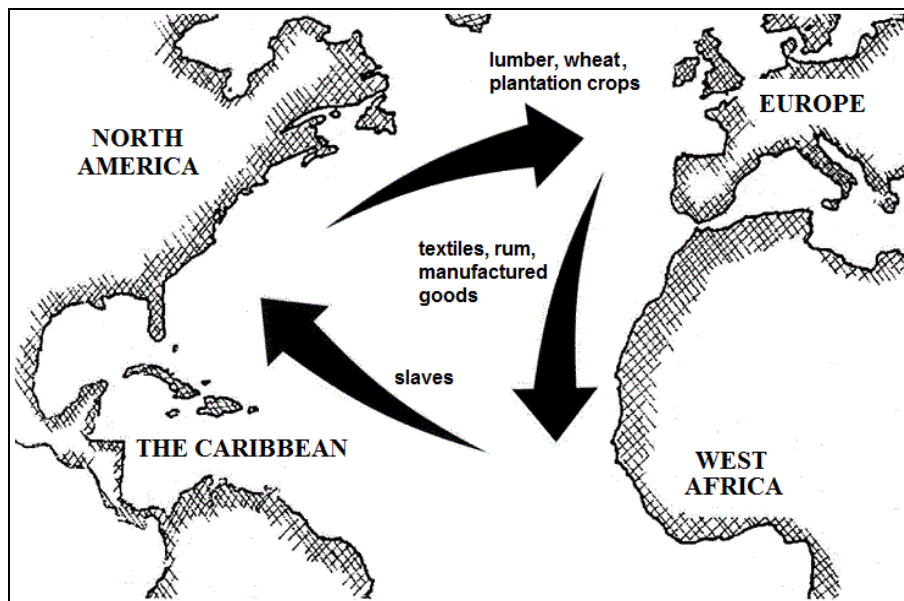
COLONIAL POLITICAL STRUCTURE

- ◆ Basic pattern to support imperial control
 - ✓ No two colonies exactly alike
 - ✓ Colonies had limited autonomy over local affairs
- ◆ Crown and colonies had different priorities
 - ✓ Some degree of grumble inherent in colonists
 - ✓ Not a source of high conflict
 - ✓ England's sovereignty was not questioned
- ◆ System ultimately empowered colonists
 - ✓ Assemblymen were civic leaders w/ voter support
 - ✓ Lower legislative house controlled finances
 - ✓ Governors were prisoners of system
- ◆ Voter = male, white, free, Christian (any), landowner

- ◆ Internal conflicts challenged political authority
 - ✓ Bacon's Rebellion (1676, Virginia)
 - frontier settlers distressed w/ Indian attacks
 - marched against Gov. Berkeley; Jamestown burned
 - inc. many indentured servants (hastened hard slavery)
 - unhappy westerners vs. unresponsive easterners
 - ✓ Leisler's Rebellion (1689, New York)
 - ✓ Coode's Revolt (1689, Maryland)
 - ✓ Paxton Boys Uprising (1763, Pennsylvania)
 - ✓ Regulator War (1771, North Carolina)

ECONOMIC CLIMATE OF COLONIAL AMERICA

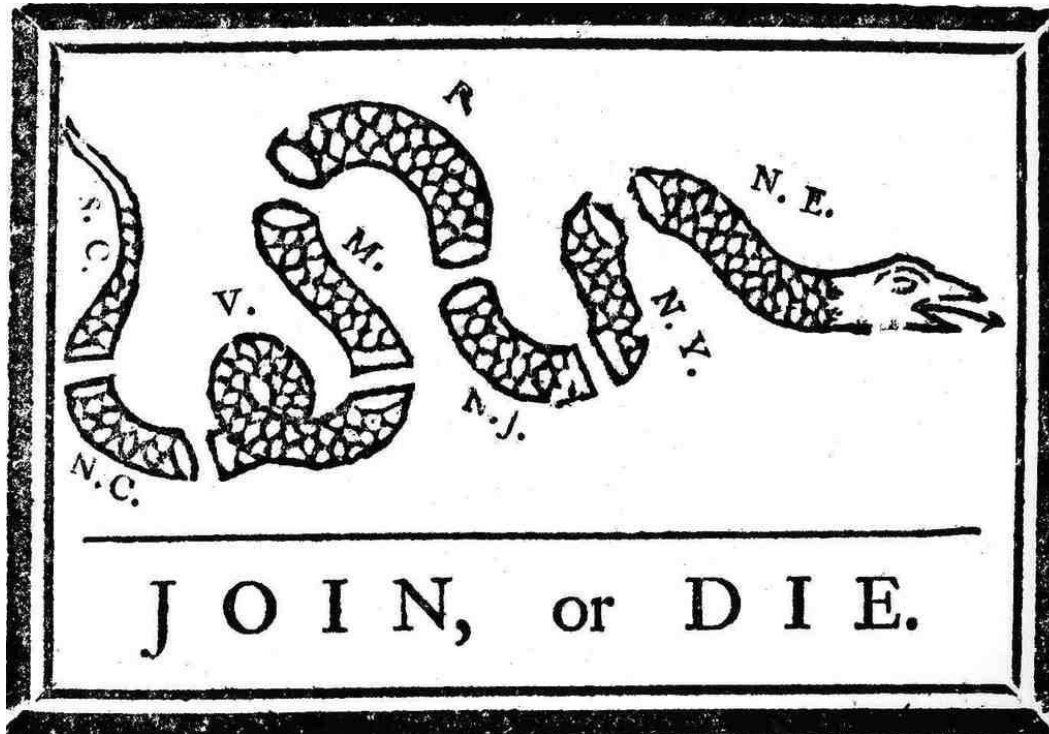
- ◆ Colonies = raw materials & markets for goods
- ◆ Triangular trade system (inc. Middle Passage)



- ◆ Theory of mercantilism
 - ✓ Gold & silver bullion (via mining, war, trade)
 - ✓ "Favorable balance of trade" (exports > imports)
- ◆ Navigation Acts (1650s)
 - ✓ Enumerated articles
 - ✓ Effects lessened by "salutary neglect"
- ◆ "New" policies reflected commercial status quo
 - ✓ Brought joint prosperity to Great Britain & colonies
 - ✓ Relationship cont'd after Revolutionary War

COLONIAL WARS

- ◆ King William's, Queen Anne's, King George's
- ◆ Albany Conference (1754)
 - ✓ Iroquois Confederation + 7 colonies + Crown
 - ✓ Origin of "Join, or Die." Cartoon



- ◆ French and Indian War (1754-63)
 - ✓ European version was the Seven Years' War
 - ✓ No definitive boundary separating British & French soil
 - ✓ Ping pong violation of territory (late 1740s)
 - ✓ Geo. Washington's defeat at Ft. Necessity (1754)
 - ✓ Appointment of Wm. Pitt as Prime Minister (1758)
- ◆ Treaty of Paris
 - ✓ *Au revoir* → France exits N. America
 - ✓ Britain's vast new land → administrative & financial woes
 - ✓ Pivotal change in relationship between colonies & Crown
- ◆ Proclamation of 1763