Chapter #4: American Life in the Seventeenth Century - – Big Picture Themes

1. The Southern colonies were dominated by agriculture, namely (a) tobacco in the Chesapeake and (b) rice and indigo further down the coast.

2. Bacon’s Rebellion is very representative of the struggles of poor white indentured servants. Nathaniel Bacon and his followers took to arms to essentially get more land out west from the Indians. This theme of poor whites taking to arms for land, and in opposition to eastern authorities, will be repeated several times (Shay’s Rebellion, Paxton Boys, Whisky Rebellion).

3. Taken altogether, the southern colonies were inhabited by a group of people who were generally young, independent-minded, industrious, backwoodsy, down home, restless and industrious.

4. A truly unique African-American culture quickly emerged. Brought as slaves, black Americans blended aspects of African culture with American. Religion shows this blend clearly, as African religious ceremonies mixed with Christianity. Food and music also showed African-American uniqueness.

5. New Englanders developed a Bible Commonwealth—a stern but clear society where the rules of society were dictated by the laws of the Bible. This good-vs-evil society is best illustrated by the Salem witch trials.

6. Taken altogether, the northern colonies were inhabited by a group of people who grew to be self-reliant, stern, pious, proud, family oriented, sharp in thought and sharp of tongue, crusty, and very industrious.
William Berkeley
He was a British colonial governor of Virginia from 1642-52. He showed that he had favorites in his second term which led to the Bacon's rebellion in 1676, which he ruthlessly suppressed. He had poor frontier defense.

Headright system
A way to attract immigrants; gave 50 acres of land to anyone who paid their way and/or any plantation owner that paid an immigrants way; mainly a system in the southern colonies.

Indentured servants
Indentured servants  Because of the massive amounts of tobacco crops planted by families, "indentured servants" were brought in from England to work on the farms. In exchange for working, they received transatlantic passage and eventual "freedom dues", including a few barrels of corn, a suit of clothes, and possibly a small piece of land

Stono Rebellion (1739)
The Spanish empire enticed slaves of English colonies to escape to Spanish territory. In 1733 Spain issued an edict to free all runaway slaves from British territory who made their way into Spanish possessions. On September 9, 1739, about 20 slaves, mostly from Angola, gathered under the leadership of a slave called Jemmy near the Stono River, 20 miles from Charleston. 44 blacks and 21 whites lost their lives. South Carolina responded by placing import duties on slaves from abroad, strengthening patrol duties and militia training, and recommending more benign treatment of slaves.

Bacon’s Rebellion (1676)
An uprising of western Virginia planters against the Eastern Establishment headed by Sir William Berkeley, the royal governor. The Westerners, led by Nathaniel Bacon, resented both the social pretensions of the Berkeley group—which in turn considered the Baconites “a giddy and unthinking multitude”—and Berkeley’s unwillingness to support their attacks on local Indians. Bacon raised a small army, murdered some peaceful Indians, burned Jamestown, and forced the governor to flee. But Bacon came down with a “violent flux” and died, and soon thereafter Berkeley restored order.

Leisler’s Rebellion (1689-91)
After news of the abdication of James II had reached New York, Jacob Leisler, a local militia captain, proclaimed himself governor of the colony. He claimed to rule in the name of the new monarchs, William and Mary, and attempted without success to organize an expedition against French Canada during King William’s War. In 1691, after a governor appointed by King William had arrived in New York, Leisler resisted turning over power. He was arrested, tried for treason, and executed.

Halfway Covenant (1662)
A Puritan church document; the Halfway Covenant allowed partial membership rights to
persons not yet converted into the Puritan church; it lessened the difference between the "elect" members of the church from the regular members; Women soon made up a larger portion of Puritan congregations.

GUIDED READING: Chapter #4 American Life 1607-1692

The Unhealthy Chesapeake
1. "Life in the American wilderness was nasty, brutish, and short for the earliest Chesapeake settlers." Explain.

The Tobacco Economy
Know: Tobacco, Indentured Servants, Freedom Dues, Headright System
2. What conditions in Virginia made the colony right for the importation of indentured servants?

Frustrated Freemen and Bacon's Rebellion
Know: William Berkeley, Nathaniel Bacon
3. Who is most to blame for Bacon's rebellion, the upper class or the lower class? Explain.

Colonial Slavery
Know: Royal African Company, Middle Passage, Slave Codes, Chattel Slavery
4. Describe the slave trade.

Africans in America
Know: Gullah, Stono Rebellion
5. Describe slave culture and contributions.

Southern Society
Know: Plantations, Yeoman Farmers
6. Describe southern culture in the colonial period, noting social classes.

The New England Family Know: The Scarlet Letter
7. What was it like to be a woman in New England?

Life in the New England Towns
Know: Harvard, Town Meetings
8. Explain the significance of New England towns to the culture there.

The Half-Way Covenant and the Salem Witch Trial
Know: Jeremiad, Conversions, Half-Way Covenant
9. What evidence shows that New England was becoming more diverse as the 17th century wore on?

The New England Way of Life
Know: Yankee Ingenuity
10. How did the environment shape the culture of New England?

The Early Settlers' Days and Ways
Know: Leisler's Rebellion
11. How much equality was evident in the colonies?