The Thirteen Colonies

- 1775 – Britain controlled 32 colonies in New World, from Canada to West Indies
  - 13 decided to fight for independence
  - The “why” can be found in distinctive “American” social, economic, and political structures of these 13 colonies
Conquest by the Cradle

- There was a huge increase in population in America during the 1700s
  - In 1700 there were 300,000 people in America; 20,000 blacks
  - By 1775 there were 2.5 million people in America; 500,000 were black
  - 400,000 were new immigrants; an additional 400,000 were black slaves
  - The rest was due to the natural fertility of Americans; colonists doubled their numbers every 25 years
Conquest by the Cradle

The political importance of increasing population

- In 1700 there were 20 English subjects for every American colonist
- In 1775 there were 3 English subjects for every American colonist
- Political power was shifting to the American colonies
Conquest by the Cradle

- In 1775, most people lived east of the Alleghenies (the Western part of the Appalachians from Pennsylvania to Virginia)
- Some pioneers were moving into the frontier of Tennessee and Kentucky
Map Showing the Allegheny Mountains
A Mingling of the Races

- America as a melting pot: Many foreign groups mixed with predominantly English people, creating a distinctively American group
Europeans and Africans in the Eighteenth Century
A Mingling of the Races

- Germans
  - By 1775 were 6% of the population (150,000)
  - In the early 1700s, they settled chiefly in Pennsylvania
    - Known as Pennsylvania Dutch (“Deutsch” means German)
    - Moved to the backcountry and worked industriously
  - Primarily Lutheran
  - Not loyal to British crown
  - Clung to German heritage and language
A Mingling of the Races

- Scots-Irish
  - By 1775 were 7% of the population (175,000)
  - Scottish who had been exiled to Ireland before emigration to America
  - In the early 1700s, settled chiefly in Pennsylvania as squatters, but also rural Maryland, Virginia, and Carolinas
  - Quick to attack and retaliate against Indians
  - Had no loyalty to British government that had persecuted them in Europe
  - But also rebelled against colonial governments dominated by eastern elites
A Mingling of the Races

- Other ethnic groups
  - In 1775 they were 5% of the population, including: French Huguenots (Protestants), Welsh, Dutch, Swedes, Jews, Irish, Swiss, Scots Highlanders
  - Generally they had little loyalty to British

- African slaves
  - By 1775 they were 25% of the population and heavily concentrated in South
A Mingling of the Races

- The population of the 13 colonies was primarily Anglo-Saxon, but was the most ethnically diverse population in the world at the time
- The South was mixed black and white (with 90% of all slaves)
- The North was primarily Puritan and the least ethnically diverse
- The Middle colonies were the most ethnically diverse (especially Pennsylvania)
## Ethnic and Racial Composition of the American People, 1790

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scots-Irish</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other European</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A Mingling of the Races

- The immigrant groups intermarried (with each other and with English colonists)
  - These people created a new American national identity separate from anything in Europe

- African slaves intermarried with other slaves of diverse tribes
  - Slaves created a new African American identity different from blacks in Africa
The Structure of Colonial Society

- America in the 1700s was a land of equality and opportunity (for whites) compared to Europe
  - No titled nobility
  - No poor underclass
  - Most Americans were small farmers who owned their own land, although there were small groups of skilled workers and tradespeople in the cities
  - Hard working colonist could raise their social status, which was impossible in England
The Structure of Colonial Society

- Wars began to lead to the stratification of American society
  - Merchants (New England and middle colonies) were enriched by war contracts (between England and France and with the Indians)
  - These merchants lived well (imported clothing, china, silverware); people began to sit in churches and schools according to social rank
  - The richest 10% in Boston and Philadelphia owned 2/3 of the wealth
The Structure of Colonial Society

- Widows and orphans created because of the men killed in England’s wars
  - These people became dependent on public charity for survival
  - The number of poor was still small compared to England (where 1/3 were poor)
Distribution of Assessed Taxable Wealth in Eighteenth-Century Chester County
Beggar
Women and Children
In New England, the descendants of the original settlers faced more limited prospects

- Supply of land dwindled (near coast and major cities and away from Indians) as estates repeatedly subdivided
- Younger sons and daughters were forced to work as wage laborers or move west (beyond the Alleghenies) for unclaimed land
- Many landless poor looked to public charity for survival in major cities
Movement into the Backcountry, 1720 – 1760
The Structure of Colonial Society

- In the South, rich planters held power and riches because of their disproportionate ownership of slaves
  - Wealth was concentrated among the largest slave owners
  - Slavery widened the gap between planters and poor whites
The Structure of Colonial Society

- Some indentured servants continued coming to America, many ultimately achieving prosperity

- The poor and convicts from Europe were involuntarily shipped to America
  - About 50,000 were shipped to America from England
  - They generally remained in the lower classes
The Structure of Colonial Society

- Black slaves had no equality with whites and no hope of improving their social status
  - They were the closest approximation to England’s oppressed lower classes
  - There was a real fear in the South that they might rebel
  - Some in the South (like South Carolina in 1760) tried to ban importation of more slaves, but all efforts were vetoed by Britain, who wanted a cheap labor supply for colonies
Clerics, Physicians, and Jurists

- Clerics were the most respected profession in the colonies
  - By 1775, they had less power than in early colonial days (especially New England), but were still well-respected
Clerics, Physicians, and Jurists

- Physicians
  - Were poorly trained and not well-respected
  - They had little medical knowledge; bleeding was a common (and deadly) practice
  - Apprentices worked with older trainers and then were turned loose
  - Epidemics (for which doctors could do little) killed many (such as smallpox and diphtheria)
Clerics, Physicians, and Jurists

- Lawyers
  - Were not favorably regarded
  - Most parties in dispute presented their case themselves in court
Workaday America

- Agriculture
  - 90% of the colonists were involved
  - In the Chesapeake, mainly tobacco was grown, but wheat was also spread
  - In the Middle colonies, primarily grain (the “bread” colonies) was grown
  - Americans enjoyed a higher standard of living because of agriculture than any other people in history
Workaday America

- Fishing (including whaling)
  - Principally in New England
  - Cod exported to Europe
  - Stimulated shipbuilding
  - Served as training for future navy
Workaday America

- Commerce (trade)
  - Especially in New England, New York, and Pennsylvania
  - Shipped food and forest products to Caribbean
  - Brought gold, wine, and oranges to Europe
  - Brought industrial goods from Europe to America
Triangular trade

- Very profitable, though small in relation to total colonial commerce
- Rum shipped from New England to Africa and traded in Africa for slaves
- Slaves shipped to West Indies and traded for molasses
- Molasses shipped to New England and distilled into rum
Triangular Trade across the Atlantic
Workaday America

- Manufacturing
  - Secondary because of ease of finding good land to farm and British restrictions
  - Rum, beaver hats, iron forges, household manufacturing (spinning, weaving), carpentry
  - Lumbering was the most important single manufacturing activity for shipbuilding (primarily in New England)
Workaday America

- Shipbuilding
  - Colonies had important (and relatively rare) materials such as tar, pitch, rosin, and turpentine
  - Huge trees in colonies used for British ships; colonists were restricted from cutting some down because of this
The Colonial Economy
Value of Colonial Exports by Region, Annual Average, 1768 - 1772
As early as the 1730s, there was a growing trade imbalance between Britain and colonies:

- Americans (with increasing population) demanded more and more British products.
- British population was reaching a saturation point for imports from America.
- How could colonists sell enough goods to make money to buy what they wanted in Britain?
- The answer: by seeking foreign (non-British) markets.
Workaday America

- **Foreign trade**
  - Exports to Europe had to pass through Britain where re-exporters took a slice of the profits
  - Most important trading partner for colonists was trade with West Indies

- **1733 – Molasses Act**
  - British West Indian planters pressured Parliament to stop American trade with French West Indies
  - Would cripple American foreign trade and hurt colonists’ standard of living
  - Colonists got around law by smuggling and bribing
Colonial Trade Patterns, c. 1770

- **NORTH AMERICAN COLONIES**
  - Tobacco, fish, lumber, flour for English textiles, etc.
  - Timber, foodstuffs
- **WEST INDIES**
  - Sugar, molasses
  - Slaves
  - Rum
- **SOUTH AMERICA**
- **ENGLAND**
- **EUROPE**
- **AFRICA**
  - Gold Coast
  - Gulf of Guinea
Transportation was a huge problem in America because of:

- Sparse population
- Huge expanse of land
- Scarcity of money and workers
Horsepower and Sailpower

- Roads
  - Dirt roads; dusty in summer and mud ditches in winter
  - Dangers of stagecoaches – fallen trees, rickety bridges, overturning of carriage, runaway horses
Horsepower and Sailpower

- Waterways
  - Heavy reliance on waterways because of bad roads
  - Population clustered around banks of navigable rivers
  - Also much traffic along coasts
Horsepower and Sailpower

- Taverns along the main routes
  - Provided amusements (gambling, bowling, pool, bars)
  - All social classes mingled together
  - Gossip (and political talk) spread through taverns
    - Important for crystallizing public opinion
    - Centers of agitation as revolutionary movement became stronger
Horsepower and Sailpower

- The colonial postal system
  - Private couriers also worked
  - Service was slow and infrequent
  - Privacy was a problem: mail carriers might pass the time by reading mail
Dominant Denominations

- Two “established” (tax-supported) churches in 1775 – Anglican and Congregational
  - Considerable part of population did no worship at any church
  - In those colonies that had an established religion only a minority of people belonged to that church
Dominant Denominations

- Established churches in the colonies:
  - Congregational in Massachusetts (including Maine), Connecticut, New Hampshire
  - Anglican in Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, New York (only in NY City and 3 neighboring counties)
  - No established church in Rhode Island, New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania
Dominant Denominations

- Church of England (Anglican) church
  - Propped up king’s authority in colonies
  - Royal authorities tried to expand into other colonies, but were strongly opposed
  - Faith that was less fierce (and more worldly) than Puritanism
  - In 1693 the College of William and Mary was founded to train better Anglican clergy
Dominant Denominations

- Congregational church
  - Grew out of individual Puritan churches
  - Established in all of New England except Rhode Island
  - Presbyterianism associated with Congregationalism, but was not established in any colony
Dominant Denominations

- Religious ministers and politics
  - Presbyterianism and Congregationalism encouraged rebellion against British
  - Anglican clergymen generally supported the crown
Religious Diversity in 1750
Dominant Denominations

- Anglican church was handicapped by not having a bishop in the New World
  - Ministers had to travel to England to be ordained
  - Plan to ordain an American bishop was stopped by protesting colonists who felt this would increase the power of the Anglican church (and therefore crown)
Dominant Denominations

- Religious toleration
  - People could generally worship (or not) as they pleased
  - Roman Catholics were discriminated against, as in England
  - However, fewer Catholics in America meant anti-Catholic laws were less strict and less enforced
The Great Awakening

By the mid 1700s, religion was less fervent than in the 1600s, when the colonies were first settled

– The Puritan church had 2 burdens:
  Elaborate doctrines
  Compromises to liberalize membership requirements
The Great Awakening

- Puritan elaborate doctrines
  - Puritan preachers preached overly complex, intellectual, and boring sermons, beyond the understanding of the membership
The Great Awakening

- Puritan compromises to liberalize membership requirements
  - Ministers worried members were no longer motivated by hell and damnation
  - Some members questioned established doctrines:
    • Good works might save people instead of predestination to heaven or hell
    • Arminians (followers of Dutch Jacobus Arminius) believed individual free will, not divide decree, determined a person’s eternal fate
  - Some churches (in response to these liberal beliefs) allowed non-converted members into church membership
The Great Awakening

- In the 1730s and 1740s, the Great Awakening occurred
  - A series of spiritual revivals that swept through the colonies
The Great Awakening

- Began in 1734 in Northampton, Massachusetts with Jonathan Edwards
  - Edwards preached “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God”
  - Fought idea that good works were enough to be saved – God’s grace was only way to get to heaven
  - Preaching style was learned and closely reasoned, but used brutal doctrines to catch people’s attention
Jonathan Edwards
The Great Awakening

- In 1738 George Whitefield became prominent
  - Powerful preacher who used speaking skills to reach people
  - Traveled the colonies, preaching in outside forums to thousands of people
  - Preached message of human helplessness and divine omnipotence
  - Countless sinners converted; the “saved” groaned, shrieked, and rolled around on ground under influence of God’s power
- Whitefield also inspired many imitators
George Whitefield
George Whitefield Preaching
The Great Awakening

“Old lights” vs. “new lights”

– Old lights did not believe in the emotionalism and theatrical antics of the revivalists
– New lights defended Great Awakening for revitalizing American religion
– Congregationalists and Presbyterians split on this issue:
  • Congregationalists were associated with old lights; Presbyterians were associated with new lights
The Great Awakening

Effects of the Great Awakening

- Increased membership of “new light” churches (Baptists, Presbyterians)
- Undermined of “old light” religions (whose authority had come from education)
- Increased number and competitiveness of American religions
- Encouraged missionary work among Indians and black slaves
- “new light” universities founded (Princeton, Brown, Rutgers, Dartmouth)
- First mass movement of American people
  - Broke down sectional and denominational lines
  - Gave Americans sense that they were a single people
Schools and Colleges

- Traditional English view of education
  - Reserved for aristocratic few (leaders, and males), not for regular citizens
  - This idea was only slowly broken by the colonists
Schools and Colleges

- Puritan New England pushed education more than other colonies
  - Done primarily for religious reasons: to encourage learning needed for reading and understanding the Bible
Schools and Colleges

Education in New England

- Primarily for boys
- Primary and secondary schools
  - Varied in quality and length of time open
  - Farming took much time
- Many graduates from Cambridge (strongly Puritan university in England) and other English universities
School in a Puritan Meetinghouse
Schools and Colleges

- Elementary schools existed in middle colonies and South
  - Some tax-supported, some private

- Schools in South hampered by population spread out over large areas
  - Wealthy families used private tutors for their children
Schools and Colleges

The general atmosphere in school
- Focus on religion and classical languages (Latin and Greek)
- Focus on doctrine and dogma (not experiment and reason)
- Independent thinking discouraged
- Discipline severe (for example, students were “birched” – spanked by a branch from a birch tree when they misbehaved)
Schools and Colleges

College education

- At first (especially New England) geared toward preparing men for the ministry
- Rich families (especially in South) sent boys to England to get a “real” (refined, philosophical, worldly) education
Schools and Colleges

- Nine colleges established during the colonial era
  - These schools had enrollments of only 200 (at the most)
  - Curriculum leaned toward the “dead” languages (Latin and Greek)
  - After 1750, the trend was toward more modern subjects
  - Ben Franklin played major role in founding (what became) the University of Pennsylvania
A Provincial Culture

- In art and culture America still responded to Europe
  - American painters went to Europe to paint and complete training
  - Some seen as Loyalists (pro-British) during Revolution because of the influence Britain had on them
  - Important colonial painters
    - John Trumbull, Charles Willson Peale, Benjamin West, John Singleton Copley
A Provincial Culture

- In architecture also, America copied Europe
  - Even the “American” log cabin copied from Sweden
  - In 1727 the red-bricked Georgian style building was introduced in America
An Example of Georgian Architecture
A Provincial Culture

- Literature
  - Was generally undistinguished
  - Phyllis Wheatley
    - Was a poet who as a slave girl was brought to Boston at age 8
  - Benjamin Franklin
    - Edited Poor Richard’s Almanack (1732 – 1758)
      - Collection of quotes and sayings; homespun wisdom like “Honesty is the best policy”
      - More widely read in America than anything else but Bible
    - Also wrote his famous Autobiography
Phyllis Wheatley
Poor Richard's Almanack

Poor Richard, 1739.
AN
Almanack
For the Year of Christ
1739,
Being the Third after LEAP YEAR.
And makes from the Creation
Years
By the Account of the Eastern Greeks 7267
By the Latin Church, when O ext. Y 8958
By the Computation of W. W. 3748
By the Kamaa Chronology 5688
By the Jewish Rabbies 5500

Wherin is contained,
Fitted to the Latitude of Forty Degrees, and a Meridian of Five Hours West from London, but may without sensible Error, serve all the adjacent Places, even from Newenland to South-Carolina.

By RICHARD SAUNDERS, Philom.
PHILADELPHIA.
Printed and sold by B. FRANKLIN, at the New Printing-Office near the Market.
A Provincial Culture

Science

- Was generally behind that of Europe
- Ben Franklin was America’s only first-rank scientist
  - Performed dangerous experiments like flying a kite to demonstrate that lightning was a form of electricity
  - Invented bifocal spectacles, highly efficient Franklin stove, and lightning rod
Ben Franklin's Kite Experiment with Electricity
A few private libraries existed
  – Byrd family in Virginia had largest (4,000 books)

Circulating libraries also existed
  – Ben Franklin established first in Philadelphia
  – By 1776, there were about 50 in America

Americans generally too poor to buy many books and too busy to read many
Pioneer Presses

- Pamphlets, leaflets, journals
  - Printed by hand-operated printing presses
  - By 1775, 40 colonial newspapers were in print
    - Weeklies consisting of 1 large sheet, folded in 1/2
    - Long, complex essays signed with Roman-sounding names
    - “news” might lag weeks behind the event (especially overseas events)
  - Newspapers were powerful way colonists could rally support around rebellion against British
Colonial Newspapers
The Zenger case

- Arose in New York (middle colony, with many different ethnic groups competing for power)
- John Peter Zenger, a newspaper printer, was brought to court for criticizing a corrupt royal governor
- Zenger was charged with seditious libel (sedition means inciting to rebellion; libel means printing something that damages someone’s reputation)
- British law said that the truth or falsity of what Zenger wrote did not matter
- Zenger’s lawyer (Alexander Hamilton) eloquently argued that “the very liberty of both exposing and opposing arbitrary power” was at stake
The Trial of Peter Zenger
Pioneer Presses

- The Zenger decision
  - Jury sided with Hamilton, returning verdict of not guilty
  - Pointed way to open discussion in open society that America was becoming
  - Because it was contrary to existing law, it was not immediately accepted by other judges
  - Eventually helped establish the legal doctrine that true statements about public officials were not libelous
  - Made newspapers (eventually) free to publish responsible criticism of powerful officials
The Great Game of Politics

- In 1775, the 13 colonies had governments that took a variety of forms
- Colonial governors
  - 8 had royal governors
  - 3 (Maryland, Pennsylvania, Delaware) were under proprietors who appointed governors
  - 2 (Connecticut, Rhode Island) elected their own governors under self-governing charters
The Great Game of Politics

- Colonial legislatures (assemblies)
  - Most had 2-house legislatures
  - The upper house was chosen by those who appointed the governor (the crown, proprietors, or voters in self-governing colonies)
  - The lower house was chosen by people (those with enough property to qualify)
  - Backcountry voters were generally underrepresented and resented governmental elites
  - Self-taxation through direct and local representatives was an important privilege colonial to voters
The Great Game of Politics

- Royal governors
  - Many were good and able; a few were corrupt and incompetent
  - Even the best ones had trouble with colonial legislatures because they represented a far-off authority across the Atlantic
The Great Game of Politics

- Colonial assemblies’ attempts to assert their authority
  - Withheld governor’s salary unless he did what they wanted
    - The governor was normally in need of money (otherwise he would not be in America); most governors gave in
  - The London government should have paid governors from independent sources
    - 1767 – Townshend taxes arranged to pay governors independent of legislatures; but by that time colonists were already angry over taxation became angrier over new taxes
The Great Game of Politics

- Local government
  - South – county government
  - North – town-meeting government
  - Middle – mixture between these 2
The Great Game of Politics

Voting

- Upper classes refused (and feared) full democracy
  - 1/2 of all adult males were disenfranchised
- Religious and property qualifications; even stricter for office-holding
- Ease of getting land meant fulfilling property requirement was attainable by most
- Many eligible voters did not vote
  - Allowed upper classes ("betters") to run colonial affairs
  - Voted more to kick out bad leaders that to elect good ones
The Great Game of Politics

- Democracy
  - In 1775, America was not a true democracy
  - America was far more democratic than England and the rest of Europe, and America was moving toward democracy
Colonial Folkways

- Colonial life was drab and tedious, but compared to Europeans, Americans lived well
Colonial Folkways

- Food
  - Plentiful, but coarse and monotonous
  - Americans ate more (especially of meat) than people in the Old World
  - Only the lazy or sick went hungry
Colonial Folkways

- A lack of basic comforts
  - Churches were not heated, even in the cold winter
  - Drafty homes were poorly heated by inefficient fireplaces
  - No running water, no plumbing, no bathtubs
  - Candles and whale-oil lamps gave off faint light at night
  - Garbage disposal done by hogs or buzzards
Colonial Folkways

- Colonial amusement
  - Militia mustering (trainings) interspersed with merrymaking
  - On the frontier: house-raisings, quilting bees, husking bees, apple parings
  - Funerals and weddings
  - Lotteries approved (used by churches to raise money)
  - South – card playing, horse racing, cockfighting, fox hunting, dancing, stage plays (but forbidden in North)
Colonial Folkways

- Holidays
  - Christmas was celebrated by most colonists, but frowned on by Puritans because of its association with Catholicism
  - Thanksgiving Day became an American festival, combining God and eating
Colonial Folkways

- By the mid 1700s, the colonies were growing together and becoming more similar
  - All basically English in language, customs, and Protestantism
  - Widespread presence of diversity (ethnic/religious) led to some toleration
  - Ambitious people had opportunities for social mobility that Europeans did not have
  - All had some self-government (though not full democracy)
  - Communication and transportation among the colonies was improving
  - Separated from the ruling authority (England) by 3,000 miles