

3 Struggles for Political Power

★ Section Focus

★ **Key Terms** Magna Carta ■ common law
★ ■ Board of Trade ■ Navigation Acts
★ ■ Dominion of New England ■ divine right
★ ■ Glorious Revolution

★ **Main Idea** The American colonists succeeded in establishing a measure of self-government. The royal governors, however, remained powerful, and England refused to grant the colonists the same rights as people in England.

Objectives As you read, look for answers to these questions:

1. What steps did the colonists take to achieve self-government?
2. Why did England want strong economic controls over the colonies?
3. What is meant by the "rights of Englishmen?"

Virginia, 1676. Power is in the hands of the royal governor, Sir William Berkeley, and a handful of his planter friends. The House of Burgesses is under their control. No election has been held in fourteen years. Berkeley and his friends direct the colony's fur trade with the Indians. The price of tobacco is so low that it doesn't pay to ship it. The governor writes that six out of seven planters are poor, discontented, in debt, and armed. Rather than do something about their discontent, the House of Burgesses passes laws to take away the vote of landless freemen. On the frontier Indians attack and kill some new settlers. Frontier planters call for revenge, but the governor is reluctant. He doesn't want to kill innocent Indians or upset the fur trade. Enter Nathaniel Bacon.

BACON'S REBELLION

Nathaniel Bacon was a new immigrant to Virginia and a tobacco planter. When the governor refused to punish the Indians, Bacon organized, without official approval, an expedition of 300 men to do what the governor would not. The expedition attacked and killed the first Indians they came across. These Indians happened to be peaceful, fur-trading friends of the governor, who became furious. But Bacon's action had made him so popular the governor felt helpless to do anything more than call for new elections to the assembly.

Bacon was elected to the assembly and helped push through needed reforms. When the assembly then voted to send Bacon on another Indian expe-

dition, the governor raised an army in his absence. Civil war broke out when Bacon returned. Bacon attacked and burned Jamestown (an attack from which it never really recovered). The governor fled across the Chesapeake. Bacon set up a new government and denounced Berkeley and his friends as "sponges" and "juggling parasites."

No one knows what might have happened in this first American rebellion had Bacon lived. But Bacon fell ill and quickly died. Without leadership the rebel movement collapsed. Back in control, Governor Berkeley took his revenge. He executed 23 of Bacon's followers, an action that prompted Charles II to say: "That old fool has hanged more men in that naked country than I have done for the murder of my father."

Berkeley was recalled to England, a new governor was appointed, and things settled down in Virginia. Most of Bacon's reforms stayed in place, however, and no later governor dared assume as much power as Berkeley had. One small step had been taken against tyranny and toward self-government.

ACHIEVING SELF-GOVERNMENT

The American Revolution was not the start of local self-government for the colonists. Far from it. For more than a century and a half prior to independence, the colonists had been learning the art of ruling themselves.

The tradition of local self-government was nurtured by the colonists' awareness of the "rights

of Englishmen." These rights were first expressed in the **Magna Carta** of 1215. This document asserted the right to trial by a jury of one's peers, no imprisonment without trial, and no taxation except by legal means. In succeeding centuries Parliament acquired the power to make laws and to pass taxes. The rights of Englishmen also included a tradition of customs and law based on previous court decisions. This was the **common law**. Thus, when English people moved to America, they carried with them the belief that they had certain rights by law and by tradition.

★ Historical Documents

For an excerpt from the Magna Carta, see page R16 of this book.

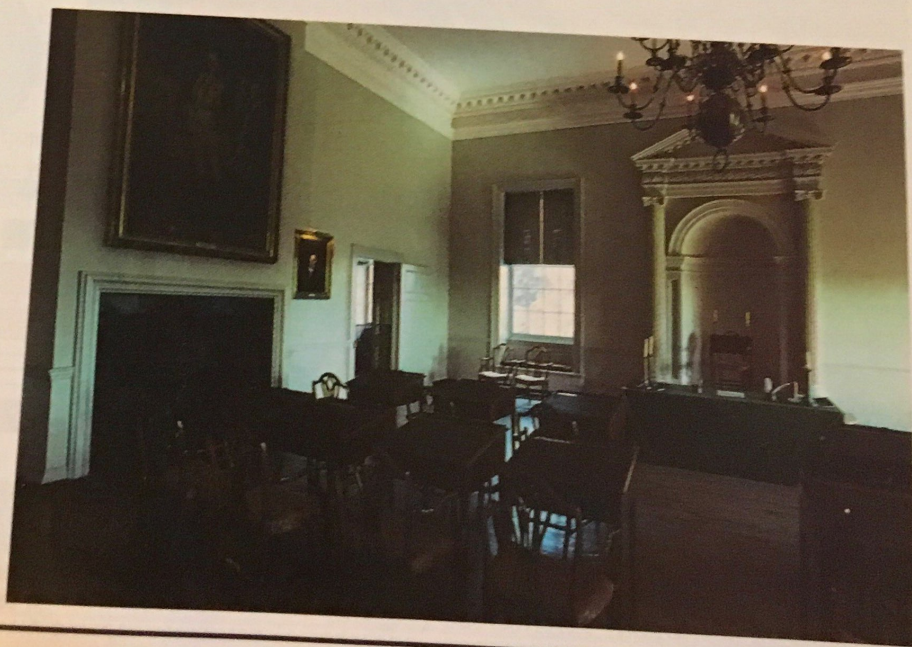
When Maryland was founded, the charter given to Lord Baltimore required that he seek the advice and consent of the colonists. In 1638 the settlers asked for the right to introduce laws. This was the same right Parliament had. While waiting for Baltimore's answer, which would take months, they went ahead and passed some laws they thought necessary. Wisely, Baltimore granted the assembly a role in legislation. In a similar way each colony established some sort of representative assembly.

COLONIAL GOVERNMENTS

By 1700 the colonial governments all followed a somewhat similar pattern. Each was ruled by a governor, either elected or appointed. Assisting the governor was an appointed council. The council both advised and restrained the governor. It had the power to prevent the governor from doing something, but could not force him to take an action. The council also held an equal voice in all legislation coming from the assembly, and no bill could pass without its approval. In addition, the council acted as the highest court in the colony.

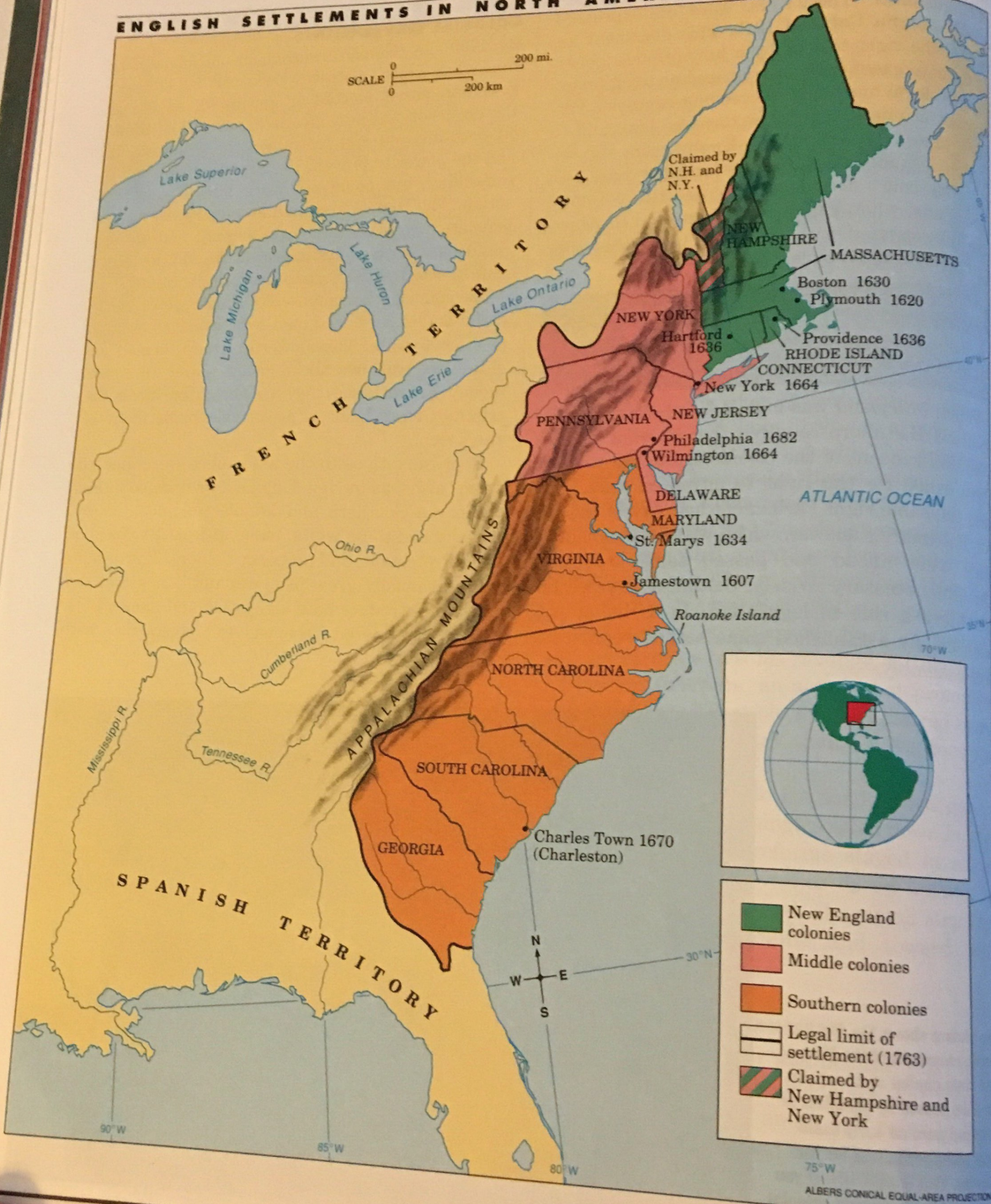
The council was composed of about twelve influential and experienced men, who usually held the position for life. This powerful group formed an elite that was not above using power to make money. For instance, they had the authority to distribute Crown lands, a power that made many of them rich.

Representatives to the assemblies were elected from towns, as in New England, or from counties, as in the Southern and Middle Colonies. Voters usually had to be white, male, at least 21 years of age, Protestant, and property holders. The assemblies gradually grew in power until they had the right to introduce both legislation and money bills. They considered themselves co-equals with Parliament.



This picture shows the Old Senate chambers of the Maryland state capitol at Annapolis. The laws passed by colonists in Maryland were an early example of self-government for the colonies. **PARTICIPATION** If you were establishing a new colonial government, what laws would you first propose?

ENGLISH SETTLEMENTS IN NORTH AMERICA



POLICIES

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MAP

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POLICIES OF EMPIRE

England did not forget the purpose of its colonies: to make England more powerful and more wealthy. According to the practice of mercantilism (page 33), each part of the empire should contribute to the prosperity of the whole. Thus England encouraged those economic activities that supplied the empire with needed food and raw materials.

Beginning in 1660 England gave new strength and direction to its empire. It began exerting stronger controls over the economic activities of the colonies. It drove Dutch competition from the Americas. It also established a parliamentary committee, the **Board of Trade**, to oversee policy in the empire.

This policy was spelled out in a series of **Navigation Acts**. The Navigation Act of 1660 decreed that all colonial trade had to take place in English ships or in colonial-owned ships with English captains. An important effect of the law was to encourage colonial shipbuilding. The law also listed goods, such as tobacco, indigo, and sugar, that could be sold only to England or to another colony—but not to the Dutch.

The Navigation Act of 1663 was a further strike at Dutch and other European traders. It specified that all European imports to the colonies had to pass through England first. There the government would collect both import and export duties on the same goods. This law was generally ignored, and the colonists freely engaged in smuggling.

The colonists also ignored a Navigation Act passed in 1673. That act sent English tax officials to the colonies to collect the duties on colonial goods not destined for England. The colonial leaders despised the tax officials and were reluctant to cooperate. This was particularly true in New England.

MAP SKILLS

English settlers established colonies along the North American coast. What were the two earliest English settlements? What natural feature formed the western boundary of the colonies?
CRITICAL THINKING Why, do you think, were the English settlements located on or near the coast?

Parliament reacted by trying to put the colonies under direct rule of the Crown. Between 1686 and 1688 the New England colonies were consolidated into the **Dominion of New England**. The dominion included Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Plymouth, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and parts of New Jersey and New York. Governor of the dominion was Sir Edmund Andros, by all accounts an arrogant and tactless man. He abolished the legislative assemblies of New England and instituted the Church of England as the official religion. New England might have rebelled then and there, but a revolution in England made it unnecessary.

THE GLORIOUS REVOLUTION

For the previous two centuries English monarchs had claimed that the basis of their authority was **divine right**. Such a God-given right to rule meant that they could ignore popular opinion or Parliament. On the other hand, the English people had a strong tradition of rights going back to the Magna Carta. During the seventeenth century, the Crown and Parliament battled for control.

The final showdown came in 1688. In that year King James II made clear that he planned to install Catholicism as the state religion of England. Appalled, prominent leaders of Parliament turned to William of Orange, ruler of the Netherlands and husband of James's daughter Mary. They invited the royal couple to lead an uprising on behalf of the peoples' liberties. Unable to find any popular support, James fled to France. Parliament then named William and Mary as rulers of England.

The issue was thus decided: the Crown's authority was dependent on Parliament and the people it represented. Law had precedence over the whims of a king. To make this clear, Parliament passed a Bill of Rights that reaffirmed such old rights as no taxation without Parliamentary consent, no cruel or unjust punishment, free speech in Parliament, no imprisonment without a trial, and the right to petition. This victory of Parliament's was called the **Glorious Revolution**.

The Glorious Revolution had its effect in the colonies. For one, the good citizens of Massachusetts promptly put Governor Andros and his cohorts in

jail. Thus came to an end the Dominion of New England, and King William did not try to resurrect it.

In the long term the Glorious Revolution contributed to a rupture between the colonies and England. This is because Parliament stated that its Bill of Rights did not apply to the colonies. In the colonies, Parliament made clear, the royal governors were to rule by authority of Crown and Parliament. Governors could veto legislation. They could postpone or dismiss assemblies. They could appoint and dismiss all judges at will. And they could create courts without juries. Hard feelings grew as colonial assemblies tried to assert the same rights that Parliament had won in the Glorious Revolution.

SECTION REVIEW

- 1. KEY TERMS** Magna Carta, common law, Board of Trade, Navigation Acts, Dominion of New England, divine right, Glorious Revolution
- 2. PEOPLE** Nathaniel Bacon, Sir Edmund Andros, James II, William and Mary
- 3. COMPREHENSION** In what ways were colonial governments similar by 1700?
- 4. COMPREHENSION** How did the Glorious Revolution affect the colonies?
- 5. CRITICAL THINKING** Why might Parliament think the Bill of Rights should not apply to the colonists? Why might the colonists think otherwise?

4 The Colonial Economies

★ Section Focus

- ★ **Key Terms** extractive activities ■ land speculation ■ subsistence agriculture
- ★ ■ Middle Passage

★ **Main Idea** The colonial economies prospered as they developed around available natural resources.

★ **Objectives** As you read, look for answers to these questions:

1. In what ways did the colonists make use of natural resources?
2. What accounted for regional differences in the colonial economies?
3. What were some effects of American prosperity?

The eighteenth century was but an infant itself when Benjamin Franklin was born in Boston in 1706, the fifteenth child in the family. Franklin's father was a candlemaker who labored long hours at his trade in order to care for his large brood.

Ben Franklin was 17 when he left his apprenticeship as a printer and took off to make his way in the world. He ended up in Philadelphia with three pence in his pocket. When he died in 1790 at the age of 84, Franklin was a rich man.

It is not surprising that Franklin died rich. Throughout his life he remained as interested in wealth as in virtue. He conveyed his ideas as advice in *Poor Richard's Almanack*. The advice of

Poor Richard reflected the morality and the social responsibility of the Puritans in whose society Franklin had grown up:

You will be more happy than princes, if you will be more virtuous.

What is serving God? 'Tis doing good to man.

Diligence overcomes difficulties, sloth makes them.

A penny saved is a penny earned.
God helps them that help themselves.

Through such sayings as these, Franklin encouraged generations of Americans to develop thrift,

This watercolor, by a British sailor in 1800, shows the inhumane conditions on a slave ship's deck. How did slave traders justify their treatment of

diligence, however, was both more developed, the

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Land specu

to resell it at a profit out the colonies. The speculators who those cities and arrivals and trade in the backcountry

SHIPBUILDING

It did not take long to realize that the Massachusetts fishing season was but subsistence food for one's needs and seas New England