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Colonial Society on the Eve of Revolution, 1700–1775

PART I: Reviewing the Chapter

A. Checklist of Learning Objectives

After mastering this chapter, you should be able to

1. describe the basic population and social structure of the eighteenth-century colonies and indicate how they had changed since the seventeenth century.
2. explain how the economic development of the colonies altered the patterns of social prestige and wealth.
3. explain the causes and effects of the Great Awakening.
4. describe the origins and development of education, culture, and the learned professions in the colonies.
5. describe the basic features of colonial politics, including the role of various official and informal political institutions.

B. Glossary

To build your social science vocabulary, familiarize yourself with the following terms.

1. **melting pot** The mingling of diverse ethnic groups in America, including the idea that these groups are or should be “melting” into a single culture or people. “Colonial America was a melting pot and has been from the outset.”
2. **sect** A small religious group that has broken away from some larger mainstream church. “They belonged to several different Protestant sects. . . .”
3. **agitators** Those who seek to excite or persuade the public on some issue. “Already experienced colonizers and agitators in Ireland, the Scots-Irish proved to be superb frontiersmen. . . .”
4. **stratification** The visible arrangement of society into a hierarchical pattern, with distinct social groups layered one on top of the other. “. . . colonial society . . . was beginning to show signs of stratification. . . .”
5. **mobility** The capacity to pass readily from one social or economic condition to another. “. . . barriers to mobility . . . raised worries about the ‘Europeanization’ of America.”
6. **elite** The smaller group at the top of a society or institution, usually possessing wealth, power, or special privileges. “. . . these elites now feathered their nests more finely.”
7. **almshouse** A home for the poor, supported by charity or public funds. “Both Philadelphia and New York built almshouses in the 1730s. . . .”
8. **gentry** Landowners of substantial property, social standing, and leisure, but not titled nobility. “Wealth was concentrated in the hands of the largest slaveowners, widening the gap between the prosperous gentry and the ‘poor whites’”

9. **tenant farmer** One who rents rather than owns land. "... the 'poor whites' ... were increasingly forced to become tenant farmers."
10. **penal code** The body of criminal laws specifying offenses and prescribing punishments. "But many convicts were the unfortunate victims ... of a viciously unfair English penal code. ..."
11. **veto** The executive power to prevent acts passed by the legislature from becoming law. "Thomas Jefferson ... assailed such vetoes. ..."
12. **apprentice** A person who works under a master to acquire instruction in a trade or profession. "Aspiring young doctors served for a while as apprentices to older practitioners. ..."
13. **speculation** Buying land or anything else in the hope of profiting by an expected rise in price. "Commercial ventures and land speculation ... were the surest avenues to speedy wealth."
14. **revival** In religion, a movement of renewed enthusiasm and commitment, often accompanied by special meetings or evangelical activity. "The stage was thus set for a rousing religious revival."
15. **secular** Belonging to the worldly sphere rather than to the specifically sacred or churchly. "A more secular approach was evident late in the eighteenth century. ..."

Part II: Checking Your Progress

A. True-False

Where the statement is true, mark T. Where it is false, mark F, and correct it in the space immediately below.

- ___ 1. Most of the spectacular growth of the colonial population came from immigration rather than natural increase.
- ___ 2. The most numerous white ethnic groups in the colonies were the Germans and the Scots-Irish.
- ___ 3. Compared with the seventeenth century colonies, the eighteenth-century colonies were becoming more socially equal and democratic.
- ___ 4. The lowest class of whites in the colonies consisted of the convicted criminals shipped to America by British authorities.
- ___ 5. Thomas Jefferson's condemnation of British support of the slave trade was removed from the Declaration of Independence.
- ___ 6. Doctors and lawyers were more highly regarded in the colonies than clergymen.
- ___ 7. Besides agriculture, the most important colonial economic activities were related to the sea.
- ___ 8. Colonial merchants were generally satisfied to trade in protected British markets and accepted imperial restrictions on trade with other countries.
- ___ 9. The established Anglican church in the South was much more powerful than the established Congregational church of New England.
- ___ 10. The Great Awakening came after a period of religious decline caused by clerical over-intellectualism and lay liberalism.

- ___ 11. Great Awakening revivalists like Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield tried to replace the older Puritan ideas of conversion and salvation with more rational and less emotional beliefs.
- ___ 12. The Great Awakening broke down denominational and sectional barriers, creating a great sense of common American identity and unity.
- ___ 13. Most early colonial education, including that at the college level, was closely linked with religion.
- ___ 14. The greatest colonial cultural achievements came in art and imaginative literature rather than in theology and political theory.
- ___ 15. The central point of conflict in colonial politics was the relation between the democratically elected lower house of the assembly and the governors appointed by the king or colonial proprietor.

B. Multiple Choice

Select the best answer and write the proper letter in the space provided.

- ___ 1. The primary reason for the spectacular growth of America's population in the eighteenth century was
 - a. the conquering of new territories.
 - b. the natural fertility of the population.
 - c. the increased importation of white indentured servants and black slaves.
 - d. new immigration from Europe.
- ___ 2. German settlement in the colonies was especially heavy in
 - a. Massachusetts.
 - b. Maryland.
 - c. New York.
 - d. Pennsylvania.
- ___ 3. The Scots-Irish eventually became concentrated especially in
 - a. the seacoast settlements.
 - b. the New England colonies.
 - c. the frontier areas.
 - d. the cities.
- ___ 4. Compared with the seventeenth century, American colonial society in the eighteenth century showed
 - a. greater domination by small farmers and artisans.
 - b. greater equality of wealth and status.
 - c. greater gaps in wealth and status between rich and poor.
 - d. greater opportunity for convicts and indentured servants to climb to the top.

- 5. The most honored professional in colonial America was the
 - a. lawyer.
 - b. clergyman.
 - c. doctor.
 - d. journalist.
- 6. The primary source of livelihood for most colonial Americans was
 - a. manufacturing.
 - b. agriculture.
 - c. lumbering.
 - d. commerce and trade.
- 7. Indians and African-Americans shared in the common American experience of
 - a. migrating westward in search of free land.
 - b. creating new societies out of the mingling of diverse ethnic groups.
 - c. forming closed, settled communities that resisted outsiders.
 - d. clinging to traditional cultural values brought from the Old World.
- 8. An unfortunate group of involuntary immigrants who ranked below indentured servants on the American social scale were
 - a. the younger sons of English gentry.
 - b. French-Canadian fur traders.
 - c. convicts and paupers.
 - d. single women.
- 9. The “triangular trade” involved the sale of rum, molasses, and slaves among the ports of
 - a. Virginia, Canada, and Britain.
 - b. the West Indies, France, and South America.
 - c. New England, Britain, and Spain.
 - d. New England, Africa, and the West Indies.
- 10. The passage of British restrictions on trade encouraged colonial merchants to
 - a. organize political resistance in the British Parliament.
 - b. find ways to smuggle and otherwise evade the law by trading with other countries.
 - c. turn to domestic trade within the colonies.
 - d. turn from trading to such other enterprises as fishing and manufacturing.
- 11. Besides offering rest and refreshment, colonial taverns served an important function as centers of
 - a. news and political opinion.
 - b. trade and business.
 - c. medicine and law.
 - d. religious revival.
- 12. The Anglican church suffered in colonial America because of
 - a. its strict doctrines and rigid church order.
 - b. its weak clergy and close ties with British authorities.
 - c. its inability to adjust to conditions of life in New England.
 - d. its reputation for fostering fanatical revivalism.

- ____ 13. The two best-established colonial denominations were the
- Quakers and Dutch Reformed.
 - Baptists and Lutherans.
 - Anglicans and Congregationalists.
 - Roman Catholics and Presbyterians.
- ____ 14. Among the many important results of the Great Awakening was that it
- broke down sectional boundaries and created a greater sense of common American identity.
 - contributed to greater religious liberalism and toleration in the churches.
 - caused a decline in colonial concern for education.
 - moved Americans closer to a single religious outlook.
- ____ 15. A primary weapon used by colonial legislatures in their conflicts with royal governors was
- extending the franchise to include almost all adult white citizens.
 - passing laws prohibiting the governors from owning land or industries.
 - voting them out of office.
 - using their power of taxation to withhold the governor's salary.

C. Identification

Supply the correct identification for each numbered description.

- _____ 1. Corruption of a German word used as a term for German immigrants in Pennsylvania
- _____ 2. Section of the colonies where most Scots-Irish settlers were located.
- _____ 3. Activity in which many colonial merchant princes made fortunes that aroused fears of "Europeanization"
- _____ 4. Popular term for convicted criminals dumped on colonies by British authorities
- _____ 5. Dreaded epidemics of disease, especially smallpox and diphtheria
- _____ 6. A once-despised profession that rose in prestige after 1750 because its practitioners defended colonial rights
- _____ 7. Small but profitable trade route that linked New England, Africa, and the West Indies.
- _____ 8. Popular colonial centers of recreation, gossip, and political debate
- _____ 9. Term for tax-supported condition of Congregational and Anglican churches, but not of Baptists, Quakers, and Roman Catholics
- _____ 10. Spectacular, emotional religious revival of the 1730s and 1740s
- _____ 11. Ministers who supported the Great Awakening against the "old light" clergy who rejected it
- _____ 12. Institutions that were founded in greater numbers as a result of the Great Awakening, although a few had been founded earlier
- _____ 13. The case that established the precedent that true statements about public officials could not be prosecuted as libel

- _____ 14. The upper house of a colonial legislature, appointed by the crown or the proprietor
- _____ 15. Commodity that a person had to own a certain amount of in order to be eligible to vote

D. Matching People, Places, and Events

Match the person, place, or event in the left column with the proper description in the right column by inserting the correct letter on the blank line.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| _____ 1. Philadelphia | A. Itinerant British evangelist who spread the Great Awakening throughout the colonies |
| _____ 2. African-Americans | B. Colonial printer whose case helped begin freedom of the press |
| _____ 3. Scots-Irish | C. Colonial painter who studied and worked in Britain |
| _____ 4. Paxton Boys and Regulators | D. Leading city of the colonies; home of Benjamin Franklin |
| _____ 5. Patrick Henry | E. Largest non-English group in the colonies |
| _____ 6. Molasses Act | F. Worst example of a corrupt and incompetent royal governor |
| _____ 7. Anglican church | G. Former slave who became a poet at an early age |
| _____ 8. Jonathan Edwards | H. Scots-Irish frontiersmen who protested against colonial elites of Pennsylvania and North Carolina |
| _____ 9. George Whitefield | I. Attempt by British authorities to squelch colonial trade with French West Indies |
| _____ 10. Phillis Wheatley | J. Brilliant New England theologian who instigated the Great Awakening |
| _____ 11. Benjamin Franklin | K. Group that settled the frontier, made whiskey, and hated the British and other governmental authorities |
| _____ 12. John Peter Zenger | L. Nonestablished religious group that benefited from the Great Awakening |
| _____ 13. Lord Cornbury | M. Author, scientist, printer; "the first civilized American" |
| _____ 14. Baptists | N. Eloquent lawyer-orator who argued in defense of colonial rights |
| _____ 15. John Singleton Copley | O. Established religion in southern colonies and New York; weakened by lackadaisical clergy and too-close ties with British crown |

E. Putting Things in Order

Put the following events in correct order by numbering them 1 to 10.

- _____ Epochal freedom of the press case is settled.
- _____ First southern college to train Anglican clergy is founded.
- _____ Britain vetoes colonial effort to halt slave importation.

- ___ Scots-Irish protestors stage armed marches.
- ___ First medical attempts are made to prevent dreaded disease epidemics.
- ___ Parliament attempts to restrict colonial trade with French West Indies.
- ___ Princeton College is founded to train “new light” ministers.
- ___ An eloquent British preacher spreads evangelical religion through the colonies.
- ___ Benjamin Franklin starts printing his most famous publication.
- ___ A fiery, intellectual preacher sets off a powerful religious revival in New England.

F. Matching Cause and Effect

Match the historical cause in the left column with the proper effect in the right column by writing the correct letter on the blank line.

Cause	Effect
___ 1. The high natural fertility of the colonial population	A. Prompted colonial assemblies to withhold royal governors' salaries
___ 2. The heavy immigration of Germans, Scots-Irish, Africans, and others into the colonies	B. Weakened religious commitment in the early eighteenth century
___ 3. The large profits made by merchants as military suppliers for imperial wars	C. Resulted in the development of a colonial “melting pot,” only one-half English by 1775
___ 4. American merchants' search for non-British markets	D. Was met by British attempts to restrict colonial trade, e.g., the Molasses Act
___ 5. Clerical dry intellectualism and lay liberalism	E. Increased the wealth of the eighteenth-century colonial elite
___ 6. The Great Awakening	F. Led to the increase of American population to one-third of England's in 1775
___ 7. The Zenger case	G. Forced the migration of colonial artists to Britain to study and pursue artistic careers
___ 8. The appointment of unpopular or incompetent royal governors to colonies	H. Marked the beginnings of freedom of printed political expression in the colonies
___ 9. Upper-class fear of “democratic excesses” by poor whites	I. Reinforced colonial property qualifications for voting
___ 10. The lack of artistic concerns, cultural tradition, and leisure in the colonies	J. Stimulated more emotional styles of religion and greater intercolonial unity