

# Life in the English Colonies

## What You Will Learn...

### Main Ideas

1. Colonial governments were influenced by political changes in England.
2. English trade laws limited free trade in the colonies.
3. The Great Awakening and the Enlightenment led to ideas of political equality among many colonists.
4. The French and Indian War gave England control of more land in North America.

### The Big Idea

The English colonies continued to grow despite many challenges.

### Key Terms and People

town meeting, p. 91

English Bill of Rights, p. 91

triangular trade, p. 93

Great Awakening, p. 94

Jonathan Edwards, p. 94

Enlightenment, p. 95

John Locke, p. 95

Pontiac, p. 97



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TAKING NOTES

Use the graphic organizer online to take notes on developments that affected the growing colonies.

## If YOU were there...

Your family migrated to America in the 1700s and started a small farm in western Pennsylvania. Now, more and more people are moving in. You would like to move farther west, into the Ohio River valley. But a new law says you cannot move west of the mountains because it is too dangerous. Still, you are restless and want more land and more freedom.

**Why might you decide to break the law and move west?**

**BUILDING BACKGROUND** When they moved to America, the English colonists brought their ideas about government. They expected to have the same rights as citizens in England. However, many officials in England wanted tight control over the colonies. As a result, some colonists, like this family, were unhappy with the policies of colonial governments.

## Colonial Governments

The English colonies in North America all had their own governments. Each government was given power by a charter. The English monarch had ultimate authority over all of the colonies. A group of royal advisers called the Privy Council set English colonial policies.

## Colonial Governors and Legislatures

Each colony had a governor who served as head of the government. Most governors were assisted by an advisory council. In royal colonies the English king or queen selected the governor and the council members. In proprietary colonies, the proprietors chose all of these officials. In a few colonies, such as Connecticut, the people elected the governor.

In some colonies the people also elected representatives to help make laws and set policy. These officials served on assemblies. Each colonial assembly passed laws that had to be approved first by the advisory council and then by the governor.

Established in 1619, Virginia's assembly was the first colonial legislature in North America. At first it met as a single body, but it was later split into two houses. The first house was known as the Council of State. The governor's advisory council and the London Company selected its members. The House of Burgesses was the assembly's second house. The members were elected by colonists.

In New England the center of politics was the **town meeting**. In town meetings people talked about and decided on issues of local interest, such as paying for schools.

In the southern colonies, people typically lived farther away from one another. Therefore, many decisions were made at the county level. The middle colonies used both county meetings and town meetings to make laws.

## Political Change in England

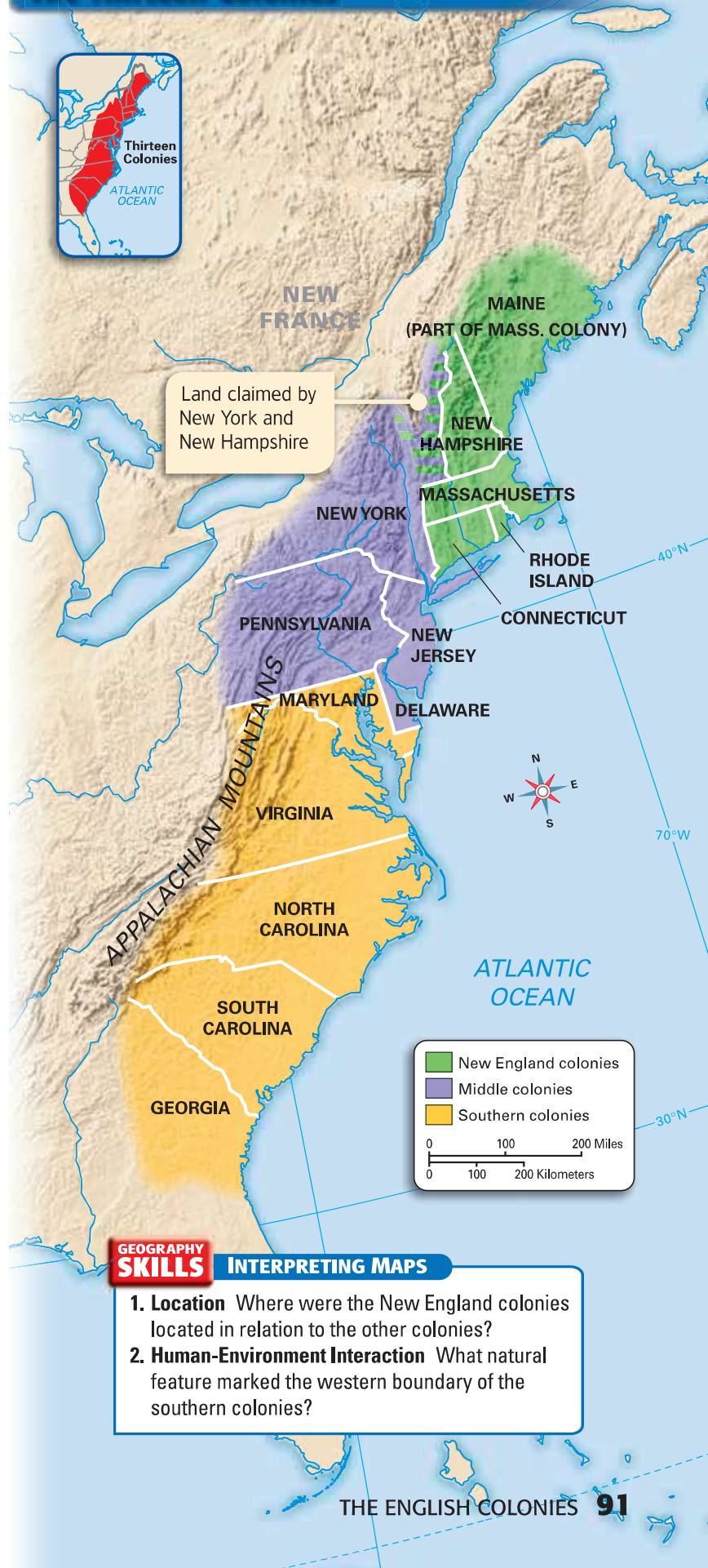
In 1685 James II became king of England. He was determined to take more control over the English government, both in England and in the colonies.

James believed that the colonies were too independent. In 1686 he united the northern colonies under one government called the Dominion of New England. James named Sir Edmund Andros royal governor of the Dominion. The colonists disliked Andros because he used his authority to limit the powers of town meetings.

## English Bill of Rights

Parliament replaced the unpopular King James and passed the **English Bill of Rights** in 1689. This act reduced the powers of the **English monarch**. At the same time, Parliament gained power. As time went on, the colonists valued their own right to elect representatives to decide local issues. Following these changes, the colonies in the Dominion quickly formed new assemblies and charters.

## The Thirteen Colonies





## Colonial Courts

Colonial courts made up another important part of colonial governments. Whenever possible, colonists used the courts to control local affairs. In general, the courts reflected the beliefs of their local communities. For example, many laws in Massachusetts enforced the Puritans' religious beliefs. Laws based on the Bible set the standard for the community's conduct.

Sometimes colonial courts also protected individual freedoms. For example, in 1733 officials arrested John Peter Zenger for printing a false statement that damaged the reputation of the governor of New York. Andrew Hamilton, Zenger's attorney, argued that Zenger could publish whatever he wished as long as it was true. Jury members believed that colonists had a right to voice their ideas openly and found him not guilty.

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### ANIMATED HISTORY

Creating Wealth

#### READING CHECK Analyzing Information

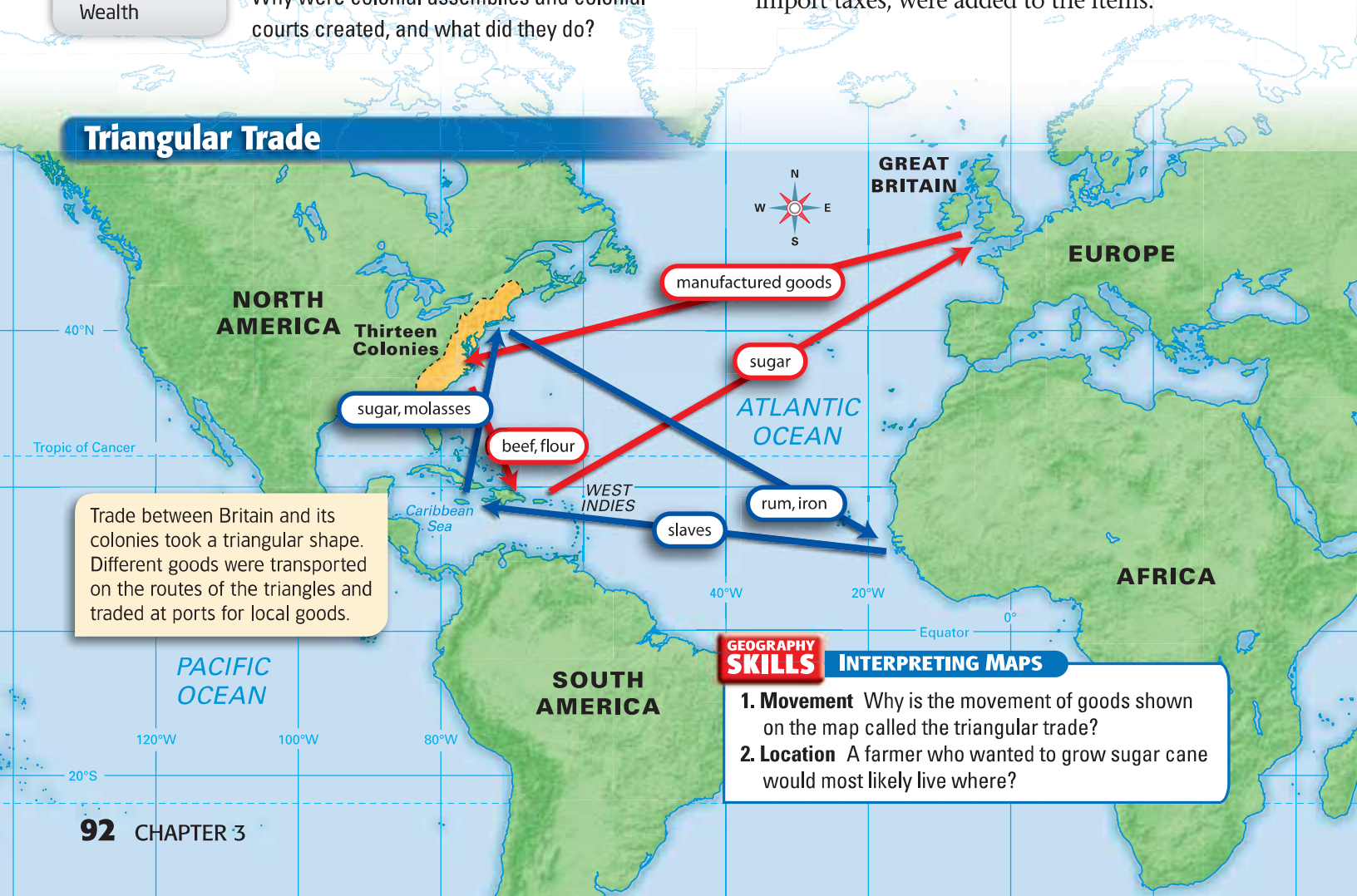
Why were colonial assemblies and colonial courts created, and what did they do?

## English Trade Laws

One of England's main reasons for founding and controlling its American colonies was to earn money from trade. In the late 1600s England, like most western European nations, practiced mercantilism, a system of creating and maintaining wealth through carefully controlled trade. A country gained wealth if it had fewer imports—goods bought from other countries—than exports—goods sold to other countries.

To support this system of mercantilism, between 1650 and 1696 Parliament passed a series of Navigation Acts limiting colonial trade. For example, the Navigation Act of 1660 forbade colonists from trading specific items such as sugar and cotton with any country other than England. The act also required colonists to use English ships to transport goods. Parliament later passed other acts that required all trade goods to pass through English ports, where duties, or import taxes, were added to the items.

## Triangular Trade



Trade between Britain and its colonies took a triangular shape. Different goods were transported on the routes of the triangles and traded at ports for local goods.

### GEOGRAPHY SKILLS

#### INTERPRETING MAPS

- 1. Movement** Why is the movement of goods shown on the map called the triangular trade?
- 2. Location** A farmer who wanted to grow sugar cane would most likely live where?

England claimed that the Navigation Acts were good for the colonies. After all, the colonies had a steady market in England for their goods. But not all colonists agreed. Many colonists wanted more freedom to buy or sell goods wherever they could get the best price. Local demand for colonial goods was small compared to foreign demand.

Despite colonial complaints, the trade restrictions continued into the 1700s. Some traders turned to smuggling, or illegal trading. They often smuggled sugar, molasses, and rum into the colonies from non-English islands in the Caribbean. Parliament responded with the Molasses Act of 1733, which placed duties on these items. British officials, however, rarely carried out this law.

By the early 1700s English merchants were trading around the world. Most American merchants traded directly with Great Britain or the West Indies. By importing and exporting goods such as sugar and tobacco, some American merchants became wealthy.

## Triangular Trade

Trade between the American colonies and Great Britain was not direct. Rather, it generally took the form of **triangular trade**—a system in which goods and slaves were traded among the Americas, Britain, and Africa. There were several routes of the triangular trade. In one route colonists exchanged goods like beef and flour with plantation owners in the West Indies for sugar, some of which they shipped to Britain. The sugar was then exchanged for manufactured products to be sold in the colonies. Colonial merchants traveled great distances to find the best markets.

### BIOGRAPHY

#### Olaudah Equiano

1745–1797

Olaudah Equiano claimed to have been born in Africa in present-day Nigeria. His autobiography told the story of his enslavement. According to his autobiography, Equiano survived the Middle Passage, traveling in a slave ship across the Atlantic. After arriving in the colonies, a Virginia planter purchased him and again sold him to a British naval officer. While working as a sailor, Equiano eventually earned enough money to purchase his own freedom in 1766. Equiano later settled in England and devoted himself to ending slavery.

**Analyzing Information** How did Equiano gain his freedom?



*“I received such a salutation [smell] in my nostrils, as I had never experienced in my life; . . . I became so sick and low that I was not able to eat . . . The groans of the dying, rendered [made] the whole a scene of horror almost inconceivable [unbelievable].”*

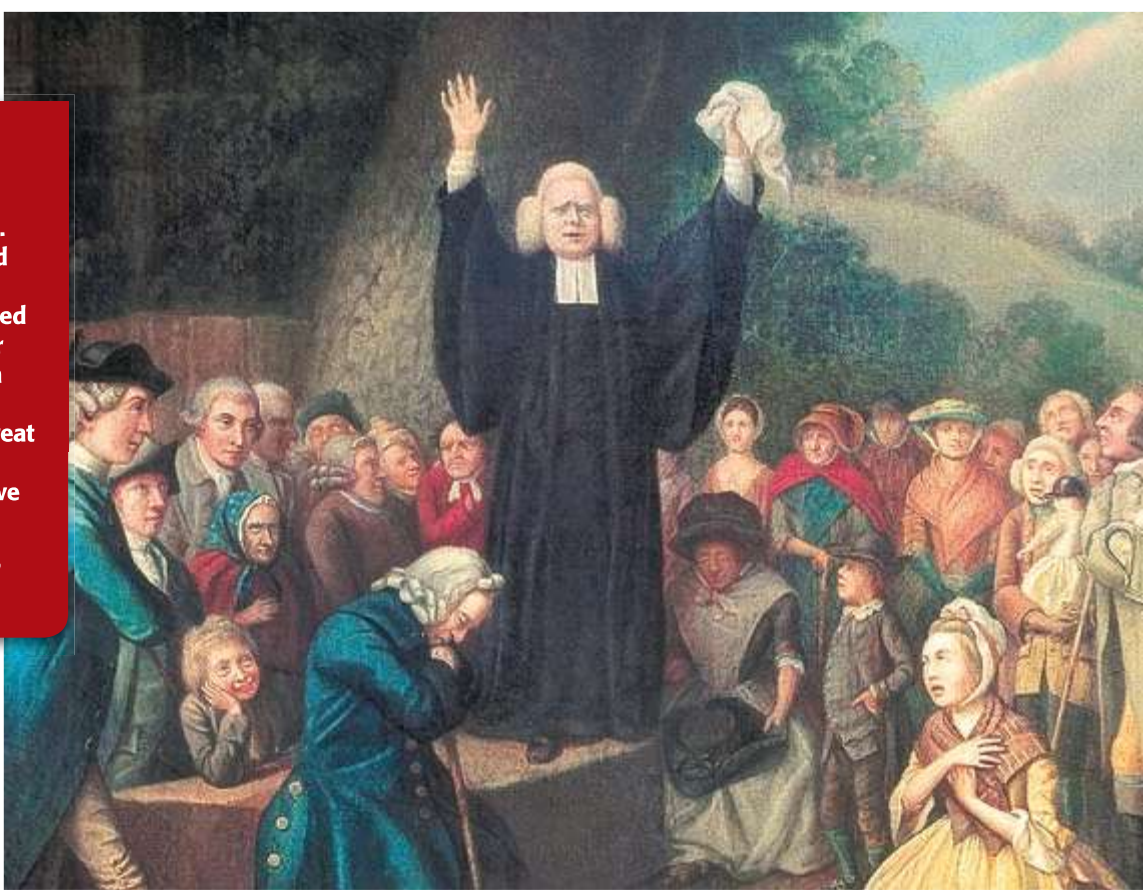
—Olaudah Equiano, from *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African*



## The Great Awakening

George Whitefield gives a powerful sermon during the Great Awakening. Ministers like Whitefield emphasized personal religious experiences over official church rules. They also allowed ordinary church members—whatever their race, class, or gender—to play a role in services. The value placed on individuals of all types during the Great Awakening helped shape American political ideas about who should have a say in government.

*How do you think religious freedom led to political freedom?*



### Middle Passage

One version of the triangular trade began with traders exchanging rum for slaves on the West African coast. The traders then sold the enslaved Africans in the West Indies for molasses or brought them to sell in the mainland American colonies.

The slave trade brought millions of Africans across the Atlantic Ocean in a voyage called the Middle Passage. This was a terrifying and deadly journey that could last as long as three months.

Enslaved Africans lived in a space not even three feet high. Slave traders fit as many slaves as possible on board so they could earn greater profits. Thousands of captives died on slave ships during the Middle Passage. In many cases, they died from diseases such as smallpox. As farmers began to use fewer indentured servants, slaves became even more valuable.

#### READING CHECK Identifying Cause and Effect

What factors caused the slave trade to grow? How did this affect conditions on the Middle Passage?

### Great Awakening and Enlightenment

In the early 1700s revolutions in both religious and nonreligious thought transformed the Western world. These movements began in Europe and affected life in the American colonies.

#### Great Awakening

After years of population growth, religious leaders wanted to spread religious feeling throughout the colonies. In the late 1730s these ministers began holding revivals, emotional gatherings where people came together to hear sermons.

Many American colonists experienced “a great awakening” in their religious lives. **This Great Awakening—a religious movement that swept through the colonies in the 1730s and 1740s—changed colonial religion.** It also affected social and political life. **Jonathan Edwards** of Massachusetts was one of the most important leaders of the Great Awakening. His dramatic sermons told

sinner to seek forgiveness for their sins or face punishment in Hell forever. British minister George Whitefield held revivals from Georgia to New England.

The Great Awakening drew people of different regions, classes, and races. Women, members of minority groups, and poor people often took part in services. Ministers from different colonies met and shared ideas with one another. This represented one of the few exchanges between colonies.

The Great Awakening promoted ideas that may also have affected colonial politics. Sermons about the spiritual equality of all people led some colonists to begin demanding more political equality. Revivals became popular places to talk about political and social issues. People from those colonies with less political freedom were thus introduced to more democratic systems used in other colonies.

## Enlightenment

During the 1600s Europeans began to re-examine their world. Scientists began to better understand the basic laws that govern nature. Their new ideas about the universe began the Scientific Revolution. The revolution changed how people thought of the world.

Many colonists were also influenced by the **Enlightenment**. This movement, which took place during the 1700s, spread the idea that reason and logic could improve society. Enlightenment thinkers also formed ideas about how government should work.

Some Enlightenment thinkers believed that there was a social contract between government and citizens. Philosophers such as **John Locke** thought that people had natural rights such as equality and liberty. Ideas of the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment eventually influenced colonial leaders.

**READING CHECK** Summarizing How did the Great Awakening and the Enlightenment influence colonial society?

## French and Indian War

By the 1670s tensions had arisen between New England colonists and the Wampanoag. Metacomet, a Wampanoag leader also known as King Philip, opposed the colonists' efforts to take his people's lands. In 1675 these tensions finally erupted in a conflict known as King Philip's War. The colonial militia—civilians serving as soldiers—fought American Indian warriors. Both sides attacked each other's settlements, killing men, women, and children. The fighting finally ended in 1676, but only after about 600 colonists and some 3,000 Indians had been killed, including Metacomet.

## Native American Allies

Some Native Americans allied with the colonists to fight against Metacomet and his forces. These Indians had developed trade relations with colonists. They wanted tools, weapons, and other goods that Europeans could provide. In exchange, the colonists wanted furs, which they sold for large profits in Europe. As a result, each side came to depend upon the other.

French colonists traded and allied with the Algonquian and Huron. English colonists traded and allied with the Iroquois League. This powerful group united American Indians from six different groups. Many American Indians trusted the French more than they did the English. The smaller French settlements were less threatening than the rapidly growing English colonies. No matter who their allies were, many Indian leaders took care to protect their people's independence. As one leader said:

“We are born free. We neither depend upon [the governor of New France] nor [the governor of New York]. We may go where we please . . . and buy and sell what we please.”

—Garangula, quoted in *The World Turned Upside Down*,  
edited by Colin G. Calloway



## North American Empires before and after the Treaty of Paris

1754



1763



### GEOGRAPHY SKILLS

#### INTERPRETING MAPS

- Regions** Which countries gained North American territory between 1754 and 1763?
- Human-Environment Interaction** What natural feature helped form the boundary between British and Spanish territory in 1763?

## War Erupts

Until the mid-1700s, France and Great Britain struggled for control of territory in North America. British colonists wanted to settle in the Ohio River valley, where they could take advantage of the valuable fur trade. The French believed this settlement would hurt their fur trade profits. A standoff developed in the Ohio Valley where the French had built three forts. Fighting erupted in 1753 as the British military moved to take over the valley.

When a young Virginian named George Washington arrived with more soldiers, he found the area under French control. Washington and his troops built a small, simple fort that he named Fort Necessity. After his troops suffered many casualties—captured, injured, or killed soldiers—Washington finally surrendered. His defeat in 1754 was the start of the French and Indian War. Leaders from the colonies met to discuss defense. The convention produced a plan for uniting the colonies called the Albany Plan. Meanwhile, in 1756 fighting began in Europe, starting what became known as the Seven Years' War.

## Treaty of Paris

The turning point of the war came in 1759. That year British general James Wolfe captured Quebec, gaining the advantage in the war. However, the war dragged on for four more years. Finally, in 1763 Britain and France signed the Treaty of Paris, officially ending the war.

The terms of the treaty gave Canada to Britain. Britain also gained all French lands east of the Mississippi River except the city of New Orleans and two small islands in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. From Spain, which had allied with France in 1762, Britain received Florida. In an earlier treaty, Spain had received Louisiana, the land that France had claimed west of the Mississippi River. The Treaty of Paris changed the balance of power in North America. Soon British settlers began moving west to settle new lands.

## Western Frontier

Most colonial settlements were located along the Atlantic coast. Colonial settlers, or pioneers, slowly moved into the Virginia and Carolina backcountry and the Ohio River valley.

Indian leaders like Chief **Pontiac** opposed British settlement of this new land. Pontiac's Rebellion began in May 1763 when his forces attacked British forts on the frontier. Within one month, they had destroyed or captured seven forts. Pontiac then led an attack on Fort Detroit. The British held out for months.

British leaders feared that more fighting would take place on the frontier if colonists kept moving onto American Indian lands. To avoid more conflict, King George III issued the Proclamation of 1763. This law banned British settlement west of the Appalachian Mountains. The law also ordered settlers to leave the upper Ohio River valley.

**READING CHECK** Summarizing Why did George III issue the Proclamation of 1763?

## BIOGRAPHY

### Pontiac

1720–1769

Pontiac, an Ottawa chief who had fought for France, tried to resist British settlement west of the Appalachians. Calling them “dogs dressed in red who have come to rob us,” he attacked the British in the Ohio country in 1763. Pontiac's rebellion was put down, and he surrendered in 1766.

**Analyzing Information** How did Pontiac try to stop the British?

**SUMMARY AND PREVIEW** In this section you read about colonial governments, the slave trade, and the conflicts with foreign countries and with Native Americans that the colonies faced as they grew. In the next section you'll learn about the increasing tension between the colonies and Great Britain that led to independence.



## Section 4 Assessment

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ONLINE QUIZ

### Reviewing Ideas, Terms, and People

- Describe** How were colonial governments organized?
  - Analyze** How did political change in England affect colonial governments?
- Explain** What is **mercantilism**?
  - Analyze** How did the Navigation Acts support the system of mercantilism?
  - Evaluate** Did the colonies benefit from mercantilism? Why or why not?
- Identify** What was the **Great Awakening**?
  - Compare** How was the **Enlightenment** similar to the Great Awakening?
- Explain** What caused the French and Indian War?
  - Evaluate** Defend the British decision to ban colonists from settling on the western frontier.

### Critical Thinking

- Summarizing** Review your notes on the developments in the colonies during the late 1600s to

mid-1700s. Then add a box to the bottom of your chart in which you briefly summarize how the colonies grew and changed during the period, as well as the challenges they faced.

Development	Effects
Establishment of local government	
Political change in England	
Trade laws	
Great Awakening/Enlightenment	
French and Indian War	



How the colonies grew and changed and challenges faced

### FOCUS ON WRITING

- Reviewing the Information** This section focused on what life was like in all the English colonies discussed so far. Does this information give you any new ideas about the colony you'll use in your infomercial?