

The Colonial Period Nuts and Bolts

The Colonial Period

European Colonization

The first permanent settlement was in Jamestown, Virginia in 1607.

The British soon established 13 colonies along the east coast of North America

Europeans came to the New World for 3 major reasons: **glory, God, and gold.**

Glory: adventure and political gain.

God: religious freedom and converting natives to Christianity.

Gold: land and resources.

Colonial Regions

New England Region

- Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Connecticut
- Poor, rocky soil
- Shipping and Fishing
- Town Meetings
- Strict religious communities

Middle Colonies

- New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware
- Farming: "Breadbasket colonies"
- More diverse society

Southern Colonies

- Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia
- Plantation Farming
- Slavery
- Tobacco (Cash Crops)

Colonial Governments

Most of the colonies were founded with charters from the British government.

Colonies, while ultimately under British control, were largely **self-governing**. They had their own colonial governments to pass and enforce local laws. **All were steps in the growth of representative democracy.**

Important Events in Colonial Politics

- Virginia House of Burgess (1619): first elected representative legislature in the colonies. An example of a representative form of government.
- Mayflower Compact (1620): established a civil government for Plymouth Colony. Clear step toward self-governing.

- Fundamental Orders of Connecticut (1639): First written constitution in the colonies.
- Albany Plan of Union (1754): plan to unify the colonies as one. Colonial assemblies objected because they did not want to give up their individual power.

Economic Policy: Mercantilism

Mercantilism was the British economic policy in the colonies.

- Purpose of colonies is to benefit the mother country
- Colonies supplied Britain with raw materials
- British manufactured and sold finished products back to colonies at a profit
- Britain limited colonies' trade with other nations

Mercantilist policy was not strictly enforced during the period of **salutary neglect**.

Salutary Neglect

Salutary neglect was an unofficial British policy of not strictly enforcing many laws restricting the colonies. (They left the colonies alone.)

It ended in 1763 with the end of the **French and Indian War**. The British needed money to pay for the war, so they enforced restrictions and raised taxes.

After being left alone for so long, the colonists resisted this new interference by the British especially new taxed like those in the **Tea Act, Sugar Act, Townsend Acts, and Stamp Act**.

1607-1763

- Mercantilist policies on the books but not enforced during **salutary neglect**.
- Colonies were left alone; developed an independent spirit

1763-1776

- French and Indian War leaves Britain in debt
- To raise money, they end salutary neglect and begin enforcing trade restrictions and raising taxes
- Examples: Sugar Act (1764), Quartering Act (1765), Stamp Act (1765), Townshend Act (1767), Intolerable Acts (1774)

1763-1776

Colonists resist these policies and eventually declare independence

Colonial Resistance

Colonists were angered by the sudden enforcement of mercantilism and the passing of new taxes and trade restrictions.

No Taxation without representation: the colonists' primary argument against these laws'; since colonists had no representatives in the British Parliament, the British government had no right to tax them. Consent of the governed.

Colonists were also angry over other things, such as the British forcibly quartering their troops in colonists' homes and the **Proclamation of 1763**, which forbade colonists from settling west of the Appalachian Mountains.

Colonists resisted these British measures in many ways, including the following:

1. Boycotts
2. Committees of Correspondence
3. Sons of Liberty (Organized the Boston Tea Party)
4. Organized Protests
5. **Common Sense** by Thomas Paine
6. First and Second Continental Congress

Colonists who supported the independence movement were called **Patriots**. Those who wanted to remain part of Britain were called **Loyalists**.

Common Sense by Thomas Paine

A publication persuading the American colonists to support colonial independence. Help the American cause in the Revolutionary War because it persuaded individuals who were undecided to support independence.

Winning Independence

Declaration of Independence

On July 4, 1776, members of the Second Continental Congress signed the **Declaration of independence**, which stated that the colonies were forming their own country. Most of the Declaration was written by **Thomas Jefferson**.

Influence of Enlightenment philosopher John Locke:

1. **Natural rights** ("life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness")
2. **Consent of the governed** ("No Taxation without Representation")