CHAPTER 19 - THE DIVERSITY OF AMERICAN COLONIAL SOCIETIES, 1530–1770

I. The Columbian Exchange
   A. Demographic Changes
      1. The peoples of the New World lacked immunity to diseases from the Old World. Smallpox, measles, diphtheria, typhus, influenza, malaria, yellow fever and maybe pulmonary plague caused severe declines in the population of native peoples in the Spanish and Portuguese colonies. Syphilis was the only significant disease thought to have been transferred from the Americas to Europe.
      2. Similar patterns of contagion and mortality may be observed in the English and French colonies in North America. Europeans did not use disease as a tool of empire, but the spread of Old World diseases clearly undermined the ability of native peoples to resist settlement and accelerated cultural change.
   B. Transfer of Plants and Animals
      1. European, Asian, and African food crops were introduced to the Americas while American crops, including maize, beans, potatoes, manioc, and tobacco, were brought to the Eastern Hemisphere. The introduction of New World food crops is thought to be one factor contributing to the rapid growth in world population after 1700.
      2. The introduction of European livestock such as cattle, pigs, horses, and sheep had a dramatic influence on the environment and on the cultures of the native people of the Americas.
      3. Old World livestock destroyed the crops of some Amerindian farmers. Other Amerindians benefited from the introduction of cattle, sheep, and horses.

II. Spanish America and Brazil
   A. State and Church
      1. The Spanish crown tried to exert direct control over its American colonies through a supervisory office called the Council of the Indies. In practice, the difficulty of communication between Spain and the New World led to a situation in which the Viceroyos of New Spain and Peru and their subordinate officials enjoyed a substantial degree of power.
      2. After some years of neglect and mismanagement, the Portuguese in 1720 appointed a viceroy to administer Brazil.
      3. The governmental institutions established by Spain and Portugal were highly developed, costly bureaucracies that thwarted local economic initiative and political experimentation.
      4. The Catholic Church played an important role in transferring European language, culture, and Christian beliefs to the New World. Catholic clergy converted large numbers of Amerindians, although some of them secretly held on to some of their native beliefs and practices.
      5. Catholic clergy also acted to protect Amerindians from some of the exploitation and abuse of the Spanish settlers. One example is Bartolome de Las Casas, a former settler turned priest who denounced Spanish policies toward the Amerindians and worked to improve the status of Amerindians through legal reforms such as the New Laws of 1542.
      6. Catholic missionaries were frustrated as Amerindian converts blended Christian beliefs with elements of their own cosmology and ritual. In response, the Church redirected its energies toward the colonial cities and towns, where the Church founded universities and secondary schools and played a significant role in the intellectual and economic life of the colonies.
B. Colonial Economies
1. The colonial economies of Latin America were dominated by the silver mines of Peru and Mexico and by the sugar plantations of Brazil. This led to a dependence on mineral and agricultural exports.
2. The economy of the Spanish colonies was dominated by the silver mines of Bolivia and Peru until 1680 and then by the silver mines of Mexico. Silver mining and processing required a large labor force and led to environmental effects that included deforestation and mercury poisoning.
3. In the agricultural economy that dominated Spanish America up to the 1540s, Spanish settlers used the forced-labor system of encomienda to exploit Amerindian labor. With the development of silver-mining economies, new systems of labor exploitation were devised: in Mexico, free-wage labor, and in Peru, the mita.
4. Under the mita system, one-seventh of adult male Amerindians were drafted for forced labor at less than subsistence wages for six months of the year. The mita system undermined the traditional agricultural economy, weakened Amerindian village life, and promoted the assimilation of Amerindians into Spanish colonial society.
5. The Portuguese developed the slave-labor sugar plantation system in the Atlantic islands and then set up similar plantations in Brazil. The Brazilian plantations first used Amerindian slaves and then the more expensive but more productive (and more disease-resistant) African slaves.
6. Sugar and silver played important roles in integrating the American colonial economies into the system of world trade. Both Spain and Portugal tried to control the trade of their American colonies through monopolies and convoy systems that facilitated the collection of taxes but that also restricted the flow of European goods to the colonies.

C. Society in Colonial Latin America
1. The elite of Spanish America consisted of a relatively small number of Spanish immigrants and a larger number of their American-born descendants (creoles). The Spanish-born dominated the highest levels of government, church, and business, while the creoles controlled agriculture and mining.
2. Under colonial rule the cultural diversity of Amerindian peoples and the class differentiation within the Amerindian ethnic groups both were eroded.
3. People of African descent played various roles in the history of the Spanish colonies. Slaves and free blacks from the Iberian Peninsula participated in the conquest and settlement of Spanish America; later, the direct slave trade with Africa led both to an increase in the number of blacks and to a decline in the legal status of blacks in the Spanish colonies.
4. At first, people brought from various parts of Africa retained their different cultural identities; but with time, their various traditions blended and mixed with European and Amerindian languages and beliefs to form distinctive local cultures. Slave resistance, including rebellions, was always brought under control, but runaway slaves occasionally formed groups that defended themselves for years.
5. Most slaves were engaged in agricultural labor and were forced to submit to harsh discipline and brutal punishments. The overwhelming preponderance of males made it impossible for slaves to preserve traditional African family and marriage patterns or to adopt those of Europe.
6. In colonial Brazil, Portuguese immigrants controlled politics and the economy, but by the early seventeenth century Africans and their American-born descendants—both slave and free—were the largest ethnic group.
7. The growing population of individuals of mixed European and Amerindian descent (mestizos), European and African descent (mulattos), and mixed African and Amerindian descent were known collectively as “castas.” Castas dominated small-scale retailing and construction in the cities, ran small ranches and farms in the rural areas, and worked as wage laborers; some gained high status and wealth and adopted Spanish or Portuguese culture.

III. English and French Colonies in North America
   A. Early English Experiments
      1. Attempts to establish colonies in Newfoundland (1583) and on Roanoke Island (1587) ended in failure.
      2. In the seventeenth-century hope that colonies would prove to be profitable investments, combined with the successful colonization of Ireland, led to a new wave of interest in establishing colonies in the New World.
   B. The South
      1. The Virginia Company established the colony of Jamestown on an unhealthy island in the James River in 1606. After the English Crown took over management of the colony in 1624, Virginia (Chesapeake Bay area) developed as a tobacco plantation economy with a dispersed population and with no city of any significant size.
      2. The plantations of the Chesapeake Bay area initially relied on English indentured servants for labor. As life expectancy increased, planters came to prefer to invest in slaves; the slave population of Virginia increased from 950 in 1660 to 120,000 in 1756.
      3. Virginia was administered by a Crown-appointed governor and by representatives of towns meeting together as the House of Burgesses. The House of Burgesses developed into a form of democratic representation at the same time as slavery was growing.
      4. Colonists in the Carolinas first prospered on the fur trade with Amerindian deer-hunters. The consequences of the fur trade included environmental damage brought on by over-hunting, Amerindian dependency on European goods, ethnic conflicts among Amerindians fighting over hunting grounds, and a series of unsuccessful Amerindian attacks on the English colonists in the early 1700s.
      5. The southern part of the Carolinas was settled by planters from Barbados and developed a slave-labor plantation economy, producing rice and indigo. Enslaved Africans and their descendants formed the majority population and developed their own culture; a slave uprising (the Stono Rebellion) in 1739 led to more repressive policies toward slaves throughout the southern colonies.
      6. Colonial South Carolina was the most hierarchical society in British North America. A wealthy planter class dominated a population of small farmers, merchants, cattlemen, artisans, and fur-traders who, in turn, stood above the people of mixed English-Amerindian or English-African background and slaves.
   C. New England
      1. The Pilgrims, who wanted to break completely with the Church of England, established the small Plymouth Colony in 1620. The Puritans, who wanted only to reform the Church of England, formed a chartered joint-stock company (the Massachusetts Bay Company) and established the Massachusetts Bay colony in 1630.
      2. The Massachusetts Bay colony had a normal gender balance, saw a rapid increase in population, and was more homogenous and less hierarchical than the southern colonies. The political institutions of the colony were derived from the terms of its charter and included an elected governor and, in 1650, a lower legislative house.
3. Without the soil or the climate to produce cash crops, the Massachusetts economy evolved from dependence on fur, forest products, and fish to a dependence on commerce and shipping. Massachusetts’s merchants engaged in a diversified trade across the Atlantic, which made Boston the largest city in British North America in 1740.

D. The Middle Atlantic Region
1. Manhattan Island was first colonized by the Dutch and then taken by the English and renamed New York. New York became a commercial and shipping center; it derived particular benefit from its position as an outlet for the export of grain to the Caribbean and Southern Europe.

2. Pennsylvania was first developed as a proprietary colony for Quakers, but soon developed into a wealthy grain-exporting colony with Philadelphia as its major commercial city. In contrast to rice-exporting South Carolina’s slave agriculture, Pennsylvania’s grain was produced by free family farmers, including a substantial number of Germans.

E. French America
1. Patterns of French settlement closely resembled those of Spain and Portugal; the French were committed to missionary work, and they emphasized the extraction of natural resources—furs. French expansion was driven by the fur trade and resulted in depletion of beaver and deer populations and made Amerindians dependent upon European goods.

2. The fur trade provided Amerindians with firearms that increased the violence of the wars that they fought over control of hunting grounds. When firearms reached the horse frontier in the early eighteenth century, they increased the military power and hunting efficiency of the indigenous peoples of the American West and slowed the pace of European settlement.

3. Catholic missionaries, including the Jesuits, attempted to convert the Amerindian population of French America, but, meeting with indigenous resistance, they turned their attention to work in the French settlements. These settlements, dependent on the fur trade, were small and grew slowly. This pattern of settlement allowed Amerindians in French America to preserve a greater degree of independence than they could in the Spanish, Portuguese, or British colonies.

4. The French expanded aggressively to the West and South, establishing a second fur-trading colony in Louisiana in 1699. This expansion led to war with England in which the French, defeated in 1759, were forced to yield Canada to the English and to cede Louisiana to Spain.

IV. Colonial Expansion and Conflict
A. Imperial Reform in Spanish America and Brazil
1. After 1713 Spain’s new Bourbon dynasty undertook a series of administrative reforms including expanded inter-colonial trade, new commercial monopolies on certain goods, a stronger navy, and better policing of the trade in contraband goods to the Spanish colonies. These reforms coincided with the eighteenth-century economic expansion that was led by the agricultural and grazing economies of Cuba, the Rio de la Plata, Venezuela, Chile, and Central America.

2. The Bourbon policies were detrimental to the interests of the grazing and agricultural export economies, which were increasingly linked to illegitimate trade with the English, French, and Dutch. The new monopolies aroused opposition from creole elites whose only gain from the reforms was their role as leaders of militias that were intended to counter the threat of war with England.
3. The Bourbon policies were also a factor in the Amerindian uprisings, including that led by the Peruvian Amerindian leader José Gabriel Condorcanqui (Tupac Amaru II). The rebellion was suppressed after more than two years and cost the Spanish colonies over 100,000 lives and enormous amounts of property damage.

4. Brazil also underwent a period of economic expansion and administrative reform in the 1700s. Economic expansion fueled by gold, diamonds, coffee, and cotton underwrote the Pombal reforms, paid for the importation of nearly 2 million African slaves, and underwrote a new wave of British imports.

B. Reform and Reorganization in British North America

1. In the latter half of the seventeenth century the British Crown tried to control colonial trading (smuggling) and manufacture by passing a series of Navigation Acts and by suspending the elected assemblies of the New England colonies. Colonists resisted by overthrowing the governors of New York and Massachusetts and by removing the Catholic proprietor of Maryland, thus setting the stage for future confrontational politics.

2. During the eighteenth century economic growth and new immigration into the British colonies was accompanied by increased urbanization and a more stratified social structure.