I. The Unhealthy Chesapeake

• Life in the American wilderness:
  – Life was nasty, brutish, and short.
  – Malaria, dysentery, and typhoid took their toll.
  – Newcomers died ten years earlier.
  – Half of the people born in early Virginia and Maryland died before their twentieth birthday.
  – Few lived to see their fiftieth birthday, sometimes even their fortieth, especially if they were women.

I. The Unhealthy Chesapeake (cont.)

• Settlements of the Chesapeake grew slowly, mostly by immigration:
  – Most were single men in their late teens and early twenties.
  – Most died soon after arrival.
  – Men outnumbered women, usually six to one.
  – Families were few and fragile.
  – Most men could not find mates.

• Chesapeake settlements (cont.):
  – Most marriages were destroyed by death of a partner within seven years.
  – Scarcely any children reached adulthood under the care of two parents.
  – Many pregnancies among unmarried young girls reflected weak family ties.

• Yet the Chesapeake colonies struggled on.
• End of 17th c., white population was growing.
II. The Tobacco Economy

- Chesapeake hospitable to tobacco growing:
  - It quickly exhausted the soil.
  - It created an insatiable demand for new land.
  - Commercial growers moved farther up the river valleys, provoking Indian attacks.
- By 1630s the Chesapeake shipped 1.5 million pounds of tobacco, and by 1700 almost 40 million pounds.
- Overproduction depressed prices.

II. The Tobacco Economy (cont.)

- More tobacco required more labor, but from where?
  - Natural population increase was too slow.
  - Indians often died on contact with whites.
  - African slaves were expensive.
  - England still had a “surplus” of displaced workers and farmers desperate for employment.
- Virginia and Maryland used the headright system to encourage importation of laborers.

II. The Tobacco Economy (cont.)

- Chesapeake planters recruited some 100,000 indentured servants to the region by 1700.
- These “white slaves” represented more than three-quarters of all European immigrants.
  - Indentured servants led a hard life but looked forward to becoming free and acquiring land.
  - After freedom, they often had to work for former masters at low wages because few received land as part of “freedom dues.”
9 III. Frustrated Freemen and Bacon’s Rebellion

- Impoverished freedmen were increasingly frustrated with broken hopes and failure to find single women to marry.
- 1670: Virginia assembly disfranchised most landless whites.
- Governor Berkeley faced Bacon’s Rebellion (1676) led by Nathaniel Bacon.

10 III. Frustrated Freemen and Bacon’s Rebellion (cont.)

- Because of Berkeley’s friendly policies toward Indians, he refused to retaliate against a series of brutal Indian attacks.
- Bacon and his frontier followers took matters into their own hands.
- After Bacon died from disease, Berkeley brutally suppressed the rebellion.
- Afterwards, planters sought a less troublesome source of labor for tobacco.
  
11 IV. Colonial Slavery

- In late 17th century slavery expanded:
  - 7 million brought to New World over 300 years.
  - 400,000 came to North America, most after 1700.
  - 1619: First Africans were brought to Jamestown.
  - 1670: Africans = 7% of southern population.
  - Colonists could not afford high prices for slaves.
  - White servants were less costly initially, but less so by late 1600s and seemed more dangerous after Bacon’s Rebellion.

12 IV. Colonial Slavery (cont.)

- Mid-1680s: More black slaves than white servants came into plantation colonies.
- 1698: Royal African Company lost monopoly.
- Thus Americans, especially Rhode Islanders, entered the lucrative slave trade.
- Most slaves came from west coast of Africa, present-day Senegal to Angola (see Map 4.1).
- Most came via gruesome middle passage.
  
13
IV. Colonial Slavery (cont.)

• In the early 1600s, the legal difference between African slaves and white servants was unclear, but that changed as the number of Africans greatly increased.
• 1662: Virginia statutes began to define the iron conditions of slavery for blacks.
• “Slave codes” marked blacks and their children as property (“chattels”) for life.

IV. Colonial Slavery (cont.)

• Some colonies made it a crime to teach a slave to read or write.
• Not even conversion to Christianity could qualify a slave for freedom.
• As the 1600s ended, racial discrimination clearly molded the American slave system.
• Slavery then shaped race relations throughout the English colonies.

V. Southern Society

• As slavery spread, gaps in the South’s social structure widened:
  – A hierarchy of wealth and status became defined.
  – At the top were powerful great planter families: the Fitzhughs, the Lees, and the Washingtons.
  – By the Revolutionary War, 70% of the leaders of the Virginia legislature came from families established in Virginia before 1690 (the “FFVs”).

V. Southern Society (cont.)

• Most of the planter elite were hard-working.
• Far beneath the planters were the small farmers, the largest social
Still lower were the landless whites.
Beneath them were those whites serving out their indenture.
Increasingly black slaves occupied the bottom rung of southern society.

V. Southern Society
(cont.)

• Few cities sprouted in the colonial South.
• Thus an urban professional class (lawyers and financiers) was slow to emerge.
• Southern life revolved around the isolated great plantations.
• Waterways were the principal means of transport.
• Roads were terrible.

VI. The New England Family

• Contrasts in New England life:
  – New England settlers of 1600s added 10 years to their life span.
  – First generations of Puritans averaged 70 years.
  – They tended to migrate not as single persons but as families, and the family remained the center of New England life
  – New England’s population grew from natural reproduction.

VI. The New England Family
(cont.)

• Married life in New England:
  – Early marriage encouraged a booming birthrate.
  – Women generally married in their early twenties.
  – They produced babies every two years.
  – Dread of death in birthing haunted women.
  – A married woman could experience up to ten pregnancies and raise as many as eight children.
  – Longevity contributed to family stability.
  – New England “invented” grandparents.
VI. The New England Family
(cont.)
• Other contrasts between southern and New England ways of life:
  – The fragility of southern families advanced the economic security of southern women.
  – Because men often died young, southern colonies allowed married women to retain separate title to property and inherit their husband’s estates.
  – New England women, however, gave up property rights when they married.

VI. The New England Family
(cont.)
• A rudimentary concept of women’s rights as individuals was beginning to appear in the 1600s.
• Women could not vote, but authorities could intervene to restrain abusive husbands.
• Women had some spheres of authority (e.g., midwifery).

VI. The New England Family
(cont.)
• Laws of Puritan New England sought to defend the integrity of marriages:
  – Divorce was very rare, and authorities commonly ordered separated couples to reunite.
  – Outright abandonment was among the few permissible grounds for divorce.
  – Adultery was another.

VII. Life in the New England Towns
• New Englanders evolved a tightly knit society based on small villages and farms.
• Puritanism instilled unity and a concern for the moral health of the whole community.
• Society grew in an orderly fashion, unlike in the southern colonies.
• After securing a grant of land from a colonial legislature, proprietors laid out their towns.

34 □ VII. Life in the New England Towns (cont.)
• Also marked out was a village green, where the militia could drill.
• Each family received several parcels of land:
  – A woodlot for fuel
  – A tract suitable for growing crops
  – A tract for pasturing animals
• Towns of over 50 families were required to provide elementary education [see boxed quote on page 72].

35 □ VII. Life in the New England Towns (cont.)
• 1636: Harvard was founded.
• Puritans ran their own churches.
• Democracy in the Congregational Church led to the same in government.
• Town meetings classrooms for democracy:
  – Elected officials
  – Appointed schoolmasters
  – Discussed mundane matters such as road repairs

36 □ VIII. The Half-Way Covenant and the Salem Witch Trials
• Passage of time dampened the first generation’s religious zeal.
• By the mid-1600s, a new form of doom-saying sermon appeared with jeremiads.
• Decline in conversions was alarming.
• 1662: The Half-Way Covenant for Congregational Church membership was established, offering partial membership.

37 □

38 □ VIII. The Half-Way Covenant and the Salem Witch Trials (cont.)
• The Half-Way Covenant weakened the distinction between the “elect” and others.
• Doors of Puritan churches eventually opened to all comers, whether converted or not.
• Strict religious purity was sacrificed to the cause of wider religious participation.
• Women became the majority of churchgoers.

VIII. The Half-Way Covenant and the Salem Witch Trials (cont.)

• 1692: Salem witch trials occurred:
  – A group of girls claimed to have been bewitched by certain older women.
  – A hysterical “witch hunt” ensued, leading to legal lynching of 20 individuals.
  – 19 were hanged; 1 pressed to death.
  – 2 dogs were also hanged.
• Witchcraft persecutions were common at this time in Europe.

IX. The New England Way of Life

• The story of New England was largely written by rocks:
  – Puritans did not possess the soil; it possessed them by shaping their hard-working character.
  – The difficult land left colonial New England less ethnically mixed than southern colonies.
  – The harsh climate also molded New England.
  – Black slavery was on a modest scale because few staple crops were grown on small family farms.
IX. The New England Way of Life (cont.)
• Just as the land shaped New Englanders, so they shaped the land:
  – Native Americans left their imprint but did not have a concept of individual land ownership.
  – English settlers were different; they felt a virtual duty to “improve” the land.
  – Dramatic changes resulted from introduction of new livestock as cleared forests led to erosion.
  – Repelled by rocks, hardy New Englanders turned to fine natural harbors.

IX. The New England Way of Life (cont.)
• Calvinism, soil, and climate made for energy, purposefulness, sternness, stubbornness, self-reliance, and resourcefulness.
• New Englanders saw themselves as God’s chosen people.
• They had an incalculable impact on the rest of the nation as they moved westward.

X. The Early Settlers’ Days and Ways
• The cycles of the seasons and the sun set the schedules of all earliest Americans:
  – Overwhelming majority were farmers.
  – Daily tasks were assigned by gender and age.
  – Life was humble but comfortable compared to Europe because land was cheap.

X. The Early Settlers’ Days and Ways (cont.)
• Most white migrants came from neither the richest nor the poorest classes in Europe.
• Crude frontier life did not permit a flagrant display of class distinctions.
• Some elite tried to recreate on a modified scale the social structure of the Old World.
• 1689–1691: Leisler’s Rebellion in New York was caused by animosity between lordly landholders and aspiring merchants.
• Efforts to reproduce the finely stratified societies of Europe proved feeble in early America, where equality and democracy found fertile soil—at least for white people.