

The First American Way of Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Americans moving across their continent have faced the questions again and again: how to live, how to live with one another, how to live with the outside world. They first learned how to live on tobacco, rice, furs and fish. England told them through the Navigation Acts that they must live with the outside world. For the remaining question, many chose not to love with one another. Many people decided to live alone, away from others and the Puritans. But before the end of the colonial period, most Americans were living together in one of four distinct patterns- the Southern plantation, the New England town, the loose collection of individual farms, or the coastal city.</li></ul>
Plantations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Plantations developed in colonies where the majority of people lived by growing a single crop for export, tobacco (Virginian and Maryland), rice or indigo (South Carolina), sugar (West Indies).</li><li>➤ The definition of a plantation has changed from “planter” being a settler and “plantation” being a settlement to holdings where substantial numbers of people worked for the owner. Gradually the term came to imply that the workers were slaves.</li><li>➤ The plantation manned by slaves originated in the Mediterranean, but within the present US it developed first in Virginia. Unknown in England, it was the most novel way of living that colonial Americans devised for themselves. It was also the most productive, if judged by the exports of the 13 colonies. However, it came to be the most violent and oppressive; a way of living that required the continuous coercion of unwilling and unrewarded labor.</li><li>➤ The first steps towards plantations were taken during Virginia’s tobacco boom in the 1620s. A number of successful Virginians were able to gather crews of up to 30 men to work for them. These laborers were mainly Englishmen who signed up for 7 years of service for their voyage. They were almost like slaves, because they could be bought, sold, traded and won in card games. The plantation force remained overwhelmingly English for many years because it was cheaper to buy English indentured servants for 7 years than African slaves for life. And in early Virginia, 7 years was the life expectancy for immigrants. Women were less valued, since they were not used for fieldwork, and one woman could cook and wash for a sizable crew of men. Towards the middle of the century, people started to live longer, and by 1660 the population rose to 25,000 from 15,000 in 1653.</li><li>➤ As an increasing amount of men lived to complete their term of servitude, the added years of labor added profits to their masters. The Ex-Servants (called freedmen) could at last start small plantations, grow tobacco for export, and import servants of their own. But as production increased, a new Navigation Act of 1660 restricted the market for Virginia and Maryland tobacco, and this dropped the price of tobacco to a penny or less per pound. Land was also in demand, increasing the price. Freedmen had trouble</li></ul>

	<p>starting their own businesses. The good land by the water was already occupied by the previously established businesses, forcing freedmen to rent from big owners or far up one of their rivers (prone to Indian attack and too far for ocean-going vessels).</p>
<p>Freedmen Rebellion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ As a result, Virginia and Maryland (where the same conditions prevailed) acquired a growing class of indigent freedmen. They wandered from county to county, dodging the tax collector, sometimes trying to live off the land, sometimes working for wages, and most times, stealing and enticing servants to run away with them. The servants were mostly young and mostly armed, as any home needed to be armed in case of an Indian attack.</li> <li>➤ William Berkeley, the governor of the colony clearly saw danger ahead. He thought that they would “revolt (with the enemy)...in hope of bettering their condition by Sharing the Plunder of the Country with them”. His fears were justified. Three years later, sparked by an Indian attack on the frontiers, a band of self-appointed Indian-fighters attacked their rulers. Nathaniel Bacon, a freedman, found ready allies in nearly every part of the colony. They burned the capital settlement at Jamestown and drove the governor and his friends in flight to the Eastern Shore, the only loyal stronghold in the colony. Then, after they redistributed the wealth, the rebels gave up as quickly as they had risen. Bacon died of a fever and the rebels had no solution to the problems that faced them. Berkeley exacted a savage revenge by hanging the remaining leaders, though the king had sent a general pardon.</li> <li>➤ The rebellion had subsided, but its causes had not. Soon, though slaves became a better investment than the indentured servants.</li> </ul>
<p>Slaves</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ At the close of the seventeenth century, a slave cost only twice as much as a servant. Slaves could be worked for life, and proved to be much less dangerous than a freedman. (No slave rebellion in American history ever approached the success of Bacon’s rebellion.) Slaves could safely be denied rights that an Englishman, servant or free, could legally demand. Slaves could be kept unarmed, unorganized and helpless to resist. Their very skin color made it difficult to escape, announcing their probable status.</li> <li>➤ The need for African slaves had many reasons. In the West Indies, mothers could not have enough children to keep up with the awful death rate. In the colonies, the African slaves had become more economical than using natives or indentured servants.</li> <li>➤ Tobacco required less strenuous labor than sugar, life on a southern plantation was less arduous and slaves had longer life expectancies. In the southern plantations, women worked alongside men in the field and at the same time raised children. Children were properties of the masters, so the family could be broken up by selling any one of them. However, families were allowed to have their own small garden next to the cabins they lived in, and at night, they spent time together, so they at least had a semblance of family life.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Plantations often constituted a small community in itself. At the center lay a great house, normally facing a navigable river. Arranged around it were attendant buildings, laundry, smokehouse, kitchen, and perhaps a schoolhouse, where a hired tutor taught his free children. At some distance say the barns and cabins of the slaves. In addition to field hands, the community included house slaves, skilled artisans, carpenter, blacksmith, and tailor, cobbler (either white indentured or slave educated for the purpose). What could not be made on the premises would be imported directly from London.</li> </ul>
<p>Different Lifestyles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The New England Town: Rivers, tobacco, and slavery made up the plantation. Puritanism and past experience made up the New England town that also appeared in parts of NY and NJ settled by New Englanders. The English borough was a town that normally possessed a charter of incorporation from the king entitling it to send two members to Parliament and to exercise a degree of local governmental independence. The freemen, a very small proportion of the pop. Elected its members of parliament as well as a mayor to handle local affairs.</li> <li>➤ The Farm: In the colonies from New England southward, most Americans lived lonely lives. In the New World, sheer space separated families because settlers chose lands for evenness, water supply and fertility, rather than neighborliness. It was common practice to clear a plot, crop it for several years, and when its fertility was drained, another field was cleared. Clearing a field meant nothing more than girdling the trees at the base to kill them, and planting crops between lifeless trunks, and clearing away the trunks if they rotted away.</li> <li>➤ The City: The streets, unlike in the country, were either gravel or cobblestone. Swine roamed everywhere, feeding on the trash, and drovers herded sheep to the butcher. Elegant carriages rolled the streets along with packs of barking dogs. Sailors reeled out of taverns, and the swaying masts of ships could be seen over the rooftops. Every shop had wares to catch the eye, mostly imported items from China and England.</li> </ul>

**Part 2: The Emerging American Mind**

<p>Americanisms</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Awareness of American differences with their mother country England was present by the mid- century.</li> </ul>
<p>Responsible Representative government</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The English brought with them the political ideas that were in their mother country. But very early on, Americans developed conceptions of representative government that differed from that prevailing in England at that time. England did have a representative government, but over time, it was less and less representative (in the sense that big new towns could not send reps but diminished towns could).</li> <li>➤ Like in England, every colony had property qualifications for voting; probably the great majority of adult whites owned enough land to meet</li> </ul>

	<p>them. The New England colonies have every town the right to send delegates to the assembly. Outside New England, the unit of representation was usually the county. In New England, where town meetings could be called at any time, people often gathered to tell their delegate how to vote on a particular issue. The representative was supposed to look after the peoples interests first, and those of the colony second. In larger counties it was almost impossible for voters to gather in one place, except on Election Day. In America, a representative government meant something different than in England. To Americans, a government existed to do a job, and to keep responsible to its employers. “Virtual” representatives in Parliament created offices whose only purpose was to enrich the men who filled them. Colonial assemblymen, watched closely by their constituents, had comparatively little opportunity to dip into the public purse.</p>
<p>Clergy and Laity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Americans look on their clergymen as they did on their representatives. They wanted the clergy to serve, not rule them. This attitude had its roots in the English Reformation.</li> <li>➤ The Anglican Church in England was the complete opposite. It was the only church supported by state taxation. During much of the colonial period, only its members could hold public office, and its bishops enjoyed an authority that reached far beyond the spiritual realm. As ex officio members of the House of Lords they voted on every act of parliament, and, as presiding judges in courts with jurisdiction over private wills and breaches of morality, they could excommunicate offenders. Excommunication cut a man off from political rights and intercourse with neighbors; it could mean economic ruin as well as social ostracism. An offender could get the sentence lifted only by paying a heavy fee.</li> <li>➤ In the colonies, churchmen had no such powers. Except in Rhode Island, Delaware, Penn, and NJ, the assemblies did levy taxes in support of churches, favoring the Congregational churches in New England, the Anglican elsewhere. However, this was the only connection between church and state most Americans would tolerate.</li> </ul>
<p>Education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ American colonists had better understandings of their church and government systems because they were better educated. The adults wanted to read and wanted their children to read. They were perhaps inspired by their views of the Indians: naked, savage, and illiterate. In Massachusetts the law directed every town of 100 families to maintain a schoolmaster and every town of 100 families to maintain one who could teach Greek and Latin. Other New England colonies had similar requirements. The laws were not always enforced, but the rate of literacy exceeded that of England and rose rapidly in the 18<sup>th</sup> century until nearly all adult males could read and write. Other colonial regions lagged behind. In the Southern colonies, laws forbade teaching slaves to read or write.</li> <li>➤ By the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, nearly every colony had at least one</li> </ul>

	<p>printing press, and usually produced a weekly newspaper, devoted mainly to news from abroad and from other colonies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ The colonists made early provision for higher education. In 1636, they founded a college named after its first benefactor, John Harvard.</li></ul>
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