

## English Colonial Examples: Virginia & Bacon's Rebellion

### England & True Colonization

#### Factors Leading to Successful English Colonization:

- ✿ Defeat of the Spanish Armada (1588)—Bolstered English confidence, opened up the Atlantic to Planting, Supplying & Protecting Colonies;
- ✿ Full impact of Reformation felt in England led to:
  - ⊕ More secular purpose of English colonies as a whole, as the Church of England did not emphasize conversion of Native Americans; but
  - ⊕ Splintering of Protestantism leads to persecution and rise of radical strains of Separatists, Puritans, Catholics and Quakers who determine their own mission in the New World.
- ✿ Economic changes make colonization necessary & successful:
  - ⊕ **Enclosure Movement** closed off land to majority of English population displacing agricultural population:
    - Population that wanted to leave.
    - Population England wanted to send away.
- ✿ Rising merchant class and banking interests provided assets as capital for colonization;
  - ⊕ Looking for opportunities for profit
  - ⊕ Many opportunities in England dominated by nobility.
- ✿ Creation of the **Joint Stock Companies** provided the mechanism for turning capital into colonies.

### English Colonial Example: Virginia

- ✿ Virginia Company received a charter from James I
- ✿ Goals of Colony:
  - ⊕ Find a legitimate passage to the East—Search for the Northwest Passage;
  - ⊕ Convert Natives to Christianity (Minor goal);
  - ⊕ Profits for stockholders in Virginia Company:
    - Sought Gold & Silver (Attempt to recreate Spanish successes);
    - When failed to find mineral wealth, turned to **Cash Crop**—Tobacco one of the most successful **Drug Foods** of the New World (Along with sugar, chocolate & coffee)

## Virginia Colony, Successes & Failures

- ⊗ **Tobacco economy** brought fabulous wealth to stockholders
  - ⊕ Short-term profits, but long-term damage to soil;
  - ⊕ **Plantation economy** tied Virginia to one crop, one economic system;
  - ⊕ Importance of forced labor (**Indentured servants**)
- ⊗ Economic success led to social difficulties:
  - ⊕ Mix of settlers based on economic need not basic survival;
  - ⊕ Disease was rampant in the unhealthy Chesapeake region, led to high mortality rates & high turnover in colonists;
  - ⊕ Did have representative government in form of **House of Burgesses**, but controlled by large landowners (took advantage of **Headright System** to grab up available land);
  - ⊕ Virginia Company continued to pump cash & labor into the colony, but opportunities remained limited;
  - ⊕ Provided the model for future development, but far from a self-sustaining colony.

## Recurring Conflict with Native Americans

- ⊗ Complex Relationship with **Powhatan Confederacy**
  - ⊕ From founding of Jamestown in 1607
  - ⊕ Defined by Powhatan's desire to trade
    - Legend of John Smith & Pocahontas
    - Powhatan had upper hand; sought to incorporate Virginia into his system.
- ⊗ Indian/Land Policy as a Root Cause of Bacon's Rebellion
  - ⊕ Opechancanough led Native Americans against VA Settlers (1644)
  - ⊕ VA government sought to minimize contact between settlers & Native Americans.
  - ⊕ Growth of the colony led to renewal of conflict beginning in the 1660s.

## Grievances Crystallized with Nathaniel Bacon at the Center

- ⊗ History of Nathaniel Bacon
  - ⊕ Cousin of VA Governor **William Berkeley**
  - ⊕ Named to House of Burgesses upon arrival
  - ⊕ Landowner, but not part of the **Gentry**, the **Planter Aristocracy**
  - ⊕ Used killing of his servant as pretext to organize & arm lower classes

- ✿ Bacon's Rebellion
  - ⊕ Early sanction of Bacon's attacks on largely peaceful Native American tribes, Doeg and Susquehannock
  - ⊕ Passage of "Bacon's Laws"
    - Gave the Backcountry greater say in politics, suffrage for all freedmen and say in taxation;
    - Limited participation of newcomers in House of Burgesses; and
    - Sanctioned Bacon's Army
- ✿ Berkeley's Reversals
  - ⊕ Planters feared that Bacon's army might turn on the Gentry;
  - ⊕ Feared that Indentured Servants—1/2 the population—might be drawn to Bacon & the yeoman farmers;
  - ⊕ Governor & Burgesses declared Bacon a traitor.
- ✿ Bacon's "Successes"
  - ⊕ Burned down several plantations;
  - ⊕ Marched on Jamestown & routed Berkeley's forces; but
  - ⊕ Rebellion dissolved with the unexpected death of Bacon.

### Issues of Bacon's Rebellion

- ✿ Land Policy
  - ⊕ Best land in VA is in the Tidewater region around the Chesapeake;
  - ⊕ Grants to wealthy dominated the area; and
  - ⊕ **Headright System** exacerbated the issue.
  - ⊕ Little available land for later immigrants or those completing indentures.
- ✿ Political & Economic Power
  - ⊕ Insider/Outsider status determined beyond borders of VA;
  - ⊕ Did not matter how long a person had been in the colony;
  - ⊕ Small Planters & **yeoman farmers** had little in common other than hatred of Plantation Aristocracy and desire to become part of the Gentry.

### Consequences of Bacon's Rebellion

- ✿ For the Planter Aristocracy—Realization of worst fears.
  - ⊕ Possible class-consciousness among small-time planters, yeoman farmers and indentured servants.
  - ⊕ System of indentured servitude was short-term solution to the labor problem, created long-term

expectations among whites lower class that could still claim "Rights of all Englishmen."

- ⊗ Shift to Hereditary, Race-Based Chattel Slavery
  - ⊕ Practical Issues—Labor pool in England drying up; VA servants & former servants seeking more rights; and slavery established in Caribbean.
  - ⊕ Economic Considerations—As disease waned, indentured servitude became less profitable while slavery became more .
  - ⊕ Racial Consideration—Africans already defined in New World by their servitude; English had a well-developed sense of the "Other; and Need to create a permanent underclass, crating common cause based on whiteness not class.