

Chapter 2

Colliding Peoples in Eastern North America, 1600–1780

Thanksgiving

giving thanks
should be a very personal thing
like the legendary settlers in New England learned
when they arrived as illegal immigrants
and the natives
though wary of their guns and swords
taught them to plant
corn together with fish
and shared their harvest with them
late in the year

...

giving thanks is a very human thing
it shows that we are aware
of the fragility of our life
of how it always depends
on the kindness of strangers
who help us to survive
in their world

Walter Hölbling¹

In the Beginning There Were Indians

Variety

The history of American immigration begins with Indians, because what is now the United States was not empty before Europeans came. The first concept to grasp is diversity. North America was not a unitary place, and it was not inhabited by only one sort of people prior to the European invasion. Take language. More different languages were spoken in what is now California alone than in all of Europe in 1500. Perhaps as many as 143 language *families*—as different from each other as the Sino-Tibetan language family is from the Indo-European—coexisted in America north of Mexico. Some families of related languages like the Algonquian family (including languages spoken by the Pequot, Abnaki, Menominee, Chippewa, and many more Native groups) were spoken over wide territories by relatively large numbers of people. Others like the languages in the Ritwan family were employed in only very limited locales by small numbers of closely related peoples. Scholars figure there were about 1000 different Native American languages in all (Figure 2.1).²



Figure 2.1 Tribal groups.



Figure 2.2 Kicks Iron.

Take physical features. Here are pictures of three Indian men from different parts of western North America: Kicks Iron of the Dakota Sioux (Figure 2.2); Tswawadi, a Kwakiutl (Figure 2.3); and Mishongnovi, a Hopi (Figure 2.4).³ It's not just the clothes. These guys do not look alike. Native Americans were not just one sort of people.

Take social organization. There was enormous variety in the density and complexity of different Native groups. In the thirteenth century, the city of Cahokia sprawled along the Mississippi River not far from the present-day location of St. Louis. With a population of 20,000 to 30,000, it was smaller than Texcoco, the Chichimec city, or Tenochtitlan, the later seat of the Aztec empire. But Cahokia's population was on the same order of magnitude as London's or Rome's.⁴ Cahokia was the epitome of what the archeologists call Mississippian culture. Cahokians made fine jewelry and sophisticated pottery. They worked in metal and stone, herded deer, and planted corn, pumpkins, squash, beans, and tobacco. The city was arranged around a central plaza with a huge rectangular earthen mound. The central pyramid, with a wooden temple at its top, covered fifteen acres and stood as high as a



Figure 2.3 Tswawadi.

modern ten-story building. Smaller mounds dotted the surrounding territory. There was a rigid class system and a ritual life focused on issues of mortality. Cahokia drew tribute from surrounding towns and farming communities. It was the center of a vast regional trade network. Mississippian mound-building culture and commerce stretched from Florida to Wisconsin, from Ohio to Oklahoma.⁵

The Native peoples of the Northwest Coast, Salish and others, built networks of towns rather than central cities, but they approached similar levels to the mound builders in terms of prosperity, population density, social complexity, and regional trade in the centuries before Europeans came to the continent. The Southeastern flood plains and the forests and rivers of the Northwest were rich physical environments that supported large settled populations. Some other peoples, such as the Shoshone and Bannock who lived in the Great Basin of Nevada and Utah, found the desert a less salubrious climate. Their population was sparse and on the move, small bands with no permanent dwellings, gathering seeds and roots and hunting small game. Other Native peoples assorted themselves between these two extremes of nomadism versus settlement, hunting and gathering versus agriculture and urban life.⁶

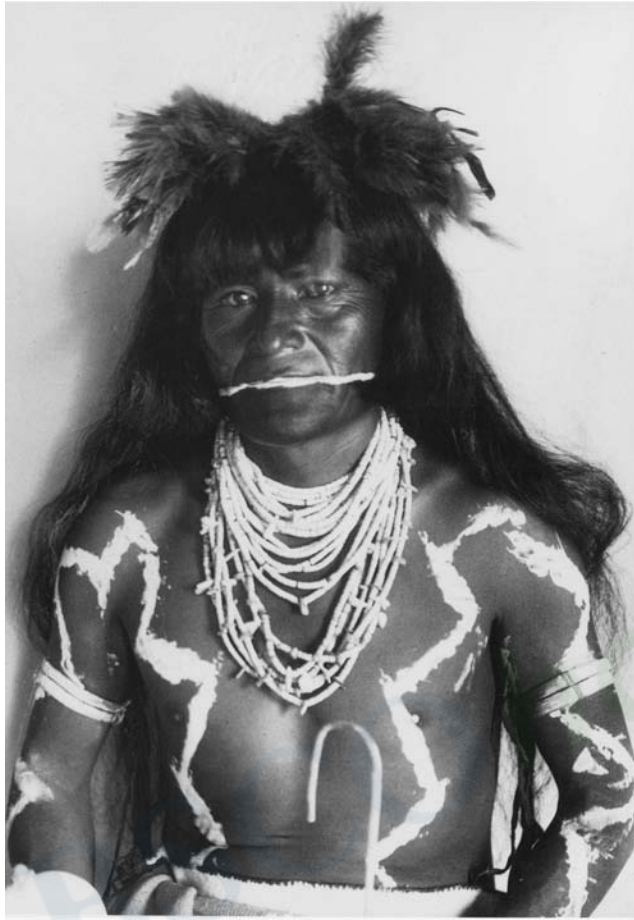


Figure 2.4 Mishongnovi.

North America, then, was inhabited by a great variety of peoples. They had no common consciousness of themselves as “Indians.” Robert Berkhofer reminds us that, “[s]ince the original inhabitants of the Western Hemisphere neither called themselves by a single term nor understood themselves as a collectivity,” it was only in the minds of White people that they were “Indians.”⁷

North America was also inhabited by a lot of people. The best estimates of the total population of North and South America before Columbus left the Canary Islands range from 54 million to 75 million: about 15 percent of the total world population at the time, as many as lived in Europe.⁸ Most of those people lived in fairly dense agricultural and urban settings in Mexico and in Central and South America. But a substantial number also lived north of the Rio Grande. Scholars’ estimates of the total have grown over the past century, as they have become more sophisticated in their understanding of the archeological record and of how European diseases probably spread among Native peoples even before they came into actual physical contact with Europeans. William Denevan estimates that 3.8 million people lived north of Mexico in 1492. Russell Thornton puts the number at more than seven million: a

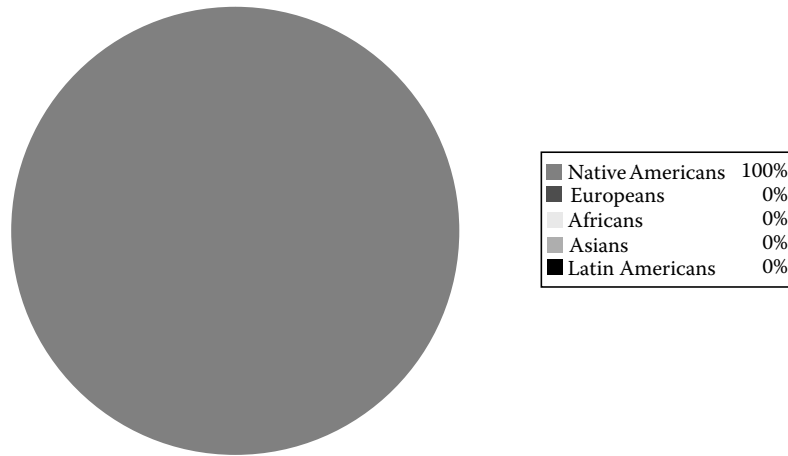


Figure 2.5 Population of North America, North of Mexico in 1500.

bit over five million in what is now the contiguous United States and something over two million in Canada, Alaska, and Greenland. Thus five million people lived in the continental United States. Add the nearly one million who lived in Hawai'i, and the total number of Native people in the territory that later became the United States probably adds up to about six million. (Compare that to the total number of European- and African-descended people counted within the United States by the first census of 1790: 3.9 million.) The lands to which Europeans migrated at the dawn of the modern era were far from empty.⁹

Figure 2.5 represents the racial makeup of the lands that would eventually become the United States, at the time of the beginning of European migration into the Americas. I recognize that the racial designations—Native American, European, etc.—are anachronistic. They do not stand for people groups as anyone recognized them in 1500. Even such concepts as “English” and “Spanish” were tenuous then. I have no wish to arrogate to myself the right to specify what were the relevant groups at any other time in history. But I do want the reader to get a sense of how broad-scale racial demography has changed over the centuries; hence I have chosen to introduce these very modern racial categories. I will place similar figures at appropriate points throughout this volume—roughly one every half-century starting with 1600. They allow us to think comparatively with a wide lens about broad trends in population dynamics. In the beginning, there were Indians.

Origins

How did all these people come to be in North America? The dominant theory—and it is just that, for there are no historical records and only fragments of archeology to prove it—is that they came from Asia via a land bridge sometime before 12,000 years ago. During each of several ice ages between 90,000 and 10,000 years ago, the annual temperature of the earth dropped several degrees below current levels. Much of the Northern Hemisphere was covered with thick sheets of ice. Since the earth is a bounded system, the water to make that ice had to come from somewhere.

The level of the world's oceans dropped between 100 and 300 feet, depending on which period one is talking about. The Bering Sea is less than 200 feet deep. All this meant that, during the coldest centuries, what is now sea floor was then land. Asia and North America were not connected by a narrow "land bridge"; they were a single continent, joined by a section several hundred miles wide. It was all cold territory and much of it covered with ice, but some parts had little snowfall and amounted to polar desert pathways. Large game animals—horses, mammoths, camels, caribou, and bison—migrated across the territory and made their first appearance in the Western Hemisphere. The theory is that Asian hunters followed them and—many generations later when temperatures moderated, the ice melted, and the oceans rose again—found themselves on the eastern side of the divide. They migrated east and south through the two continents, multiplied and filled the landscape, and reached the southern tip of South America around 12,000 years ago.

Some archeologists speculate that the first humans may have entered North America as much as 40,000 years ago or even earlier; others put that date at less than 15,000 years ago. Some think that they came not on foot across the icy wastes, but in small boats along the coast warmed by the Japan current and feeding off fish and marine mammals. Others point out that migration was also possible (indeed likely) from northern Norway across Arctic ice to Greenland and Baffin Island. DNA and blood group studies suggest a close link between Native Americans and Asians, but also some remote European ancestry. Linguistic studies suggest three major migrations, one involving the ancestors of most Native peoples of the new world, a second the ancestors of Northwest Coast Indians, and the third and most recent involving Inuits and Aleuts.¹⁰

That is the theory that is traditionally most common among anthropologists. The theory that is traditionally most common among Native Americans is that they originated here. Each Native people has its own story recounting how humans were first created, how some of them came to live in their particular part of North America, and various matters pertaining to social order, ethics, and spiritual life. Some of these stories tell of travel across land or water, but more tell a story of creation in this place or of emergence from an underworld. For example, the Hopi origin stories regard this as the fourth world, into which people came to escape evil. After climbing up from the third world through a reed or bamboo, they scattered across the earth. Groups who were to become the Hopi clans wandered across the Southwest and came to Black Mesa and the surrounding lands where Hopi have dwelt in modern times. These too are theories.¹¹

Of course, it is possible that some people came to the Americas from some other place in much more recent centuries, after the time of the Ice Age yet before Columbus. There is something strangely Eurocentric about the land bridge theory. It posits that Native Americans must be descended from people who came here very, very long ago and by primitive means—hence they are part of the natural landscape, not modern human beings. And of course, because only Europeans can build big ships and sail long distances, anyone else who was here must have walked. Even if one does not subscribe to the theories of Ivan Van Sertima and others, who insist that there was considerable ancient communication and trade between Africa and South America, one can recognize the probability of other, middle-era contacts. Polynesian seafarers traveled successfully back and forth across many thousands of miles of open ocean throughout the first millennium CE. If they could reach Hawai'i, Aotearoa, and Rapa Nui—which they did—then surely they might have reached

Chile and Peru. China's huge Ming Dynasty fleets plied the Indian Ocean, traded on the coast of Africa, and may have reached Australia. There is some speculation that Chinese ships, then or much earlier, might have reached Mexico as well. One is on more solid evidentiary ground noting that in winter Inuit from Alaska have traded and married with Siberians across the frozen Bering Straits for as long as outsiders have observed them, using centuries-old travel technology—so ongoing connection in the pre-Columbian era is likely. And Norse sailors like Eirik Thorvaldsson, Bjarni Herjulfsson, and Leiv Eiriksson explored the northeast coast of North America and planted some colonies at the dawn of the second millennium. Still, even though there may have been some such small-scale contacts, the major infusions that formed the population of Native Americans clearly came much earlier, in the very remote past.¹²

Except for Native American origin stories, all these theories posit Indians as the first immigrants to America. They may indeed have come from Asia or some other place, but in this book I will speak of them as Native peoples, for however and whenever they came to be in this land, they began here a very long time ago. I will treat them as the original inhabitants.¹³

There Goes the Neighborhood: European Incursion and "Settlement"

Spanish, French, and Dutch Encounter Native Peoples

Several generations passed between Columbus's discovery of the Americas and the first European migration into what would later become the United States. The Spanish were the most active in the early period. Hundreds and then thousands of soldiers and civilians came to the islands of the Caribbean from the 1490s, and after 1519 they came to Mexico as well. They seized control of lands by force and by treachery. Their arms and especially their diseases—plague, smallpox, influenza, measles, cholera, typhus, and others to which Native Americans had no natural immunity—decimated the local population. On Hispaniola, nearly eight million people died in Columbus's generation. Disease marched ahead of the invaders along Native routes of trade and communication (Figure 2.6). A very partial list of early epidemics, each of which killed thousands of people, would include:

1516	Yucatan	Smallpox
1520	Southern Mexico	Smallpox
1615–1622	Chesapeake	Smallpox
1616–1620	New England	Smallpox
1633–1635	New England	Smallpox
1659	Florida	Measles
1660	New England	Smallpox
1746	Nova Scotia	Typhoid
1780–1800	Texas	Smallpox and measles
1782–1783	Columbia River Valley	Smallpox
1784	Western Great Lakes	Smallpox
1790	Northwest Canada	Tuberculosis

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By the time the killing had stopped, 95 percent of the Native American population had been wiped out.¹⁵

This is a detailed map of the United States, showing major geographical features, rivers, and cities. The map includes the Pacific Ocean to the west, the Atlantic Ocean to the east, and the Gulf of Mexico to the south. Major mountain ranges like the Rockies and Appalachians are labeled. Rivers such as the Mississippi, Missouri, and Colorado are shown. Cities from Los Angeles to New York are marked. A scale bar at the bottom left indicates distances in miles and kilometers.

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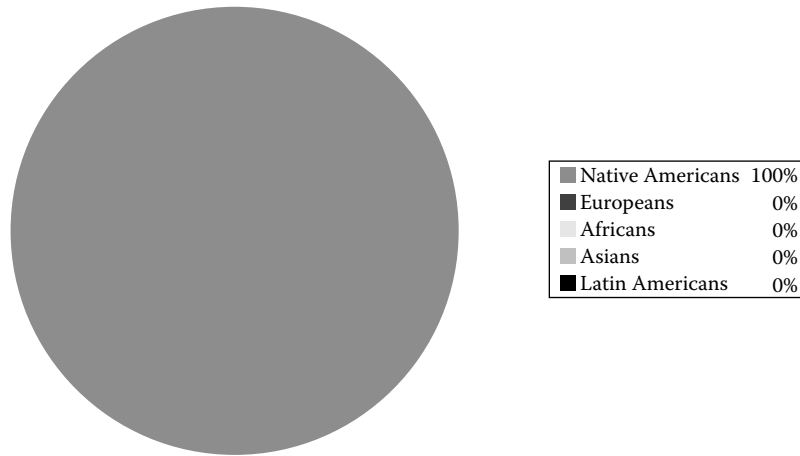


Figure 2.7 Population in 1600 of the territory that would become the United States.

If the Spanish came to the southern part of North America as conquerors and extractors of wealth, the French came to the northern region as traders. Early on, two small groups of Huguenots—Protestant refugees from the Catholic reaction against the Reformation—tried and failed to establish colonies in what are now South Carolina and Florida in 1562 and 1564. Other French people had better luck far to the north, where the St. Lawrence River gave them access to the Great Lakes and they could trade with Native peoples for furs to be sold in European markets. French people founded towns at Port Royal in Nova Scotia in 1604 and Quebec in 1608. The French were a tiny number of people compared to their Native American hosts. The Dutch, too, came in small numbers to trade with the Native peoples, planting trading posts near Albany in 1614 and at New Amsterdam (later New York) in 1621 (Figure 2.7).¹⁷

A Micmac leader gave a sense of the relative power of immigrants and Natives in these words spoken circa 1677 to Chrestien LeClerq, a Recollet missionary:

Thou sayest of us also that we are the most miserable and most unhappy of all men, living without religion, without manners, without honour, without social order, and, in a word, without any rules, like the beasts in our woods. ... Well, my brother, if thou dost not yet know the real feelings which our Indians have towards thy country and towards all thy nation, it is proper that I inform thee at once. I beg thee now to believe that, all miserable as we seem in thine eyes, we consider ourselves nevertheless much happier than thou. ... [T]hou deceivest thyself greatly if thou thinkest to persuade us that thy country is better than ours. For if France, as thou sayest, is a little terrestrial paradise, art thou sensible to leave it? And why abandon wives, children, relatives, and friends? Why risk thy life and thy property every year ... in order to come to [our] country ...? ... We believe, further, that you are incomparably poorer than we. ... As to us, we find all our riches and all our conveniences among ourselves, without trouble and without exposing our lives to the dangers in which you find yourselves constantly through your long voyages. ... [T]here is no Indian who

does not consider himself infinitely more happy and more powerful than the French.¹⁸

Neither Spanish, nor French, nor Dutch, nor English people were inclined to respect their Native American hosts. European ideas about Native North Americans were unevenly split. The minor chord was a romantic image of the New World as a paradise on earth, with Indians cast as nature's noble and gentle dwellers of the forest. Robert Berkhofer describes the enduring image of "the good Indian":

[T]he good Indian appears friendly, courteous, and hospitable to the initial invaders of his lands and to all Whites so long as the latter honored the obligations presumed to be mutually entered into with the tribe. Along with handsomeness of physique and physiognomy went great stamina and endurance. Modest in attitude if not always in dress, the noble Indian exhibited great calm and dignity in bearing, conversation, and even under torture. Brave in combat, he was tender in love for family and children. Pride in himself and independence of other persons combined with a plain existence and wholesome enjoyment of nature's gifts. According to this version, the Indian, in short, lived a life of liberty, simplicity, and innocence.¹⁹

But that image always took second place to the dominant portrayal of Native peoples as savages; as bloodthirsty, primitive barbarians; and perhaps worst, as heathen worshippers of non-Christian gods. David Stannard sums up European thinking about Indians:

[O]ne of the preconditions for the Spanish and Anglo-American genocides against the native peoples of the Americas was a public definition of the natives as inherently and permanently—that is, as racially—inferior beings. To the conquering Spanish, the Indians more specifically were defined as natural slaves, as subhuman beasts of burden, because that fit the use to which the Spanish wished to put them. ... Since the colonizing British, and subsequently the Americans, had little use for Indian servitude, ... the Indians were Satan's helpers, they were lascivious and murderous wild men of the forest, they were bears, they were wolves, they were vermin. Allegedly having shown themselves to be beyond conversion to Christian or to civil life—and with little British or American need for them as slaves—in this case, straightforward mass killing of the Indians was deemed the only thing to do.²⁰

In European eyes, Europeans were individuals who had names, stories, and discernible personalities. Indians did not have names, individual identities, personalities, or stories. They were interchangeable, faceless, menacing, and to be destroyed.²¹

For their part, Native peoples returned a considerable measure of disrespect. Cornelius Jaenen reminds us that it was Europeans' egotism and folly, not their actual experiences with Native peoples, that led them to assume "that the native tribesmen viewed [European] culture with awe and admiration, that they often attempted to imitate the Europeans, and usually aspired to elevate themselves to the superior level of the white man." To the contrary, although in some cases Native

peoples feared European metal weaponry, and surely they must have been demoralized by the bewildering toll taken by European diseases, on balance they thought the Europeans' religion to be sorcery and their manners to be inferior. They thought it barbaric that, as they had heard from those who came from Europe, in places like England and France there was an abundance of food, yet some people were poor and forced to beg in the streets. Among Native North Americans, such hard-heartedness would never have been tolerated.²²

While a sense of superiority infected the French and Dutch people who came to live in America, the balance of power made them less likely than the Spanish to act aggressively against local people. The number of French and Dutch immigrants was so small, and they depended so heavily on the goodwill of their Algonquian and Iroquois hosts to maintain their trade relationships, that for a long time they stayed, for the most part, on good terms with their Native neighbors.

English Immigrants Encounter Native Peoples

Add to this mix the English people who migrated into the middle region of eastern North America late in the sixteenth century and early in the seventeenth. They, too—small in number and weak at first—began on a more or less positive footing with the Native peoples whose lands they entered. But quickly relationships turned sour.²³

A word must be said about terms. The *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups* sets forth the standard scholarly view on each of its hundreds of subjects. The otherwise fine essay on English Americans makes the silly, self-absorbed, and unfortunately all-too-common distinction between “17th-Century Settlement” and “18th-Century Immigration.” I will not use the term “settlement” because that implies North America was a howling, empty wilderness in need of “settling,” and this it surely was not. It was a place full of many different peoples, and the English who came here were immigrants. The encyclopedia also makes the strange assertion that “By the time of independence these English people and their descendants constituted about half the population.” Half of what? Half of the White population? Probably. Half of the combined White and Black population of the thirteen new states? Less likely. Half the total population of the portion of North America that would later become the United States? Certainly not. The English part of *that* population was about one-sixth. It is essential that we not lose sight of the larger picture of peoples and their interactions. If we focus only on the White population of the easternmost part of the continent, as almost all histories of the period do, then we begin to go down a slippery slope toward excusing genocide and slavery as natural, inevitable, and therefore no one's fault.²⁴

The first attempt at English immigration took place at Roanoke Island in Pamlico Sound, in what is now North Carolina. Sir Walter Raleigh was an adventurer and an intimate of Queen Elizabeth I (the Virgin Queen whose reputed sexual status gave its name to the first American colony). Raleigh sent an exploratory mission to the southeast coast in 1584, looking for a place to begin the kind of rich conquest that Spanish adventurers had been making for most of the century. His soldiers were received warmly by a Roanoke chief named Wingina, who thought he might be able to use the English as allies in his efforts to establish power over some neighboring chiefs. Two Roanoke Indians went back to England with the visitors. They returned

a year later with a militarized expedition of English people. One of the Indian emissaries, Manteo, thought the English would make good allies. The other, Wanchese, perceived inequality and suffering in English society and warned against trusting English intentions. The immigrants demanded that Wingina and his people provide them with food and made known their intention to enslave their hosts. The local people got fed up, but before they could act the English attacked their village and killed Wingina and most of the Native leaders. Unable to establish the colony, the adventurers returned to England.²⁵

In 1587 Raleigh sent out a civilian party, including women and children, led by John White, with the intention that they would co-exist peacefully with local Indians, not try to kill or enslave them. They were supposed to go to another location, further north, on Chesapeake Bay, but the ship captain who delivered them dropped them off at Roanoke Island instead. By this time, Wanchese had assumed leadership of the Roanoke Native community, whose members were still angry about the earlier encounter. The English and Native communities exchanged attacks, then White sailed back to England looking for reinforcements. But a war between Spain and England intervened and he did not make it back for three years. When he finally was able to return in 1590, the English colony had disappeared. Roanoke's fate was treated as a mystery for many years, but recent research suggests that at least some of the Roanoke English ended up taking refuge fifty miles away on Croatoan Island. There, among friendly Indians related to the optimistic emissary Manteo, they appear to have maintained a separate English community for a while. In the end they seem to have taken up the ways of their hosts and blended into the Native population by the early 1600s. So the first act of immigrant assimilation in what was to become the United States was English people becoming Indians.²⁶

In this period when English people were first trying to migrate into the southeastern part of North America, the main focus of their attention was the lands around Chesapeake Bay. Bankrolled by English investors, the migrants' hope was to start a colony where they could make a return on that investment. But no one was quite sure how to make the colony pay for itself. Some hoped to discover gold, others to trade with the Native inhabitants, and still others to sell forest products to the English navy. A long-term goal was to find a sea passage to the Pacific and thence to Asia. In May 1607 three small ships, commanded by Captain Christopher Newport and bearing 120 migrants, dropped anchor at a place they named Jamestown after their new king, sixty miles from the mouth of Chesapeake Bay. The newcomers and their provisions were put ashore and the ships returned to England. When Newport returned with more immigrants and supplies the following January, only thirty-eight of the men he had left ashore remained alive.

They had not found gold or silver. They had not found a rich, populous Native civilization they could conquer and enslave, nor with whom they could trade. They had fallen to bickering and scheming among themselves, and they had proved unable to feed themselves. Reinforced by several shiploads of immigrants and supplies over the next few years, Jamestown limped along for a time, able to survive only because of the calculated generosity of Powhatan, a local Native chief. The people of the Chesapeake region were divided into perhaps as many as fifty different tribes, each of them made up of several towns, and each tribe with its own chief. Powhatan was paramount ruler over perhaps two dozen of those tribes. He saw in the English another tribe of people whom he might use in alliance to maintain and strengthen his paramount position in the region (after all they had guns, hatchets, and other

metal implements, and they seemed to like fighting). Powhatan had his people trade with the English and supply them with food. Powhatan's people captured the English leader, an adventurer named John Smith, in December 1607. When Smith was brought before Powhatan, the chief and his preteen daughter Pocahontas enacted a richly choreographed ceremony by which Powhatan symbolically adopted Smith and invested him as an honorary, but lesser, chieftain or *werowance*, beholden to Powhatan. Smith thought he was about to be killed and that Pocahontas had saved his life—that was the story passed down on the English side.²⁷

Despite Powhatan's friendship, the English behaved brutally and relationships soon deteriorated. In 1609, Powhatan complained to John Smith:

Captaine Smith, you may understand that I having seene the death of all my people thrice, and not any one living of these three generations but my selfe [Powhatan probably refers to three epidemics that had swept through the area before the English arrived]; I know the difference of Peace and Warre better than any in my Country. ... that you are come to destroy my Country, so much affrighteth all my people as they dare not visit you. What will it availe you to take that by force you may quickly have by love, or to destroy them that provide you food. What can you get by warre, when we can hide our provisions and fly to the woods? Whereby you must famish by wronging us your friends. ... Thinke you I am so simple, not to know it is better to eate good meate, lye well, and sleepe quietly with my women and children, laugh and be merry with you, have copper, hatchets, or what I want being your friend: then be forced to flie from all, to lie cold in the woods, feede upon Acornes, rootes, and such trash, and be so hunted by you, that I can neither rest, eate, nor sleepe; but my tyred men must watch, and if a twig but breake, every one cryeth there commeth Captaine Smith: then must I fly I know not whether: and thus with miserable feare, end my miserable life, leaving my pleasures to such youths as you, which through your rash unadvisednesse may quickly as miserably end, for want of that, you never knew where to find. Let this therefore assure you of our loves, and every yeare our friendly trade shall furnish you with Corne; and now also, if you would come in friendly manner to see us, and not thus with your guns and swords as to invade your foes.²⁸

Warfare followed, with atrocities on both sides. Powhatan stopped trading with the English, determined to starve them out. In the winter of 1609 to 1610, the English population of nearly 500 dwindled to 60, but in spring the Virginia Company sent more immigrants. In 1613 a party of English seized Pocahontas as she was visiting friends along the Potomac River. Kept as a hostage at Jamestown, she converted to Anglicanism and became engaged to the widower John Rolfe. Their marriage the following year was not just a personal union, but a diplomatic way to end five years of warfare. She gave birth to a son, Thomas Rolfe, and then in 1616 was taken to London and feted as "*la belle sauvage*." She met King James I and partied with high society, but she contracted pneumonia, died at age twenty-two, and was buried far from home. Her son, Thomas Rolfe, went back to Virginia in 1640 as a planter. His workers grew tobacco on lands that had once belonged to his mother's tribe, but he himself had assimilated into British society.

Meanwhile, 600 miles to the north, a different sort of English immigrants were interacting with a different set of Native peoples. For a couple of generations, English

fishing boats had plied the waters from Newfoundland to Cape Cod, and adventurers like John Smith had brought ships to trade. An unintended accompaniment to such contacts was the passing of European microbes. For instance, in the plague of 1616 to 1619, probably 90 percent of the Massachusetts Indians who inhabited the coastal area were wiped out. When a boatload of religiously motivated Puritans arrived in 1620, the Massachusetts were reeling. Neighboring Indian groups such as the Wampanoags and Narragansetts were pressing upon them. These Puritans had received a charter to go to the Chesapeake, but they went off course, either accidentally or because they wanted to found their own colony outside the control of the Virginia Company (we cannot be sure which). Arriving just before Christmas, with few preparations for a harsh New England winter, the Pilgrims suffered terribly, and half of them died by spring from cold, scurvy, and malnutrition.²⁹

Enter Squanto and Massasoit. Squanto had already had a remarkable life. He had been kidnapped from his Patuxet village by an English trader in 1614 and taken to Spain to be sold as a slave. It is unclear how he escaped, but by 1617 he had made his way to England. After a trip with English sailors to Newfoundland, he returned home to find that the Patuxet and most other Wampanoag groups had been wiped out by disease. In the spring of 1621, because he spoke English and the local language, he was able to insert himself between the Pilgrims and their Wampanoag neighbors. He taught the newcomers how to plant corn using fish fertilizer, and so enabled them to feed themselves in their new world. Massasoit was sachem, or hereditary leader, of the Wampanoags who surrounded the Plymouth colony. He saw in these English people a potential ally against his Narragansett rivals and so made a mutual defense treaty with them in 1621. Without the friendship of Squanto, Massasoit, and the other Wampanoags, the English people likely would not have survived.³⁰

So, despite negative European presumptions about Native Americans, the Europeans who came to places like Plymouth and the Chesapeake got along fairly well with their Native neighbors at first. Still, before long conflict came to dominate their relationships whenever they encountered one another. The first problem was disease. European diseases to which they lacked immunity, combined with wars and changes in ways of living, contributed to a sharp decline among the Indians of Virginia: from 25,000 when Jamestown was founded in 1607 down to 2,000 in 1700 (meanwhile the non-Indian population of Virginia had grown from zero to about 100,000). Disease frequently ran ahead of substantial person-to-person contact between Europeans and Native peoples. In 1670, the Native population of Illinois was more than 10,500; by 1736 it had dropped to 2,500, and by 1800 to 500. Over the whole area that would become the continental United States, the Native population dropped from more than 5 million in 1600 to just 600,000 in 1800. The dynamics were similar in other places that came to be part of the United States, although somewhat later in time. In Hawai'i when Captain Cook arrived in 1778 the population numbered between 800,000 and 1 million. Disease ravaged the Hawaiians, who could count only 80,000 people in 1849, and 45,000 in 1876. The pattern throughout the Americas was that Europeans' diseases and European aggression killed, on the average, between 90 and 95 percent of each group of Native people.³¹

Soon, land became the issue. In places like New England and the Chesapeake, Europeans inserted themselves amid declining Native populations. Eager to obtain land and build farms and villages after the style of rural England, sometimes they arranged to buy land from local people and sometimes they just took it. To the English, North America was an empty continent (and, indeed, their diseases had made

it less populous than it had been previously). The Natives were, in English eyes, as beasts of the forest, not as people who lived on the land. America was an empty wilderness in need of civilizing by Europeans. The English attitude toward Native land claims is summed up in these 1629 words of John Winthrop, who was to go on to serve many years as Governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony: "As for the Natives in New England, they inclose noe Land, neither have any settled habytation, nor any tame Cattle to improve the Land by, and soe have noe other but a Naturall Right to those Countries, soe as if we leave them sufficient for their use, we may lawfully take the rest, there being more than enough for them and us." In such an interpretation, to live on the land, to "settle" it, was to build a farm with a fence around it, a barn, and put cows in the field. By such an interpretation, since Native peoples farmed but not after the European style, because they were in that interpretation not fully humans, the land was empty and available for the taking.³²

Resistance, Conflict, Genocide

Of course, the land was not empty and the Indians who lived on it were often quite unhappy about being asked or forced to vacate. Powhatan's people fought three wars against the Chesapeake English in 1610 to 1614, 1622 to 1632, and 1644 to 1646. By the end of the third war, European diseases and superior firepower had just about wiped out the Powhatan Indians. Some of the remnant moved west, others were sold into slavery in the Caribbean, and a few adopted White ways and lived among Europeans (Figure 2.8). The Virginians who fought the 1622 to 1632 war established a policy of open-season warfare against all Indians. Thereby, English people were able to expand their area of habitation into lands that had formerly been Indian homes.³³

In 1636 a nasty English trader named John Oldham who had been thrown out of towns up and down the coast was killed at Block Island, off the eastern tip of Long Island, apparently by some Pequot Indians with whom he had been trading. The Pequots had been expanding their power over other tribes in southern New England

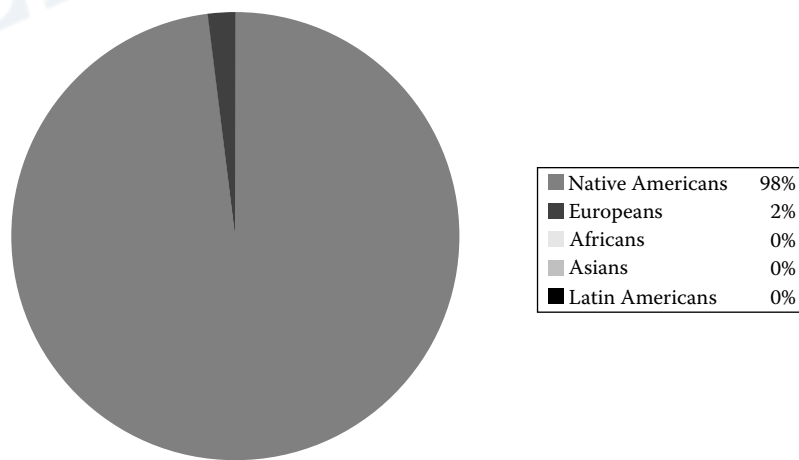


Figure 2.8 Population in 1650 of the territory that would become the United States.

since before the English began to immigrate, and they were now the most powerful Native group in the region. But the English possessed armor, muskets, and cannon. An expedition from the Bay Colony attacked the Pequots and burned their homes to the ground, killing hundreds of women and children along with adult men. As John Mason interpreted the end of the Pequot War, "Thus was God pleased to smite our enemies and to give us their land for an inheritance." The Pequot War reduced the most powerful Indian people in the region to a tiny remnant, as the English sold many Pequots into slavery and attached others to neighboring tribes such as the Narragansetts who were friendly to the English. The war also opened up the fertile Connecticut River valley for another colony of Puritans.³⁴

Three decades later, half the remaining Native population of New England rose up against the English. They were led by a Wampanoag sachem, Metacom, whom the English called King Philip, and who was Massasoit's son. Several tribes were involved. The conflict stemmed from the continued expansion of English people from Plymouth, Massachusetts Bay, and most recently Connecticut into lands occupied by Native peoples. With the decline of the beaver population along the coast, several coastal tribes had nothing to trade with the English any longer. Their populations were declining and they were demoralized. Metacom gave them an inspiration to resist the colonizers, and young men from several tribes such as the Nipmunks and Narragansetts responded. Metacom's War has been called the bloodiest war in the history of North America, which would be quite a distinction. Initially, in 1675, Metacom's warriors succeeded brilliantly. Hundreds of English immigrants fled outlying farms and villages for the safety of Boston and other larger towns. But English firepower prevailed in the end, allied with some large, powerful tribes to the west like the Mohawks, who still had furs to trade with the English. In the end, Metacom's wife, his son, and hundreds of other Indians were captured and sold into slavery. Metacom was killed and beheaded; his head remained on display in the fort at Plymouth for twenty-five years.³⁵

Thus ended Native resistance to English domination in the Northeast. And thus was introduced genocidal warfare. Native peoples of the lands that would one day become the United States did not traditionally fight wars against whole civil populations. In the main, war was confined to limited retaliation, as in raiding a village, taking a life for a life. Frequently captives were seized and adopted into tribes to replace those who had been killed. With the coming of Europeans, all that began to change. As Francis Jennings trenchantly observes: "Civilized war is the kind *we* fight against *them* (in this case, Indians), whereas savage war is the atrocious kind that they fight against us." English people after Metacom's War feared Indians as bloodthirsty barbarians because they refused to make way for English expansion into their homelands and they resisted militarily. David Stannard adds: "The European habit of indiscriminately killing women and children when engaged in hostilities with the natives of the Americas was more than an atrocity. It was flatly and intentionally genocidal. For no population can survive if its women and children are destroyed." The English who fought the Pequot War and Metacom's War were making genocide against their neighbors, as surely as were Serbs making genocide against their Muslim and Croatian neighbors in Bosnia-Herzegovina late in the twentieth century.³⁶

Whatever our high school textbooks may have told us, America in the seventeenth century was not limited to the lands claimed and increasingly populated by English people along the eastern seaboard. There were Europeans migrating in that

same era into other territory far to the west. Since the time when Juan de Oñate and a troop of soldiers stumbled into what is now New Mexico in 1598 looking for gold, Franciscan friars had been trying to convert local Indians to Christianity and other Spanish ways. In and around the valley of the Rio Grande lived thousands of Native people whom the Spanish named Pueblo because they lived in permanent towns (apartment houses, even) built of adobe. They farmed and wore what the Spaniards could recognize as clothing. In the manner of their residence, occupation, and dress, then, the Spanish saw them as civilizable (that is, convertible into facsimiles of Europeans) and so they sought to make Christians of them. After Oñate's butchery at the Acoma Pueblo in 1599—the Spanish killed 800 people outright and enslaved the other 600, cutting one foot off each of the 80 men whom they allowed to live—other Indians in the area submitted to the Spanish for more than three generations. The Spanish forced them to convert to Christianity, to pay tribute, and to labor to support the immigrants. They punished anyone who still practiced their ancestral religion. But economic hard times followed a six-year drought, and neither the Spanish nor their god was able to protect the Pueblo Indians from slave-taking raids by Apaches and Navajo. The Spanish squashed a Native spiritual revitalization movement in 1675 by hanging its leaders and flogging several dozen followers.

Five years later, in a carefully timed plot led by a religiously motivated Pueblo named Popé, 17,000 Indians from 25 pueblos, half the population of the territory, rose in bloody revolt. They killed more than 400 Spanish residents, burned Santa Fe, and forced the remaining 2000 Spanish to flee New Mexico. The Pueblo Revolt was the most successful of what Jack Forbes has called an "epidemic" of Indian rebellions across northern New Spain in the 1680s. A loose coalition of Pueblos kept the Spanish out of New Mexico until 1692; thereafter the Spanish allowed the Native peoples more freedom of culture and religion than under the previous regime. During the Spanish absence, Navajos and Apaches made off with herds of Spanish sheep and horses. The Navajos changed their lifestyle to sedentary herding, while the Apaches raised horses and traded them with other Indian peoples to the north. The arrival of horses on the Great Plains ushered in the birth of horse-riding, buffalo-hunting Plains Indian culture. Now Native peoples were able to hunt buffalo efficiently. The Great Plains were able to support a much larger population, and tribes from the east and west crowded into what had been a sparsely populated region.³⁷

Not all Indian-European relationships were so thoroughly conflict ridden. In some instances, Native peoples managed to coexist with European immigrants with fairly long periods of peace, in a regime of mutual accommodation and trade. Key items in maintaining such harmony were an economic nexus framing relationships, a physical distance between concentrations of Europeans and Natives, and military power in the hands of well-organized Indian confederacies. The prototypical confederacy was the Iroquois. The Pequots, Wampanoags, Powhatans, and other coastal tribes were small in size, militarily weak after the first generation or two of Europeans had arrived, and not centrally organized. The League of the Iroquois was the opposite. Many thousands strong, the confederacy had been in place for at least a century before Europeans showed up in North America. It comprised five large tribes: the Mohawks, Oneidas, Onandogas, Senecas, and Cayugas (the Tuscaroras were added in 1722). They met in annual councils with complex rules for regulated decision making. They made war on their neighbors effectively and negotiated treaties as a sovereign nation. The Iroquois controlled a huge territory, from the Adirondacks to the Great Lakes, in what later became New York and Pennsylvania. Since

they controlled the eastern Great Lakes, they could monopolize the fur trade with pelt-hungry Europeans. By skillful diplomacy, they played first the Dutch and then their New York successors the English off against the French. It was only after the French lost the Seven Years War in 1763 and were forced out of Canada that Iroquois power began to decline. No other Native people was as strong as the Iroquois, but a few large southern tribes like the Creeks and Cherokee maintained autonomy and peace on similar terms.³⁸

Several assumptions that Europeans made about their relationships with Native peoples turned out not to have been well founded. For one thing, European immigrants, particularly the English and Spanish, seem to have convinced themselves that Native Americans would readily change to become like Europeans. Proselytizing for Christianity was one of the supposed motivations for European involvement in North America. To be sure, some Native people did adopt new styles of clothing within a couple of generations of meeting European immigrants. Some became Christians, and many learned English, Spanish, or French. Yet, as James Axtell and Theda Perdue have conclusively shown, it was just as likely that Europeans would acculturate to Native ways. Axtell tells of hundreds of English immigrants who either lived near Indian groups or were captured by them, who then became "White Indians"—and who when offered rescue by other Whites chose to remain as Indians. Axtell speaks of "the extraordinary drawing power of Indian culture." Eighteen-year-old James Smith was captured and baptized into the tribe of his captors with these words:

My son, you are now flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone. By the ceremony that was performed this day, every drop of white blood was washed out of your veins. You are taken into the Caughnewaga nation and initiated into a war-like tribe. You are adopted into a great family and now received with great seriousness and solemnity in the room and place of a great man. After what has passed this day you are now one of us by an old strong law and custom. My son, you have now nothing to fear. We are now under the same obligations to love, support, and defend you that we are to love and to defend one another. Therefore you are to consider yourself as one of our people.

Smith was skeptical at first, but came to conclude, "They treated me ... in every way as one of themselves."³⁹ Perdue writes of the mixed families of European-derived men and Native women in the Southeast. The men were traders and Indian agents, their wives often prominent women among the Creeks or another tribe. Contrary to the men's expectations, it was they who were the newcomers and dependents. They seem to have imagined that their children would be raised as English Americans, but they found out that Native matrilineal norms swept the children into the Native orbit.⁴⁰

The point of this section is to remind us that European people in the beginning were immigrants, guests in Native America. Sometimes they came with power, as did the Spanish in central Mexico. Other times they came in a posture of weakness, as did the Pilgrims in Plymouth and the early English immigrants to the Chesapeake. Seldom were the Europeans socially polished. Their predisposition to believe that Native peoples were savages led them to disregard the Indians' perspectives and to run roughshod over them when they were able. The Europeans killed most of the Native population, through sharing diseases and by force of arms. Assimilation

was a two-way street: some Europeans became Indians, and many Indians took on the ways of Europeans. But from the beginning in North America, English people were immigrants. They went through processes of change and adjustment to life in their newly adopted land, as we shall see in the next section. And they kept coming.

A Mixed Multitude: European Migrants

English Immigrants

The largest single group of immigrants who came to the colonies of British North America during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were themselves British.⁴¹ But “British” meant a lot of different things. David Hackett Fischer argues that one can most fruitfully conceive of these British people as migrating to America in four distinct waves, from different regions and strata of society in the land they left, forming four distinct societies (and cultures) in British North America.⁴²

For English working people, migration itself was not a new thing, in that for many generations people had been moving around England and indeed around Europe. Young men went out of their villages to work; they maintained ties to their ancestral homes and often returned after a period away. Others made more permanent moves to the towns and cities that were growing at the dawn of the modern era. As the sixteenth century turned to the seventeenth, the number of such migrants increased. Some were driven by the pressure that an expanding rural population laid on the land. Others were cast off by the enclosure movement. British landlords began turning farmland into pasture for sheep and cattle. Herding paid good profits and it required fewer hands. The landholding class increased its wealth, and farmers who had formerly been attached to the land were cast adrift. They went to towns and cities looking for work. As Bernard Bailyn described it, “in its earliest phase, the [English] peopling of North America was a spillover—an outgrowth, an extension—of these established patterns of mobility in England.” London was a mecca for migrants: between 1650 and 1750, half the natural increase of the English countryside was absorbed by that growing city. But London and other cities were also charnel houses, rife with poverty and disease. Against such a grim backdrop, emigration to North America must have seemed a reasonable alternative. And so the move to the city extended across the Atlantic: between 1640 and 1700, 69 percent of the countryside’s natural increase went to North America (Figure 2.9).⁴³

This pattern repeats itself over and over in the history of American immigration. Japanese peasants late in the nineteenth century, and Italians, Poles, and many others first went out to work and came back. Then they, or their children or grandchildren, moved from village to town and from town to city. Only then, by and large, did they make the leap across the ocean. To be sure, there were important exceptions to this pattern, such as the abrupt, forced removal of Africans from their homes into slavery in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the equally abrupt forcing of East European Jews out of the *shtetl* and out of Russia by *pogroms* in the nineteenth century. In both those cases, the migrants were forced to leave behind family, friends, and nearly everything they held dear. But a much more widespread pattern was a generations-long process of going and coming, of connectedness between the places from which one came and the places to which one was moving.

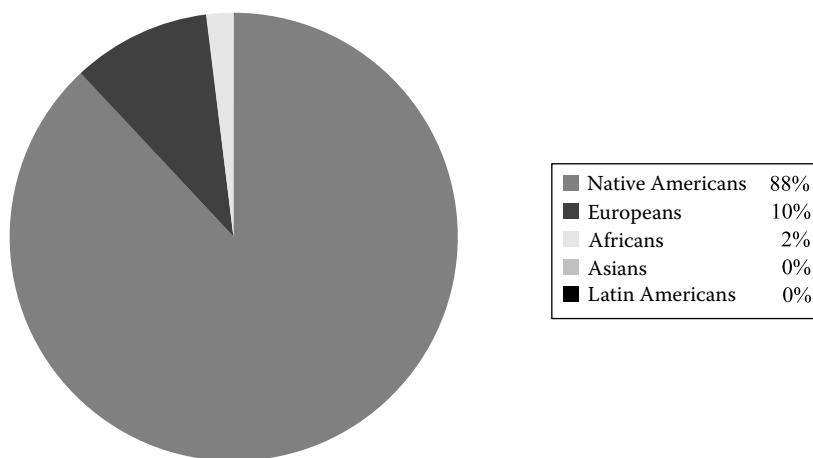


Figure 2.9 Population in 1700 of the territory that would become the United States.

Another theme in the English migration to North America is a certain intentionality. The Virginia Company recruited volunteers to go to America and told them big whopping lies about how easy it would be to make a living there. The company's investors needed colonists in Virginia, growing crops for the British market, if they were to earn a return on their investment. In 1991 a famous historical journal printed Walter Woodward's parody, "Jamestown Estates," which caught the flavor of the Company's effort:

JAMESTOWN ESTATES

For As Little As £10 12s. 6d., You, Too, Can Own a Share of Paradise.

From the moment the gentle, southern breezes waft your pinnacle to the verdant, gardenlike shore, you'll know this is where you belong. Jamestown Estates, where only a few are living a life those in England can hardly imagine. ... Jamestown Estates offers one of the most active labor markets in the New World. Whatever you do, you can do it better here. Our employment office has many people anxious to welcome you to our growing work force. ... Consider ... some of these exceptionally valuable Jamestown Pluses:

- 24-hour security, palisaded grounds.
- Hunting, fishing right on premises. Native guides teach you to hunt like a lord.
- The Sotweed Garden Center—learn how to plant like a pro. No experience necessary ...

Virginia ... A WHOLE NEW WORLD⁴⁴

William Penn had a few more scruples about telling the truth, but he was no less active in sending out advertisements and agents, not only within England but to Germany and other parts of Europe as well, to recruit immigrants for Pennsylvania.

The Puritans and their companions—the first large wave of English migrants to what would become the United States—also migrated with intent. The bulk of the

Puritan migration came from the flatlands of eastern England to Massachusetts in the period between 1628 and 1640. They certainly were intentional, organized, and energetic in their move abroad. In those years 80,000 English people—2 percent of the total population—left England. Of those, 58,000 went across the Atlantic to the Caribbean and North America. Most of the several thousand who went to New England (Plymouth, Massachusetts Bay, Connecticut, and Rhode Island) went with a religious purpose. They were Puritans, members of one radical fringe of the Protestant Reformation who had been uncomfortable in an England dominated in turns by the Catholic Church and the Church of England.

Modern-day Fundamentalists would recognize kindred in the Puritans. They were serious folk, Bible readers and believers, people who had been born again spiritually by a powerful conversion experience. They believed God had a special role for them to fulfill in the destiny of humankind. Despairing of the sorry state of religion and society in England, they went to America by the tens of thousands to establish “A City On a Hill”: a godly commonwealth where biblical Christianity was practiced, a model that those they left behind in Europe might one day learn to emulate.⁴⁵

Unlike other early immigrants to British North America, the Puritans came in families and created replicas of English villages. They scattered a hundred towns from New Hampshire to Connecticut, pushing back the Native people as they did so. The Puritans were probably the best educated of any large group of immigrants in American history, except for late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Japanese and late-twentieth-century Filipinos, Koreans, South Asians, and Arabs. They built schools and colleges that set the standard for one of America’s now nearly abandoned sources of strength and unity: the public school system. They organized themselves into towns and congregations, and even though they included less fervent believers in their midst, Puritan religion held sway. Pastors and male lay leaders stood at the head of society. Those who challenged their leadership were likely to be whipped, hanged, or thrown out of the community, whether they be proselytizing Quakers or orthodox but outspoken Puritan women like Anne Hutchinson.

The Puritans weathered three crises in the seventeenth century that fundamentally reshaped the New England regime. The first was Puritan success in old England. From 1642 to 1649 Puritan politicians and armies fought for control of the English government. In the latter year they overthrew King Charles I, executed him, and placed Oliver Cromwell at the head of a nominally republican government. For the next 15 years, no one was looking to the City On a Hill—they had a larger Puritan experiment to attend to in England. Many New Englanders went back to England to take part in the great adventure. Others who stayed turned away from England and began to form an American identity.

As a second generation of Puritan migrants came of age in America, a crisis of faith hit New England. Members of the first generation had been marked by the intervention of the Holy Spirit in their lives; each knew that she or he had been converted by God’s personal caress. In mid-century a second generation grew up with a different experience from that of their parents. Nearly all of them believed with their minds and hearts all that their parents had believed. But few among them had felt God’s touch in a personal conversion experience; therefore, they were not admissible to church membership, hence they could not be full citizens. A new generation of leaders solved the impasse by instituting what later generations called the Half-way Covenant—such believers could have partial church membership and so their

children in turn could be baptized. It was an attempt to preserve Puritan culture by taking a realistic view of what was possible to demand in the new environment. This constituted a classic second-generation move, as we shall see with other immigrant groups in American history.⁴⁶

As New England grew into a stable, prosperous province, more and more people crowded in. Most were English, but few of the latecomers were Puritans. Then, at the end of the century, a series of witchcraft outbreaks—the most famous at Salem, Massachusetts, in 1692—tested the fabric of New England society. All the new diversity brought out gender, class, theological, and interpersonal conflicts. Some people accused others of consorting with dark forces. It may have been in part real warfare of the spirit world. People were tried, found guilty, and executed. When the wave of hysteria subsided, New Englanders went back to building a prosperous, middle-class society out of increasingly diverse elements. With each passing decade they became less and less unanimous spiritually, and more and more American (as opposed to English) in outlook.

Most English people, indeed most Europeans, were believing Christians of one sort or another at the dawn of the modern era. But that does not necessarily mean that religion played a part in their coming to America. The Puritans' motivation was genuinely religious; in this they were highly unusual. The second big wave of British immigrants comprised a royalist elite and a mass of indentured servants who came to America from south England between 1640 and 1675. As we saw earlier in this chapter, a fragile colony was planted at Jamestown despite great loss of life and morale, and it held on for a third of a century. In the 1640s, however, things began to look up, at the same time and for the same reason that things were looking down for migration into New England. The gathering Puritan revolution in Old England destabilized not only the Stuart dynasty, but the lives and fortunes of a large cohort of nobles and would-be aristocrats.

Sir William Berkeley, a supporter of the King, came in 1641 and served as Governor of Virginia for more than thirty years. According to David Hackett Fischer's description, "His appearance was that of a nobleman—short cloak, deep bands, great boots, belted sword, and long hair cascading in ringlets around his patrician face. His manners were those of a courtier, polished by years in the presence of the King. His speech was that of a scholar, knighted on the field of honor by Charles I."⁴⁷ Such descriptions lent themselves over the years to the creation of the Cavalier Myth, that Southern Whites are descended from English nobility. Berkeley consciously recruited royalist aristocrats (many of them younger sons who would not inherit family lands in England) to come to Virginia. They came mainly from royalist strongholds in the south and west of England. He awarded them large lots of land and important civil positions. About the same time, for reasons that are not clear, the Virginia population ceased to die off at the horrific rate it had suffered in the first several decades. During Berkeley's tenure as governor, the English population of Virginia exploded from 8,000 to 40,000. The economy expanded, too, with tobacco being the main crop, grown for consumption in Europe.

These privileged landowners imported workers, also mainly from the south and west of England, to plant, tend, and harvest their tobacco fields. In return for the planters paying their passage, the workers served indentures that usually lasted four to seven years. The planters were awarded a headright: fifty acres of land for each person they brought into the colony. Those workers who survived to the end of their indenture were then turned out to find their own means of support.⁴⁸ They went

looking for land on which to farm. With most of the land in the tidewater region—the flat, fertile territory along the rivers near Chesapeake Bay—taken, these former servants and some late-coming people of higher class found themselves squatting on backcountry land that was inhabited by Indians. It was a situation destined for conflict. Governor Berkeley tried to keep the English and the Indians separate by decree, but the land-hungry English would have none of it.

Conflict came to a head in 1675 to 1676. A dispute over some hogs between a group of Doeg Indians and some English immigrants resulted in English killing Doegs, then Doegs killing English, then English killing not just Doegs but Susquehannocks, who had been English allies for two generations. Some Indian groups raided outlying English farmsteads, and the English in the Chesapeake began to fear a war like the one Metacom was just then fighting with another set of English people in New England. Led by a disgruntled aristocrat and former friend of the governor named Nathaniel Bacon, English farmers attacked the Indians they found most convenient to hand: Appomattoxes, Pamunkeys, Occaneechees, and others who were friendly and who lived within the area of White residence. They killed hundreds. Bacon excused this slaughter disingenuously, saying that the peaceful Indians “have been soe cunningly mixt among the severall Nations or families of Indians that it hath been very difficult for us, to distinguish how, or from which of those said Nations, the said wrongs did proceed”—so he would just kill them all. Indians are all alike, and the only good ones are dead. Governor Berkeley attempted to impose order by marching against both Indians and Bacon’s militia. Bacon and his followers chased Berkeley across Chesapeake Bay and burned Jamestown to the ground. But then Bacon contracted dysentery and died, and the rebellion collapsed. From that time forward, the White planter class began to turn away from importing White servants under indenture, and began to bring in ever-larger numbers of African slaves to do their work.⁴⁹

The third large wave of English migrants came from the northern Midlands and Wales to the Delaware Valley between 1675 and 1725. William Penn was granted a charter to build a colony as a refuge for his fellow members of the Society of Friends, or Quakers. Even more radical than the Puritans, the Quakers believed that God spoke directly to each individual human heart, and so they had no place for ecclesiastical authorities. In the early years of their religion, which coincided with the founding of New England, Quakers were physically abused in both Old and New England. By the end of the century their main disability was social ostracism from Anglicans and Puritans alike. Pennsylvania was to be a place of refuge for Friends, but quickly it became home to a mixed multitude of people from many parts of English life as well as from other parts of Europe, and Philadelphia, its port and capital, became a hub of commerce.⁵⁰

Immigration Policy under the British

During the generations when the British Crown ruled, the government’s consistent policy was one of encouraging immigration by Europeans.⁵¹ In 1616 the Virginia Company began to grant the headright. If an employer brought in indentured servants or slaves, then he got to keep the headrights for them.⁵² In 1740, Parliament passed the Plantation Act, “An Act for naturalizing such foreign Protestants, and others herein mentioned, as are settled or shall settle, in any of his Majesty’s Colonies

in America.” Its goal was both to encourage immigration and to make an orderly process for turning migrants into English subjects:

Whereas the Increase of People is a Means of advancing the Wealth and Strength of any Nation or Country; And whereas many Foreigners and Strangers from the Lenity of our Government, the Purity of our Religion, the benefits of our Laws, the Advantages of our Trade, and the Security of our Property, might be induced to come and settle in some of His Majesty’s Colonies in America, if they were made Partakers of the Advantages and Privileges which the natural born Subjects of this Realm do enjoy.

The act went on to specify that, except only for Quakers and Jews, any applicant for naturalization must take communion in a Protestant church.⁵³

Later, when the British government did not promote immigration to their satisfaction, the English-descended people in America rebelled. The *Declaration of Independence* is partly a high-minded document full of noble abstractions about unalienable rights and the pursuit of happiness, but it is mainly a bitter catalogue of English Americans’ complaints about their faraway king. One of the complaints that British North Americans voiced most often in the period after 1763 was that George III had failed to encourage immigration. The *Declaration* reads in part:

When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for *one people* to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with *another* ... a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation. ... The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having, in direct object, the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these States. ... He has endeavored to prevent the population of these States, for that purpose, obstructing the laws for naturalization of foreigners, refusing to pass others to encourage their migration hither.

Note the words in italics. By the 1770s, enough generations had passed that the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of English immigrants now thought of themselves as not English people but Americans. They were peeved at the English king for failing, in their estimation, his duty to bring more migrants to this country they increasingly saw as not his but their own. There is a grim paradox in the fact that they would then go on to impose their own hegemony over newcomers henceforth.

Other Europeans

The growth of the middle colonies in the eighteenth century gave rise to a fourth wave of British migration, and along with it a large influx of peoples from other parts of Europe. First, the peoples from other parts. A small troop of Dutch immigrants founded New Amsterdam in 1624. They left their names on towns, streets, neighborhoods, and public buildings far out of proportion to their actual population, which was tiny. Holland maintained a small post for fur trading with Native peoples, but it was not until the British took over in 1664 and renamed the town New York that the place began to grow.⁵⁴

Among the many European peoples who later streamed into New York, Philadelphia, and other eastern ports were various sorts of Germans. It is essential to remember that Germany was not yet a nation but a collection of principalities stretching from the mouth of the Rhine in Holland up to the Alps in Switzerland, and from Alsace in the west far into Central Europe. Large parts of that territory would coalesce into the modern state of Germany in the latter nineteenth century, while others would remain outside the German polity yet within the German cultural sphere. All of the peoples of those various places spoke varieties of the German language, although those varieties were not all mutually intelligible. So the line between Dutch and German, between German and Swiss, or between German and Czech was not always as clear as it might seem today. A term like “Pennsylvania Dutch” thus has an elliptical quality to it. On the one hand it was a corruption of *Deutsch* (“German”) which once referred to all those different peoples. On the other hand, the actual Dutch—that is, people from Holland—were among the several Germanic peoples who came to the middle colonies. The vast majority, however, came from other German places.⁵⁵

Some of the Pennsylvania Dutch were members of radical Protestant sects, such as the thirteen Quaker and Mennonite families who founded Germantown, Pennsylvania, in 1683. But most were either Lutherans or Reformed, members of established state churches in their ancestral principalities. Large-scale German migration began in 1709, when 13,000 people left the Palatinate, a wine-growing principality along the Rhine. They had suffered overpopulation, border wars against the French, and recent harsh winters. They went first to England, then nearly 3000 of them were sent on by the British government to New York’s Hudson River Valley. Some soon moved north and west up the Hudson and the Mohawk, while others made their way southwest to Pennsylvania, where land was more readily available. They wrote back to those at home about the land to be had in America and a stream of migration was begun, not just from the Palatinate but from other German-speaking lands all up and down the Rhine, and indeed from all over Central Europe. By mid-century, German migrants were pushing west into central Pennsylvania and coming into conflict with Native populations there. Others made their way south and west, through Maryland and into Virginia up the Shenandoah Valley. By the time of the American Revolution, German farms and villages were planted all along the Allegheny foothills and into the Carolina backcountry.⁵⁶

The largest German impact came in Pennsylvania. Many German immigrants served indentures in their early years in America, but most became independent farmers before long. By the time of the Revolution they numbered more than one-third of the colony’s White population. They did not gather into cities, but became the largest group in parts of the countryside. Concentrated in half a dozen southeast Pennsylvania counties stretching between Philadelphia and York, the Germans were the most segregated of the colony’s ethnic groups; for example, in 1790 they made up 72 percent of the population of Lancaster County and 73 percent of Berks. One could live in such areas, not speak a word of English, and get along quite nicely. Ethnic Germans were a force with which to reckon in Pennsylvania society and politics. They took to English citizenship more freely than any other non-English group—they constituted 94 percent of the people naturalized into English citizenship within the thirteen colonies during the eighteenth century. They formed an ethnic swing vote in colonial politics between the Quaker party and that of the colony’s proprietor, Thomas Penn. When the Revolution came in 1776, Germans formed the largest ethnic minority bloc in the new state assembly (Table 2.1).⁵⁷

Table 2.1 German Immigration to British North America by Decades, 1700–1775

<i>Decade</i>	<i>Number</i>
Before 1700	153
1700–1709	41
1710–1719	2,981
1720–1729	4,801
1730–1739	16,728
1740–1749	10,361
1750–1759	48,081
1760–1769	9,341
1770–1775	5,011
Total	111,211

Source: Marianne S. Wokeck, *Trade in Strangers: The Beginnings of Mass Migration to North America* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), 45–46.

Thousands of British people came to America in the middle of the eighteenth century, during the main era of German immigration between 1710 and 1775. Many of them were English, as before, but there were new populations: Scots, Irish, and Scotch-Irish. They constituted the fourth wave in David Hackett Fischer's typology of British migrants: coming from the north of England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Ireland proper, many thousands of them ended up in the same backcountry zone as the Germans, stretching from Pennsylvania to Georgia. Like the migrations to the Delaware Valley and New England (and unlike the Chesapeake migration), these immigrants typically came in families. The largest part of this group was from Ulster, the northeastern part of Ireland where the British government had planted colonies of Scots in an attempt to subdue the native Irish. As Maldwyn Jones described their situation as servants of English colonizers in Ireland, these displaced Scots were "surrounded by a hostile people whom they despised, yet themselves regarded as inferior by the ruling English." In the 1730s and 1740s their numbers began to swell until, on the eve of the Revolution, they constituted the largest group of migrants except Africans.⁵⁸

These people, who would have called themselves Ulstermen, have been variously denominated by others as Ulster Scots, Scotch-Irish, and Anglo-Irish. Most were Presbyterians, and so they had much in common with the people who came direct from Scotland in these same decades. Like those Scots and also the northern English with whom they did not share a common religious commitment, the Scotch-Irish were pushed by rising rents and pulled by the desire to own farmland of their own. Like those others, the Scotch-Irish had long existed in an unstable border zone where violence between clans and between the English and their neighbors was endemic. On the average, these various Scots, Scotch-Irish, and northern English brought less education and less wealth with them than the more middle-class New Englanders, or the British and German populations of Pennsylvania and

the Delaware Valley. They entered America through Philadelphia and other middle coast ports. Quickly they fanned out into the backcountry and, like the Germans, moved south and west, some as far as the Carolinas.

Driven though they were by difficult circumstances, the Scotch-Irish and others who made up this last pre-Revolutionary wave of migrants from the northern parts of the British isles nonetheless came to have a positive view of the migration experience. Samuel Johnson reported from the Isle of Skye in 1773 that local people had America very much on their minds, and that they saw themselves as having a future there.

Whether the mischiefs of emigration were immediately perceived, may be justly questioned. They who went first, were probably such as could best be spared; but the accounts sent by the earliest adventurers, whether true or false, inclined many to follow them; and whole neighborhoods formed parties for removal; so that departure from their native country is no longer exile. He that goes thus accompanied, carries with him all that makes life pleasant. He sits down in a better climate, surrounded by his kindred and his friends: they carry with them their language, their opinions, their popular songs, and hereditary merriment: they change nothing but the place of their abode.⁵⁹

Johnson and his friend James Boswell attended a party to celebrate those who had migrated and those who would:

[W]e performed with much activity a dance which I suppose the emigration from Skye has occasioned. They call it "America." A brisk reel is played. The first couple begin, and each sets to one—then each to another—then as they set to the next couple, the second and third couples are setting; and so it goes on till all are set a-going, setting and wheeling round each other, while each is making the tour of all in the dance. *It shows how emigration catches till all are set afloat.* Mrs. Mackinnon told me that last year when the ship sailed from Portree for America, the people on shore were almost distracted when they saw their relations go off; they lay down on the ground and tumbled, and tore the grass with their teeth. This year there was not a tear shed. The people on shore seemed to think that they would soon follow.⁶⁰

This completes the four waves of British migration to North America. Those British immigrants and their descendants were certainly not the only peoples in what would become the United States. They were not the only Europeans. But together the various British immigrants and their descendants made up the larger part of the White population of the colonies on the eve of nationhood. They formed four distinct culture zones in eastern North America. The Puritan migration brought religiously motivated, well-educated, strong nuclear families from the south of England to New England in the middle third of the seventeenth century. Then aristocrats, would-be aristocrats, and their servants created a very different society in the tidewater—less well educated, less socially integrated, and more hierarchical. Then a mixed multitude led by a moderate and tolerant Quaker government inhabited the Delaware Valley and surrounding country. Finally, families from Ireland, Scotland, and the north of England came through Pennsylvania and spread out over the southern

backcountry. Each wave of migrants had its distinctive origins, its typical family characteristics. Each created a distinctive society in America, with its own dialect and patterns of social organization.

Aaron Fogleman estimated the numbers of migrants of various ethnic origins to the thirteen British colonies between the beginning of the eighteenth century and the start of the Revolution (Table 2.2). His estimates vary a bit from those for Germans in Table 2.1 or for Africans in Tables 2.3 and 2.4, but they give a rough estimate of the relative sizes of the different migrant flows in this period.

All this meant that, by the time of the American Revolution, the European American population was a mixed multitude. Figure 2.10 shows the percentages of people from various European national origins who were recorded by the first U.S. Census of 1790. Note that the large size of the English population is due not to a large number of recent immigrants so much as to a large amount of natural increase from immigrants who had come generations before.

Indenture

Most European migrants came as indentured servants. Someone—a broker in the old country, a ship captain, or, on rare occasions, an employer in America—paid their passage. When they arrived they were obliged to work off their debt for four, five, or even seven years. In 1750, Gottlieb Mittelberger was a passenger on a ship with 400 redemptioners, as they were also called. It took him from May to October to make the trip from his native Württemberg to Pennsylvania: seven weeks down the Rhine to Rotterdam and then fifteen weeks on board ship before reaching Philadelphia. He described the voyage:

During the journey the ship is full of pitiful signs of distress—smells, fumes, horrors, vomiting, various kinds of sea sickness, fever, dysentery, headaches, heat, constipation, boils, scurvy, cancer, mouth-rot, and similar afflictions, all of them caused by the age and the highly-salted state of the food, especially of the meat, as well as by the very bad and filthy water, which brings about the miserable destruction and death of many. Add to all that shortage of food, hunger, thirst, frost, heat, dampness, fear, misery, vexation, and lamentation as well as other troubles. Thus, for example, there are so many lice, especially on the sick people, that they have to be scraped off the bodies. All this misery reaches the climax when in addition to everything else one must also suffer through two to three days and nights of storm, with everyone convinced that the ship with all aboard is bound to sink. In such misery all the people on board pray and cry pitifully together.⁶¹

When they arrived in America the redemptioners were sold. Mittelberger described the scene at the docks in Philadelphia:

This is how the commerce in human beings on board ship takes place. Every day Englishmen, Dutchmen, and High Germans come from Philadelphia and other places, some of them very far away, sometimes twenty or thirty or forty hours' journey, and go on board the newly arrived vessel that has brought people from Europe and offers them for sale. From among the healthy they

Table 2.2 Immigration by Ethnic Group into the Thirteen Colonies, by Decade, 1770–1775

Decade	Africans	Germans*	Scotch Irish	Irish	Scots	English	Welsh	Other	Total
1700–09	9,000	(100)	(600)	(800)	(200)	[400]	[300]	[100]	(11,500)
1710–19	10,800	(3,700)	(1,200)	(1,700)	(500)	[1,300]	[900]	[200]	(20,300)
1720–29	9,900	(2,300)	(2,100)	(3,000)	(800)	[2,200]	[1,500]	[200]	(22,000)
1730–39	40,500	13,000	4,400	7,400	(2,000)	[4,900]	[3,200]	[800]	(76,200)
1740–49	58,500	16,600	9,200	9,100	(3,100)	[7,500]	[4,900]	[1,100]	(110,000)
1750–59	49,600	29,100	14,200	8,100	(3,700)	[8,800]	[5,800]	[1,200]	(120,500)
1760–69	82,300	14,500	21,200	8,500	10,000	[11,900]	[7,800]	[1,600]	157,800
1770–75	17,800	5,200	13,200	3,900	15,000	7,100	[4,600]	[700]	67,500
Total	278,400	84,500	66,100	42,500	35,300	[44,100]	[29,000]	[5,900]	(585,800)

Figures are rounded to nearest 100 immigrants. The estimates are divided into three categories: most dependable for accuracy (no demarcation), less dependable (), and least dependable [].

Aaron Spencer Fogleman, *Hopeful Journeys: German Immigration, Settlement, and Political Culture in Colonial America, 1717–1775* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 2; see also Fogleman, “Migrations to the thirteen British North American Colonies, 1700–1775: New Estimates,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 22 (1992): 691–709.

* Includes all German-speaking peoples, including Swiss and Alsations.