Chapter 3: Colonial Society in the Eighteenth Century

1. Population Growth
   1. dramatic spike of population
   2. at first, immigration was the main source of population growth, until death rate decreased and conditions improved in England
   3. in the North, death rate decreased b/c of the cool climate, clean water and absence of large population centers
   4. in the South (Chesapeake), death rate high because of malaria and salt-contaminated water; only decreased after the settlers developed immunity to the local diseases
   5. also increased because gender ratio became more balanced
   6. European Immigrants
      1. many people from Europe for a variety of reasons: economic and religious
      2. most immigrants settled in middle colonies
   7. French Huguenots emigrated to escape religious persecution
   8. English immigration decreased compared to German and Scotch-Irish immigration
   9. Germans settled in Pennsylvania, maintained their German language, customs and religion (Lutheran)
   10. Scotch-Irish- were forced to leave Ireland, settled in Western Pennsylvania, Virginia, Carolinas and Georgia
   11. Africans were largest group of non-English immigrants, worked broad range of occupations and all discriminated against
2. General Characteristics
   1. English culture dominated
   2. self-government- representative assembly elected by white male property owners
      1. only in Rhode Island and Connecticut was the governor elected by the people, other colonies’ governors were elected by crown or proprietor
   3. religious toleration- Massachusetts was least tolerant, Rhode Island and Pennsylvania were most tolerant
   4. no hereditary aristocracy- class system was based on economic status, not inherited special privileges
   5. social mobility- everyone had the chance for a better life!
      1. in America, land was abundant so wealth was based on not land like in England, but on labor force-- classes were fluid
3. The family
   1. marrying at young age and rearing more children
   2. gender imbalance in Chesapeake allowed women to have their pick of men and to marry early
   3. women often died in childbirth (made a baby every two years!); those who survive spend their lives taking care of their children
   4. women did household work, educated children, worked alongside husband, some shared decision making
   5. indentured servants not allowed to marry, but they had babies anyways
   6. men dominated politics and usually only men could own land, had unlimited domestic power
   7. women who outlived their husbands would inherit children and plantation-- economic power
   8. in the South, women were able to devote more time to their families b/c servants did their domestic work
   9. in the North, fathers exercised power over their sons b/c they controlled their land inheritances (primogeniture, or all land to first son, not respected)
   10. in New England, communities grew when residents didn’t have enough land anymore
4. The economy
   1. richness of American land and British mercantile policy produced agricultural economy
   2. most ppl too poor or isolated to be able to afford basic technology like plows, pots, kettles, guns or wagons
   3. but not self-sufficient; depended on markets for clothes and grain-processing
   4. New England
      1. farming limited to subsistence levels because the weather was colder and the soil harder/rockier
      2. profited from natural resource exploitation like logging, shipbuilding, fishing, trading, and rum-distilling
      3. did not industrialize (metalwork) because:
         1. inadequate labor supply
         2. small domestic market
         3. inadequate transportation facilities and energy supplies
         4. imposed mercantilist policies
   5. Middle colonies
      1. rich soil produced an abundance of wheat and corn
      2. iron-making
   6. Southern colonies
      1. varied geography and climate led to range of farms, from little ones to big ones
      2. cash crops: tobacco in Chesapeake and North Carolina, rice and indigo in South Carolina and Georgia
      3. production exceeded demand, so price of tobacco low
      4. these labor-intensive crops promoted slavery
         1. slaves established families that could be broken up at any time
         2. own language (Gullah)
         3. sometimes resisted by running away, but there was nowhere to run
      5. plantations were large but unstable b/c of the cash crop market, but self-sufficient b/c of their distance from cities and towns
      6. small farmers who formed the majority of the population depended on planters to market crops and receive credit
   7. Monetary system
      1. colonies forced to use hard currency (gold and silver) to pay for imports from England
      2. printed currency for domestic use led to inflation :c
      3. forced to use rudimentary barter system
   8. trade
      1. because trading by water is much easier than trading overland, Boston, NYC, Philadelphia and Charleston become large trading centers
         1. wealth disparities apparent
         2. big social problems like crime, pollution, epidemics and traffic
         3. vulnerable to price fluctuations
         4. news traveled fast in cities
      2. enjoyed protection from foreign competition within the English colonies b/c of the Navigation Acts
      3. but also cheated by exporting goods that England didn’t want (fish, flour, wheat and meat) to the Indies
5. religion
   1. reinforced traditional gender roles, despite preaching that men and women were equal before God
   2. the highly religious nature of Puritan society and the gender roles it depended on were background themes of witchcraft hysteria
   3. Protestant Dominance
      1. established churches- churches living off of colonial government taxes
         1. Anglican Church in Virginia
         2. Congregational Church in Massachusetts Bay and Connecticut
         3. tax support waned away, especially after the Revolution
      2. Anglicans
         1. no bishop to ordain ministers
         2. viewed as symbol of British control in colonies
      3. Congregationalists- found mostly in New England
      4. many denominations
      5. Protestants tolerated each other better than they tolerated Catholics
   4. **The Great Awakening**- movement characterized by fervent expressions of religious feeling among masses of people in 1730s and 1740s
      1. response to decreased piety and growing secularism caused by Enlightenment (belief in human reason and scientific inquiry)
      2. appealed to women and younger sons who would inherit little land and had uncertain futures, because it gave everyone the opportunity to start anew
      3. **Jonathan Edwards** in New England
         1. **“Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God”** said that God was super pissed at humans
      4. **George Whitefield**
         1. traveled from side of colonial America to the other
         2. preached everywhere that God was all-powerful and if you didn’t believe in him you would go to hell
      5. Religious impact
         1. emotionalism became common part of Protestant services
         2. ministers lost power because ppl studied in their own homes now
         3. caused split between supporters (**Congregational** “New Light”) and condemners (**Presbyterian** “Old Lights”) which led to competition, increased religious diversity and call for separation of church and state
      6. Political influence
         1. bottom-up thinking: if religion is more independent, why not politics?
6. Cultural Life
   1. 1600s people only had time for economic survival, but in 1700s people began to pursue leisure activities
   2. consumerism increased b/c people wanted to demonstrate their societal rank
   3. Achievements in the Arts and Sciences
      1. Architecture- Georgian style with symmetrical brick/stucco homes
      2. Painting- wandering artists, **Benjamin West** and **John Copley**
      3. Literature- lots of political essays and treatises about American rights and English authority
         1. **Benjamin Franklin’s Poor Richard’s Almanack**
      4. Science- Benjamin Franklin with electricity, bifocal eyeglasses and Franklin stove
   4. Education
      1. education = refinement, extension of their social class
      2. most white males were literate, though most ppl never received education past primary school
      3. few educational opportunities for women and slaves
      4. New England- wanted ppl to learn the Bible so they created the first tax-supported schools
      5. Middle colonies- church sponsored or private
      6. Southern colonies- parents and tutors
      7. Higher education- Harvard, William and Mary, and Yale were **sectarian**, promoting the doctrines of a particular religious sect but still taught liberal education and science
      8. effects of scientific education seen in inoculation against smallpox
   5. Professions
      1. for a while only Christian ministers were respected, but physicians and lawyers began to be respected
      2. Physicians had no experience, believed in the four humors, employed leeches and bloodsuckers, and were competitive with midwives
      3. lawyers- started from talkative troublemakers to respectable people
   6. The Press
      1. few illustrations in newspapers
      2. **Zenger** case went against English common law which stated that injuring a governor’s reputation was criminal by acquitting Zenger, encouraging newspapers to take greater risks in criticizing a colony’s government
   7. Rural Folkways
      1. most people read only the Bible
      2. entertainment in South was cardplaying and horse-racing
      3. entertainment in middle colonies was theatergoing
      4. entertainment in Puritan New England was attending religious lectures (lol)
   8. Emergence of a National Character
      1. motivations for immigration, political heritage of English majority and American natural environment combined to become AMERICA
      2. different from England because:
         1. less severe punishments b/c labor is important
         2. Peter Zenger’s case established that criticisms of the government weren’t libelous if they were true-- protection of freedom of the press
         3. law is not the power of an earthly sovereign, it is the reflection of divine will or natural order
      3. self-governing because provincial governors appointed by crown had little power
      4. similar systems of government, governor as chief executive and separate legislature voting to accept/reject proposed laws
      5. structure of government
         1. royal colonies: New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia
         2. proprietary colonies: Maryland, Pennsylvania and Delaware
         3. only in Connecticut and Rhode Island were the governors elected by popular vote
         4. bicameral legislature
            1. lower house (assembly) voted for/against new taxes
            2. upper house appointed by king or proprietor
         5. local government
            1. New England- town meeting where people of the town came together to vote directly on public issues
            2. South- law-enforcing sheriff and other officials who served a county
         6. voting
            1. white women, poor white men, slaves of both sexes and most free blacks could not vote
            2. religious restrictions were removed in the 1700s, but you still needed to own some property
            3. colonial assemblies and governors’ councils represented privileged elite, though it varied from the super exclusive House of Burgesses to the more open legislature in Massachusetts