

## CH. 6 Self-Government Develops in the 13 Colonies (1607-1763)

Introduction: All of England's colonies shared a common heritage, especially with regard to their system of government. Under this system, citizens hold certain rights. This system of English government helped the colonies grow from small outposts in the wilderness to important parts of the British Empire. However, by 1763, the colonists began to strongly disagree with some of the strict laws and policies of English rule.

### I. What Rights did the English Colonists bring to America?

A. English Heritage(tradition)- the English people limited the monarch's power with the following:

1. The Magna Carta 1215-the Great Charter limited the power of the king/queen, allowed for trial with juries, and the monarch must ask advice of nobles regarding new taxes.
2. The Petition of Right 1628- this document stated that the people could not be taxed without the consent of Parliament.
3. The English Bill of Rights 1689- this document guaranteed citizens specific rights that could not be taken away by the government.

By accepting these 3 documents, the English monarchs admitted that their subjects possessed important rights. The English government had changed from an absolute monarchy to a limited monarchy.

B. American Colonial Rights- The English colonists who settled in America claimed to have the same rights as people who lived in England. The colonial charters granted by the British Crown supported this claim.

## II. What kinds of Government grew up in the English colonies?

A. Colonial Governments- colonial governments were modeled after the government of Great Britain:

Head of the Government-the king / colonial governor

Legislature-Parliament / colonial legislature

Courts-Royal Courts / colonial courts

B. How are colonial governors chosen?

-Charter Colonies: (Rhode Island, Connecticut)

Were governed according to their charter. The Legislatures elected the governor.

-Proprietary Colonies: (Maryland, Pennsylvania, Delaware)

Governed according to the will of the proprietor.

Therefore, the proprietor picked the governor.

-Royal Colonies: (Massachusetts, N.H., N.Y., N.J., Virginia, N. Carolina, S. Carolina, Georgia)

Only the king had the power to appoint the colonial governor. The citizens of royal colonies did not have any voice in their government.

C. How are lawmakers chosen? Most colonial legislatures had 2 houses (upper & lower house). The governor appointed the members of the upper house while the lower house was elected by the voters.

#### D. Local Affairs-

1. Town meetings- form of local government in which the people speak for themselves instead of electing representatives. This was more effective in the New England colonies because the people lived close together.
2. Justices of the Peace- in the Southern colonies, people were spread apart which resulted in county government. Affairs of local government were carried out by "justices of the peace". The duties of a justice included: judging court cases, collecting taxes, and providing for roads.

#### II. What disagreements developed between England and the Colonists?

##### A. English Colonial Policy

Trade with the American colonies became a source of great wealth for England. To protect this wealth, Parliament passed laws restricting colonial trade and manufacturing (Navigation Acts.) Nevertheless, many colonial merchants grew rich under England's trade laws. English colonial policies included: mercantilism, Navigation Acts, triangular trade, and restriction of most colonial manufacturing.

What was the triangular trade?

Trade routes that followed triangular patterns from ports in England or other parts of the world, especially in Africa or the West Indies. Colonial merchants earned great profits from this trade because they frequently disobeyed English trade laws.

##### B. Colonial Disagreement

At first, the laws controlling trade did not seriously hurt the colonial economy. The Navigation Acts were not enforced carefully. Until the mid-1700's, the British practiced salutary neglect, a policy allowing the colonies to develop their own economy with little interference from the British government. The British did not interfere because the colonies were growing and England was profiting from trade.

The colonial merchants took advantage of this and engaged in smuggling-secretly and illegally shipping goods for trade. Most colonists did not feel it was wrong to violate English law, and that the colonists should be allowed to manage their own affairs. Although the British did overlook colonial smuggling, they continued to believe that they could rule the American colonies as they wished. Things would change significantly by 1763.

#### IV. Who was John Peter Zenger?

-In 1735, Zenger, printer of the "New York Weekly Journal" was arrested for libeling the governor of NY. During his trial he was able to prove that what he printed was "true". The jury found him innocent of the charges.

-The court case was a great victory for the concept of freedom of the press, which would later become part of the US Constitution.

#### V: Who was Nathaniel Bacon?

-He was a wealthy landowner who sympathized with the Virginia farmers who were angry about: increased taxes, poor representation in the Virginia assembly, and little protection from Indian attacks on the frontier.

-In 1675, Bacon led a rebellion of farmers against the governor and burned down Jamestown.

-English soldiers were sent to put down the rebellion. The rebels were all hanged. Bacon died from an illness.

-Bacon's rebellion was a sign to the upper (propertied) class that they could lose their land if another rebellion was to succeed.