


# Life in Colonial America

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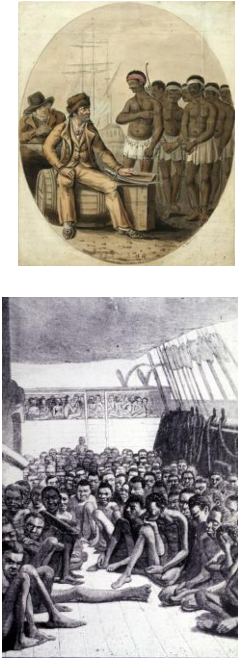


- Where does the labor come from?
  - At first indentured servants, but they were expensive & temporary
  - Slaves were permanent, but enslaving Indians was hard
    - **Easy for Indians to run away**
    - **Too many died from diseases or hard work**

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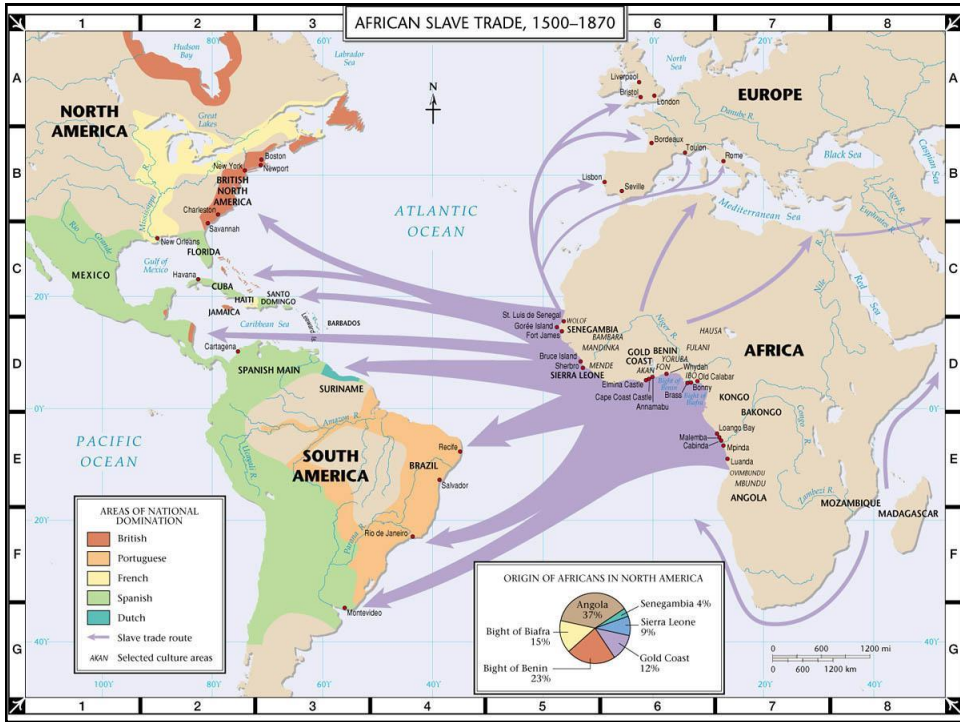
## African Slavery

- From West African tribes
- Most captured by rival tribes and sold at the coast
- Middle Passage
  - Brutal journey from Africa to New World
  - Vast majority went to sugar plantations in the Caribbean and Brazil
    - **Less than 5% went to British North America**



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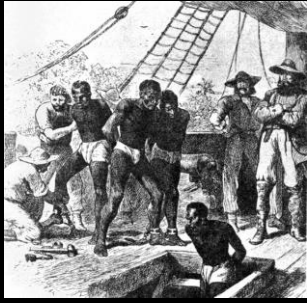



- Slavery differed depending on local environment & economy
  - North: few slaves (10%) & most lived in cities
  - South: many slaves (90%) & most were field hands on plantations
    - Life on tobacco plantations in VA & MD allowed most slaves to live long lives
    - SC & GA was much worse –rice paddies were putrid & disease ridden; population was only sustained through new imports of slaves

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## Resistance

- Most resistance was passive: slaves might
  - Resist work (malingering)
  - Sabotage crops & tools
  - Run away
- Punishment included beatings, whippings, & mutilation
  - Extent of violence toward slaves depended on density of slave population
  - Fewer slaves = less violence



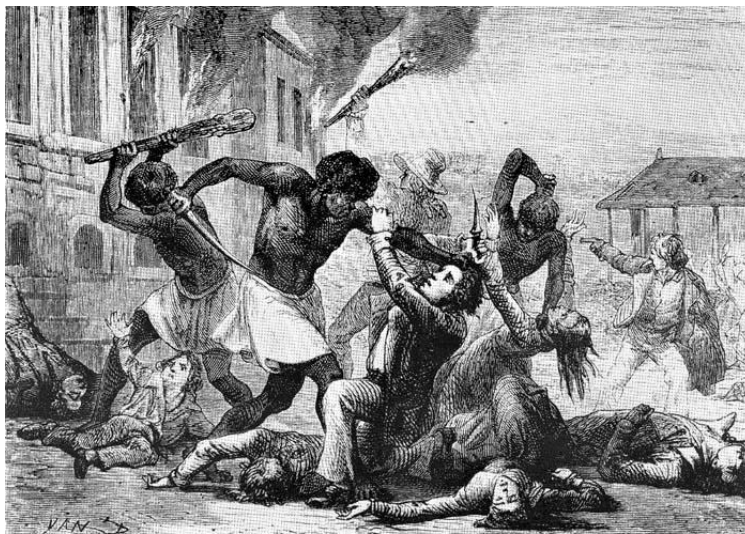
APRIL 16, 1767.

**R**UN AWAY from the subscriber, near *Williamburg*, last *Saturday* night, a Negro fellow named **BOB**, about 5 feet 7 inches high, about 26 years of age, was burnt when young, by which he has a scar on the wrist of his right hand, the thumb of his left hand burnt off, and the hand turns in; had on a double breasted dark coloured frieze jacket, and yellow cotton breeches. He was lately brought home from *Hartford* county in *North Carolina*, where he has been harboured for three years past by one *Fan Pell*, who lives on *Chinkapa* creek; he passed for a freeman, by the name of *Edward* or *Edmund Tamar*, and has got a wife there. He is an extraordinary fawer, a tolerable good carpenter and currier, pretends to make shoes, and is a very good fallow. He has been gone for eight years, a part of which time he lived in *Charleston*, *South Carolina*. He can read and write; and, as he is a very artful fellow, will probably forge a pass. All masters of vessels are hereby cautioned from carrying him out of the colony, and any person from employing him. Whoever apprehends the said fellow, and conveys him to me, shall have 5 l. reward, if taken in this colony; if in *North Carolina*, 5 l. and if in any other province, 10 l.

WILLIAM TREBELL.

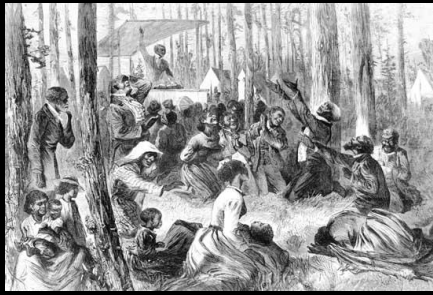
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- Occasional rebellions were ruthlessly suppressed
  - Biggest colonial revolt was the Stono rebellion in SC



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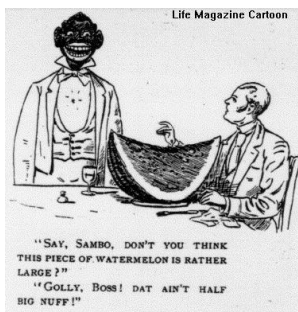
- African-Americans influenced American music, folklore, & religious practices
  - **Distracted slaves from servitude & promised deliverance in the next life**
- Slaves also had powerful kinship ties
  - Masters realized that slaves would be more stable if they had families
    - **Threat of losing a family prevented resistance: if slaves didn't work & the plantation failed, then families would be broken up at auctions**
    - **Families also meant an increased workforce through reproduction**



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## Racism in America

- **Did racism cause slavery, or did slavery cause racism?**
  - English did associate black with darkness & evil, and stamped Africans as “savage”
  - On the other hand, most common racist stereotypes were also assigned to the underclass in England to explain *their* status
  - After 1676 slavery was increasingly defined using racial terms



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## Southern Gentry

- First huts in Jamestown were gone by the 18<sup>th</sup> century, replaced by mansions of the new colonial aristocracy
- Colonial aristocrats (planters) imitated British landlords & controlled Southern society
  - Ran large plantations on fertile lands next to rivers
  - Owned many slaves
  - Also exercised authority over white yeoman farmers



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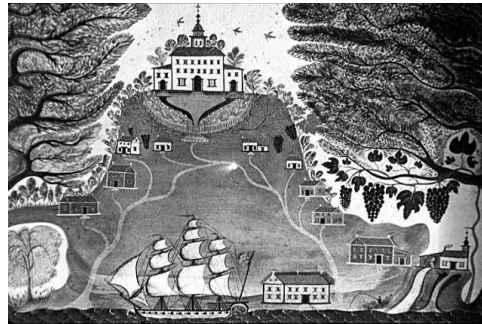
- Most southern whites were yeomen
  - Worked land away from rivers and in less fertile areas
  - Majority owned no slaves
    - Those who did usually owned just 1 or 2



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## Bacon's Rebellion -- 1676

- Tension between Tidewater and Piedmont
  - As cultivation of tobacco increased, the price dropped
  - Rich planters in Tidewater held huge estates
  - Others (new settlers & freed indentured servants) had to go to the Piedmont
    - land was less fertile & vulnerable to Indian attacks



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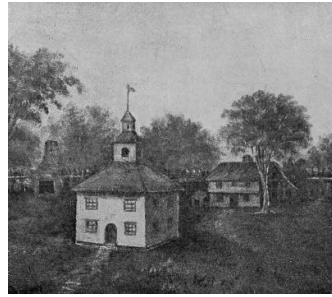
- Nathaniel Bacon defied Governor Berkeley & led a vigilante force to kill Indians
  - **Both peaceful and warlike tribes**
  - **Also burned Jamestown**
- Berkeley eventually wins
  - **hangs many of the rebels, Bacon gets dysentery**
- Result
  - New lands opened to settlement
  - Planters rely on slaves instead of indentured servants
    - **Indentured servants telling families that life is bad, so who will replace them?**
    - **Color difference makes it easy to encourage racism**

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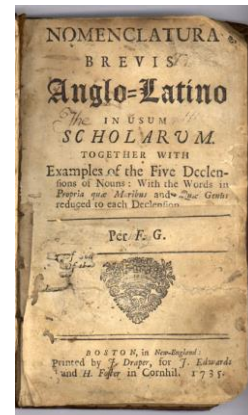


## New England

- In the South, the gentry turned the English manor into plantations
- In New England, the Puritans turned the English village into townships
- Problem for townships as the initial generation died off
  - **if you divide the land up for your children, & they divide the land up for their children, what will eventually happen?**
  - **Younger sons had to move west, breaking up townships**



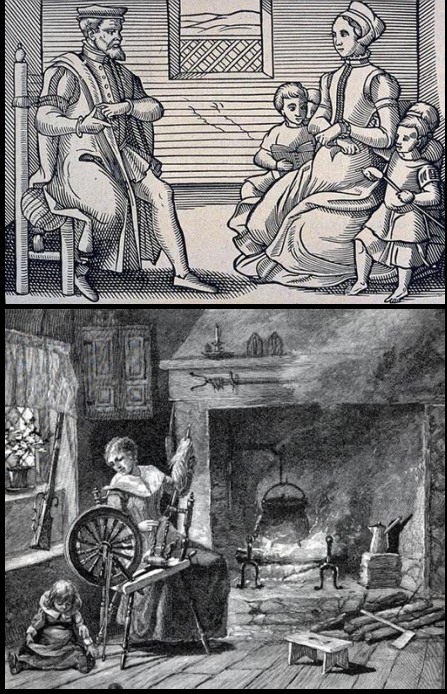
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- Puritan education
  - Citizens had to be able to read the Bible
  - Townships required to have a public school
- Half-Way Covenant
  - Non-saints could be baptized, but no communion or vote in church affairs
  - **Previously, only the children of “saints” were baptized**
    - **2<sup>nd</sup> generation weren't willing to join the elect (to join you had to attend church & have a born again experience)**

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## Family Life



- **Most dwellings were plain or sturdy**
  - Dark interiors, lit only by candles or oil lamps – most people went to bed at sunset
- **Meals were made in a pot on a large fireplace & served on a board**
  - Usually there was only one chair for the father – thus the term *chairman of the board*
  - Other family members stood to eat
  - Fare was usually corn, boiled meat, & vegetables

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## New England Economy

- **Maritime**
  - Depended on the ocean
  - Short growing season in the North
  - Fishing
  - Shipbuilding
    - **first big American industry**
    - **Nearly 1/3 of all British ships were made in the colonies**
- Trade
  - **Merchants traded with the British and (illegally) with other European colonies**




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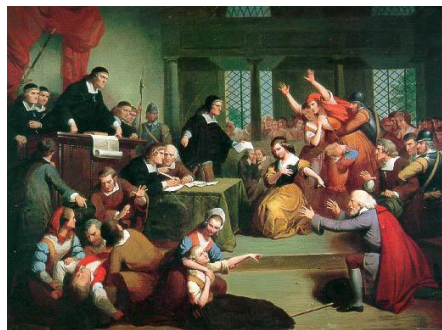
## Triangle Trade

- New England merchants sell guns, rum, & manufactured goods to African kingdoms & buy slaves
- Sell slaves in the Caribbean (West Indies) & buy sugarcane
- Sell sugarcane in New England & buy rum
  - or in Britain for guns & manufactured goods
- You make a profit at each stop, then you start all over again



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## Salem Witch Trials



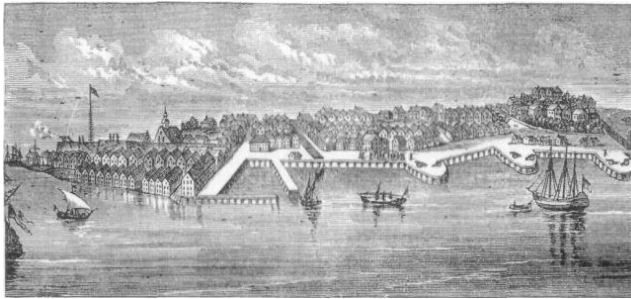
- Tensions were already rising in New England
  - **land pressure**
  - **disparity of wealth**
  - **Materialism also placed strains on church discipline**
- In 1692 several girls began acting strangely, & accused three women of witchcraft
  - **The accused named others as witches to protect themselves, and soon the accusation net spread**
    - Around 150 arrested, 19 hanged
  - **Eventually the governor stepped in, and the hysteria subsided**

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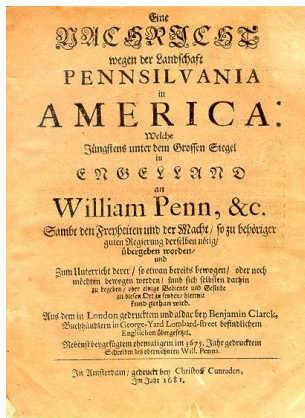


# Life in the Middle Colonies

- Economic mix
  - Pennsylvania known as “breadbasket” of colonies
  - NYC & Philadelphia had trade & commerce



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- Ethnic Mix
  - Quakers & NYC both had a tradition of tolerance
    - This encouraged immigrants & refugees of all kinds
  - Germans
    - Many farming communities
    - Penn had circulated brochures throughout the Rhineland
    - Many German immigrants escaped from religious persecution and war



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– Scots-Irish

- Mostly lived in the backcountry
- Scots-Irish fled Anglican persecution and high English taxes
- **Known for their violent, hard drinking, clannish, and anti-authoritarian culture**

