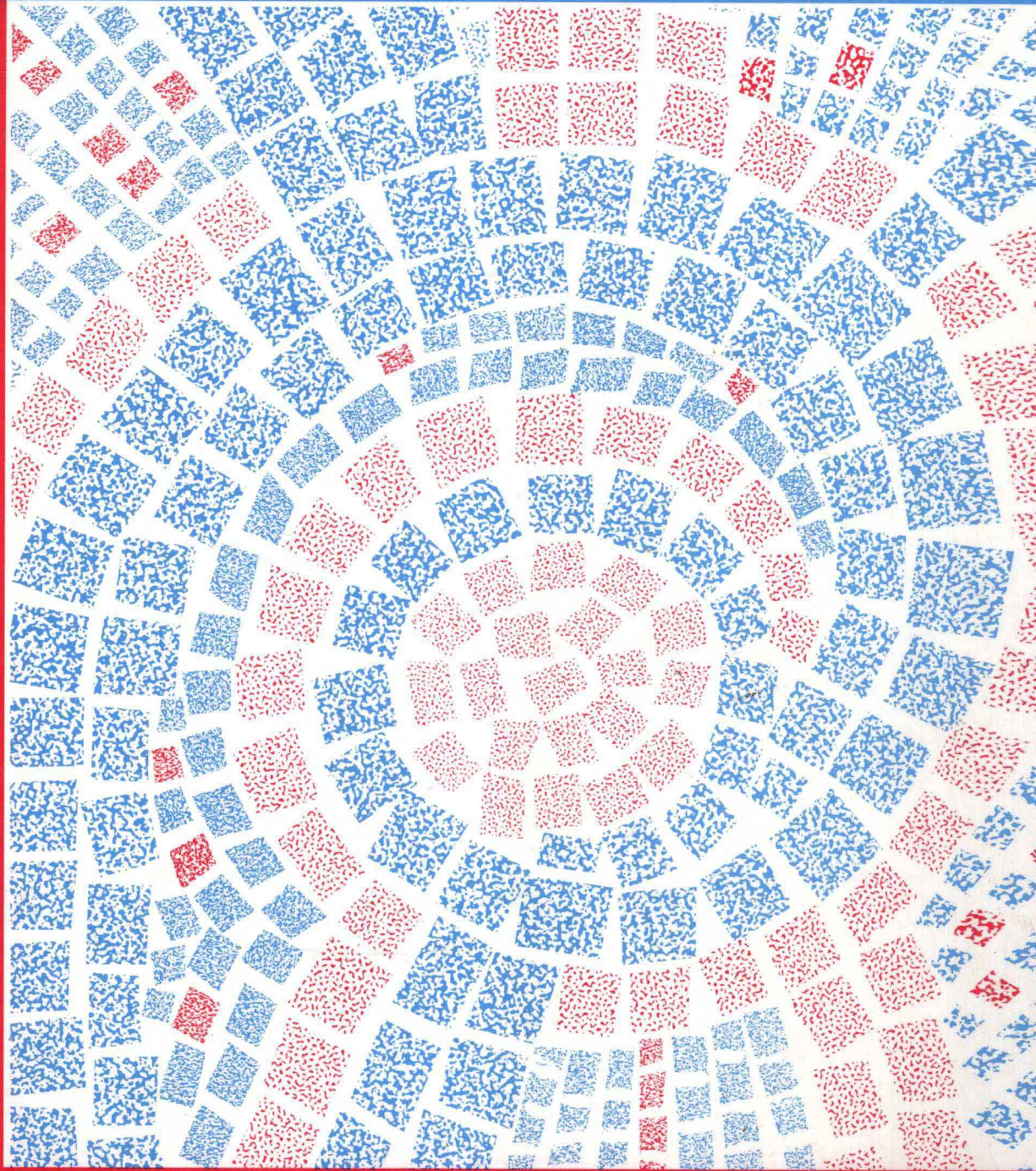


Perspectives on American Civilization

Third Edition



Robert A. Goldberg and L. Ray Gunn

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Robert A. Goldberg and L. Ray Gunn

University of Utah
Salt Lake City, Utah



SIMON & SCHUSTER
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INTRODUCTION

This book is a collection of the matter of American history. Primary sources are the diplomatic dispatches, eye-witness accounts, letters, novels, and manifestos from which historians fashion interpretations of past actors and events. This task of analysis is much like that performed by anthropologists uncovering pottery shards or political scientists reviewing polling data. As you read these documents, you will become aware of the complexity inherent in the historian's work. The value and meaning of each piece of evidence are not self-evident or obvious. No document offers a single motivation or interpretation. The historian reads each document in isolation to discern its internal meaning, the purpose of its creator. Then, the scholar must fit the artifact into the historical context which gave it birth. What is its relationship to the events of a particular period? Finally, the historian relates the document to the wider themes of the American experience. How do these individual threads of evidence run through the fabric of foreign policy, social change, economic development, and political evolution? Is there a consistency or divergence in pattern? Why?

We have assembled documents which are broadly representative of the issues and peoples that were and are American history. The critical happenings from the Colonial period to the present are viewed through the eyes of the elite, the inarticulate, blacks, whites, Native Americans, men, women, conservatives, liberals, and radicals. Only through such a prism could the diversity of the American experiment be accurately presented. From these documents should emerge, as well, the reference points which shape all that we confront in the present and all that we will confront in the future.

I. The Colonial Foundations, 1607-1763

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, English adventurers and religious dissenters established a foothold on the North American continent. Settlements at Jamestown (1607), Plymouth (1620), and Massachusetts Bay (1630) were the vanguard of a great migration of Europeans which, over the course of a century, produced thirteen English colonies stretching along the Atlantic seaboard from Maine to Georgia. A central theme of colonial history is the process by which these first tentative settlements grew and matured into the provincial society of the mid-eighteenth century. In the early years, the New World environment took its toll in human lives, discarded institutions, and outmoded cultural forms. Gradually, however, Europeans adapted to new circumstances, developed viable economics, and produced distinctive social orders. In New England the tenets of Puritanism combined with a harsh climate and poor soil to produce a Puritan/Yankee culture based on trade and commerce. In contrast, tobacco, rice, and slavery shaped a decentralized, planter society in the South. The middle colonies, always more diverse than those to the North or the South, evolved into a heterogeneous agricultural and commercial society. An underlying theme throughout this transformation was the constant interaction of European, Native American, and African cultures. While European culture achieved an early and lasting dominance, in the process it absorbed elements of its competitors and was itself altered in significant ways. Indeed, the process of growth and adaptation in the New World environment produced a "new society" in North America by the middle of the eighteenth century, one increasingly at variance with the society of the Mother Country. As the colonies matured socially, economically, and politically, they grew increasingly restless under the restraints of the British colonial system. Thus, the stage was set for resistance when the British adopted a more stringent policy of colonial administration in the 1760s.

1. Of the Naturall Inhabitants of Virginia —Captain John Smith

The first Europeans in America encountered a land long populated by native peoples. These "Indians," as they came to be called, possessed extraordinarily diverse cultures, spoke a bewildering variety of languages, and exhibited varying degrees of social complexity. The cultural gap between Native American societies and Europeans, who tended to view all natives as "savages," profoundly conditioned the interaction of European and native cultures in succeeding generations. In the following selection, Captain John Smith, one of the early leaders of the Jamestown colony, describes some of the customs of the native inhabitants of Virginia. Interestingly, while Smith adopts the common habit of describing native peoples as "savages," his description reveals the complexity of their social organization and cultural norms.

The land is not populous, for the men be fewe; their far greater number is of women and children. Within 60 miles of *Iames Towne* there are about some 5000 people, but of able men fit for their warres scarce 1500. To nourish so many together they haue yet no means, because they make so smal a benefit of their land, be it never so fertill. . . .

Some being very great as the *Sesquesahamocks*, others very little as the *Wighcocomocoes*: but generally tall and straight, of a comely proportion, and of a colour browne when they are of any age, but they are borne white. Their haire is generally black; but few haue any beards. The men weare halfe their heads shaven, the other halfe long. For Barbers they vse their women, who with 2 shels will grate away the haire, of any fashion they please. The women are cut in many fashions agreeable to their yeares, but ever some part remaineth long.

They are very strong, of an able body and full of agilitie, able to endure to lie in the woods vnder a tree by the fire, in the worst of winter, or in the weedes and grasse, in *Ambuscado* in the Sommer.

They are inconstant in everie thing, but what feare constraineth them to keepe. Craftie, timerous, quicke of apprehension and very ingenuous. Some are of disposition fearefull, some bold, most cautelous, all *Savage*. Generally covetous of copper, beads, and such like trash. They are soone moved to anger, and so malicious, that they seldome forget an iniury: they seldome steale one from another, least their coniurers should reueale it, and so they be pursued and punished. That they are thus feared is certaine, but that any can reueale their offences by coniuration I am doubtfull. Their women are carefull not to bee suspected of dishonesty without the leaue of their husbands.

Each houshold knoweth their owne lands and gardens, and most liue of their owne labours.

For their apparell, they are some time couered with the skinnnes of wilde beasts, which in winter are dressed with the haire, but in sommer without. The better sort vse large mantels of deare skins not much differing in fashion from the Irish mantels. Some imbrodered with white beads, some with copper, other painted after their manner. But the common sort haue scarce to cover their nakednesse but with grasse, the leaues of trees, or such like. We haue seen some vse mantels made of Turkey feathers, so prettily wrought and wouen with threeds that nothing could bee discerned but the feathers, that was exceeding warme and very handsome. But the women are alwaies couered about their midles with a skin and [are] very shamefast to be seene bare.

They adorne themselues most with copper beads and paintings. Their women some haue their legs, hands, brests and face cunningly imbrodered with diuerse workes, as beasts, serpentes,

From TRAVELS AND WORKS OF CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH, PRESIDENT OF VIRGINIA AND ADMIRAL OF NEW ENGLAND, 1580-1631, Edward Arber, editor, John Grant Booksellers, Ltd., 1910, Vol. 1, Part 1, pp. 65-74.

artificially wrought into their flesh with blacke spots. In each eare commonly they haue 3 great holes, whereat they hange chaines, bracelets, or copper. Some of their men weare in those holes, a smal Greene and yellow coloured snake, neare halfe a yard in length, which crawling and lapping her selfe about his necke often times familiarly would kiss his lips. Others wear a dead Rat tied by the tail. Some on their heads weare the wing of a bird or some large feather, with a Rattell. Those Rattells are somewhat like the chape of a Rapier but lesse, which they take from the taile of a snake. Many haue the whole skinne of a hawke or some strange fowle, stuffed with the wings abroad. Others a broad peece of copper, and some the hand of their enemy dried. Their heads and shoulders are painted red with the roote *Pocone* braied to powder mixed with oyle; this they hold in somer to preserue them from the heate, and in winter from the cold. Many other formes of paintings they vse, but he is the most gallant that is the most monstrous to behould.

Their buildings and habitations are for the most part by the riuers or not farre distant from some fresh spring. Their houses are built like our Arbors of small young springs [?sprigs] bowed and tyed, and so close covered with mats or the barks of trees very handsomely, that notwithstanding either winde raine or weather, they are as warme as stooues, but very smoaky; yet at the toppe of the house there is a hole made for the smoake to goe into right over the fire.

Against the fire they lie on little hurdles of Reedes covered with a mat, borne from the ground a foote and more by a hurdle of wood. On these round about the house, they lie heads and points one by th[e] other against the fire: some covered with mats, some with skins, and some starke naked lie on the ground; from 6 to 20 in a house.

Their houses are in the midst of their fields or gardens; which are smal plots of ground; some 20 [*acres* p. 363], some 40, some 100., some 200., some more, some lesse. Some times from 2 to 100 of these houses [are] together, or but a little separated by groues of trees. Neare their habitations is [but] little small wood, or old trees on the ground, by reason of their burning of them for fire. So that a man may gallop a horse amongst these woods any waie, but where the creekes or Rivers shall hinder.

Men women and children haue their severall names according to the seuerall humor of their Parents. Their women (they say) are easilie deliuered of childe, yet doe they loue children verie dearly. To make them hardy, in the coldest mornings they wash them in the riuers, and by painting and ointments so tanne their skins, that after year or two, no weather will hurt them.

The men bestowe their times in fishing, hunting, wars, and such manlike exercises, scorning to be seene in any woman like exercise; which is the cause that the women be verie painefull and the men often idle. The women and children do the rest of the worke. they make mats, baskets, pots, morters; pound their corne, make their bread, prepare their victuals, plant their corne, gather their corne, beare al kind of burdens, and such like. . . .

In March and Aprill they liue much vpon their fishing, weares; and feed on fish, Turkies and squirrels. In May and Iune they plant their fieldes; and liue most of Acornes, walnuts, and fish. But to mend their diet, some disperse themselues in small companies, and liue vpon fish, beasts, crabs, oysters, land Torteyses, strawberries, mulberries, and such like. In Iune, Iulie, and August, they feed vpon the rootes of *Tocknough*, berries, fish, and Greene wheat. . . .

For fishing and hunting and warres they vse much their bow and arrowes. They bring their bowes to the forme of ours by the scraping of a shell. Their arrowes are made, some of straight young sprigs, which they head with bone some 2 or 3 inches long. These they vse to shoot at squirrels on trees. An other sort of arrowes they vse, made of reeds. These are peeced with wood, headed with splinters of christall or some sharpe stone, the spurres of a Turkey, or the bill of some bird. For his knife, he hath the splinter of a reed to cut his feathers in forme. With this knife also, he will ioint a Deare or any beast; shape his shooes, buskins, mantels, &c. To make the nock of his arrow hee hath the tooth of a Beuer set in a stick, wherewith he grateth it by degrees. His arrow head he quickly maketh with a little bone, which he ever weareth at his bracer, of any splint of a stone, or glasse in the forme of a hart; and these they glew to the end of their

arrowes. With the sinewes of Deare, and the tops of Deares hornes boiled to a ielly, they make a glew that will not dissolue in cold water.

For their wars also they vse Targets that are round and made of the barks of trees, and a sworde of wood at their backs, but oftentimes they vse for swords the horne of a Deare put through a peece of wood in forme of a Pickaxe. Some, a long stone sharpened at both ends vsed in the same manner. This they were wont to vse also for hatchets, but now by trucking they haue plenty of the same forme, of yron. And those are their chiefe instruments and armes.

Their fishing is much in Boats. These they make of one tree by bowing [*?burning*] and scratching away the coles with ston[e]s and shels till they haue made it in forme of a Trough. Some of them are an elne deepe, and 40 or 50 foot in length, and some will beare 40 men; but the most ordinary are smaller, and will beare 10, 20, or 30. according to their bignes. Instead of oares, they vse paddles and sticks, with which they will row faster then our Barges.

Betwixt their hands and thighes, their women vse to spin the barks of trees, deare sinews, or a kind of grasse they call *Pemmenaw*; of these they make a thred very even and readily. This thred serveth for many vses, as about their housing, apparell; as also they make nets for fishing, for the quantity as formally braded as ours. They make also with it lines for angles.

Their hookes are either a bone grated, as they nock their arrows, in the forme of a crooked pinne or fishhook; or of the splinter of a bone tied to the clift of a litle stick, and with the ende of the line, they tie on the bate.

They vse also long arrowes tyed in a line wherewith they shoote at fish in the rivers. But they of *Accawmack* vse staues like vnto Iavelins headed with bone. With these they dart fish swimming in the water. They haue also many artificiall weares in which they get abundance of fish.

In their hunting and fishing they take extreame paines; yet it being their ordinary exercise from their infancy, they esteeme it a pleasure and are very proud to be expert therein. And by their continuall ranging, and travel, they know all the advantages and places most frequented with Deare, Beasts, Fish, Foule, Rootes, and Berries. At their huntings they leaue their habitations, and reduce themselves into companies, as the *Tartars* doe, and goe to the most desert places with their families, where they spend their time in hunting and fowling vp towards the mountaines, by the heads of their riuers, where there is plentie of game. For betwixt the rivers, the grounds are so narrowe, that little commeth there which they deuoure not. It is a marvel they can so directly passe these deserts, some 3 or 4 daies iourney without habitation. Their hunting houses are like vnto Arbours couered with mats. These their women beare after them, with Corne, Acomes, Morters, and all bag and baggage they vse. When they come to the place of exercise, euery man doth his best to shew his dexteritie, for by their excellling in those quallities, they get their wiues. Forty yards will they shoot leuell, or very neare the mark, and 120 is their best at Random. At their huntings in the deserts they are commonly 2 or 300 together. Hauing found the Deare, they environ them with many fires, and betwixt the fires they place themselves. And some take their stands in the midst. The Deare being thus feared by the fires and their voices, they chace them so long within that circle, that many times they kill 6, 8, 10, or 15 at a hunting. They vse also to driue them into some narrowe point of land, when they find that aduantage; and so force them into the riuier, where with their boats they haue *Ambuscadoes* to kill them. When they haue shot a Deare by land, they follow him like blood hounds by the blood and straine, and oftentimes so take them. Hares, Pattridges, Turkies, or Egges, fat or leane, young or old, they deuoure all they can catch in their power. . . .

One Savage hunting alone, vseth the skinne of a Deare slit on the one side, and so put on his arme, through the neck, so that his hand comes to the head which is stuffed; and the hornes, head, eies, eares, and every part as arteficially counterfeited as they can devise. Thus shrowding his body in the skinne, by stalking he approacheth the Deare, creeping on the ground from one tree to another. If the Deare chance to find fault, or stande at gaze, hee turneth the head with his hand to

his best advantage to seeme like a Deare, also gazing and licking himselfe. So watching his best aduantage to approach, hauing shot him, hee chaseth him by his blood and straine till he get him.

When they intend any warres, the *Werowances* vsually haue the aduice of their Priests and Coniurers, and their Allies and ancient friends; but chiefly the Priestes determine their resolution. Every *Werowance*, or some lustie fellow, they appoint Captaine over every nation. They seldome make warre for lands or goods, but for women and children, and principally for revenge. They haue many enimies, namely all their westernely Countries beyond the mountaines, and the heads of the rivers. . . .

For their musicke they vse a thicke cane, on which they pipe as on a Recorder. For their warres, they haue a great deepe platter of wood. They cover the mouth thereof with a skin, at each corner they tie a walnut, which meeting on the backside neere the bottome, with a small rope they twitch them together till it be so tought and stiffe, that they may beat vpon it as vpon a drumme. but their dhiefe instruments are Rattels made of small gourds or Pumpion shels. Of these they haue Base, Tenor, Countertenor, Meane and Tribble. These mingled with their voices sometimes 20 or 30 together, make such a terrible noise as would rather affright then delight any man.

If any great commander arriue at the habitation of a *Werowance*, they spread a mat as the Turkes do a carpet, for him to sit vpon. Vpon an other right opposite they sit themselues. Then doe all with a tunable voice of showing bid him welcome. After this, doe 2. or more of their chiefest men make an oration, testifying their loue. Which they do with such vehemency and so great passions, that they sweate till they drop; and are so out of breath they can scarce speake. So that a man would take them to be exceeding angry or starke mad. Such victuall as they haue, they spend freely; and at night where his lodging is appointed, they set a woman fresh painted red with *Pocones* and oile, to be his bedfellow.

Their manner of trading is for copper, beades, and such like; for which they giue such commodities as they haue, as skins, fowle, fish, flesh, and their country come. But their victuall is their chiefest riches.

Every spring they make themselues sicke with drinking the iuice of a root they call *wighsacan*, and water; whereof they powre so great a quantity, that it purgeth them in a very violent maner; so that in 3 or 4 daies after, they scarce recover their former health.

Sometimes they are troubled with dropsies, swellings, aches, and such like diseases; for cure wherof they build a stoue in the form of a douehouse with mats, so close that a fewe coales therein covered with a pot, will make the pacient sweate extreamely. For swellings also they vse smal peeces of touchwood, in the forme of cloues, which pricking on the griefe, they burne close to the flesh, and from thence draw the corruption with their mouth. With this root *wighsacan* they ordinarily heal greene wounds: but to scarrifie a swelling or make incision, their best instruments are some splinted stone. Old vlcers or putrified hurtes are seldome seene cured amongst them.

They haue many professed Phisitions, who with their charmes and Rattels, with an infernall rowt of words and actions, will seeme to sucke their inwarde griefe from their navels or their grieved places; but of our Chirurgians they were so conceived, that they beleued any Plaister would heale any hurt.

2. Virginia Slave Laws

Although the first black Africans were brought to Jamestown, Virginia, in 1619, they came as bound servants, not as slaves. It was only gradually, over the course of the seventeenth century, that a fully-articulated system of perpetual bondage for Africans emerged. By the 1640s distinctions between white and black servants had begun to appear in the statutes of some colonies. By the end of the century, Americans had adopted a slave labor system and had reserved that status for blacks. The evolution of the slave system in seventeenth century Virginia is revealed in the following selection of laws from 1662 to 1705.

Negro womens children to serve according to the condition of the mother, ACT XII, 1662.

WHEREAS some doubts have arrisen whether children got by any Englishman upon a negro woman should be slave or ffree, *Be it therefore enacted and declared by this present grand assembly*, that all children borne in this country shalbe held bond or free only according to the condition of the mother, *And* that if any christian shall committ ffornication with a negro man or woman, hee or shee soe offending shall pay double the ffines imposed by the former act.

An act about the casuall killing of slaves, ACT I, 1669.

WHEREAS the only law in force for the punishment of refractory servants (a) resisting their master, mistris or overseer cannot be inflicted upon negroes, nor the obstinacy of many of them by other then violent meanes supprest, *Be it enacted and declared by this grand assembly*, if any slave resist his master (or other by his masters order correcting him) and by the extremity of the correction should chance to die, that his death shall not be accompted ffelony, but the master (or that other person appointed by the master to punish him) be acquit from molestation, since it cannot be presumed that prepensed malice (which alone makes murther ffelony) should induce any man to destroy his owne estate.

Noe Negroes nor Indians to buy christian servants, ACT V, 1670.

WHEREAS it hath beene questioned whither Indians or negroes manumited, or otherwise free, could be capable of purchasing christian servants. *It is enacted* that noe negroe or Indian though baptised and enjoyned their owne ffreedome shall be capable of any such purchase of christians, but yet not debarred from buying any of their owne nation.

An act for preventing Negroes Insurrections, ACT X, 1689.

WHEREAS the frequent meeting of considerable numbers of negroe slaves under pretence of feasts and burialls is judged of dangerous consequence; for prevention whereof for the future, *Bee it enacted by the kings most excellent majestie by and with the consent of the generall assembly, and it is hereby enacted by the authority aforesaid*, that from and after the publication of this law, it shall not be lawfull for any negroe or other slave to carry or arme himselfe with any club, staffe, gunn, sword or any other weapon of defence or offence, nor to goe or depart from of his masters ground without a certificate from his master, mistris or overseer, and such permission not to be granted but upon perticuler and necessary occasions; and every negroe or slave soe offending not haveing a certificate as aforesaid shalbe sent to the next constable, who is hereby enjoyned and

From STATUTES AT LARGE OF VIRGINIA, William Walter Hening, ed., 1823.