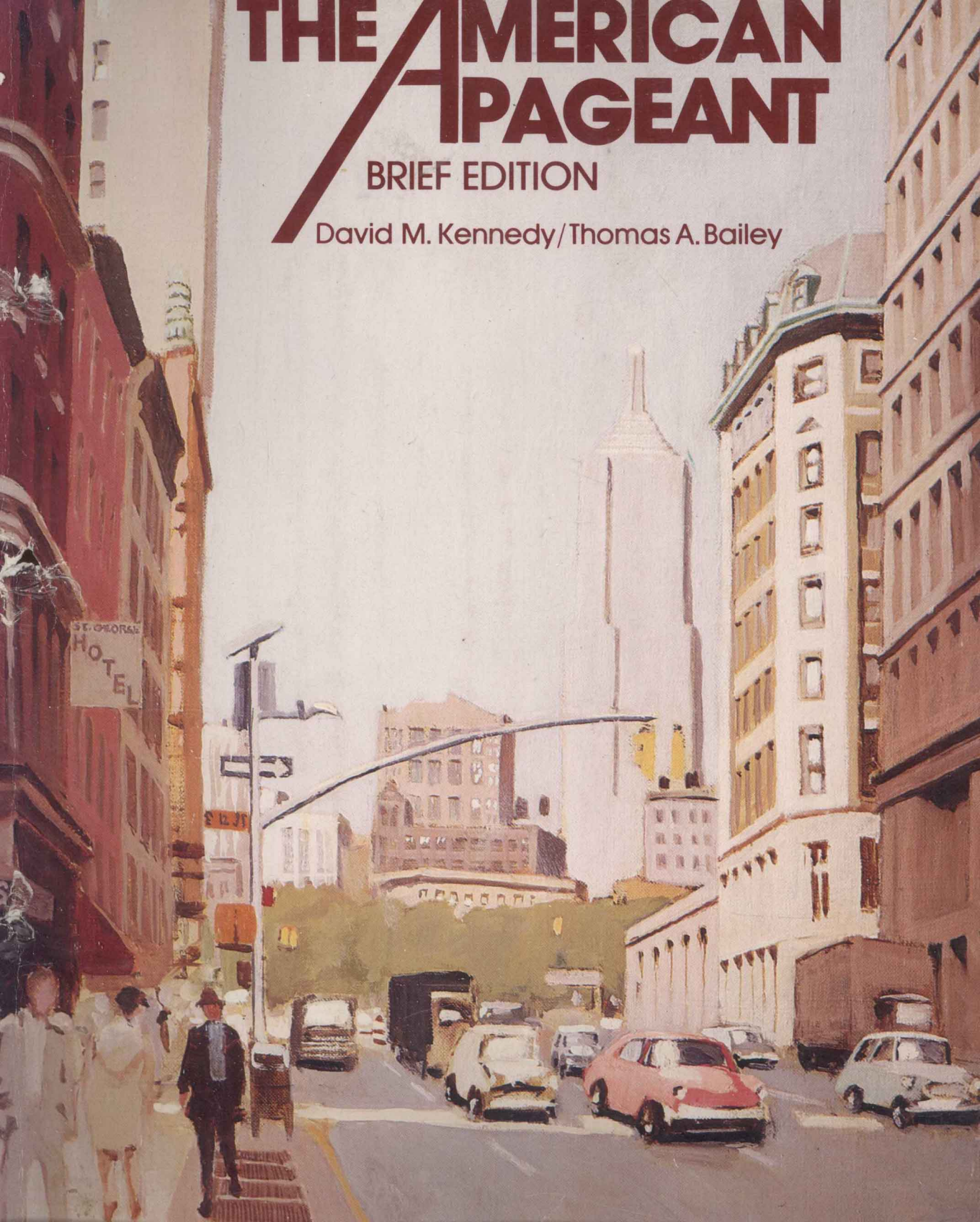


THE AMERICAN PAGEANT

BRIEF EDITION

David M. Kennedy/Thomas A. Bailey



The American Pageant

A HISTORY OF THE REPUBLIC

Brief Edition

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Preface

This Brief Edition of *The American Pageant* is designed for use in one-semester courses in American history, as well as courses that rely heavily on readings in primary sources or specialized monographs. Like the longer text from which it is drawn, it provides a strong foundation of chronological narrative upon which an effective understanding of American historical development can be built. It combines the authors' diverse yet complementary areas of expertise—Thomas A. Bailey's in political, diplomatic, constitutional, and military history; David M. Kennedy's in social, economic, cultural, and intellectual history.

Readers will find in the following pages concise yet comprehensive treatment of all major topics in American history. Special attention is given to American Indian life in the pre-Columbian era, the Spanish impact on the New World, the social and economic life of the British North American colonies (particularly in the Chesapeake region), the origins and legacy of the Revolution and Constitution, immigration and social mobility, the nature of slavery, the causes and consequences of the Civil War, the westward movement, urbanization and industrialization, the emergence of a distinctively American literary tradition, the changing roles of

women, the evolution of family structures, America's rise to superpower status, the civil rights movement, and the impact of three major wars—World Wars I and II as well as Vietnam—in the twentieth century. A thoroughly up-to-date concluding chapter sketches a portrait of the American people today against this colorful historical background. An annotated and cross-referenced text of the Constitution in the Appendix also provides a useful means of tracing the historical origins and growth of fundamental Constitutional doctrines.

This Brief Edition of *The American Pageant* seeks to present the subject of American history in an engaging and lively way, without distorting the often sobering reality of the past. Many readers of *The American Pageant* have remarked that it is one of the few American history textbooks with a personality, and this edition preserves that personality. Though condensed, it sacrifices neither clarity nor concreteness—and tries to honor Shakespeare's advice that brevity is the soul of wit. In any case, as Shakespeare also observed, and as all students appreciate, it is better to be brief than tedious.

D.M.K.
T.A.B.

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New World Beginnings

... For I shall yet live to see it [Virginia] an Inglish nation.

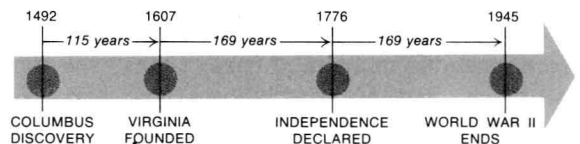
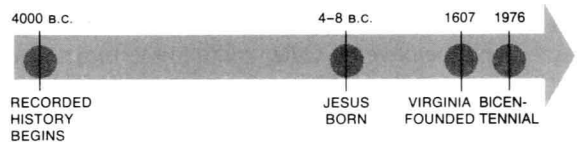
Sir Walter Raleigh, 1602

• Before Columbus

Nearly five hundred years ago, the first Europeans stumbled on the American continents. This dramatic achievement opened breathtaking new vistas and forever altered the future of both the Old World and the New.

Of the numerous new republics that eventually appeared in the Americas, the most influential has been the United States. Born a pygmy, it grew to be a giant whose liberal democratic ideals, robust economy, and achievements in science, technology, and culture have left a deep imprint upon the rest of the world.

The American continents were slow to yield their virginity to intruders from the Old World. Expansive though it was, the ancient Roman Empire extended only as far northwestward as Britain. Except for a brief and soon-forgotten Scandinavian visitation about 1000 A.D., the New World remained



unknown and unsuspected to Europeans for fifteen hundred years after the birth of Christ.

First in the chain of events that led to the accidental discovery of the New World were the Chris-

tian Crusades of the eleventh to the fourteenth centuries. Although their avowed aim was to wrest the Holy Land from the Moslems, the armored Crusaders were more successful in enhancing “barbarian” European tastes for the exotic delights of Asia: spices for spoiled and monotonous food; silk for rough skins; drugs for aching flesh; perfumes for unbathed bodies; colorful draperies for gloomy castles.

But the distance and difficulties of transportation, for which Moslem and Italian middlemen charged dearly, made these products expensive luxuries in Europe. The consumers and distributors of Western Europe were eager to find a less costly shortcut waterway to Eastern Asia, but made little headway before the Renaissance of the fourteenth century. Then technical innovations, such as better maps, the mariner’s compass, and the printing press, improved the science of navigation, while the Renaissance itself created a spirit of optimism, self-reliance, and venturesomeness.

The emergence of the modern national state at this time also facilitated discovery. This new type of government alone had the unity, power, and resources to shoulder the formidable tasks of exploration, conquest, and colonization. The first nations to unite—Portugal, Spain, England, France, and the Netherlands—were also the first to flourish as colonial empire builders.

Little Portugal took the lead in discovering what came to be the coveted water route to the Indies. In the fifteenth century, Portuguese navigators edged cautiously down the coast of Africa. In 1488 Bartholomeu Diaz finally rounded the continent’s southern tip, and in 1498 Vasco da Gama successfully crowned Portuguese efforts by reaching India. Portuguese merchants soon established flourishing trading stations in India, Africa, China, and the East Indies. Immense wealth flowed into their coffers from these ventures, as the monopolistic grip of the Italian commercial cities was broken. Although the India-bound navigator Pedro Cabral accidentally discovered Brazil in 1500, and the Portuguese subsequently erected a huge empire there, the return from this New World outpost was only a small fraction of the lush profits that the Portuguese garnered from their rich Asian trade.

• Columbus Stumbles Upon a New World

The Kingdom of Spain became united—an event pregnant with destiny—late in the fifteenth century. This new unity resulted primarily from the marriage of two sovereigns, Ferdinand and Isabella, and from the brutal expulsion of the “infidel” Moslem Moors. Glorifying in their new strength, the Spaniards were eager to outstrip their Portuguese rivals in the race for the fabled Indies.

Christopher Columbus, a skilled Italian seaman, now stepped upon the stage of history. A man of vision, energy, resourcefulness, and courage, he finally managed, after heartbreaking delays, to gain the ear of the Spanish rulers. Like all of his informed contemporaries, he was convinced that the world was round. Then why not find the way to East Asia by sailing directly westward into the darkness of the Atlantic, instead of eastward for unnecessary miles around Africa?

The Spanish monarchs at last decided to gamble on the persistent mariner. They helped outfit him with three tiny but seaworthy ships, manned by a motley crew. Daringly, he spread the sails of his cockleshell craft. Winds were friendly and progress was rapid, but the superstitious sailors, fearful of sailing over the edge of the world, grew increasingly mutinous. Nearly six long weeks passed and failure loomed ahead when, on October 12, 1492, land was sighted—an island in the Bahamas. A new world thus swam within the vision of Europeans.

Although Columbus and other explorers at first simply tried to get through the land barriers that blocked the ocean pathway to Asia, the truth gradually dawned that sprawling new continents had been discovered. Yet Columbus stubbornly maintained until his death in 1506 that he had skirted the rim of the “Indies.” So certain was he that he called the near-naked natives “Indians,” a gross geographical misnomer that somehow stuck.

Ironically, the remote ancestors of these Native Americans were the true discoverers of America. Some 10,000 to 20,000 years earlier they had ventured across the narrow waters from Asia to what is now Alaska. From there they roamed slowly southward as far as South America. Over the centuries



North American Indian Tribes at the Time of European Colonization. This map illustrates the great diversity of the Indian population—and suggests the inappropriateness of identifying all of the Native American peoples with the single label “Indian.” The more than 200 tribes were deeply divided by geography, language, and life-style.

they had split into hundreds of tribes and language groups. Some of these aboriginal peoples had evolved stunning civilizations. Incas in Peru, Aztecs in Mexico, and Mayans in Central America developed advanced agricultural practices, based on the cultivation of corn (a gift from the Indians to the Old World), that supported populations of millions. They erected bustling, elaborately carved stone cities, rivaling in size those of contemporary medieval Europe. They carried on far-flung commerce, studied mathematics, and made strikingly accurate astronomical observations.

Indian life in North America was cruder, though high levels of cultural development were found among the Pueblos in the Southwest, the Creeks in the Southeast, and the Iroquois in the Northeast. Most native settlements were small, scattered, and often impermanent. So thinly spread across the land was the North American Indian population that large areas were virtually uninhabited, with whispering, primeval forests and sparkling, virgin waters. Perhaps ten million Indians dwelled in all of the present-day United States at the time of Columbus’s discovery. They ate corn, fish, wild game, nuts, and berries. Private property, especially private landholding, was a concept almost unknown to the Indians until the white Europeans moved in on them. Political organization was equally unfamiliar; loose, independent tribal structures served the Indians well until they clashed with

the powerful governments of the whites. Europeans encountered only a handful of Indian institutions larger than the tribal unit, such as the Iroquois Confederacy in the region of present-day New York, and the Powhatan Confederacy in Virginia.

• The Spanish Conquistadores

Gradually the realization sank in that the American continents held rich prizes of their own—especially the glittering gold of the advanced Indian civilizations in the southern continent. Spain secured its claim to Columbus’s discoveries in the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494), dividing with Portugal the “heathen lands” of the New World. The lion’s share went to Spain.

Spain now became the dominant exploring and colonizing power in the 1500s. Love of God joined with the lure of gold in spurring the Spaniards on, as zealous priests sought to convert the pagan natives to Catholic Christianity.

Some early explorers, such as Ponce de León, Coronado, and de Soto ventured into territory that eventually became part of the United States, but the permanent Spanish conquests of the great civilizations of Mexico and Peru had far more impact on subsequent American developments. Hernando Cortés, with seven hundred men and eighteen horses (which awed the horseless natives), tore open the treasure coffers of the Mexican Aztecs in

1519–1521. Francisco Pizarro, an iron-fisted conqueror, crushed the Peruvian Incas in 1532, and added another incredible hoard of gold and silver to the loot from Mexico. The Spanish invaders not only robbed the Indians, but subsequently enslaved them and put them to work digging up precious metals. By 1600, Spain was swimming in New World silver, mostly from the fabulously rich mines at Potosi, Peru.

The Spanish *conquistadores* (conquerors), curiously enough, were indirect founding fathers of the United States. Their phenomenal success excited the envy of Englishmen, and helped spur some of the early attempts at colonization. Moreover, the dumping of the enormous Indian treasure chests upon Europe inflated the currency and drove prices upward. The pinch further distressed underpaid English toilers, many of whom in turn were later driven to the New World. There, ironically, they challenged Spanish supremacy.

These plunderings by the Spaniards unfortunately obscured their substantial colonial achievements, and helped give birth to the “Black Legend.” This false concept implied that the conquerors merely tortured and butchered the Indians (“killing for Christ”), stole their gold, infected them with smallpox, and left little but misery behind. The Spanish invader did kill thousands of natives and exploit the rest, but he intermarried with them as well, creating a distinctive South American culture of *mestizos*—people of mixed Indian and European heritage. He erected a colossal empire, sprawling from California and the Floridas to Tierra del Fuego. He transplanted and engrafted his culture, laws, religion, and language, and laid the foundations for a score of modern-day Spanish-speaking nations.

The bare statistics of Spain’s colonial empire are alone impressive. By 1574, thirty-three years before the first primitive English shelters in Virginia, there were about two hundred Spanish cities and towns in North and South America. A total of 160,000 Spanish inhabitants, mostly men, had subjugated some 5 million Indians—all in the name of the gentle Jesus. Majestic cathedrals dotted the land, printing presses were turning out books, and literary prizes were being awarded. Two distinguished universities were chartered in 1551, one at Mexico City and the other at Lima, Peru. Both of

them antedated Harvard, the first college established in the English colonies, by eighty-five years.

It is clear that the Spaniards, who had more than a century’s head start over the English, were genuine empire builders in the New World. As compared with their Anglo-Saxon rivals, their colonial establishment was larger and richer, and it lasted more than a quarter of a century longer.

• The Gilbert and Raleigh Fiascos

Feeble indeed were the efforts of England in the 1500s to compete with the sprawling Spanish empire. Sir Humphrey Gilbert tried to plant a colony on the bleak coast of Newfoundland, but lost his gamble and his life in 1583, when his ship sank in a storm. Sir Walter Raleigh, Gilbert’s gallant half-brother, attempted in the 1580s to establish a colony in warmer climes. The settlers chose North Carolina’s Roanoke Island, which lay just off the coast of Virginia—a vague region named by the Virgin Queen Elizabeth in honor of herself. With Raleigh busy at home, the ill-starred Roanoke colony mysteriously vanished, swallowed up by the wilderness. Most probably disease and hostile Indians wiped out many of the colonists. Among them was Virginia Dare, the first baby of English blood to be born in the New World. Her known life lasted nine days.

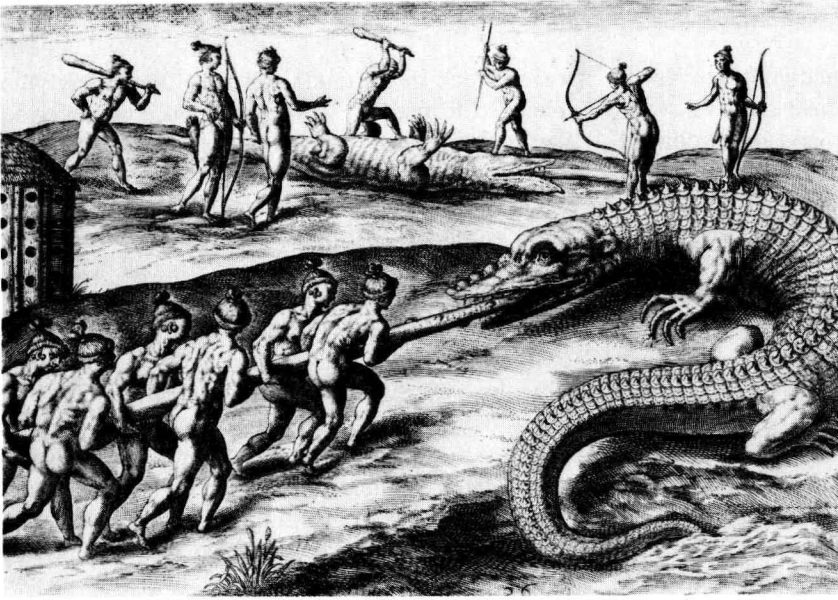
The Anglo-Saxons were plainly losing out. When the reign of “Good Queen Bess” ended in 1603, England did not have a single permanent habitation in all the Americas. Her backwardness contrasted strikingly with the imperial achievements of both Spain and Portugal.

Huge empires cannot be erected on shoestrings. The failures of lone wolves like Gilbert and Raleigh merely proved that the risky business of colony building was beyond the resources of a single private purse.

• England on the Eve of Empire

By the early 1600s the English were ready to enter the colonial scramble in dead earnest. Why?

Economic motivations were strong. A vigorous middle class had risen, challenging the social position of the nobles, and providing an active group of



Florida Indians Killing an Alligator. Wild stories about the strange creatures that might inhabit lands beyond the seas circulated in Europe even before Columbus's discovery. Tales of these mythic beasts influenced the views of early artists, who often distorted reality, as in the case of these over-size alligators. (The Granger Collection).

merchants who could furnish business leadership and wealth for colonial enterprises. Moreover, the joint-stock company—forerunner of the modern corporation—was now perfected. It had the virtue of enabling a considerable number of investors (“adventurers”) to pool their capital—an advantage that the luckless Gilbert and Raleigh had not enjoyed.

England was also burdened with a surplus population. At least she thought she was, even though her 4 million inhabitants totaled only about half those of London in the mid-twentieth century. As the woolen industry boomed, sheep displaced tillers from the land. Catholic monasteries and convents that had formerly cared for the poor had been seized by the crown, so penniless souls were increasingly turned loose on the country. By the late 1500s the land swarmed with “sturdy beggars and paupers.”

English colonization was also profoundly influenced by the Protestant Reformation. Martin Luther, a German who dramatically launched his reformist attack on the Church of Rome in 1517, was another indirect founding father of the United States. Much-married Henry VIII of England, using the Reformation for his own devices and divorces, broke with Rome and made himself head of the Church of England. Unhappy Protestants, especially those who felt that their king had not parted company completely with the Papacy, came to look upon America as a desirable haven for people of

their faith. Many persecuted Catholics, who believed that their sovereign had gone too far, likewise began to regard America as a possible refuge.

International religious rivalry, in addition, spurred English colonization. The King of England ruled the leading Protestant nation; the King of Spain ruled the leading Catholic nation. A bitter contest between these two powers for the spoils of North America was, curiously, to take on some of the features of a religious crusade extended to the New World. English America was in some degree a child of Catholic-Protestant strife.

The conflict between Catholic Spain and Protestant England grew white hot in the late sixteenth century. Although the two nations were technically at peace, semi-piratical English “sea dogs,” such as Francis Drake, plundered Spanish treasure ships, and were rewarded for their efforts by a grateful Queen Elizabeth I. A showdown came in 1588 when Philip II of Spain, self-anointed foe of the Protestant Reformation, amassed his “Invincible Armada” of some 130 troop-bearing ships for an invasion of England. But the English sea dogs and devastating storms destroyed half the Spanish fleet, dealing a humiliating blow to Spanish prestige and the Catholic cause.

The defeat of the Spanish Armada weakened Spanish power and, important for subsequent American history, ensured England’s naval dominance of the North Atlantic. Control of the seas

enabled England not only to plant colonies in North America, but to supply and protect them as well. The English victory over the Armada also produced a vibrant national pride and self-confidence that blossomed in culture and politics. Shakespeare, who made occasional references to England's American colonies, was only one of many contemporary patriots who expressed boundless faith in the future of the English nation.

• England Plants the Jamestown Seedling

In 1606, two years after peace with Spain, the hand of destiny beckoned toward Virginia. A joint-stock company, known as The Virginia Company of London, received a charter from King James I of England for a settlement in the New World. The main attraction was the promise of gold, although there was also a strong desire to convert the Indians to Christianity and to find a passage through America to the Indies. Like most joint-stock companies of the day, The Virginia Company was intended to endure for only a few years, after which its stockholders hoped to liquidate it for a profit. This arrangement put severe pressure on the luckless colonists, who were threatened with abandonment in the wilderness if they did not quickly strike it rich on the company's behalf. Few of the investors thought in terms of long-term colonization. Apparently no one even faintly suspected that the seeds of a mighty nation were being planted.

The charter of the Virginia Company is a significant document in American history. It guaranteed to the overseas settlers the same rights of Englishmen that they would have enjoyed if they had stayed at home. This precious boon was gradually extended to the other English colonies, and became a foundation stone of American liberties.

Unluckily, the site selected in 1607 for the tiny colony was Jamestown, on the wooded and malarial banks of the James River, named in honor of King James I. Although mosquito-infested and unhealthy, the spot was easy to defend.

The early years at Jamestown proved to be a nightmare for all concerned—except the buzzards. Forty would-be colonists perished during the initial voyage in 1606–1607. Another expedition in 1609 lost its leaders and many of its precious supplies in

a shipwreck in Bermuda. Of the 400 settlers who managed to make it to Virginia, only 60 survived the “starving time” winter of 1609–10. Ironically, the woods rustled with game and the rivers flopped with fish, but the greenhorn settlers wasted valuable time grubbing for nonexistent gold when they should have been gathering provisions. Diseased and despairing, the colonists dragged themselves aboard homeward-bound ships in the spring of 1610—only to be met at the mouth of the James River by a relief party, which ordered them back to Jamestown.

Disease continued to reap a gruesome harvest among the Virginians, and Indian raids added to the death toll. By 1625, Virginia contained only some 1200 hard-bitten survivors of the nearly 8000 adventurers who had tried to start life anew in the ill-fated colony.

Virginia was saved from collapse at the start largely by the leadership and resourcefulness of an intrepid young adventurer, Captain John Smith. Taking over in 1608, he whipped the gold-hungry colonists into line with the rule, “He who will not work shall not eat.” At times of scarcity the settlers were forced to eat “dogges, Catts, Ratts, and Myce.” One man killed, salted, and ate his wife, for which misbehavior he was executed.

• Virginia: Child of Tobacco

John Rolfe, who became father of the tobacco industry, was also an economic savior of the Virginia colony. By 1616 he perfected methods of raising and curing the pungent weed (another Indian gift to Europe) which eliminated much of the bitter tang. Tobacco-rush days began, as crops were planted even in the streets of Jamestown and between the numerous graves. So heavy was the concentration on the yellow leaf that some foodstuffs had to be imported.

Virginia's prosperity was finally built on tobacco smoke. This “bewitching weed” played a vital role in putting the colony on firm foundations, and in setting an example for other successful colonizing experiments. But tobacco—King Nicotine—was something of a tyrant. It was ruinous to the soil when greedily planted in successive years, and it also enchained the prosperity of Virginia to the

fluctuating price of a single crop. Finally, tobacco promoted the broad-acred plantation system, and with it a brisk demand for slave labor.

In 1619, the year before the Plymouth Pilgrims landed in New England, what was described as a Dutch warship appeared off Jamestown and sold some twenty black Africans. (The scanty record does not reveal whether they were purchased as lifelong slaves or as servants committed to limited years of servitude.) Yet black slaves were too costly for most of the hard-pinned white colonists to acquire, and for decades they were imported only in dribbles. Virginia counted but 300 blacks in 1650, although by the end of the century blacks made up approximately 14 percent of the colony's population.

Representative self-government was also born in primitive Virginia, in the same cradle with slavery and in the same year—1619. The London Company authorized the settlers to summon an assembly, known as the House of Burgesses. A momentous precedent was thus feebly established, for this assemblage was the first of many miniature parliaments to mushroom from the soil of America.

• “Cavalier” Virginia and Bacon’s Rebellion

As time passed, James I grew increasingly hostile to Virginia. He detested tobacco and he distrusted the representative House of Burgesses, which he branded a “seminary of sedition.” In 1624 he revoked the charter of the bankrupt Virginia Company, thus making Virginia a royal colony directly under his control.

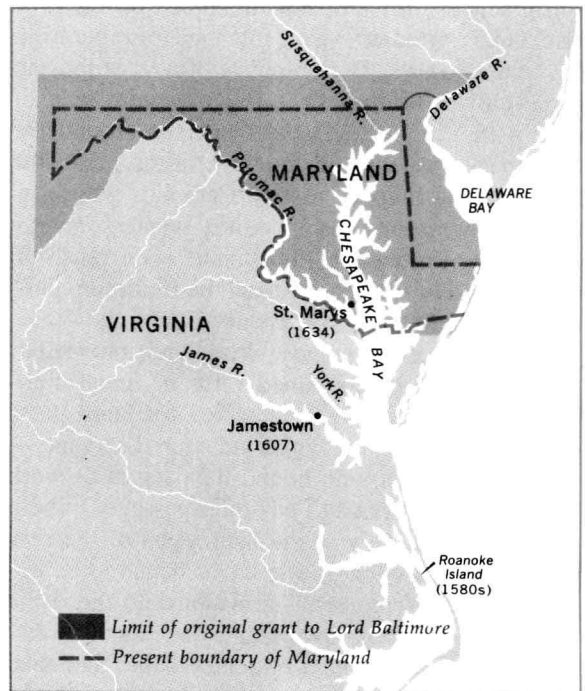
To add to the confusion, civil wars convulsed England in the 1640s. The personal rule of King Charles I, supported by his loyal “Cavaliers,” was openly challenged by the Parliamentarians (“Roundheads”). They ultimately found their great leader in Oliver Cromwell. The Virginians showed surprising loyalty to the distant Crown, and when the Parliamentarians triumphed and Charles I was beheaded, a sprinkling of the vanquished Cavaliers fled to hospitable Virginia. Only a handful of them were of noble birth; most of them were Cavaliers only by sentiment or political attachment. But the tradition of aristocratic origins spread rapidly in

Virginia—later “the Cavalier State”—and the belief that many of its founders were exiled noblemen came to have a profound impact on the Southern mind.

Cavalier or not, class and sectional tensions quickly jelled in colonial Virginia. Lace-bedecked gentry monopolized the rich tidewater lands of the coastal areas; the Byrd family alone eventually amassed 179,000 acres. Poorer folk were forced into the wild and dangerous back country. There, though unrepresented or underrepresented in the House of Burgesses, they were compelled to bear the full brunt of the Indian attacks.

Rebellion was clearly in the making. About a thousand angry back-country men broke out of control in 1676, led by Nathaniel Bacon, a twenty-nine-year-old planter. They chastised the Indians, routed Governor Berkeley, and burned Jamestown. But when Bacon suddenly died at the hour of victory, the governor crushed the rebellion and cruelly hung twenty rebels.

Bacon’s ill-fated rebellion was symptomatic of much that was to be American. It highlighted the



Early Maryland and Virginia.