

MKU – Biskra	Level:	2 nd year <i>Licence</i>
Faculty of Letters and Languages	Course:	Civilization of the Language
English Language Division	Instructor:	Dr. Salim Kerboua
Semester II		

**LECTURES 6 - 7:
EARLY SETTLEMENTS:
VIRGINIA, PLYMOUTH BAY, AND MASSACHUSETTS BAY COLONIES
THE THIRTEEN ENGLISH COLONIES OF NORTH AMERICA**

THE ENGLISH ATTEMPTS TO SETTLE NORTH AMERICA

During the second half of the 16th century, a handful of English explorers and promoters of the colonization of the New World, such as Sir Humphrey Gilbert and Sir Walter Raleigh, attempted to establish colonies. However these first attempts were not successful. The most famous one was the Roanoke Colony (1587). The colony disappeared and its promoter, Raleigh, had no information on the sad fate of the few colonists.

The Popham Colony (1606) was another unsuccessful attempt to settle and colonize the New World. In 1606 a group of English merchants sent a party of explorers and colonizers to the New World. They were part of the Plymouth Company, a joint-stock venture, which had been given the rights to colonize anywhere they could between Maine and modern-day Virginia's Potomac River. The expedition established its settlement site on a peninsula at the mouth of the Kennebec River, in today's Maine. The colony struggled through its first winter, during which George Popham died, and a fire engulfed the storehouse of the settlement. The remaining few survivors went back to England.

JAMESTOWN AND VIRGINIA

In 1606, a group of investors had formed the London (or Virginia) Company and received a grant to colonize the New World in a region from the mouth of the Hudson River (where New York City is located today) to present-day North Carolina. In late 1606 the colonists left England for Virginia on three small ships: *the Susan Constant*, *the Godspeed*, and *the Discovery*. They comprised 140 men and four boys as well as crew members, and included common laborers, bricklayers, soldiers, and goldsmiths, plus a surgeon, black-smith, carpenter, barber, minister, perfumer, and a tailor. Aware they would encounter Indians in America, the company had hired a military leader named **John Smith**, whose contributions to the colony would prove greatly important. The ships reached the coast of modern-day Virginia on **April 26, 1607**. The colonists founded a small settlement and named it **Jamestown**.

During its early years, the settlement suffered many hardships and great sufferings. Nevertheless, the settlement survived (though many colonists died and were subsequently replaced by newcomers).

By the end of the 1610s, the colony expanded and flourished. Its economy relied on agriculture and especially the production and export of tobacco to England. In **1618, the lands which had previously been the property of the Virginia Company were distributed to the permanent resident of the colony and the latter began to prosper.**

To encourage more migration to Virginia, any colonists arriving after 1618 would receive 50 acres (20.25 ha) of land, once they had paid their ship passage to the New World. This system, called the "**headright system**," suddenly put land into the hands of hundreds, and later thousands, of English immigrants.

The following year, **1619**, saw more positive change as the first elected legislature in North America began meeting. This early body was called the **House of Burgesses**, with two representatives, or burgesses, elected from each of the 11 regions of the Virginia colony. Virginia's government then included a governor, who was appointed in

England and served for life; a council of advisors, whose members were appointed by the governor; and an elected legislature. **For the first time the colonists could pass their own laws and, at least in part, govern their own world.**

THE PLYMOUTH BAY COLONY AND THE MASSACHUSETTS BAY COLONY

- **Plymouth Bay Colony**

In the early 1610s, in England, many **Puritans** came to believe that changing the Church of England was not possible. They abandoned Anglicanism, calling themselves “**Separatists**.” Because they did not support the official English church, the Separatists were often persecuted. This led one group of Separatists to leave England altogether and move to Holland and then to the New World where they could practice their religious beliefs without interference. There, they wanted to create a whole new society from top to bottom, with no interferences or distractions to draw them away from their faith. Some of these Separatists sailed to the New World in the fall of **1620**, onboard an aging wine vessel named *the Mayflower*. The 102 colonists reached the shores of an area they would call New England. Before they landed, they drew up agreement to accept the decisions of their leaders, which they signed on **November 11, 1620**. Known as the **Mayflower Compact**, this written contract would serve as **an example of self-government in English North America**. Through this agreement, the men chose one of their fellows, **John Carver**, as their first governor. The colonists founded the Plymouth Bay Colony.

Slowly, the Pilgrims’ colony at Plymouth prospered and developed into a viable settlement with an ever-increasing population. More Separatists arrived through the colony’s first 10 years, along with so-called **Strangers (colonists who were not part of the religious fellowship)**.

- **Massachusetts Bay Colony**

During the 1620s Charles I of England continued the persecutions of the Puritans, which drove some to come to America. In 1629 a Puritan lawyer, **John Winthrop**, organized a group of his brethren to colonize in the New World. Plymouth’s ruling body, the Council for New England, granted Winthrop’s group a patent on some local land, north of Plymouth. The following year, in **April 1630**, they set sail to the New World. Called **the Great Migration**, the number of Puritan colonists included more than 1,000 settlers onboard 11 ships, the largest group of colonists to leave for America to that date. They came as members of the **Massachusetts Bay Company**, taking their name from a local Indian tribe. They reached Massachusetts on **June 12, 1630**; at a place they called **Salem**. Winthrop had sent an advance party over ahead of the Great Migration, to help prepare the colony site. But when the flotilla of 11 ships arrived, they found one out of four of the advance group already dead. Some were frightened and 200 decided to return to England. Winthrop knew he would have to calm down his colonists and that would require ships to deliver much needed supplies to Salem from England. One of the ships, *the Lyon*, returned those who chose to go back to England and brought back the necessary supplies of food. In the meantime, 200 more colonists died.

Those who remained in Salem suffered through the difficulties of the winter of 1630–31. More died, but those who survived built cabins, storehouses, and a meetinghouse for worship. The Plymouth colonists gave assistance as they could. However, When the Salem site proved inadequate for the needs of the colonists, Winthrop moved many of his people to another site to the south, which was named Charlestown. There, too, problems arose, including an inadequate water supply. So, Winthrop packed them up again to a site named Boston. This place was well chosen, and Boston soon became the main Puritan town in New England. Their population grew steadily over the following decade, and by 1640 Massachusetts Bay was home to twice as many English colonists as Virginia.

THE MARYLAND COLONY

Jamestown had been the work of a joint-stock company. However, the venture that would create **the Maryland Colony** was led by one man, an **English Catholic** named **George Calvert**, also known as **Lord Baltimore**. When his political career was cut short due to his religion, George Calvert made the decision to leave England for the New World. King Charles I, who was sympathetic to Catholics such as Calvert, agreed to grant him a colony in a region of North America.

Calvert's land grant was huge. It consisted of 10 million acres (4 million hectares) of American land. The grant represented new hope for Calvert, but he died at the age of 52, leaving the opportunities of his new colony to his family. One of Calvert's sons, **Cecilius Calvert**, soon received the grant and was named **Lord Proprietor of Maryland**, (the Calvert family named the colony after Charles I's wife, Queen Henrietta Maria.)

Although Cecilius received the grant, he stayed in England and appointed one of his brothers, **Leonard Calvert**, to take the leadership for the family. The Calverts had advertised their colony as a safe haven for fellow Catholics, so half of the 250 colonists were Catholics.

The ships left England in December and arrived in the Chesapeake region by February **1634**. The colonists established a settlement called **St. Mary's**, where they found the land rich for farming. They based their colony's economy on **tobacco production** (like Virginia.) However, with both Catholics and Protestants living side by side, conflicts arose, leading to the passage of a Maryland law called **the Act of Toleration (1649)** which guaranteed all Marylanders who were Christians the right to worship as they chose.

THE NEW YORK COLONY

While much of the New World exploration was carried out by the larger, more powerful European states—England, Spain, France—some smaller states added their involvement, and sometimes the results proved significant. One such country was **Holland**, or the Netherlands. **In 1602** the Dutch established a giant, global trading firm, the **East India Company**. Primarily founded to coordinate trade in the Far East, the company became an important rival of the Spanish and Portuguese. In an effort to avoid contact with either power in the normal sea lanes around Africa, **in 1609**, the Dutch hired an English sailor named **Henry Hudson** contracted to find such a passage. Hudson explored parts of the north east of America, sites and places that are now called Maine and New York. He suggested several sites along the **Hudson River** (a river that would afterwards named after him) for possible **trading posts** and a **permanent Dutch colony**. A few years later the Dutch did establish a colony in the region, which they called **New Netherland**.

English merchants followed up Henry Hudson's explorations by establishing the **Hudson's Bay Company**, a New World venture whose **purpose was to trade furs with the Indians**. The Dutch positioned themselves for business with the Indians at the mouth of the Delaware River, along the Hudson River, including on an island then occupied by the **Manhattan Indians** (known today as Manhattan Island). A decade after Hudson's voyages to the New World, the Dutch established the **Dutch West India Company**. Some of the company's efforts were focused on engaging in the **New World slave trade**, and they also **invested in New Netherland**, sending the company's **first colonists to settle on Manhattan Island in 1623**. **By 1625 the Dutch in New Amsterdam (modern-day New York City)** had built a trading post, fort, windmill, and a defensive wall, a portion of which became known as Wall Street. By 1626, after a few years of hugging the southern tip of Manhattan, Dutch colonial governor Pieter Minuit is said to have purchased the whole island from a local Indian clan, for 60 guilders (approximately \$24). (If the transaction ever took place, it is unlikely that the local Indians actually thought they were selling the island and their rights to it.) Fifteen years following the explorations of Henry Hudson, the Dutch were firmly positioned in the New World, especially North America.



TO SUM UP

The thirteen English Colonies of North America:

Virginia (1607) - John Smith and the London Company.

New York (1626) - Originally founded by the Dutch. Became a British colony in 1664.

New Hampshire (1623) - John Mason was the first land holder. Later John Wheelwright.

Massachusetts Bay (1630) - Puritans looking for religious freedom.

Maryland (1633) - George and Cecil Calvert as a safe haven for Catholics.

Connecticut (1636) - Thomas Hooker after he was told to leave Massachusetts.

Rhode Island (1636) - Roger Williams to have a place of religious freedom for all.

Delaware (1638) - Peter Minuit and the New Sweden Company. British took over in 1664.

North Carolina (1663) - Originally part of the Province of Carolina. Split off from South Carolina in 1712.

South Carolina (1663) - Originally part of the Province of Carolina. Split off from North Carolina in 1712.

New Jersey (1664) - First settled by the Dutch, the English took over in 1664.

Pennsylvania (1681) - William Penn and the Quakers.

Georgia (1732) - James Oglethorpe as a settlement for debtors.