

2

Columbus

Contact between the New World and Old Europe was virtually inevitable given the European desire for riches during the Renaissance period and the advances in navigation and cartography. Although Columbus has become an often maligned figure in contemporary textbooks, nobody fails to mention his contribution to the first lasting contact between the new world and old.

CUBA

Although most U.S. textbooks place "discovery" in quotations, this Cuban textbook does so for the "new world." The terms may be controversial in some circles, but there is little debate that Columbus is the key figure.

Christopher Columbus and the "new world." The existence of Cuba, and of the American continent, remained practically unknown to Europeans until the end of the 15th century. It is true that stories were being told of Norman incursions into territories west of Europe, beyond the cold

Northern Sea, and that names like Eric the Red and his son Leif were being mentioned as the protagonists of those adventures. But in practice nothing was known about those lands, and much less about their inhabitants.

So when Christopher Columbus, an experienced sailor from Genoa, set about organizing a voyage across the Atlantic, his purpose was not to discover a new world but to find a shorter, less dangerous route to India, an important market of spices and other items in great demand in countries of Western Europe.

In his journey Columbus could of course come across territories not yet occupied by any European power, so in accepting the project, the Catholic King and Queen of Spain, Fernando and Isabel, not only agreed to share with Columbus the commercial benefits resulting from the undertaking but also appointed him Admiral, Viceroy, and Governor General of the lands he might discover.

This is how, authorized by the Capitulations of Santa Fe, and with supplies provided by the Spanish Crown, Columbus began his voyage. His three ships—the *Santa María*, the *Niña*, and the *Pinta*—set sail from palos de Moguer harbor, in the southern Spanish province of Huelva, on August 3rd, 1492.

Columbus sailed for 72 days. Longer than expected, the voyage created panic among the ever more restless sailors, who feared Columbus might have gone insane, and pressed him to return to Spain. But before the agreed 3 day term expired, in the early morning of October 12th, 1492, Andalusian sailor Rodrigo de Triana sighted land. Columbus' intrepidity, willpower, and skills had paid off. They had arrived at an island the indigenous inhabitants called Guanahaní—presently Watling—in the Lucayas or Bahamas, and which the Admiral called San Salvador, since it had saved his efforts from disaster. Columbus did not know it then, but he had discovered a new continent for Spain.

Advised by the native inhabitants through signs and gestures that there was more land nearby, he continued his voyage southeast. Fifteen days later, on October 27th, Columbus arrived at the coasts of Cuba, which he called Juana in honor of Prince Juan, the first born of the Spanish royal couple. Later, in 1515, the island would be renamed Fernandina by a decision of King Fernando, although all along it would retain its primitive name of Cuba.

This is how Europe arrived in Cuba, a land whose pristine natural scenery prompted Columbus to call it "the most beautiful land the human eye has beheld".

Columbus found in Cuba a hospitable, industrious, and peaceful civilization whose members he called *Indians*, in the belief he had arrived in India, the legendary Asian peninsula he had originally set off to find.*

CARIBBEAN

This Caribbean text is meant for students of the English-speaking Caribbean. There is insufficient demand in each island country to merit publishing separate textbooks. Consequently, these countries typically look to British or U.S. publishers for one general edition to be used across the various islands. The text spends a considerable amount of time recounting the destructive results of this initial contact.

Columbus's First Voyage

The fears of the seamen grew daily as the trade winds steadily blew their ships further and further west. By mid-September they were on the point of mutiny. Even Columbus began to doubt the wisdom of his plan. According to his earlier reckoning they should have already reached Japan. For a while he quietened his men's fears by showing them a log book in which he had underestimated the true distance they had travelled. A week later the seamen were once again talking about throwing their stubborn admiral into the sea and turning back. Columbus avoided mutiny by telling his men that they were sailing between two islands and could at any time turn towards land. On 10 October Columbus himself promised that the voyage would be abandoned if land was not sighted within forty-eight hours. As the deadline was drawing to a close, on Friday 12 October 1492, Rodrigo de Triana, keeping watch on the *Pinta*, sighted land.

Columbus went to bed convinced that the island was one of the Far

* Navarro, José Cantón. *History of Cuba: The Challenge of the Yoke and the Star*. Havana: SI-MAR, 2000, 15.

Eastern spice islands. A closer look in the morning showed that the island had no exotic spices, jewels, rich clothes or gold. The natives he met had no trade goods at all, except a little inferior cotton. He could not learn where he was or what they called their island. Columbus gave it a new name, San Salvador (Holy Saviour), and pointed out to his men that the natives were willing to please and were nonbelievers. Their souls could be won for the Christian Church and that was sure to please Queen Isabella. Besides, the 'Indians', as Columbus mistakenly called the Arawaks, might be taught to cultivate cotton to export to Europe. In the meantime he took several Arawaks on board to guide him to the real spice islands.

Hispaniola

The Arawak guides led Columbus along their own trade routes between San Salvador, Cuba and Hispaniola. They continually told him—as they did all later European explorers—that there were mountains of gold further inland, or on 'just' the next island. For three months Columbus unsuccessfully looked for the fabled wealth of Asia. The search continued until one day just before Christmas when the *Santa Maria* ran aground on the north shore of Hispaniola, and sank. Thirty-nine seamen who couldn't find a place on the remaining two ships unhappily became the first European settlers in the West.

The Amerindians and the Spanish

THE RETURN TO HISPANIOLA

Columbus returned to Spain in 1493 convinced that he had discovered one of the islands of the Indies. He wrote to Queen Isabella with plans for making Hispaniola the centre of a great trading empire. The first step would be to build towns from which Spaniards could trade with the Indians. The island could also be used as a base for exploring other parts of the Indies.

Isabella gave the task of collecting stores, men and ships to Juan de Fonseca, who was a priest, like most of the officials at her court. He and Columbus gathered seventeen ships and 1,200 men. Among them were builders, masons and carpenters with the materials to start work on the

first towns in the 'Indies'. To organise the trade there were merchants and clerks as well as map-makers who would be useful for voyages beyond Hispaniola. To provide food for the colony there were farmers with animals and stocks of seed. An important part of the expedition was a party of priests for the work of converting the Indians to Christianity.

Columbus led his fleet back to Hispaniola through the islands of the Lesser Antilles, where he saw many Carib settlements. He wrote that the Caribs were a savage people but that they seemed healthy and intelligent and would make good slaves.

At Hispaniola the fleet landed at Navidad. Columbus found that the fort built a year before had been destroyed and the Spaniards he left behind had all been killed in fights with the Arawaks. He ordered a new trading post to be built and named after Queen Isabella, but he chose a site far away from supplies of fresh water. Plants soon wilted in the salty soil and men died from fevers carried by mosquitoes in the nearby swamps. He sent expeditions to seek gold but his men found that the Arawaks were farming people with no riches to trade. Some gold could be panned from rivers but there were no mines.

These setbacks did not stop Columbus' belief in the wealth of the Indies and he took three ships to explore further west. They sailed to Jamaica but passed quickly on to Cuba. For a month the ships explored its south coast before they returned to Hispaniola.

DESTRUCTION OF THE ARAWAKS

While Columbus was away from Hispaniola, the Spaniards had abandoned work on the buildings and farms at Isabella. Instead they forced the Arawaks to provide them with food. They had also robbed them of trinkets and assaulted their women. The Arawaks were a peaceful people who had treated the Spanish with courtesy. Now they decided to resist and came together to fight the invaders who had made themselves unwelcome. Columbus immediately organised expeditions to overcome the Arawak forces. A one-sided struggle followed.

The Arawaks had only simple bows and arrows, stone clubs and wooden spears. The Spaniards were armed with steel swords, metal-tipped pikes and cross-bows. They used fierce dogs and armour-covered horses which terrified people who had never seen animals larger than a rabbit or

coney.* Horses gave the Spaniards the advantage of quick attacks and retreats, while the Arawaks suffered dreadful casualties by rushing headlong at the enemy. In a very short time tens of thousands of them were killed.

The fighting marked the end of any pretence that the Spaniards would trade fairly. Instead, Columbus forced the people of the island to pay a tax. Every three months each male over fourteen had to hand over enough gold to fill a hawk's bell and every other Arawak had to supply 25 pounds (about 12 kilograms) of spun cotton. Arawaks who failed to pay were forced to give several weeks' free labour. Hundreds of Arawaks who resisted the tax were captured and sent back to Spain for sale as slaves. They were given no extra clothing and half died from cold on the voyage.

In 1496, Christopher Columbus returned to Spain, leaving his brother, Bartholomew, in charge of Hispaniola. The wars against the Arawaks continued and led to Spanish control of the whole island. In 1493 there had been between 200,000 and 300,000 Arawaks on Hispaniola. By the end of 1496 perhaps as many as two-thirds of the Arawaks were dead. They were killed not only by Spanish weapons but also by the smallpox brought to the island on Columbus' ships. The Arawaks had no immunity to the disease and it raced through the island, weakening and killing whole tribes. Within a few years great herds of European cattle, swine and goats were roaming the island destroying the Arawaks' maize and cassava crops.

In three years the Spanish plan for a trading base in Hispaniola had given way to a conquest of the whole island. Bartholomew Columbus built a line of forts from the abandoned Isabella to a new Spanish headquarters which he started at Santo Domingo. Hispaniola had become the first Caribbean colony of Spain and Santo Domingo its capital.

THE THIRD VOYAGE

On his return to Spain Columbus found himself out of favour with Queen Isabella. She was disappointed with the way he had governed Hispaniola and annoyed that he had not found the wealth of the Indies. She had sent back the Arawak slaves and turned down Columbus' idea that Caribs might be made slaves for the same reasons. The cold would kill many of them on the voyage. Spain had no use for slave labour and as a

* A coney is a fish common to the West Indies.

Christian queen it was her duty to protect the Indians, not enslave them. It was only in 1498 that Isabella agreed to let Columbus make a third voyage.

This time Columbus sailed far to the south through the Gulf of Paria. He saw a huge volume of fresh water pouring out of the Orinoco River. There seemed so much that he was sure that the river must run through an entire continent and not just an island. He sailed on to Hispaniola where he found that a revolt had broken out against his brother Bartholomew. Columbus had five ringleaders hanged and tried to buy the support of the other Spanish by allowing them to take over parts of the island as private estates. This did not stop a steady stream of complaints to Spain against the Columbus brothers and, in 1499, Isabella sent Francisco de Bobadilla to Hispaniola with special powers to act on her behalf. His first act was to have the Columbus brothers arrested and sent back to Spain.

THE FOURTH VOYAGE

Isabella forgave Columbus and after a while allowed him to make a fourth voyage to the Caribbean to explore the coastline he had sighted across the Gulf of Paria. She warned him to stay clear of Hispaniola. Columbus did not heed the warning but sailed directly to Santo Domingo to claim his share of the taxes which had been so cruelly taken from the Arawaks. He was not allowed to enter Santo Domingo but had to take on fresh water and supplies at a nearby natural harbour.

Columbus left Hispaniola and sailed west to the coast of Honduras. Between January and May he sailed along the coast before turning his worm-eaten ships north again to Hispaniola. The ships were not fit for the voyage and sank near St Ann's Bay, Jamaica. Columbus sent Diego Mendez by canoe to Hispaniola to beg for a rescue ship. It was almost a year before he could hire a vessel to collect Columbus and the survivors of his crew. Columbus finally arrived back in Spain in 1504 and died there in 1506, probably still believing that he had discovered part of the Indies.*

* Claypole, William, and John Robottom. *Caribbean Story. Bk. 2: The Inheritors*. Kingston: Carlong, 1994, 24-26.

3

British Exploration

Only after their victory over the Spanish Armada in 1588 did Great Britain have the opportunity truly to begin to explore and colonize the New World. Though they came late to the North American table, the British carved out a nice piece for themselves after establishing only two colonies of their own, Plymouth and Jamestown. While the French and Spanish pushed farther inland in pursuit of El Dorado for more furs, the British contented themselves with establishing some semblance of a new society on the shores of the Atlantic.

GREAT BRITAIN

Exploration

English involvement in exploration before the 1550s had been minimal. Henry VII did sponsor voyages by the Cabots to the Americas but Henry VIII, despite his reforms of the navy, was little interested in the world beyond western Europe. The English, it seemed, were content to focus their trade and thus their voyages on western Europe and even more closely on the Netherlands and the port of Antwerp.

From 1551 this situation changed and changed drastically. Antwerp's prosperity was shaken by the devaluation of the English currency in 1551 that depressed trade. In 1557 France and Spain declared themselves bankrupt, having piled up heavy debts in the Netherlands. More dramatically, the Dutch revolt (1572) against Spain disrupted trade and finally (1585) closed the port to traders. English merchants perforce had to seek markets elsewhere. Thus the 1550s saw voyages to Morocco and the Gold Coast and, most significantly, to Russia. [. . .] Under Elizabeth the need to diversify trade became ever more important but other motives were also present. Increasing patriotism and nationalism as a result of Protestantism and the war with Spain demanded that England should not stand back and take second place. Attacks on Spanish ships and colonies led easily onto the idea that the English had every right to establish their own colonies. Anxieties about over-population and attendant problems of disorder also led some to see colonization as a useful way of reducing social pressures at home.

Under Elizabeth voyages of exploration thus reached a significant level for the first time and the first attempts to establish colonies were made. How successful were these ventures? In terms of their objectives they were singularly unsuccessful. Explorers hoped to find either a north-west or north-east passage to Asia and to build England's share of that trade that was both lucrative and mythical in its proportions. Of course no such passage was found and many lives and much money were thrown away in the attempt. Another objective was the discovery of the 'southern continent', a land believed to lie across the southern edge of the world. Discovery and exploitation would balance the Spanish dominance of America but Drake, deputed to discover this new land in 1577, followed a more traditional course, attacking Spanish ships and colonies and ultimately becoming the first Englishman to sail around the world.

The fates of the first colonies were equally dismal. In 1585 Sir Walter Raleigh settled colonists in Virginia but they swiftly returned home after suffering food shortages and failing to establish good relations with the local peoples. In 1587 Raleigh established another colony. The 150 settlers simply disappeared. Raleigh returned in 1590 to find a deserted site. Their fate has never been discovered. These failures brought a temporary end to colonizing ventures, to be recommenced when the Virginia Company was established in 1606. Overall the resulting lack of enthusiasm for colonies is not surprising. Elizabeth's foreign policy was dominated by events in Eu-

rope. Her overwhelming need, right through to the end of her reign, was security and exploration and colonies made no direct contribution to security. Too great an involvement might even have prejudiced security if royal finances had been drained by expenditures on unnecessary projects. Thus there was little practical royal backing for these ventures even if Elizabeth did perceive the propaganda value of success. Drake's circumnavigation won him a knighthood, received at the Queen's hands on board his ship in 1580. Voyages also provided experience and testing ground for ships and sailors. In the long term the importance of exploration and colonization under Elizabeth was not what was achieved but that a start had been made that would lead to the development of much wider-ranging trade in the seventeenth century.*

CANADA

The Thirteen Colonies

While the French were establishing settlements at Port Royal and Quebec early in the seventeenth century, their European rivals, the British, were also busy establishing colonies, on the Atlantic coast of North America. In 1607, a year before Champlain came to Quebec, a group of British merchants supported the creation of a small settlement at Jamestown on Chesapeake Bay in what would be the colony of Virginia. Much like the French, the residents of Jamestown had to survive disease, starvation, and resistance, but the original settlers managed to persevere. As was the case with the French colonies, Virginia was able to secure its future by producing a single crop that was much in demand in Europe, but instead of fur it was tobacco.

Virginia was the first of 13 British colonies that eventually became the United States. Each colony was different—settled by different groups of people, at different times, and for different reasons. Historians often classify the 13 colonies into three groups:

* Dawson, Ian. *Challenging History: The Tudor Century*. Cheltenham: Thomson, 1993. 322, 325, 326.

1. *New England*. These most northerly colonies were Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Connecticut, and Rhode Island. Settled by Puritans, a religious sect whose beliefs were under attack in England, they developed a mixed economy of farming, fishing, and logging. They exported many goods to Europe and the West Indies, including livestock, grain, and timber, but the most important export was rum, which was manufactured from molasses brought from the West Indies.

2. *The Middle Colonies*. These colonies included New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware. They enjoyed great prosperity in the eighteenth century, principally because the Delaware River valley developed into a rich agricultural area, producing grain, hemp, flax, and livestock. Quantities of timber and iron contributed to the growth of manufacturing as well.

3. *The Southern Colonies*. These were Maryland, Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia. The economic mainstay of these colonies was tobacco and rice, which were grown on large plantations worked by Black slaves imported from Africa. This huge work force of slaves produced the wealth that supported a small group of white landowners.*

4

Puritans

The treatment of Puritans as a subject in U.S. textbooks begins with their arrival in the British colonies. This selection, however, gives more of the background information regarding who the Puritans were and what led them to leave England for the New World.

GREAT BRITAIN

'wonderful presumptuous and bold'
—THE PURITAN CHALLENGE (1568–1585)

The idea of a Catholic threat is easy to comprehend, even if there is disagreement about the degree of danger. The idea of a Puritan threat is more problematical. There was no Puritan country poised to invade England. No armed Protestant rising threatened to depose Elizabeth. During the 1570s and 1580s Puritans came to fill more places in Elizabeth's government. So how could there be a Puritan threat?

* Francis, Daniel, and Sonia Riddoch. *Our Canada: A Social and Political History*. Scarborough: Pippin, 1995, 91–92.

In the beginning 'Puritan' was just another insult. Presumably Puritans irritated their neighbours and fellow church-goers by behaving in a 'holier than thou' manner, convinced that they knew the true path to God. Although members of the Church of England, they believed that the Church did not yet quite follow that true path, being in their eyes a compromise or 'mingle-mangle'. Their intention was to purify the church [...] hence their nickname which developed during the 1560s.

These critics of the church did not like their odious name of Puritans. They spoke of each other as 'true gospellers' or the 'godly'. Others, including Archbishop Parker, also called them 'precise folk' or 'precisians', a telling name for they would not rest content with the vagaries of Elizabeth's church. They wanted the one, true, precise way and that certainly involved expunging any vestiges of 'Romish superstition' from the church. There was no better way for a Puritan to spend his or her time than in bible-reading, listening to a rousing preacher or zealously seeking improvement in the church. Perhaps the simplest way to define Puritans is to say that what separated them from fellow-Anglicans was their willingness to challenge openly Elizabeth's settlement, criticising her church in words and by example in their own services. Unlike the acquiescent majority they agitated, sometimes desperately, for reform. Having said that, they were seeking reform from within the church in order to strengthen it. In a sense their striving for reform only became a challenge because they were so strongly resisted.

What did the Puritans want to reform? The answer comes in two parts—the liturgy (the form of worship) and the administration of the church. For Puritans the liturgy was still far too close to Roman Catholic practices. They objected to kneeling at communion, elaborate music, decorated vestments, celebration of saints' days and signs of superstition, such as making the sign of the cross on a child's head at baptism. Such things were sinful to Puritan minds, likely to lead the unwary and unlearned into error and damnation. If people were to be saved for heaven reforms were needed and urgently. Thus the vestments ordained by Elizabeth could be described as the 'rays of anti-Christ' but perhaps the worst vituperation was reserved for theatres and plays which not only 'maintain bawdry, insinuate foolery, and renew the remembrance of heathen idolatry' but, worst of all, 'call thither a thousand whereas an hour's tolling of a bell brings to the sermon a hundred'.

Puritans feared that, with such temptations in view, people could not hear God's word. Hence the importance of preaching clearly and loudly, showing people the route to salvation. Here was another major frustration for Puritans. Far too few priests were zealous preachers. Many had been ordained under Mary and were only too happy to maintain the trappings of Catholicism. Others were dismissed as 'dumb dogs, unskillfully sacrificing priests, destroying drones, or rather caterpillars of the world'. Too few were 'diligent barkers against the Papish wolf' and if they did not bark, said Puritans, how could they help ordinary people join God's elect?

Thus, in Puritan eyes, the liturgical compromise of 1559 and the poor quality of the clergy threatened every individual's chance of salvation. The second grave issue of concern was the church administration which, with its hierarchy of bishops and others, seemed almost identical to the Catholic church. For Puritans their religious leaders should be enthusiastic preachers whose first duty and personal commitment was to spreading the word as laid down in the Bible. Bishops seemed to be mere administrators, little different from government officials. There was also no place in their ideal scheme for church courts and fines. Sinners should make their peace and do their penance in the heart of their own congregations. The most extreme Puritan sub-group was the Separatists (also known as Brownists after one of their leaders, Robert Brown) who rejected the idea of a national church, believing that each congregation should control its own affairs.

Elizabeth saw Puritanism as a challenge to her authority. This challenge was both indirect, implicit in Puritan distaste for church hierarchies, and direct in the demand for reform of the 1559 settlement. They demanded change. Elizabeth had no intention of changing. In Elizabeth's eyes Puritan ideals were 'dangerous to kingly rule', and through their sermons 'great numbers of our people . . . otherwise occupied with honest labour for their living, are brought to idleness . . . divided amongst themselves with a variety of dangerous opinion'. Puritans wanted people to think about religion for themselves. Elizabeth wanted conformity and obedience.

Given the queen's attitude it is surprising to find so many staunch Puritans at the very centre of her government. But their presence there did a great deal to maintain the momentum of Puritanism. Elizabeth's own favourite, Leicester, and his brother, the Earl of Warwick, were noted

Puritans. So too were the Earls of Huntingdon and Bedford and Francis Walsingham. Other councilors and many MPs* were Puritans or sympathetic to their cause. Such great figures and many gentlemen appointed puritan preachers to parishes or to university posts and protected them from investigations. Puritanism was strong in the universities and London, everywhere except amongst the poor whose illiteracy effectively excluded them. Puritan emphasis on reading and study meant that it could not be a mass movement but that it would have influence out of proportion to its numbers.

Puritanism developed as the critics realized that firstly Elizabeth would not permit change and that secondly, in her drive for conformity, she would enforce the liturgical compromises they detested. The first clash came over vestments in the 1560s. In the next decade criticism intensified as frustration grew and a new generation of Puritan leaders emerged. The new, younger men were more impatient, believing that the bishops had given in too easily to Elizabeth's demands. The most notable figure in this group was Thomas Cartwright, Professor of Divinity at Cambridge University, until deprived of the post in 1570.

Parliament was an important pressure point used by Puritans. In 1571, 1573 and 1576 MPs sought reforms in the words of Walter Strickland in 1571 'so as to have all things brought to the purity of the Primitive Church'. This was to no avail. Elizabeth declared in 1572 that 'Thenceforth—no bills concerning religion should be received into this House unless the same should first be considered and liked by the clergy'. She anticipated that the bishops were unlikely to approve of radical demands. This was certainly true of the key issue that developed in the early 1570s—Presbyterianism. Presbyterians, led by Cartwright, argued that there was no support in the scriptures for a hierarchy of bishops acting as a church government. They said that each congregation should choose its minister, who would lead that congregation with the aid of a small group, the presbytery. Thus the whole Roman apparatus of bishops would be swept away. Thomas Wilcox, a Presbyterian, wrote 'Either must we have right ministry of God and right government of his church, according to the scriptures . . . (both of which we lack) or else there can be no right religion'. †

* Member of Parliament.

† Dawson, Ian. *Challenging History: The Tudor Century*. Cheltenham: Thomson, 1993, 363, 365.

5

French and Indian War

Because of their ongoing strife in Europe during the 18th century, it seems inevitable that British and French colonies would eventually come to blows in the New World. The two rival colonies grew alongside one another, but under vastly different philosophies. The French were mostly Catholic, and the British were Protestant. The French were also more independent, living with the Indians to profit from trapping furs, whereas the British settlers tended to enclose themselves in forts to protect themselves against the natives. The two camps encountered and grew irritated with one another over many decades. By the mid-1700s, the growing annoyance had broken out into all-out war on the North American continent. It is worth noting that this political rivalry receives little or no mention in recent French history textbooks.

GREAT BRITAIN

This British textbook places the fighting in North America within the context of an ongoing struggle for power in Europe between themselves and the French. This text

also demonstrates the British propensity for anecdotes and personal narratives. Notice the long quotations and short stories illustrating the narrative.

The British and French in North America

While British and French merchants competed for trade in India, British and French settlers competed for land in North America [. . .]. The French first settled along the banks of the River St Lawrence, then explored the Great Lakes. From there they moved south along the eastern bank of the River Mississippi. The settlement which has become the great modern city of Detroit was founded in 1701. By 1718 the French had reached the Gulf of Mexico where they founded New Orleans, much later famous as the birthplace of jazz.

But the towns were not important. What really interested the French settlers was the fur of the bear, the seal and the beaver. The fur trade for clothes was very profitable. This huge area of North America, which was claimed by France, was in fact only sparsely occupied by trappers, who roamed over very great distances. There were fewer than 100,000 settlers, which is not a lot when you compare this with the population of France at the time—20 million!

Despite the hardships and difficulties, some British people went to the northern part of America, now known as Canada. Why? There were profits to be made there in the fur trade. They settled round Hudson's Bay. A report from the Hudson's Bay Company in 1753 shows the great problem of transport: 'The Indians cannot carry large quantities . . . because their canoes, deeply laden, are not able to withstand the waves and storms they may meet with upon the Lakes'. Another explains that: 'A good hunter among the Indians can kill 600 beavers in a season, and can carry down (transport) but 100'.

Most British colonists settled in a coastal strip between the Atlantic Ocean and the Appalachian Mountains [. . .]. By 1733 these settlements had been organized into thirteen colonies. These colonies were more densely occupied than the French areas. By the middle of the eighteenth century the population of the thirteen colonies was as much as one quarter of that of Britain (1½ million compared with 6 million).

Despite the great expanses of land available, the British and French came into conflict:

1) To the north there were quarrels between the fur trappers and traders.

2) To the south of the Great Lakes the British wanted to settle on land which the French claimed was theirs.

The French were determined to stop the British from advancing. To defend their lands the French started to build forts. In 1754 they built the strong Fort Duquesne on the River Ohio. In hilly and thickly-forested land the best way of traveling is along rivers. The River Ohio was very important to the French as a link between their settlements on the Great Lakes and on the Mississippi. It was also the obvious route for the British to use to expand westward. The British felt hemmed in. The scene was set for war.*

Fighting in Canada, 1754–60

We left the story of the quarrel between the British and French in North America with the French building the great Fort Duquesne. It was finished by the summer of 1754. The British colonists in Virginia were particularly worried by this. A small force under the command of a young man named George Washington was sent to attack the fort. The expedition was easily beaten back by the French. In 1755 a stronger British army was sent. It was ambushed by a large force of French and Indians. Nearly two-thirds of the British, including their commander General Braddock, were killed. The massacre was horrific. One survivor later wrote:

'I cannot describe the horrors of the scene; no pen could do it. The yell of the Indians is fresh on my ear, and the terrific sound will haunt me till the hour of my dissolution (death).'

When war was declared between Britain and France in 1756, it went badly for Britain at first. The French Governor of Quebec, Montcalm, started to advance southwards towards the British colonies of New England.

But by 1759 the British were better organized. Pitt was now the British Prime Minister and taking personal control. The French fleets were block-

* Heater, Derek. *Presenting the Past, Bk. 3: Reform and Revolution*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, 9, 10.

aded in the harbours of Toulon and Brest, and when they tried to break out, were pursued and defeated. This meant the French could not send reinforcements across the Atlantic to Canada. Pitt ordered attacks on the French colonies in North America from several directions. The most important and famous was the expedition sent up the River St Lawrence. It is worth telling the story in some detail.

Pitt chose his commanders carefully. In charge of the army was Major-General James Wolfe; in charge of the navy was Vice-Admiral Sir Charles Saunders. Both were courageous and daring commanders. They assembled their forces at Louisbourg, a fort and harbour captured from the French only the previous year, 1758. Wolfe described the force in a letter to his Uncle Walter:

'The fleet consists of twenty-two sail-of-the-line and many frigates, the army of 9,000 men—in England it is called 12,000. We have ten battalions, three companies of grenadiers, some marines (if the Admiral can spare them) and six new raised companies of North American Rangers—not complete and the worst soldiers in the universe; a great train of artillery, plenty of provisions, tools and implements of all sorts.'

You can see what he meant. Although he was well equipped, he did not have the number of troops he was promised. And they were not good enough for the job. His task was formidable—to capture Quebec, strongly defended by the French commander Marquis de Montcalm.

During the winter the St Lawrence was blocked by ice. They had to wait for summer. On 6 June 1759 they set sail. They made first for the island of Orleans in the river opposite Quebec. From this island Wolfe scanned the northern bank of the river to find the easiest way of attacking Quebec.

There was no easy way. There were 106 cannon projecting from the walls of Quebec itself. In front and to the west of the town were steep cliffs, called the 'Heights of Abraham'. Down-river the French had built strong defence-works. Behind these Montcalm had concentrated 14,000 men. At first Wolfe launched attacks below these defence-works to try to bypass them. But Montcalm's troops beat off the British soldiers.

Time was running short. If Quebec were not taken by the autumn, the British ships would be frozen in the iced-up river. Wolfe made a desperate and bold decision. He moved his troops up river. In the early hours of the

morning of 13 September Wolfe led a band of men in boats to a little cove under the Heights of Abraham. A midshipman who was with them later told how Wolfe quietly recited Gray's poem, 'Elegy in a Country Church-yard'.

It had to be in a low voice for fear the French sentries might hear. The poem is still famous: it starts with the line, 'The curfew tolls the knell of parting day' and contains the line particularly relevant to Wolfe: 'The paths of glory lead but to the grave.' Wolfe leaped on shore at 4:00 a.m.

Wolfe and his soldiers clambered up the cliff. The small contingent of French guarding the heights were taken by surprise. Soon after dawn a force of 4,500 British troops clambered up the cliffs and even cannon were hauled up. Montcalm was horrified when the news reached him. He marched a force round from the other side of Quebec. At 10 a.m. he attacked. The British held their fire, then they let loose a withering stream of musket-shot. The French broke ranks and fled. But in the battle both Wolfe and Montcalm were killed.

The British took Quebec. The following year they took Montreal. The French were completely defeated. Britain now had Canada. Wolfe was a hero. Or was he? Was he really so brilliant? He seemed to waste a lot of time in the summer. Wasn't he foolish, though extraordinarily lucky, to risk climbing the Heights of Abraham? Perhaps his success was mostly due to Admiral Saunders' control of the river with the navy.

The Treaty of Paris

In 1763 a peace treaty was signed bringing the Seven Years War to an end. Britain now had the most powerful empire in the world:

1. She gained some extra West Indian islands where there had also been a lot of fighting. They were important for producing sugar.
2. She gained control of north-east India. The French were allowed to keep three trading posts in India but were forbidden to fortify them.
3. The French were driven from North America. Britain gained Quebec and the land to the west of the Appalachian mountains. And the French sold Louisiana to Spain.*

* Heater, Derek. *Presenting the Past, Bk. 3: Reform and Revolution*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, 14–16.

CARIBBEAN

Although much of the fighting in the French and Indian War took place in or near present-day Canada, this Caribbean text reminds the reader that the West Indies was an important venue as well—both as a theater of the war and as booty afterward.

France and Britain Compete for Empires

THE SEVEN YEARS WAR

After 1750 the main conflicts between European powers in the Americas were concerned more directly with rivalry between Britain and France. The first matter to be decided was ownership of North America. Here Britain had thirteen colonies on the eastern seaboard. Between 1700 and 1775 their population grew from under a third of a million to nearly two million. They had become the most important markets for goods made in Britain. In return, their products such as tobacco and timber were in great demand in Britain. In the 1750s the French began to build a line of forts starting in Canada and running behind the narrow strips of English colonies. This threat was matched by French pressure on English trading settlements in India. In 1756–63 the two countries fought the Seven Years War to decide these questions of empire.

By 1759 the British had gained the upper hand over the French on the American mainland. The British Prime Minister then ordered that the French West Indian islands should be captured so they could be kept to bargain with when the time came to make peace. The French were almost powerless to stop this. By 1761 the only French colony which Britain had not seized was St Domingue and even that was cut off from France by the British navy.

In the peace the most valuable islands were used as bargaining counters. The British handed them back in return for the whole of Canada. Britain also kept the French colony of Grenada and the Grenadines as well as three neutral islands, Tobago, St Vincent and Dominica. France took over the fourth neutral island, St Lucia.

In the Seven Years War, Britain had driven the French armies from

India as well as Canada. At the peace in 1763 she ruled a world-wide empire with lands in India and the Far East as well as the Caribbean and North America. Only twenty years later this 'first British empire' had lost its thirteen colonies on the coast of America. It was a story in which the Caribbean sugar colonies* could not escape being involved.†

CANADA

How does one explain the differences that led to the conflict between the French and the British in their new colonies? This Canadian text has several ideas.

New France and the Thirteen Colonies were established at about the same time. Yet population figures for the two regions indicate a wide disparity in the rate of development. [. . .]‡ The reasons for this disparity are complicated. One reason was simply the different landscapes that the French and British inhabited. The British settlements were farther south and were not confined to relatively small area of fertile land as were the French in the St. Lawrence valley. Another reason was the importance of fur in the economy of New France. The fur trade did not require large numbers of settlers, unlike the mixed economy of farming and fishing in the Thirteen Colonies, which afforded more opportunities for immigrants to get established. Yet another reason was that the British were less wedded to the theory of mercantilism. While New France was discouraged from producing almost anything but furs, the Thirteen Colonies produced a variety of crops and carried on substantial trade with Europe and the West Indies. Finally, the British colonies were much more open to immigration of all sorts than were the French colonies. Dissident religious groups were among the founders of the colonies, and in the eighteenth century Dutch people, Germans, Scandinavians, and French Protestants

* The islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique.

† Claypole, William, and John Robottom. *Caribbean Story, Bk. 2: The Inheritors*. Kingston: Carlong, 1994, 120.

‡ 1660: New France—3000; 13 Colonies—90,000. 1760: New France—64,041; 13 Colonies—1,593,625 (Francis 1995, 92).

were just a few of the non-British settlers who were welcome. In New France only pious Catholics were encouraged to settle.

War and Conquest

The final battle for control of New France took place in 1760, but France and Britain were at war almost constantly after 1743. In part the reasons for this conflict were rooted in North America. The expanding Thirteen Colonies were spreading inland and threatening France's control of the fur country. The French believed that to protect the fur trade, and ultimately to preserve New France itself, they had to confine the British to their coastal territories. However, just as important as the territorial rivalry was the commercial rivalry between France and Britain on a global scale. Both these countries were growing rich on overseas trade, and their desire to dominate world shipping and commerce led inexorably to open warfare. New France was expected to contribute to French war aims by harrying the British colonies, thus drawing British troops to America and giving the French greater freedom of action in Europe.*

* Francis, Daniel, and Sonia Riddoch. *Our Canada: A Social and Political History*. Scarborough: Pippin, 1995, 92-93.

6

Government in Colonial America

GREAT BRITAIN

This British excerpt focuses on the economic agreements that dictated the relationship between the Empire and her colonies. It also takes a longer look at how politics developed within the thirteen colonies and also alludes to problems on the horizon.

British Imperialism

THE SEVEN YEARS WAR AND CRISIS IN NORTH AMERICA

Centered on North America, Britain's first empire had grown as a result of English migration rather than conquest. By the mid-eighteenth century, nevertheless, North America had become the scene of mounting Anglo-French conflict, which soon merged with a wider European and global struggle known as the Seven Years War. Although Britain emerged victorious, the long years of war had the effect of irrevocably altering her relationship with the American colonies: while British statesmen resolved to assert imperial supremacy, the colonists were equally determined to

maintain and extend their freedoms. The differing, and eventually mutually exclusive, notions of imperial authority lay at the heart of the conflict which led to the Declaration of American Independence in 1776.

THE NATURE OF IMPERIAL AUTHORITY

Early attempts at settlement in the late sixteenth century had foundered due to lack of metropolitan support. Chartered in 1606, the Virginia Company represented the first systematic attempt to colonise North America. Despite a hazardous infancy, Virginia prospered as a result of the commercial cultivation of tobacco. Economic dislocation, political upheaval, and religious strife in the middle decades of the seventeenth century encouraged further emigration from England to North America. By 1759, the 13 mainland colonies which later rebelled had a population of around one and a quarter million, in addition to some 340,000 Africans, mostly slaves.

Economic relations between Britain and the colonies were governed by a series of Trade and Navigation Acts, the first of which was introduced in 1651. With the central aim of maximising profits from North America, these acts restricted the carrying trade within the empire to British or colonial ships, prohibited the import into the colonies of any goods which had not first passed through England, and listed colonial commodities which could not be shipped to foreign countries. The economic system which resulted became known as mercantilism. In order to protect imperial markets for domestic industries, the home government also placed a series of restrictions on colonial manufacture. In 1699, the Wool Act forbade the export of raw wool, woolen yarn, or cloth, while the Hat Act of 1732 limited the number of apprentices a hatter could employ to two. The Iron Act of 1750 sought to stifle the growth of the colonial metalware industry by placing restrictions on further expansion. While establishing its authority over colonial trade, parliament was more circumspect when it came to taxing the colonies for revenue.

Three distinct categories of colony existed by the mid-eighteenth century: charter, proprietary and royal. Connecticut and Rhode Island, on account of their charters, enjoyed especial freedoms. In addition to fully elective legislatures, the two charter colonies chose their governors by a popular vote. With the exception of Massachusetts, where the council was

elected, the other colonies, royal and proprietary, possessed similar forms of government. The governor and his council were appointed by the crown or the proprietor. Each colony also had an elected assembly which by the early eighteenth century had established the right to give assent to laws and taxes, and to initiate legislation. Despite the general acceptance of these arrangements, there existed real differences about the constitutional standing of the assemblies. On the one hand, the colonists perceived their elected legislatures as true parliaments which they enjoyed in virtue of their rights as Englishmen. On the other, the home government thought of them as subordinate agencies which derived their authority from the crown. In the first half of the eighteenth century, the potential for conflict was masked by the British government's relative lack of interest in the political and constitutional structure of the colonies. In these circumstances the principal rivalry was played out between the governor and the assembly.

In the battle between governor and assembly, the former found himself at a distinct disadvantage. The assembly's legislative functions made it an essential component of government in each colony. Moreover, its revenue-raising powers allowed it to refuse to vote funds until its demands were met. Further leverage was provided by the fact that in most colonies the governor's salary was dependent on an annual allocation from the assembly. The governor's freedom of action was also limited by the paucity of patronage at his disposal.

In eighteenth-century Britain, political stability was in part maintained by the government's distribution of patronage, principally in the form of appointments to offices. This practice was extended to the selection of officials in colonial administration. The home government's invasion of the governor's prerogative to appoint other officials within his colony had the effect of limiting the amount of patronage with which he could attract possible American supporters. Domestic political stability, therefore, was bought at the price of diluting British authority in the colonies.

The weak position in which many governors found themselves can be illustrated by a number of examples. Lewis Morris' governorship of New Jersey (1738-46) was characterised by legislative stalemate: in one session the only public act passed was for the destruction of crows, blackbirds, squirrels and woodpeckers in three counties. Morris' successor, Jonathan Belcher, fared little better, bitter conflict with the assembly depriving the

government of tax revenues for several years. In New York, crown instructions to grant the governor a regular salary were ignored by the assembly and had to be abandoned in 1755. At the time of the outbreak of the Seven Years War, therefore, the assemblies had attained a vitality and independence which belied their theoretical subordination to imperial authority. All the time that Britain chose not to interfere in the internal structure of the colonies an uneasy peace was maintained. The prolonged struggle with the French, however, led to a more intrusive approach by Britain which set colonial rights and imperial authority on a collision course.*

7

The American Revolution

Long considered the key period in the founding of the American nation, the Revolutionary War gives U.S. students such historical terminology as the *Founding Fathers*, the *Declaration of Independence*, the *Minuteman*, the *U.S. Constitution*, as well as the concept of *liberty*, all of which are often used as the basis for understanding American history, culture, society, and politics.

GREAT BRITAIN

In the seventeenth century a number of people, mainly from Britain, sailed across the Atlantic, and settled in America. By the middle of the eighteenth century, these settlements were organized into thirteen colonies. The total population in 1776 was 2.5 million.

The colonies flourished. The northern colonies developed shipbuilding and trading; the middle colonies, farming; and the southern colonies, tobacco and rice plantations. The American colonists were also very proud of the way they arranged their government and laws. They were

* Smith, Simon C. *British Imperialism, 1750-1970*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, 4-6.