**Chapter 3**

Society and Culture in Provincial America

*Reviewing Objectives*

**A thorough study of Chapter Six should enable the student to understand:**

1. The disagreement among historians concerning the origins of slavery.
2. The sources of colonial labor, including indentured servants, women, and imported Africans.
3. Immigration patterns and their effect on colonial development.
4. The ways in which factors of soil and climate determined the commercial and agricultural development of the colonies, despite the crown’s attempts to influence production.
5. The emergence of the plantation system and its impact on Southern society.
6. The New England witchcraft episode as a reflection of the Puritan society.
7. The reasons for the appearance of a variety of religious sects in the colonies, and the effect of the Great Awakening on the colonists.
8. The beginnings of colonial industry and commerce and the early attempts at regulation by Parliament.
9. The ways in which colonial literature, education, science, law, and justice were diverging from the English antecedents.

**Pertinent Questions**

**Chapter Three**

**The Colonial Population**

1. Explain the system of indentured servitude that developed in the American colonies. Why was it such an “appealing” system?
2. What impact did freed indentures have on colonial sociopolitical development?
3. Why did mot indentures go to Pennsylvania and New York after 1700?
4. What factors contributed to the rapid increase in colonial population during the last half of the seventeenth century?
5. Explain the results that the limited extent of medical knowledge had on colonial society. Who benefited from this limitation?
6. How did the important of reproduction in the labor-scarce society of colonial America affect the status and life cycle of women? How and why did the status of women in colonial American differ from region to region?
7. Describe the steps that led to the establishment of black slavery in the English-American colonies.
8. Why are the 1690s considered a “turning point in the history of the black population in America”? What had this change resulted in by 1760?
9. Explain the commerce in slaves – how it grew so extensive, more sophisticated, and more horrible.
10. What were the major non-English groups to migrate to America, and why did they come?
11. What were the general characteristics of the colonial population in the first half of the eighteenth century – its rate of growth, cultural composition, settlement patterns?

**The Colonial Economies**

1. Describe the economy of the Chesapeake region, and explain why it developed as it did.
2. How did the economy of South Carolina and Georgia differ from that of the Chesapeake? How was it similar?
3. Explain the commercial economy that emerged in the northern colonies alongside the agricultural one. What role did technology play in this?
4. What were the limits of colonial technology? Just how self-sufficient were American colonists?
5. What factors gave rise to colonial commercial enterprises? What obstacles did these enterprises have to overcome and what effect did their success have eon the colonial economy?
6. What was the “triangular trade,” and what does it reveal about colonial economics? How was this a response to British mercantile policies?
7. Explain the growing preoccupation with consumption of material goods in the British colonies and how this preoccupation was associated with social status.

**Patterns of Society**

1. How did the plantation system in the American South illustrate both the difference between the colonial and English class systems and the way in which colonial communities evolved in response to local conditions?
2. What were the characteristics of plantation slavery?
3. Describe the plantation as an economic unit; as a social unit.
4. What were the characteristics of communities that emerged in Puritan New England?
5. How was the family central to the Puritan community?
6. How did the experience of America affect the patriarchal family?
7. How did the witchcraft hysteria of the 1680s and 1690s result from a “gap between the expectations of a united community and the reality of a diverse and divided one”?
8. What forces gave rise to colonial “cities”?
9. Describe the “distinctive features” of urban life in colonial America.

**Awakenings and Enlightenments**

1. What were the two powerful forces competing for the American mind in the eighteenth century?
2. What were the major religious groups in the colonies, what elements formed them, and where were they located?
3. What was the Great Awakening? Who brought it about, and what groups supported or opposed it?
4. What were the effects of the Great Awakening?
5. What was the Enlightenment? How did it differ from the Great Awakening?
6. What colonial colleges were in operation by 1783? Why was each founded, and what subjects were studied in the mid-eighteenth century?
7. What evidence was there that the influence of the Enlightenment was spreading in America?
8. Explain the working of the law in colonial America – the concepts on which it was based and the way it functioned.

**Where Historians Disagree**

1. How have historians differed over how and why white Americas created a system of slave labor in the seventeenth century?
2. Explain the debate among historians over how and why it was determined that people of African descent should be slaved in America?

**Patters of Popular Culture**

1. Why was it said of almanacs that “no book we read (except the Bible) is so much valued and so serviceable to the community?”
2. In colonial America, what needs did the almanacs fill?

# Summary

After the turmoil of the late seventeenth century had subsided, it became evident that the English-American colonies and the colonists who populated them were beginning to develop characteristics that were distinctly "American." Although still essentially transplanted English subjects and still greatly influenced by European ideas and institutions, the colonists were also diverse, aggressive, and as concerned with their own success as with that of the empire of

which they were part. New sources of wealth and new patterns of trade shaped the growth of the colonies, and new immigrants, not always from England, added a dimension unknown in the mother country. Although differences in geography, economy, and population gave each colony its own particular character and problems, there remained many common concerns--not the least of which was how to deal with, or avoid dealing with, British mercantile restrictions. In short, between 1700 and 1750, Britain's American colonies began to show signs of being both English

and American; they were indeed "different," and it is this difference that Chapter Three explores.