

Questions

1. What are the Levellers criticizing when they propose that "in all laws made or to be made every person may be bound alike"?
2. What are the main rights that the Levellers are aiming to protect?

CHAPTER 3

Creating Anglo-America, 1660–1750

14. William Penn, Pennsylvania Charter of Privileges and Liberties (1701)

Source: Francis N. Thorpe, The Federal and State Constitutions, Colonial Charters, and Other Organic Laws . . . (7 vols.: Washington, 1909), vol. 5, pp. 3076–81.

The last English colony to be established in the seventeenth century was Pennsylvania, founded in 1680 by William Penn. A devout member of the Society of Friends, or Quakers, Penn envisioned the colony as a place where those facing religious persecution in Europe could enjoy spiritual freedom. Quakers held that the spirit of God dwelled within all people, not just the elect, and that this "inner light," rather than the Bible or teachings of the clergy, offered the surest guidance in spiritual matters. Thus, the government had no right to enforce any particular form of religious worship.

Penn drew up a Frame of Government in 1682 but it proved unworkable and in 1701 was replaced with a Charter of Liberties that established a political system that lasted until the American Revolution. Its first clause restated Penn's cherished principle of religious toleration, although it limited office-holding to Christians. It also established an elected legislature and promised that colonists would enjoy the same rights as "free-born subjects of England."

KNOW YE . . . That for the further Well-being and good Government of the said Province, and Territories; . . . I the said William Penn do declare, grant and confirm, unto all the Freemen, Planters and Adventurers, and other Inhabitants of this Province and Territories, these following Liberties, Franchises and Privileges . . .

Because no People can be truly happy, though under the greatest enjoyment of civil liberties, if abridged of the freedom of their consciences, as to their religious profession and worship: And Almighty God being the only Lord of Conscience, Father of Lights and Spirits; and the Author as well as object of all divine knowledge, faith and worship, who only doth enlighten the Minds, and persuade and convince the understandings of people, I do hereby grant and declare, that no person or persons, inhabiting in this Province or Territories, who shall confess and acknowledge One almighty God, the Creator, Upholder and Ruler of the World; and profess him or themselves obliged to live quietly under the Civil Government, shall be in any case molested or prejudiced, in his or their person or estate, because of his or their conscientious persuasion or practice, nor be compelled to frequent or maintain any religious worship, place or ministry, contrary to his or their mind, or to do or suffer any other act or thing, contrary to their religious persuasion.

And that all persons who also profess to believe in Jesus Christ, the Savior of the World, shall be capable (notwithstanding their other persuasions and practices in point of conscience and religion) to serve this Government in any capacity, both legislatively and executively. . . .

For the well governing of this Province and Territories, there shall be an Assembly yearly chosen, by the freemen thereof, to consist of four persons out of each county, of most note for virtue, wisdom and ability, . . . which Assembly shall have power to choose a Speaker and other officers; . . . prepare Bills in order to pass into Laws; impeach criminals, and redress grievances; and shall have all other powers and privileges of an Assembly, according to the rights of the free-born subjects of England.

Questions

1. What are Penn's arguments in favor of religious liberty?
2. Why does the document refer to "the rights of the free-born subjects of England"?

15. Nathaniel Bacon on Bacon's Rebellion (1676)

Source: Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. I (1894), pp. 55–61.

The largest popular revolt in the early English colonies was Bacon's Rebellion, which occurred in Virginia in 1676. For thirty years, Governor William Berkeley had run a corrupt regime in alliance with an inner circle of tobacco planters, while heavy taxes reduced the prospects of small farmers. His refusal to allow white settlement in areas reserved for Indians angered colonists who saw landownership as central to freedom.

After a minor confrontation between Indians and settlers on Virginia's western frontier, settlers demanded that the governor authorize the extermination or removal of the colony's Indians to open more land for whites. Berkeley refused. An uprising began that quickly grew into a full-fledged rebellion. The leader, Nathaniel Bacon, was himself a wealthy and ambitious planter. But his call for the removal of all Indians from the colony, a reduction of taxes, and an end to rule by "grantees," rapidly gained support from small farmers, landless men, indentured servants, and even some slaves. Bacon's "manifesto," which follows, outlined the rebels' complaints against the governor and the colony's "protected and darling Indians." The uprising failed. But the frightened authorities reduced taxes and adopted a more aggressive Indian policy, opening western areas to small farmers. They also accelerated the shift from indentured white labor to African slaves.

IF VIRTUE BE a sin, if piety be guilt, all the principles of morality, goodness and justice be perverted, we must confess that those who are now called rebels may be in danger of those high imputations. Those loud and several bulls would affright innocents and render the defence of our brethren and the inquiry into our sad and heavy oppressions, treason. But if there be, as sure there is, a just God to appeal to; if religion and justice be a sanctuary here; if to plead the cause of the oppressed; if sincerely to aim at his Majesty's honour and the public good without any reservation or by interest; if to stand in the gap after so much blood of our dear brethren bought and sold; if after the loss of a great part of his Majesty's colony deserted and dispeopled, freely with our lives and estates to endeavour to save the remainders be treason; God Almighty judge and let guilty die. But since we cannot in our hearts find one single spot of rebellion or treason, or that we have in any manner aimed at the subverting the settled government or attempting of the person of any either magistrate or private man, notwithstanding the several reproaches and threats of some who for sinister ends were disaffected to us and censured our innocent and honest designs, and since all people in all places where we have yet been can attest our civil, quiet, peaceable behaviour far different from that of rebellion and tumultuous persons, let truth be bold and all the world know the real foundations of pretended guilt.

We appeal to the country itself what and of what nature their oppressions have been, or by what cabal and mystery the designs of many of those whom we call great men have been transacted and carried on; but let us trace these men in authority and favour to whose hands the dispensation of the country's wealth has been committed. Let us observe the sudden rise of their estates [compared] with the quality in which they first entered this country, or the reputation they have held here amongst wise and discerning men. And let us see whether their extractions and education have not been vile, and by what pretence of learning and virtue they could so soon [come] into employments of so great trust and consequence. Let us consider their sudden advancement and let us also consider whether

any public work for our safety and defence or for the advancement and propagation of trade, liberal arts, or sciences is here extant in any way adequate to our vast charge. Now let us compare these things together and see what sponges have sucked up the public treasure, and whether it has not been privately contrived away by unworthy favourites and juggling parasites whose tottering fortunes have been repaired and supported at the public charge. Now if it be so, judge what greater guilt can be than to offer to pry into these and to unriddle the mysterious wiles of a powerful cabal; let all people judge what can be of more dangerous import than to suspect the so long safe proceedings of some of our grandees, and whether people may with safety open their eyes in so nice a concern.

Another main article of our guilt is our open and manifest aversion of all, not only the foreign but the protected and darling Indians. This, we are informed, is rebellion of a deep dye for that both the governor and council are . . . bound to defend the queen and the Appamatocks with their blood. Now, whereas we do declare and can prove that they have been for these many years enemies to the king and country, robbers and thieves and invaders of his Majesty's right and our interest and estates, but yet have by persons in authority been defended and protected even against his Majesty's loyal subjects, and that in so high a nature that even the complaints and oaths of his Majesty's most loyal subjects in a lawful manner proffered by them against those barbarous outlaws, have been by the right honourable governor rejected and the delinquents from his presence dismissed, not only with pardon and indemnity, but with all encouragement and favour; their firearms so destructful to us and by our laws prohibited, commanded to be restored them, and open declaration before witness made that they must have ammunition, although directly contrary to our law. Now what greater guilt can be than to oppose and endeavour the destruction of these honest, quiet neighbours of ours?

Another main article of our guilt is our design not only to ruin and extirpate all Indians in general, but all manner of trade and

commerce with them. Judge who can be innocent that strike at this tender eye of interest: since the right honourable the governor hath been pleased by his commission to warrant this trade, who dare oppose it, or opposing it can be innocent? Although plantations be deserted, the blood of our dear brethren spilled; on all sides our complaints; continually murder upon murder renewed upon us; who may or dare think of the general subversion of all manner of trade and commerce with our enemies who can or dare impeach any of . . . traders at the heads of the rivers, if contrary to the wholesome provision made by laws for the country's safety; they dare continue their illegal practises and dare asperse the right honourable governor's wisdom and justice so highly to pretend to have his warrant to break that law which himself made; who dare say that these men at the heads of the rivers buy and sell our blood, and do still, notwithstanding the late act made to the contrary, admit Indians painted and continue to commerce; although these things can be proved, yet who dare be so guilty as to do it? . . .

. . .

THE DECLARATION OF THE PEOPLE

For having upon specious pretences of public works, raised unjust taxes upon the commonalty for the advancement of private favourites and other sinister ends, but no visible effects in any measure adequate.

For not having during the long time of his government in any measure advanced this hopeful colony, either by fortification, towns or trade.

For having abused and rendered contemptible the majesty of justice, of advancing to places of judicature scandalous and ignorant favourites.

For having wronged his Majesty's prerogative and interest by assuming the monopoly of the beaver trade.

By having in that unjust gain bartered and sold his Majesty's country and the lives of his loyal subjects to the barbarous heathen.

For having protected, favoured and emboldened the Indians against his Majesty's most loyal subjects, never contriving, requiring, or appointing any due or proper means of satisfaction for their many invasions, murders, and robberies committed upon us.

. . .

For having the second time attempted the same thereby calling down our forces from the defence of the frontiers, and most weak exposed places, for the prevention of civil mischief and ruin amongst ourselves, whilst the barbarous enemy in all places did invade, murder, and spoil us, his Majesty's most faithful subjects.

Of these, the aforesaid articles, we accuse Sir William Berkeley, as guilty of each and every one of the same, and as one who has traitorously attempted, violated and injured his Majesty's interest here, by the loss of a great part of his colony, and many of his faithful and loyal subjects by him betrayed, and in a barbarous and shameful manner exposed to the incursions and murders of the heathen.

And we do further demand, that the said Sir William Berkeley . . . be forthwith delivered up . . . within four days after the notice hereof, or otherwise we declare as followeth: that in whatsoever house, place, or ship [he] shall reside, be hid, or protected, we do declare that the owners, masters, or inhabitants of the said places, to be confederates and traitors to the people, and the estates of them, as also of all the aforesaid persons, to be confiscated. This we, the commons of Virginia, do declare desiring a prime union amongst ourselves, that we may jointly, and with one accord defend ourselves against the common enemy.

NATH BACON, Gen'l.

By the Consent of the People.

Questions

1. What are the rebels' main complaints against the government of Virginia?
2. Do Bacon and his followers envision any place for Indians in Virginia society?

16. Letter by an Immigrant to Pennsylvania (1769)

Source: Johannes Hänner: Letter by an Immigrant to Pennsylvania, 1769, Unpublished Documents on Emigration from the Archives of Switzerland, Albert B. Faust, Deutsch-Amerikanische Geschichtsblätter, Vols. 18–19, pp. 37–39. Translation by Volker Berghahn. Reprinted by permission of Volker Berghahn.

Germans, 110,000 in all, formed the largest group of newcomers to the British colonies in the eighteenth century. The desire for religious freedom inspired many migrants, but the primary motivation for emigration was economic. German areas of Europe were plagued by persistent agricultural crises. Families found it increasingly difficult to acquire land.

Most German newcomers settled in frontier areas—rural New York, western Pennsylvania, and the southern backcountry—where they formed tightly knit farming communities in which German for many years remained the dominant language. The letter below, by a German-speaking emigrant from Switzerland to Pennsylvania, illustrates the response of many immigrants to life in America. “We have a free country,” he wrote to his relatives at home, singling out ample employment opportunities, low taxes, plentiful food, and abundant land as reasons for coming to America.

Lebanon, August 23, 1769

Dearest Father, Brother, and Sister and Brother-in-law, . . .

To begin with, we are all, thank God, fresh and healthy as long as the Lord wills, and if at last you are also in good health, this would delight my heart. What I must tell you first of all is that I have been dreaming one day after Johannis and that it seemed to me that my beloved brother-in-law in Bubendorff had died. This would pain me a lot, and the Lord will protect him of this.

I have told you quite fully about the trip, and I will tell you what will not surprise you—that we have a free country. Of the sundry craftsmen, one may do whatever one wants. Nor does the land require payment of tithes [taxes requiring payment of a portion of a farmer's produce to a local landlord, typical in Europe]. . . . By the way, wheat is grown most frequently, rye, oats, . . . apples are plentiful. . . . The land is very big from Canada to the east of us to Carolina in the south and to the Spanish border in the west. . . . Except for Carolina [there are] many large and small rivers. One can settle wherever one wants without asking anyone when he buys or leases something. . . .

I have always enough to do and we have no shortage of food. Bread is plentiful. If I work for two days I earn more bread than in eight days [at home]. . . . Also I can buy many things so reasonably [for example] a pair of shoes for [roughly] seven Pennsylvania shillings. . . . I think that with God's help I will obtain land. I am not pushing for it until I am in a better position. I would like for my brother to come . . . and it will then be even nicer in the country. . . . I assume that the land has been described to you sufficiently by various people and it is not surprising that the immigrant agents [demand payment]. For the journey is long and it costs much to stay away for one year. . . . And at this point I finally greet you all with all good friends and acquaintances very cordially, and I command all of you to the care of the Lord so that you may be well in soul and body.

Johannes Hänner

Questions

1. What does Johannes Hänner seem to mean when he calls America a "free country"?
2. How does it appear that people in Europe learn about conditions in America?

17. Gottlieb Mittelberger on the Trade in Indentured Servants (1750)

Source: Gottlieb Mittelberger, Gottlieb Mittelberger's Journey to Pennsylvania in the Year 1750 and Return to Germany in the Year 1754, trans. Carl Theo Eben (Philadelphia, 1898), pp. 28-38.

During the eighteenth century, most emigrants to British North America arrived either as slaves or indentured servants. Gottlieb Mittelberger, a German schoolteacher and organ player, traveled to Pennsylvania in 1750 and returned to Germany four years later. The passage that follows is taken from his diary, in which he vividly described conditions on the ship carrying indentured servants and the trying situation many of them faced when they landed in Philadelphia. The German men and women he describes had borrowed money to pay for their passage and had no choice but to sign long-term labor contracts in America to pay off their debt. Although indentured servants were not held for life, as slaves were, they were bought and sold and their families could easily be broken up. Mittelberger's account offers a different perspective on immigration to the American colonies from the previous document.

DURING THE VOYAGE there is on board these ships terrible misery, stench, fumes, horror, vomiting, many kinds of seasickness, fever, dysentery, headache, heat, constipation, boils, scurvy, cancer, mouth rot, and the like, all of which come from old and sharply-salted

food and meat, also from very bad and foul water, so that many die miserably.

Add to this want of provisions, hunger, thirst, frost, heat, dampness, anxiety, want, afflictions and lamentations, together with other trouble, as e.g., the lice abound so frightfully, especially on sick people, that they can be scraped off the body. The misery reaches a climax when a gale rages for two or three nights and days, so that every one believes that the ship will go to the bottom with all human beings on board. In such a visitation the people cry and pray most piteously....

No one can have an idea of the sufferings which women in confinement have to bear with their innocent children on board these ships. Few of this class escape with their lives; many a mother is cast into the water with her child as soon as she is dead. One day, just as we had a heavy gale, a woman in our ship, who was to give birth and could not give birth under the circumstances, was pushed through a loophole (porthole) in the ship and dropped into the sea, because she was far in the rear of the ship and could not be brought forward.

Children from one to seven years rarely survive the voyage; and many a time parents are compelled to see their children miserably suffer and die from hunger, thirst, and sickness, and then to see them cast into the water. I witnessed such misery in no less than thirty-two children in our ship, all of whom were thrown into the sea. The parents grieve all the more since their children find no resting place in the earth, but are devoured by the monsters of the sea. It is a notable fact that children who have not yet had the measles or smallpox generally get them on board the ship, and mostly die of them....

When the ships have landed at Philadelphia after their long voyage, no one is permitted to leave them except those who pay for their passage or can give good security; the others, who cannot pay, must remain on board the ships till they are purchased and are released from the ships by their purchasers. The sick always fare the worst, for the healthy are naturally preferred and purchased first; and so the sick and wretched must often remain on board in front of

the city for two or three weeks, and frequently die, whereas many a one, if he could pay his debt and were permitted to leave the ship immediately, might recover and remain alive. . . .

The sale of human beings in the market on board the ship is carried on thus: Every day Englishmen, Dutchmen, and High German people come from the city of Philadelphia and other places, in part from a great distance, say twenty, thirty, or forty hours away, and go on board the newly-arrived ship that has brought and offers for sale passengers from Europe, and select among the healthy persons such as they deem suitable for their business, and bargain with them how long they will serve for their passage money, which most of them are still in debt for. When they have come to an agreement, it happens that adult persons bind themselves in writing to serve three, four, five, or six years for the amount due by them, according to their age and strength. But very young people, from ten to fifteen years, must serve till they are twenty-one years old.

Many parents must sell and trade away their children like so many head of cattle, for if their children take the debt upon themselves, the parents can leave the ship free and unrestrained; but as the parents often do not know where and to what people their children are going, it often happens that such parents and children, after leaving the ship, do not see each other again for many years, perhaps no more in all their lives. . . .

It often happens that whole families, husband, wife, and children, are separated by being sold to different purchasers, especially when they have not paid any part of their passage money.

When a husband or wife has died at sea, when the ship has made more than half of her trip, the survivor must pay or serve not only for himself or herself, but also for the deceased. When both parents have died over halfway at sea, their children, especially when they are young and have nothing to pawn or to pay, must stand for their own and their parents' passage, and serve till they are twenty-one years old. When one has served his or her term, he or she is entitled to a new suit of clothes at parting; and if it has been so stipulated, a man gets in addition a horse, a woman, a cow.

Questions

1. Which aspects of the situation of the German immigrants seem most offensive to Mittelberger?
2. How public and regular does the trade in indentured servants appear to be from his account?

18. Complaint of an Indentured Servant (1756)

Source: Elizabeth Sprigs letter to John Spyer, September 22, 1756, Colonial Captivities, Marches, and Journeys, 1935, ed. Isabel M. Calder (New York, 1935), pp. 151-52.

The letter that follows was written to her father in England by Elizabeth Sprigs, an indentured servant in mid-eighteenth century Maryland. It expresses complaints voiced by many servants from the beginning of settlement. Sprigs, who had clearly had some kind of falling out with her father, described constant labor, poor food and living conditions, and physical abuse. "Many Negroes are better used," she added.

Unlike slaves, servants could look forward to a release from bondage after their period of labor was over, and to receiving a payment known as "freedom dues." Many, however, died before the end of their terms and freedom dues were sometimes so meager that they did not enable recipients to acquire land.

Maryland September 22, 1756

Honored Father,

My being forever banished from your sight, will I hope pardon the boldness I now take of troubling you with these. My long silence has been purely owing to my undutifulness to you, and well knowing I had offended in the highest degree, put a tie to my tongue and pen, for fear I should be extinct from your good graces and add a

further trouble to you. But too well knowing your care and tenderness for me so long as I retained my duty to you, induced me once again to endeavor, if possible, to kindle up that flame again.

O Dear father, believe what I am going to relate the words of truth and sincerity, and balance my former bad conduct [to] my sufferings here, and then I am sure you'll pity your distressed daughter. What we unfortunate English people suffer here is beyond the probability of you in England to conceive. Let it suffice that I am one of the unhappy number, am toiling almost day and night, and very often in the horse's drudgery, with only this comfort that you bitch you do not half enough, and then tied up and whipped to that degree that you now serve an animal. Scarce any thing but Indian corn and salt to eat and that even begrudged nay many Negroes are better used, almost naked no shoes nor stockings to wear, and the comfort after slaving during master's pleasure, what rest we can get is to wrap ourselves up in a blanket and lie upon the ground. This is the deplorable condition your poor Betty endures, and now I beg if you have any bowels of compassion left show it by sending me some relief. Clothing is the principal thing wanting, which if you should condescend to, may easily send them to me by any of the ships bound to Baltimore town, Patapsco River, Maryland. And give me leave to conclude in duty to you and uncles and aunts, and respect to all friends.

Honored Father
Your undutiful and disobedient child
Elizabeth Sprigs

Questions

1. What are Elizabeth Springs's main complaints about her treatment?
2. Why does she compare her condition unfavorably to that of blacks?

19. Women in the Household Economy (1709)

Source: *John Lawson, A New Voyage to Carolina (London, 1709), pp. 84-85.*

In the household economy of eighteenth-century America, the family was the center of economic life. Most work revolved around the home, and all members—men, women, and children—contributed to the family's livelihood. John Lawson, an English naturalist, came to Carolina in 1700 and traveled over a thousand miles, studying the natural environment and trading with Indians. His *A New Voyage to Carolina* offered a very favorable description of life in the colony. Lawson's account vividly described the lives of free Carolina women and the numerous kinds of labor they performed. The work of farmers' wives and daughters often spelled the difference between a family's self-sufficiency and poverty. Lawson was captured and killed during an Indian uprising in 1711.

THE WOMEN ARE the most industrious sex in that place, and, by their good houswifery, make a great deal of cloth of their own cotton, wool and flax; some of them keeping their families (though large) very decently appareled, both with linens and woollens, so that they have no occasion to run into the merchant's debt, or lay their money out on stores for clothing. . . .

They marry very young; some at thirteen or fourteen; and she that stays till twenty, is reckoned a stale maid; which is a very indifferent character in that warm country. The women are very fruitful; most houses being full of little ones. It has been observed, that women long married, and without children, in other places, have removed to Carolina, and become joyful mothers. They have very easy travail in their child-bearing, in which they are so happy, as seldom to miscarry. . . .

Many of the women are very handy in canoes, and will manage them with great dexterity and skill, which they become accustomed to in this watery country. They are ready to help their husbands in any servile work, as planting, when the season of the weather

requires expedition; pride seldom banishing good houswifery. The girls are not bred up to the [spinning] wheel and sewing only; but the dairy and affairs of the house they are very well acquainted withal; so that you shall see them, whilst very young, manage their business with a great deal of conduct and alacrity. The children of both sexes are very docile, and learn any thing with a great deal of Ease and Method; and those that have the advantages of education, write good hands, and prove good accountants, which is most coveted, and indeed most necessary in these parts.

Questions

1. What are the most important kinds of work done by Carolina women, according to Lawson?
2. How strict do gender roles appear to have been in early Carolina?

CHAPTER 4

Slavery, Freedom, and the Struggle for Empire, to 1763

20. Olaudah Equiano on Slavery (1789)

Source: The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself (London, 1789), Vol. 1, pp. 46–49, 69–72, 83–88.

Of the estimated 7.7 million Africans transported to the New World between 1492 and 1820, over half arrived between 1700 and 1800. Every European empire utilized slave labor and battled for control of this profitable trade. A series of triangular trading routes crisscrossed the Atlantic, carrying British goods to Africa and the colonies, colonial slave-grown products like tobacco, sugar, and rice to Europe, and slaves from Africa to the New World.

The era's most popular account of the slave experience was written by Olaudah Equiano, the son of a West African village chief, kidnapped by slave traders in the 1750s. In the passages that follow, Equiano describes his capture, encounter with other African peoples with whom he had no previous contact, passage to the New World, and sale in the West Indies. Equiano went on the purchase his freedom. His life underscored the greatest contradiction in the history of the eighteenth century—the simultaneous expansion of freedom and slavery.