
APUSH PRIMARY SOURCES

Unit 1: Colonizing America, 1491 – 1700s

Bartolome de las Casas**Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies (1542)**

Dominican priest Bartolome de las Casas (1484 - 1566), one of the first settlers in New Spain, protested the treatment of Indians by the Spanish in this address to Prince Philip, the future king of Spain. In this passage, Las Casas advocates for the rights of native peoples and rejects the encomienda system.

They [Native Americans] are by nature most humble, patient, and peaceable, holding no grudges, free from embroilments, neither excitable nor quarrelsome . . . They are also poor people, for they not only possess little but have no desire to possess worldly goods. For this reason, they are not arrogant, embittered, or greedy . . . They are very clean in their persons, with alert, intelligent minds, docile and open to doctrine, very apt to receive our holy Catholic faith, to be endowed with virtuous customs, and to behave in a godly fashion. And once they begin to hear the tidings of the Faith, they are so insistent on knowing more and on taking the sacraments of the Church and on observing the divine cult that, truly, the missionaries who are here need to be endowed by God with great patience in order to cope with such eagerness...

Yet into this sheepfold, into this land of meek outcasts there came some Spaniards who immediately behaved like ravening wild beasts, wolves, tigers, or lions that had been starved for many days . . .



Juan Gines de Sepulveda**Concerning the Just Causes of the War Against the Indians (1547)**

Juan Gines de Sepulveda (1489 – 1573), a Spanish theologian and philosopher, was tasked by Charles V, grandson of Ferdinand and Isabella, to respond to Bartolome de las Casas's assertions that the Spaniards were unjustly treating Native Americans. Below is an excerpt from his book, Concerning the Just Causes of the War against the Indians.

. . . [T]he Spanish have a perfect right to rule these barbarians of the New World and the adjacent islands, who in prudence, skill, virtues, and humanity are as inferior to the Spanish as children to adults, or women to men, for there exists between the two as great a difference as between savage and cruel races and the most merciful, between the most intemperate and the moderate and temperate and, I might even say, between apes and men...

Compare, then, these gifts of prudence, talent, magnanimity, temperance, humanity, and religion with those possessed by these half-men . . ., in whom you will barely find the vestiges of humanity, who not only do not possess any learning at all, but are not even literate or in possession of any monument to their history except for some obscure and vague reminiscences of several things put down in various paintings; nor do they have written laws, but barbarian institutions and customs. Well, then, if we are dealing with virtue, what temperance or mercy can you expect from men who are committed to all types of intemperance or mercy can you expect from men who are committed to all types of intemperance and base frivolity and eat human flesh? And so not believe that before the arrival of Christians they lived in that pacific kingdom of Saturn which the poets have invented; for, on the contrary, they waged continual and ferocious war upon one another with such fierceness that they did not consider a victory at all worthwhile unless they sated their monstrous hunger with the flesh of their enemies...

Letter from Sebastian Brandt to Henry Hovener Virginia, January 13, 1622. “A Jamestown Settler Describes Life in Virginia”

This 1622 letter from Jamestown colonist Sebastian Brandt to Henry Hovener, a Dutch merchant living in London, provides a snapshot of the colony in flux. Brandt likely arrived in 1619 in a wave of 1,200 immigrants. We know little about Brandt. He does not appear in any known existing official records, and historians presume he died not long after writing this letter. The glimpse he offers into early Jamestown serves as a tantalizing example of the challenges and thrills of studying colonial American history.

Well beloved good friend Henry Hovener My comendations remembred, I hartely wish your welfare for god be thanked I am now in good health, but my brother and my wyfe are dead aboute a year pass'd, and touchinge the busynesse that I came hither is nothing yett performed, by reason of my sicknesse & weaknesse I was not able to travell up and downe the hills and dales of these countries but doo nowe intend every daye to walke up and downe the hills for good Mineralls here is both golde silver and copper to be had and therefore I will doe my endeavours by the grace of god to effect what I am able to perform. And I intreat you to beseeche the Right Hon:[orable] & Wor:[shipful] Company in my behalfe to grant me my freedome to be sent either to me I dowbte not to doo well & good service in these countries humbly desyringe them also to provyde me some experimented fellowe & a strong boye to assiste me in my businesse, and that it may please the aforesaid Company to send me at my charge [2] a bed w[i]th a bolster and cover and some Linnen for shirtes and sheetes. Sixe fallinge bands w[i]th Last Size pairs of shoes twoo pairs of bootes three pairs of culled stockings and garters w[i]th three pairs of lether gloves some powder and shott, twoo little runletts of oyle and vinnegar some spice & sugar to comfort us here in our sicknesse abowte ffyftie pounds weight of holland and englishe cheese together, Lykewyse some knyves, spoons, combes and all sorts of culled beads as you knowe the savage Indians use Also one Rundlett w[i]th all sortes of yron nayles great and small, three haire sives, two hatchetts w[i]th twoo broad yrons and some Allum And send all these necessities thinges in a dry fatt w[i]th the first shippinge dyrected unto Mr Pontes in James Towne here in Virginia And whatsoever this all costes I will not onely w[i]th my moste humble service but also w[i]th some good Tobacco Bevor and Otterskins and other commodities here to be had recompence the Company for the same [3] And yf you could send for my brother Phillipps Sonne in Darbesheere to come hether itt were a great commoditie ffor me or suche another used in minerall workes. And thus I comitt you to the Almighty. Virginia 13 January 1622.

Powhatan Conflict and Cooperation in the Southeast, 1609

Captain Smith, you may understand that I, having seen the death of all my people thrice, and not one living of those 3 generations but my self, I know the difference of peace and war better then any in my Country. But now I am old, and ere long must die. My brethren, namely Opichapam, Opechankanough, and Kekataugh, my two sisters, and their two daughters, are distinctly each others successors. I wish their experience no less then mine, and your love to them, no less then mine to you: but this brute [rumor] from Nansamund, that you are come to destroy my Country, so much affrighted all my people, as they dare not visit you. What will it avail you to take that perforce, you may quietly have with love, or to destroy them that provide you food? What can you get by war, when we can hide our provision and flie to the woods, whereby you must famish, by wronging us your friends? And why are you thus jealous of our loves, seeing us unarmed, and both doe, and are willing still to feed you with that you cannot get but by our labors? Think you I am so simple not to know it is better to eat good meat, lie well, and sleep quietly with my women and children, laugh, and be merry with you, have copper, hatchets, or what I want being your friend; then bee forced to fly from all, to lie cold in the woods, feed upon acorns roots and such trash, and be so hunted by you that I can neither rest eat nor sleep, but my tired men must

watch, and if a twig but break, every one cry, there comes Captain Smith: then must I fly I know not whether and thus with miserable fear end my miserable life, leaving my pleasures to such youths as you, which, through your rash unadvisedness, may quickly as miserably end, for want of that you never know how to find? Let this therefore assure you of our loves, and every year our friendly trade shall furnish you with corn; and now also if you would come in friendly manner to us, and not thus with your guns and swords, as to invade your foes.

William Apes

The Pilgrims from the Indian Perspective, 1636

Background: *In his autobiography, William Apes, a Pequot, offers an Indian perspective on the early history of relations between the English colonists and the native peoples of New England.*

December 1620, the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth, and without asking liberty from anyone, they possessed themselves of a portion of the country, and built themselves houses, and then made a treaty and commanded them [the Indians] to accede to it.... And yet for their kindness and resignation towards the whites, they were called savages, and made by God on purpose for them to destroy....

The next we present before you are things very appalling. We turn our attention to dates, 1623, January and March, when Mr. Weston Colony, came very near to starving to death; some of them were obliged to hire themselves to the Indians, to become their servants in order that they might live. Their principal work was to bring wood and water; but not being contented with this, many of the white sought to steal the Indians' corn; and because the Indians complained of it, and through their complaint, some one of their number being punished, as they say, to appease the savages. Now let us see who the greatest savages were; the person that stole the corn was a stout athletic man, and because of this, they wished to spare him, and take an old man who was lame and sickly...and because they thought he would not be of so much use to them, he was, although innocent of any crime, hung in his stead....Another act of humanity for Christians, as they call themselves, that one Capt. Standish, gathering some fruit and provisions, goes forward with a black and hypocritical heart, and pretends to prepare a feast for the Indians; and when they sit down to eat, they seize the Indians' knives hanging around their necks, and stab them in the heart....

The Pilgrims promised to deliver up every transgressor of the Indian treaty, to them, to be punished according to their laws, and the Indians were to do likewise. Now it appears that an Indian had committed treason, by conspiring against the king's [Massasoit's] life, which is punishable with death...and the Pilgrims refused to give him, although by their oath of alliance they had promised to do so....

In this history of Massasoit we find that his own head men were not satisfied with the Pilgrims; that they looked upon them to be intruders, and had a wish to expel those intruders out of their coast. A false report was made respecting one Tisquantum, that he was murdered by an Indian.... Upon this news, one Standish, a vile and malicious fellow, took fourteen of his lewd Pilgrims with him...at midnight....At that late hour of the night, meeting at house in the wilderness, whose inmates heard--Move not, upon the peril of your life. At the same time some of the females were so frightened, that some of them undertook to make their escape, upon which they were fired upon.... These Indians had not done one single wrong act to the whites, but were as innocent of any crime, as any beings in the world. But if the real suffers say one word, they are denounced, as being wild and savage beasts....

We might suppose that meek Christians had better gods and weapons than cannon. But let us again review their weapons to civilize the nations of this soil. What were they: rum and powder, and ball, together with all the diseases, such as the small pox, and every other disease imaginable; and in this way sweep of thousands and tens of thousands.

John Winthrop A Model of Christian Charity (A City Upon a Hill), 1630

Background: John Winthrop (1606-1676) was a well-off landowner who served as governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony for much of its early history. Unlike the Pilgrims, Winthrop and the other Puritans who traveled to Massachusetts were not separatists. Rather, they were trying to flee the corruptions of a wicked world. "City upon a hill" is the phrase often used to refer to John Winthrop's famous speech, "A Model of Christian Charity." It was given aboard the *Arbella* not long before reaching New England.

Now the onely way to avoyde this shipwracke and to provide for our posterity is to followe the Counsell of Micah, to doe Justly, to love mercy, to walke humbly with our God, for this end, wee must be knitt together in this worke as one man, wee must entertaine each other in brotherly Affeccion, wee must be willing to abridge our selves of our superfluities, for the supply of others necessities, wee must uphold a familiar Commerce together in all meekenes, gentlenes, patience and liberallity, wee must delight in eache other, make others Condicions our owne rejoyce together, mourne together, labour, and suffer together, allwayes haveing before our eyes our Commission and Community in the worke, our Community as members of the same body, soe shall wee keepe the unitie of the spirit in the bond of peace, the Lord will be our God and delight to dwell among us, as his owne people and will commaund a blessing upon us in all our wayes, soe that wee shall see much more of his wisdome power goodnes and truthe then formerly wee have beene acquainted with, wee shall finde that the God of Israell is among us, when tenn of us shall be able to resist a thousand of our enemies, when hee shall make us a prayse and glory, that men shall say of succeeding plantacions: the lord make it like that of New England: for wee must Consider that wee shall be as a Citty upon a Hill, the eies of all people are uppon us; soe that if wee shall deale falsely with our god in this worke wee have undertaken and soe cause him to withdrawe his present help from us, wee shall be made a story and a byword through the world

List of Emigrants Bound for New England 1635

Source: John Porter, Deputy Clerk, Ship's List of Emigrants Bound for New England from Weymouth, the 20th of March, 1635.

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| 1. Joseph Hull, of Somerset, a minister, aged 40 years | 9. John Bernard, his son, aged 3 years |
| 2. Agnes Hull, his wife, aged 25 years | 10. Nathaniel, his son, aged 1 year |
| 3. Joan Hull, his daughter, aged 15 years | 1. Timothy Tabor, in Somerset of Batcombe, tailor, aged 35 years |
| 4. Joseph Hull, his son, aged 13 years | 2. Jane Tabor, his wife, aged 35 years |
| 5. Tristram, his son, aged 11 years | 3. Jane Tabor, his daughter, aged 10 years |
| 6. Elizabeth Hull, his daughter, aged 1 years | 4. Anne Tabor, his daughter, aged 8 years |
| 1. Temperance, his daughter, aged 9 years | 5. Sarah Tabor, his daughter, aged 5 years |
| 2. Grissel Hull, his daughter, aged 5 years | 6. William Fever, his servant, aged 20 years |
| 3. Dorothy Hull, his daughter, aged 3 years | 7. John Whitmarke, aged 39 years |
| 4. Judith French, his servant, aged 20 years | 8. Alice Whitmarke, his wife, aged 35 years |
| 5. John Wood, his servant, aged 20 years | 9. James Whitmarke, his son, aged 5 years |
| 6. Robert Dabyn, his servant, aged 28 years | 10. Jane, his daughter, aged 1 years |
| 7. Musachiell Bernard, of Batcombe, clothier in the county of Somerset, 24 years | 11. Onseph Whitmarke. his son, aged 5 years |
| 8. Mary Bernard, his wife, aged 28 years | 12. Rich. Whitmarke, his son, aged 2 years |

1. Robert Lovell, husbandman, aged 40 years
2. Elizabeth Lovell, his wife, aged 35 years
3. Zacheus Lovell, his son, aged 15 years
4. Anne Lovell, his daughter, aged 16 years
5. John Lovell, his son, aged 8 years
6. Ellyn, his daughter, aged 1 year
7. James. his son, aged 1 year
8. Joseph Chickin, his servant, 16 years
9. Alice Kinham, aged 22 years

10. Angell Hollard, aged 21 years
11. Katheryn, his wife, 22 years
12. George Land, his servant, 22 years
13. Sarah Land, his kinswoman, 18 years

1. John Hoble, husbandman, 13
2. Robert Huste, husbandman, 40

Ship's List of Emigrants Bound for Virginia

Source: Ship's List of Emigrants Bound for Virginia
Ultimo July, 1635

These underwritten names are to be transported to Virginia, embarked in the Merchant's Hope, Hugh Weston, Master, per examination by the minister of Gravesend touching their conformity to the Church discipline of England, and have taken the oaths of allegiance and supremacy:

Edward Towers	26	Henry Carrell	16	Wm. Baldin	21
Henry Woodman	22	Tho. Tyle	24	Wm. Penn	26
Richard Seems	26	Gamaliel White	24	Jo. Gerie	24
Vyncent Whatter	17	Richard Marks	19	Henry Baylie	18
James Whithedd	14	Tho. Clever	16	Rich. Anderson	50
Jonas Watts	21	Jo. Kitchin	16	Robert Kelum	51
Peter Loe	22	Edmond Edwards	20	Richard Fanshaw	22
Geo. Bocker	17	Lewes Miles	19	Tho. Bradford	40
Henry Eeles	26	Jo. Kennedy	20	Wm. Spencer	16
Jo. Dennis	22	Sam Jackson	24	Marmaduke Ella	22
Tho. Swayne	23	Allin King	19		
Charles Rinsden	27	Rowland Sadler	19	<i>Women</i>	
Jo. Archer	21	Jo. Phillips	28	Ann Swayne	22
Richard Williams	25	Daniel Endick	16	Eliz. Cote	22
Francis Hutton	20	Jo. Chalk	25	Ann Rice	23
Savill Gascoyne	29	Jo. Vynall	20	Kat. Wilson	23
Rich. Jones	26	Edward Smith	20	Maudlin Lloyd	24
Tho. Wynes	30	Jo. Rowlidge	19	Mabell Busher	14
Humphrey Williams	22	Wm. Westlie	40	Annis Hopkins	24
Edward Roberts	20	Jo. Smith	18	Ann Mason	24
Martin Atkinson	32	Jo. Saunders	22	Bridget Crompe	18
Edward Atkinson	28	Tho. Bartcherd	16	Mary Hawkes	19
Wm.. Edwards	30	Tho. Dodderidge	19	Ellin Hawkes	18
Nathan Braddock	31	Richard Williams	18		
Jeffrey Gurrish	23	Jo. Ballance	19		

Pedro Naranjo

Coexistence and Conflict in the Spanish Southwest: The Pueblo Revolt of 1680

Date:1680

Background: *In 1680, the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico rose up against the Spanish missionaries and soldiers, destroying every Catholic church in the region. Pedro Naranjo, an Indian prisoner, explains the reasons behind the revolt.*

Asked whether he knows the reason or motives which the Indians of this kingdom had for rebelling...and why they burned the images, temples, crosses, rosaries, and things of divine worship, committing such atrocities as killing priests, Spaniards, women, and children...he said...they have planned to rebel on various occasions through conspiracies of the Indian sorcerers.... Finally, in the past years, at the summons of an Indian named Pope who is said to have communication with the devil, it happened that in an estufa [Indian temple] of the pueblo of Los Taos there appeared to the said Pope three figures of Indians who never came out of the estufa. They gave the said Pope to understand that they were going underground to the lake of Copala. He saw these figures emit fire from all the extremities of their bodies.... They told him to make a cord of maguey fiber and tie some knots in it which would signify the number of days that they must wait before the rebellion. He said that the cord was passed through all the pueblos of the kingdom so that the ones which agreed to it [the rebellion] might untie one knot in sign of obedience, and by the other knots they would know the days which were lacking.... The said cord was taken from pueblo to pueblo by the swiftest youths under the penalty of death if they revealed the secret. Everything being thus arranged, two days before the time set for its execution, because his lordship had learned of it and had imprisoned two Indian accomplices...it was carried out prematurely that night, because it seemed to them that they were now discovered; and they killed religious, Spaniards, women, and children. This being done, it was proclaimed in all the pueblos that everyone in common should obey the commands of their father whom they did not know, which would be given through...Pope.... As soon as the Spaniards had left the kingdom an order came from the said Indian, Pope, in which he commanded all the Indians to break the lands and enlarge their cultivated fields, saying that now they were as they had been in ancient times, free from the labor they had performed for the religious and the Spaniards, who could not now be alive. He said that this is the legitimate cause and the reason they had for rebelling....

Asked for what reason they so blindly burned the images, temples, crosses, and other things of divine worship, he stated that the said Indian, Pope...ordered in all the pueblos through which he passed that they instantly break up and burn the images of the holy Christ, the Virgin Mary and the other saints, the crosses, and everything pertaining to Christianity, and that they burn the temples, break up the bells, and separate from the wives whom God had given them in marriage and take those whom they desired. In order to take away their baptismal names, the water, and the holy oils, they were to plunge into the rivers and wash themselves with amole, which is a root native to the country, washing even their clothing, with the understanding that there would thus be taken from them the character of the holy sacraments.... They thereby returned to the state of their antiquity...that this was the better life and the one they desired, because the God of the Spaniards was worth nothing and theirs was very strong, the Spaniard's God being rotten wood.... [Pope] saw to it that they at once erected and rebuilt their houses of idolatry which they call estufas, and made very ugly masks in imitation of the devil...; and he said likewise that the devil had given them to understand that living thus in accordance with the law of their ancestors, they would harvest a great deal of maize, many beans, a great abundance of cotton, calabashes, and very large watermelons and cantaloupes; and that they could erect their houses and enjoy abundant health and leisure.

Gustavus Vassa

The Middle Passage: Voyage From Africa, 1756

From *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olandah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa*, Written by Himself
(London: Printed and sold by the author, 1793)

The first object which saluted my eyes when I arrived on the coast was the sea, and a slaveship, which was then riding at anchor, and waiting for its cargo. These filled me with astonishment, which was soon converted into terror, which I am yet at a loss to describe, nor the then feelings of my mind. When I was carried on board I was immediately handled, and tossed up, to see if I were sound, by some of the crew; and I was now persuaded that I had got into a world of bad spirits, and that they were going to kill me.... I was not long suffered to indulge my grief; I was soon put down under the decks, and there I received such a salutation in my nostrils as I had never experienced in my life; so that, with the loathsomeness of the stench, and crying together, I became so sick and low that I was not able to eat, nor had I the least desire to taste anything ... but soon, to my grief, two of the white men offered me eatables; and, on my refusing to eat, one of them held me fast by the hands, and laid me across, I think, the windlass, and tied my feet, while the other flogged me severely.... In a little time after, amongst the poor chained men, I found some of my own nation, which in a small degree gave ease to my mind. I inquired of them what was to be done with us? they gave me to understand we were to be carried to these white people's country to work for them. I then was a little revived, and thought, if it were no worse than working, my situation was not so desperate: but still I feared I should be put to death, the white people looked and acted, as I thought, in so savage a manner; for I had never seen among any people such instances of brutal cruelty; and this not only shewn towards us blacks, but also to some of the whites themselves. One white man in particular I saw, when we were permitted to be on deck, flogged so unmercifully with a large rope near the foremast, that he died in consequence of it; and they tossed him over the side as they would have done a brute. This made me fear these people the more; and I expected nothing less than to be treated in the same manner.... The stench of the hold while we were on the coast, was so intolerably loathsome, that it was dangerous to remain there for any time, and some of us had been permitted to stay on the deck for the fresh air; but now that the whole ship's cargo were confined together, it became absolutely pestilential. The closeness of the place, and the heat of the climate, added to the number in the ship, which was so crowded that each had scarcely room to turn himself, almost suffocated us.... The shrieks of the women, and the groans of the dying, rendered the whole a scene of horror almost inconceivable. Happily perhaps for myself I was soon reduced so low here that it was thought necessary to keep me almost always on deck; and from my extreme youth I was not put in fetters. In this situation I expected every hour to share the fate of my companions, some of whom were almost daily brought upon deck at the point of death which I began to hope would soon put an end to my miseries.... One day, when we had a smooth sea, and moderate wind, two of my wearied countrymen, who were chained together (I was near them at the time), preferring death to such a life of misery, somehow made through the nettings, and jumped into the sea; immediately another quite dejected fellow, who, on account of his illness, was suffered to be out of irons, also followed their example; and I believe many more would very soon have done the same, if they had not been prevented by the ship's crew, who were instantly alarmed. Those of us that were the most active were in a moment put down under the deck; and there was such a noise and confusion amongst the people of the ship as I never heard before, to stop her, and get the boat out to go after the slaves. However, two of the wretches were drowned, but they got the other, and afterwards flogged him unmercifully, for thus attempting to prefer death to slavery. In this manner we continued to undergo more hardships than I can now relate....

Alexander Forbes

Coexistence and Conflict in the Spanish Southwest: The California Missions, 1839

Background: Alexander Forbes (1778–1862) was a 19th-century Scottish merchant, explorer, and author. His book *California: A History of Upper and Lower California*, published in 1839, is perhaps the first full account in English of California. An excerpt is below:

Each mission has allotted to it...a tract of land of about fifteen miles square, which is generally fertile and well-suited for husbandry. This land is set apart for the general uses of the mission, part being cultivated, and part left in its natural condition and occupied as grazing ground....The Indian population generally live in huts at about two hundred yards distant from the principal edifices; these huts are sometimes made of *adobes*, but the Indians are often left to raise them on their own plan; viz. of rough poles erected into a conical figure, of about four yards in circumference at the base, covered with dry grass and a small aperture for the entrance. When the huts decay, they set them on fire, and erect new ones....In these huts the married part of the community live, the unmarried of both sexes being kept, each sex separate, in large barn-like apartments, where they work under strict supervision....

The object of the whole of the Californian or missionary system being the conversion of the Indians and the training of them up, in some sort, to a civilized life, the constant care of the fathers is and ever has been directed towards these ends.... There can be no doubt that some of these means [of obtaining converts] go far beyond the bounds of legitimate persuasion....It must be admitted that with their particular views of the efficacy of baptism and ceremonial profession of Christianity in saving souls, the conversion of the Indians even by force, can hardly be otherwise regarded by them as the greatest of benefits conferred on these people and therefore justifying some severity in effecting it.

Sauvage nepisingue en Canada , 1717

“Nipissing Indian in Canada”

The warrior depicted here is armed with bow and arrows, wearing moccasins, clothed in a tunic and cape obtained from the Europeans, and covered in tattoos. He belonged to a group of Nipissing Indians, who were among the first allies of the French and had the reputation of being the “oldest of all the Indians” in Canada.



Edward Randolph King Philip's War, 1675

Background: For nearly half a century following the Pequot War, New England was free of major Indian wars. During this period, the region's indigenous people declined rapidly in numbers and suffered severe losses of land and cultural independence. During the first three-quarters of the seventeenth century, New England's indigenous population fell from 140,000 to 10,000, while the English population grew to 50,000. Meanwhile, the New England Puritans launched a concerted campaign to convert the Indians to Protestantism. John Eliot, New England's leading missionary, convinced about 2000 to live in "praying towns," where they were expected to adopt white customs. New England Indians were also forced to accept the legal authority of colonial courts.

Faced with death, disease, and cultural disintegration, many of New England's native peoples decided to strike back. In 1675, the chief of the Pokanokets, Metacomet (whom the English called King Philip), forged a military alliance including about two-thirds of the region's Indians. In 1675, he led an attack on Swansea, Massachusetts. Over the next year, both sides raided villages and killed hundreds of victims. Twelve out of ninety New England towns were destroyed.

The last major Indian war in New England, King Philip's War in 1675, was the most destructive conflict, relative to the size of the population, in American history. Five percent of New England's population was killed--a higher proportion than Germany, Britain, or the United States lost during World War II. Indian casualties were far higher; perhaps 40 percent of New England's Indian population was killed or fled the region. When the war was over, the power of New England's Indians was broken. The region's remaining Indians would live in small, scattered communities, serving as the colonists' servants, slaves, and tenants.

In 1637, England dispatched Edward Randolph (1632-1703) to determine the conflict's causes and assess the damage.

Various are the reports and conjectures of the causes of the present Indian warre. Some impute it to an imprudent zeal in the magistrates of Boston to christianize those heathen before they were civilized and enjoining them the strict observation of their laws, which, to a people so rude and licentious, hath proved even intolerable, and that the more, for that while the magistrates, for their profit, put the laws severely in execution against the Indians, the people, on the other side, for lucre and gain, entice and provoke the Indians to the breach thereof, especially to drunkenness, to which those people are so generally addicted that they will strip themselves to their skin to have their fill of rum and brandy....

Some believe there have been vagrant and jesuitical priests, who have made it their business, for some years past, to go from Sachem to Sachem, to exasperate the Indians against the English and to bring them into a confederacy, and that they were promised supplies from France and other parts to extirpate the English nation out of the continent of America. Others impute the cause to some injuries offered to the Sachem Philip; for he being possessed of a tract of land called Mount Hope...some English had a mind to dispossess him thereof, who never wanting one pretence or other to attain their end, complained of injuries done by Philip and his Indians to their stock and cattle, whereupon Philip was often summoned before the magistrate, sometimes imprisoned, and never released but upon parting with a considerable part of his land.

But the government of the Massachusetts...do declare these are the great evils for which God hath given the heathen commission to rise against them.... For men wearing long hair and perewigs made of womens hair; for women...cutting, curling and laying out the hair....For profaneness in the people not frequenting their meetings....

With many such reasons...the English have contributed much to their misfortunes, for they first taught the Indians the use of arms, and admitted them to be present at all their musters and trainings, and shewed them how to handle, mend and fix their muskets, and have been furnished with all sorts of arms by permission of the government....

The loss to the English in the several colonies, in their habitations and stock, is reckoned to amount to 150,000 l. [pounds sterling] there having been about 1200 houses burned, 8000 head of cattle, great and small, killed, and many thousand bushels of wheat, pease and other grain burned...and upward of 3000 Indians men women and children destroyed.

Virginia Slave Laws, 1662

Background: Black slavery took root in the American colonies slowly. Historians now know that small numbers of Africans lived in Virginia before 1619, the year a Dutch ship sold some twenty blacks (probably from the West Indies) to the colonists. But it was not until the 1680s that black slavery became the dominant labor system on plantations there. As late as 1640, there were probably only 150 blacks in Virginia and in 1650, 300. But by 1680, the number had risen to 3,000 and by 1704, to 10,000.

Until the mid-1660s, the number of white indentured servants was sufficient to meet the labor needs of Virginia and Maryland. Then, in the mid-1660s, the supply of white servants fell sharply. Many factors contributed to the growing shortage of servants. The English birth rate had begun to fall and with fewer workers competing for jobs, wages in England rose. The great fire that burned much of London in 1666 created a great need for labor to rebuild the city. Meanwhile, Virginia and Maryland became less attractive as land grew scarcer. Many preferred to migrate to Pennsylvania or the Carolinas, where opportunities seemed greater. To replenish its labor force, planters in the Chesapeake region increasingly turned to enslaved Africans. In 1680, just seven percent of the population of Virginia and Maryland consisted of slaves; twenty years later, the figure was 22 percent. Most of these slaves did not come directly from Africa, but from Barbados and other Caribbean colonies or from the Dutch colony of New Netherlands, which the English had conquered in 1664 and renamed New York.

The status of blacks in seventeenth century Virginia was extremely complex, as the laws reveal.

December 1662

Whereas some doubts have arisen whether children got by any Englishman upon a Negro woman should be slave or free, be it therefore enacted and declared by this present Grand Assembly, that all children born in this country shall be held bond or free only according to the condition of the mother; and that if any Christian shall commit fornication with a Negro man or woman, he or she so offending shall pay double the fines imposed by the former act.

September 1667

Whereas some doubts have arisen whether children that are slaves by birth, and by the charity and piety of their owners made partakers of the blessed sacrament of baptism, should by virtue of their baptism be made free, it is enacted and declared by this Grand Assembly, and the authority thereof, that the conferring of baptism does not alter the condition of the person as to his bondage or freedom; that diverse masters, freed from this doubt may more carefully endeavor the propagation of Christianity by permitting children, through slaves, or those of greater growth if capable, to be admitted to that sacrament.

September 1668

Whereas it has been questioned whether servants running away may be punished with corporal punishment by their master or magistrate, since the act already made gives the master satisfaction by prolonging their time by service, it is declared and enacted by this Assembly that moderate corporal punishment inflicted by master or magistrate upon a runaway servant shall not deprive the master of the satisfaction allowed by the law, the one being as necessary to reclaim them from persisting in that idle course as the other is just to repair the damages sustained by the master.

October 1669

Whereas the only law in force for the punishment of refractory servants resisting their master, mistress, or overseer cannot be inflicted upon Negroes, nor the obstinacy of many of them be suppressed by other than violent means, be it enacted and declared by this Grand Assembly if any slave resists his master (or other by his master's order correcting him) and by the extremity of the correction should chance to die, that his death shall not be accounted a felony, but the master (or that other person appointed by the master to punish him) be acquitted from molestation, since it cannot be presumed that premeditated malice (which alone makes murder a felony) should induce any man to destroy his own estate.