

# Colonial America

## Growth, Diversity, and Conflict

**Key Concept 2.1.II** – In the 17th century, early British colonies developed along the Atlantic coast, with regional differences that reflected various environmental, economic, cultural, and demographic factors.

**Key Concept 2.1.III** – Competition over resources between European rivals and American Indians encouraged industry and trade and led to conflict in the Americas.

**Key Concept 2.2.I** – Transatlantic commercial, religious, philosophical, and political exchanges led residents of the British colonies to evolve in their political and cultural attitudes as they became increasingly tied to Britain and one another.

A detailed oil painting of a colonial family. In the center, a woman in a white lace dress holds a young child. To her left, a man in a brown coat looks towards her. To her right, another woman in a grey dress and white headscarf stands. In the foreground, another child is seated. The background features a bust of a man's head. The overall style is characteristic of 18th-century portraiture.

# Colonial Society

# Characteristics of Colonial America



- Enormous population growth
- Largest colonies: VA, MA, PN, NC, MD
- The American melting pot
  - 66% English, 20% African
  - Remaining: Scots Irish, German, Dutch, Irish, French, Welsh, Jews
- Anglicization
  - Religion, politics, culture
  - Growing more unique

# Colonial Social Structure

- Small upper class
  - Majority of yeoman farmers
  - Small merchants, laborers
  - Indentured servants and prisoners
  - Slaves
- *Stratification mild compared to Europe – greater social mobility*
  - *Attempt to recreate European stratification failed*
    - *Emerging middle class*
    - *Democratic traditions protected against complete upper class control (John Smith: “He who does not work shall not eat”)*



# Colonial Lifestyle

- Traditional family roles
- Highest standard of living
- Longer lifespan than Europe
- Land generally cheaper than Europe
- Wages 3x higher than Europe

# Education



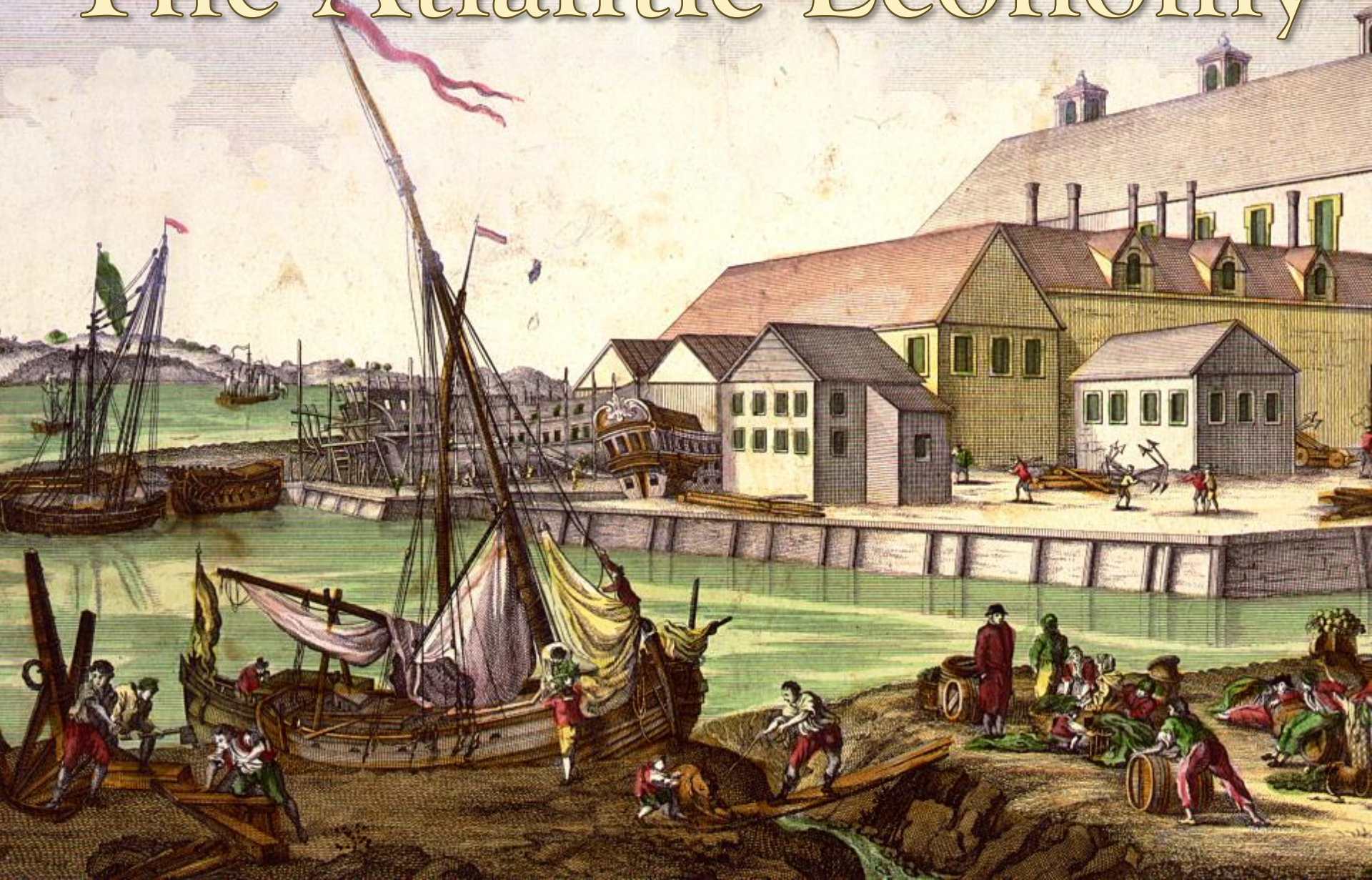
- **New England**

- **Strongest; for Bible Reading**
- **Primary and secondary schools established early**
- **Communities of 50 families or more required to build public schools**

- **Middle Some public education**

- **Many well-to-do families sent their sons to colleges in England**
- **South Privileged; hired tutors to teach their children**
- **Plantation living made cities, schools, and churches spread out**
- **Colleges Primary focus on the training of new clergy, not academics**
- **Eventually move towards secular subjects**

# The Atlantic Economy



## The Navigation Acts Enforced Mercantilism

Don't export any h  
woolens, or iron s  
these things are c  
made in England

### SALUTARY NEGLECT

*I wear my sunglasses  
so I can't see what those  
colonists over in  
America are up to...  
for now, anyway.*

COLONIAL

You can't  
export anything  
except in English  
or colonial ships!

...and that cargo  
to England to  
be taxed before  
you land it in  
the colonies!

ENGLAND

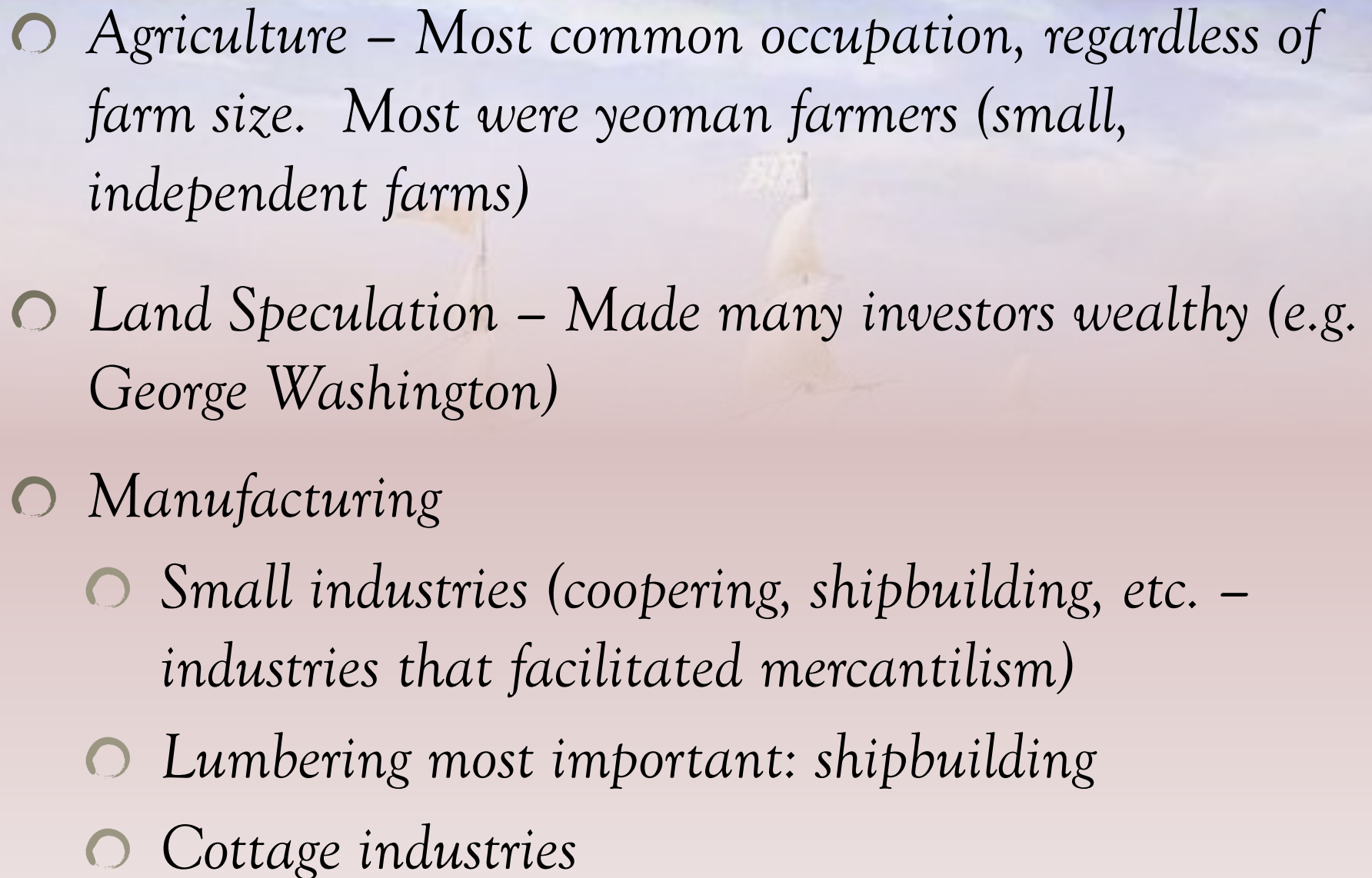
EUROPE

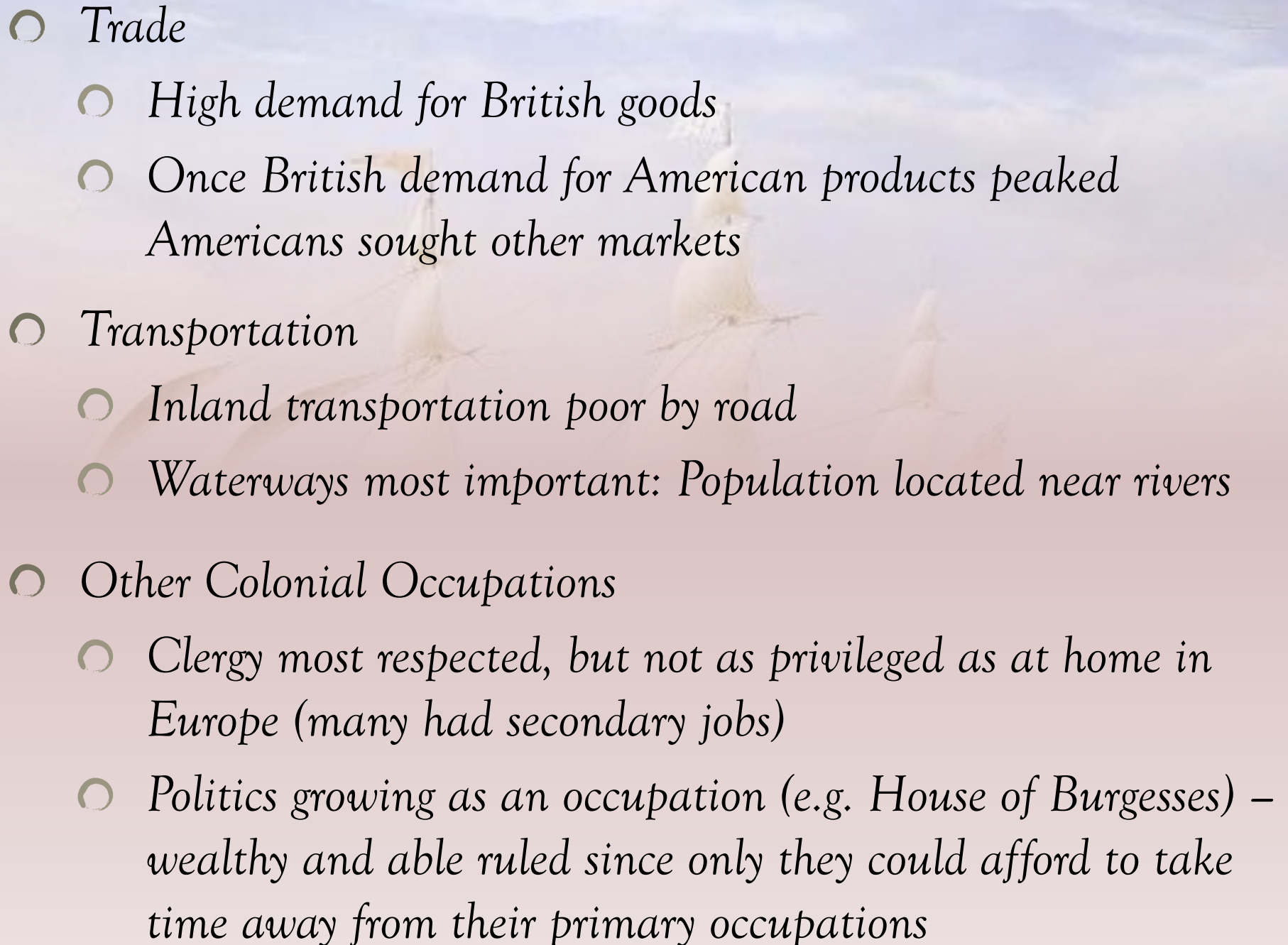
AFRICA



# ○ The Atlantic Economy



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- *Agriculture – Most common occupation, regardless of farm size. Most were yeoman farmers (small, independent farms)*
  - *Land Speculation – Made many investors wealthy (e.g. George Washington)*
  - *Manufacturing*
    - *Small industries (coopering, shipbuilding, etc. – industries that facilitated mercantilism)*
    - *Lumbering most important: shipbuilding*
    - *Cottage industries*

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- Trade
    - High demand for British goods
    - Once British demand for American products peaked Americans sought other markets
  - Transportation
    - Inland transportation poor by road
    - Waterways most important: Population located near rivers
  - Other Colonial Occupations
    - Clergy most respected, but not as privileged as at home in Europe (many had secondary jobs)
    - Politics growing as an occupation (e.g. House of Burgesses) – wealthy and able ruled since only they could afford to take time away from their primary occupations

# Politics and Power



# The House of Burgesses



- First legislative body in the colonies
- Half locally elected, half appointed by the King
- Able to enact legislation by end of the 17<sup>th</sup> c.

# John Peter Zenger Trial



- John Peter Zenger was a printer and journalist from New York
- Accused of printing and publishing a “false, scandalous, and seditious libel” against Royal Governor William Cosby
- Attorney argued that it wasn't libel if it was true
- Helped establish freedom of speech and press in the colonies

# The Pequot War: 1636-1637



- Puritans with Native American allies attacked Pequot village on Mystic River
- Puritans set fire to homes & shot fleeing survivors!
- Pequot tribe virtually annihilated → 40 years of uneasy peace

# King Philip's War: 1675-1676

## AKA: Metacom's Rebellion



- Metacom (known as King Philip by English) tried to unite local tribes to protect themselves against attacks
- Attacked English settlements on the frontier – lasted two years
- Eventually defeated; was drawn and quartered and his head displayed on a pike in Plymouth for years



# Seeds of Colonial Unity

## New England Confederation

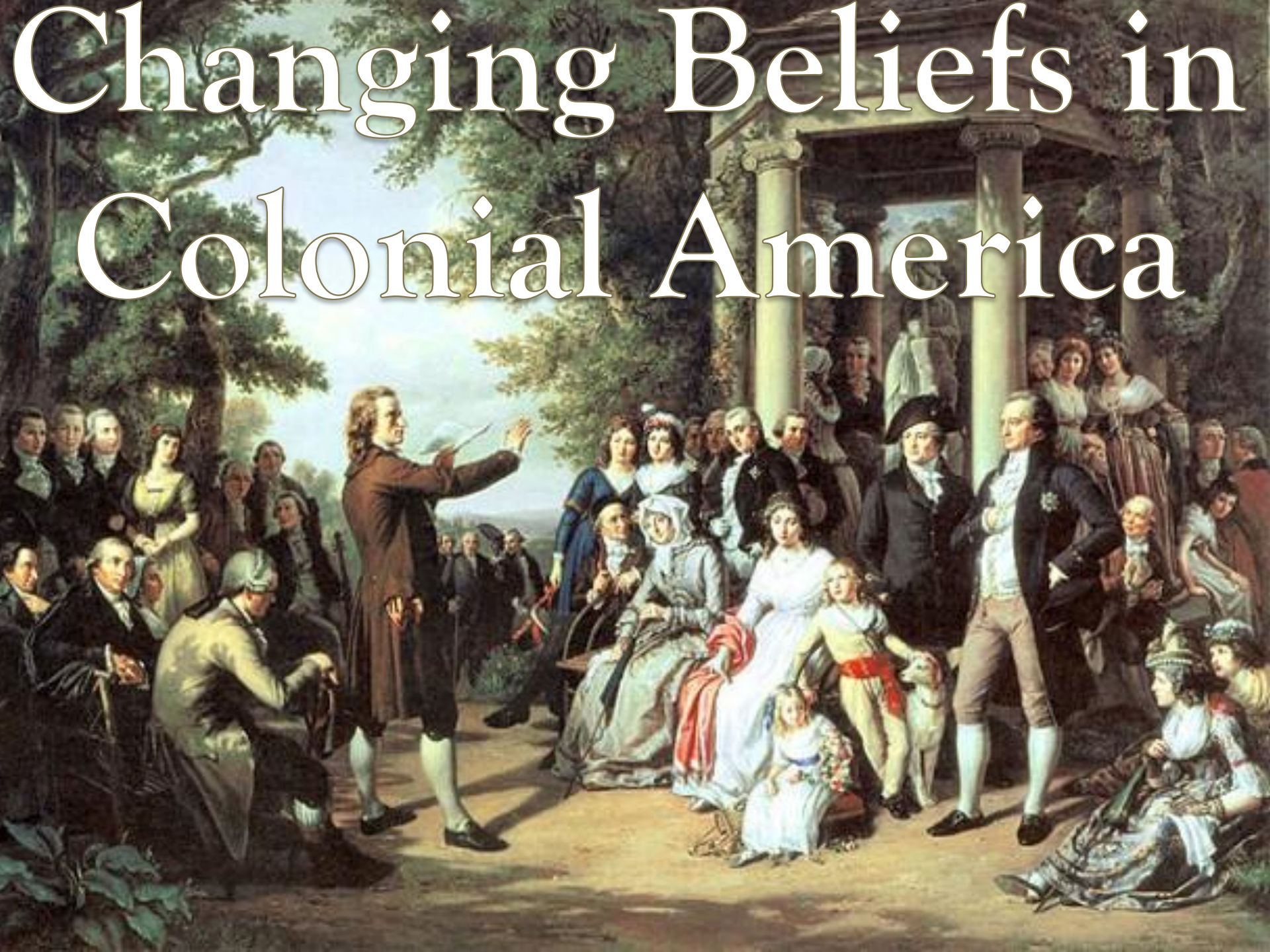
- Consisted of 4 Puritan colonies (MA Bay, Plymouth, New Haven, Connecticut) for the purpose of defense against natives

## Dominion of New England

- Meant to regain English control over the colonies
  - New England ignoring the Navigation Acts
  - Didn't like colonies defending themselves
  - Led by Sir Edmund Andros; despised by colonists
  - Epic failure



# Changing Beliefs in Colonial America



# Colonial Religion



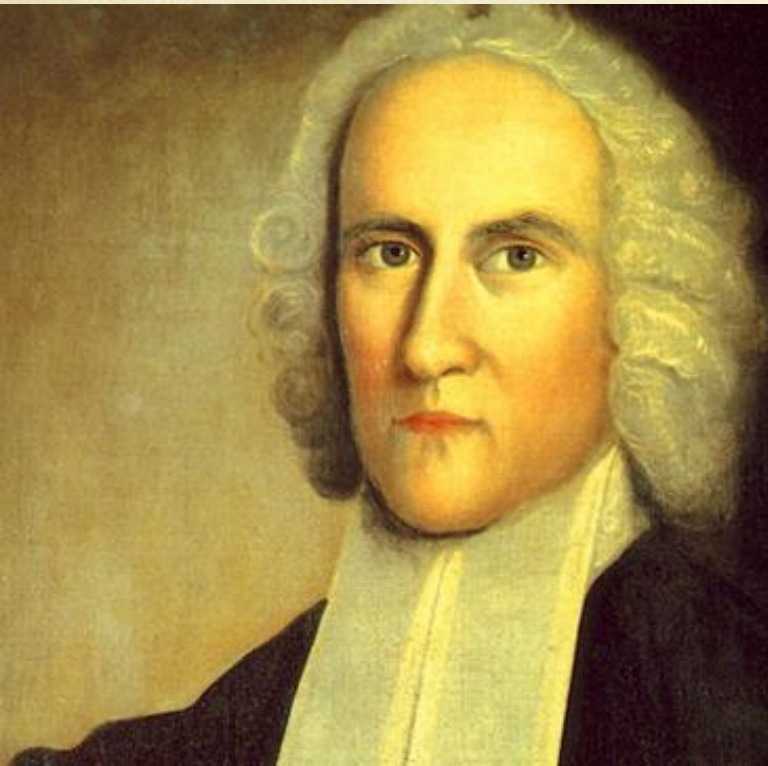
- Most common religions
  - Anglican Church: Official faith in several colonies
  - Congregational Church
  - Presbyterian Church
  - Quakers
  - Catholics
  - Jews
- Religious toleration
  - Toleration came about in large part due to non-church members.
  - Eventually led to separation of church and state (except for New England)

# The Great Awakening

- A widespread spiritual revival in the 1730s/1740s
- Appealed to emotion, encouraged introspection, and commitment to personal morality
- *New vs. Old Light*
- *Old Lights: Orthodox clergymen deeply skeptical of emotionalism and theatrical antics of the revivalists.*
- *New Lights: Supported the Awakening for revitalizing American religion and used emotionalism to move followers.*

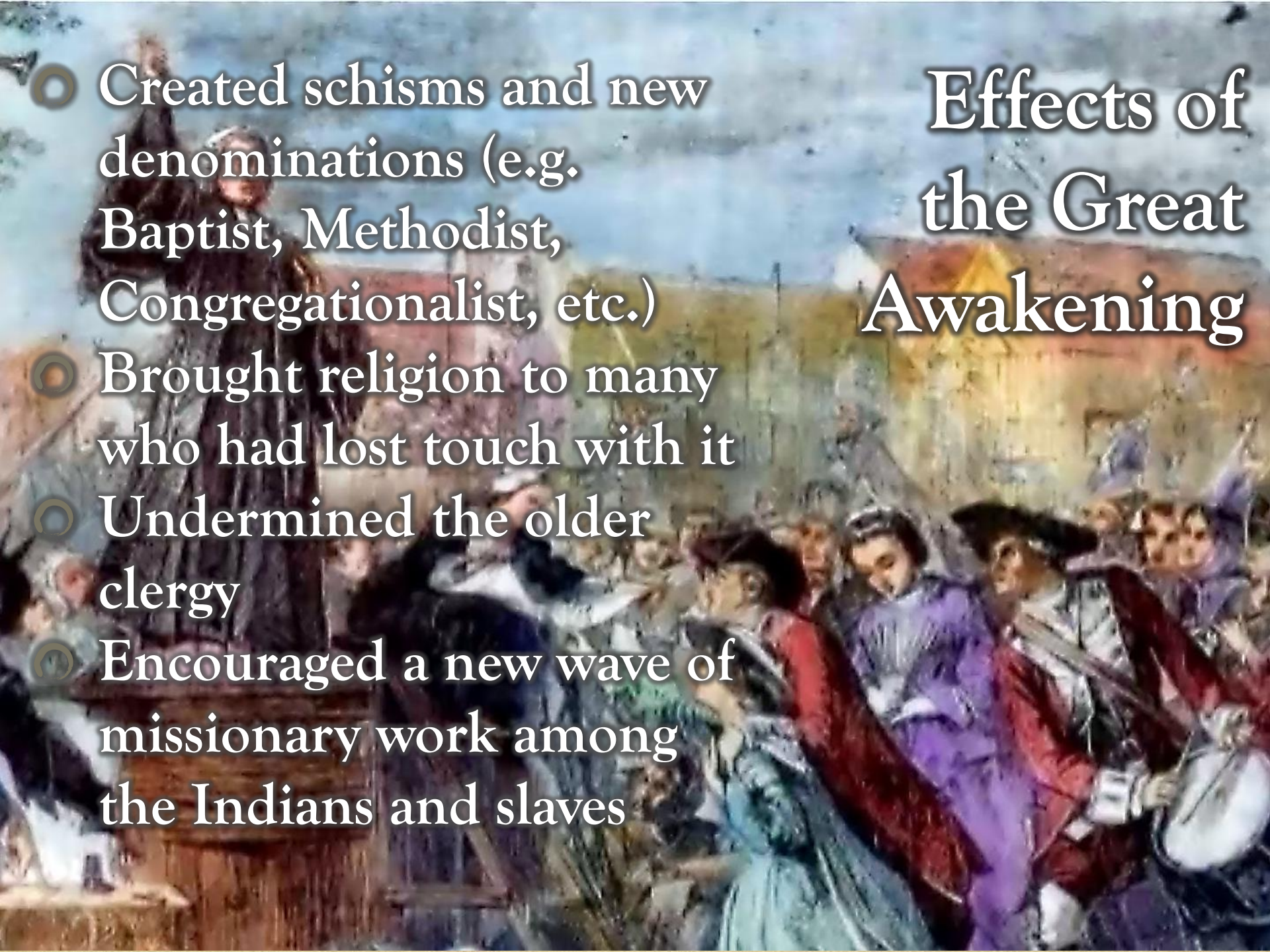
# Jonathan Edwards

- Most influential
- Salvation through God's grace alone
- Emphasized eternal damnation ("fire and brimstone" sermons)
- "Sinners In the Hands of an Angry God"



YOU CONTRIBUTE  
**NOTHING**  
TO YOUR SALVATION BUT  
**THE SIN**  
THAT MADE IT  
**NECESSARY**

~ Jonathan Edwards



# Effects of the Great Awakening

- Created schisms and new denominations (e.g. Baptist, Methodist, Congregationalist, etc.)
- Brought religion to many who had lost touch with it
- Undermined the older clergy
- Encouraged a new wave of missionary work among the Indians and slaves

# *The Enlightenment*

- An 18<sup>th</sup> c. cultural movement of intellectuals
- Use logic and reason to improve society and government
- Challenges traditional authority