

audio course [Professor E. T. O'Donnell](#)

summarized by [W. Antoniotti](#)

Part 1 The Colonial Period

A Turning Point is when a society takes a new historically significant trajectory creating a new historical reality. It may be marked by the emergence of a new technology and the establishment of a new ideal. The impact may be immediate or develop over time. **Editor's Note:** These very brief summaries do little justice to the fascinating lectures available from The Great Courses. Consider them for an Internet assignments.

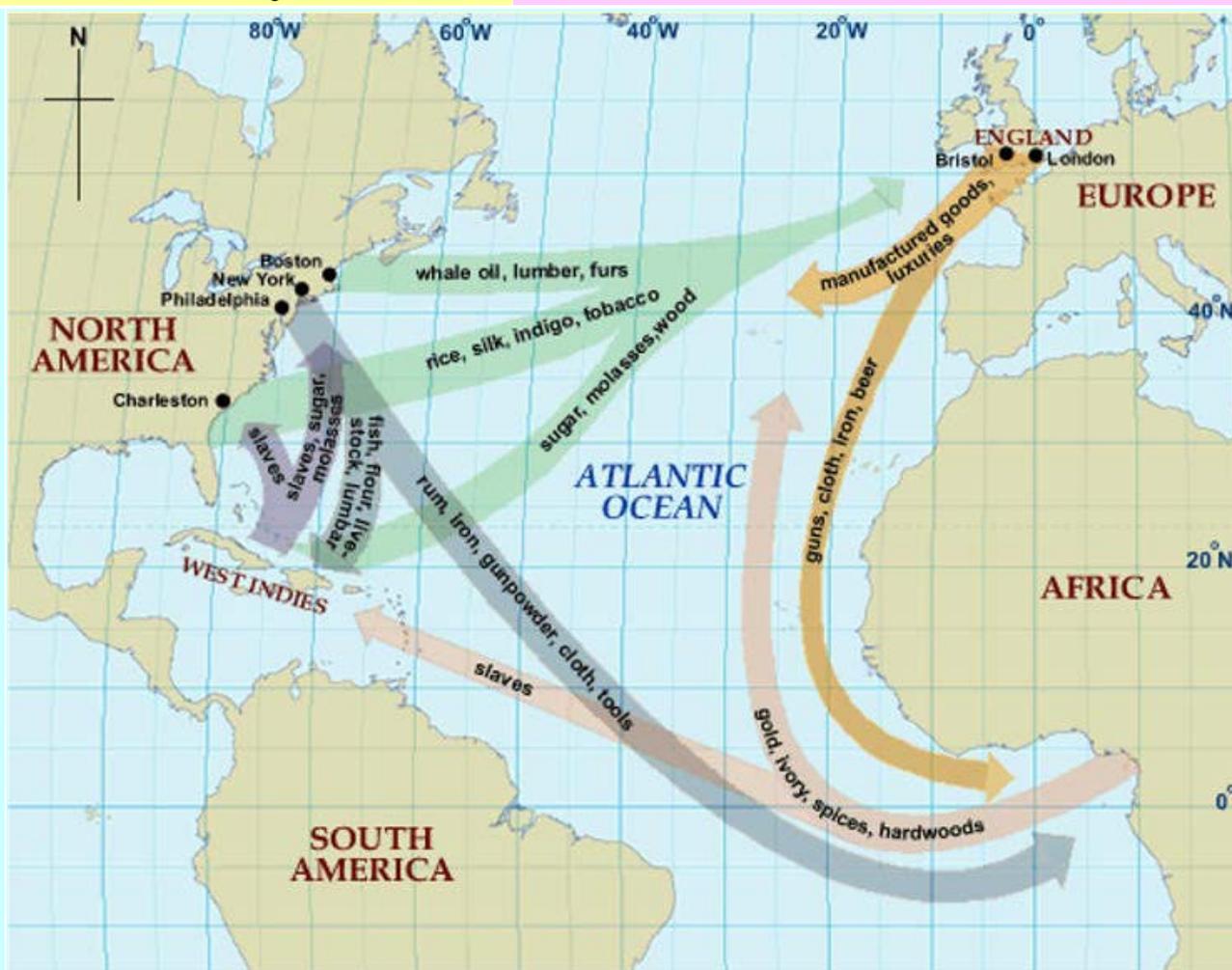
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The Early Colonial Period

#1 The Great Small Pox Epidemic of 1617.

American Colonies developed with some ease though the [Columbian Exchange](#) moved not only people and products between Europe and America but also disease. It was carried by fisherman who had arrived during the 16th Century and was reinforced by captured Indians who had returned from Europe to resettle and infect their community. An 1617 major epidemic near what would be Plymouth Massachusetts killed an entire Indian community. Left was a somewhat overgrown farm and a few peaceful Indians who feared the newcomer's God who killed their community. Between sixty and ninety percent of America's native population would die over four centuries because Europeans were immune to the diseases they brought with them. Indians were defenseless. Pilgrims came because they wanted to separate from the Church of England. Puritans came to set up a purified version of the Church of England as an exemplary "City on the Hill." All religious sects felt Divine Providence had killed the Indians because God wanted the Christian newcomers to succeed. See [History of Smallpox](#)

Editors Note: The constant theme of my historical studies is that most people were very sickly until the later part of the 20th century.



#2 1619 Began Representative Democracy and Slavery

The Jamestown colony had floundered until 1611 when tobacco was introduced to meet growing European demand. Crops were worked by indentured servants who served for about seven years and then receives free frontier land.

In 1619 Jamestown decided to be governed by a representative democracy. Also two groups of slaves arrived and they were quickly integrated into the economy. The number of slaves grew very slowly and their treatment was much like that of local indentured servants. By the 1660's freed and existing slaves were becoming numerous enough to be competition for non-slave poor workers. They were also creating other domestic problems making large planters unhappy. This anxiety resulted in laws which removed

freedoms from both existing and new slaves. In 1662 a Virginia law made the child of an enslaved woman and white father a slave whereas they had been free. [Bacon's Rebellion of 1766](#) resulted when a number of poor landowning recently freed indentured servants and freed slaves were tired of paying taxes to faraway Jamestown. They also formed an army to solve Indian problems. Issues between Bacon's army and Jamestown developed. Eventually about 1,000 rebels chased the Governor out of the capital. "Government forces from England arrived soon after and spent several years defeating pockets of resistance and reforming the colonial government to one more directly under royal control." from [The Burning of Jamestown by Howard Pyle](#) 1905. Click to enlarge and view a slide show. [Click on Most Pictures to Enlarge](#)

Slaves had once been more expensive but fear of rebellions by indentured servants added to the cost of hiring white and slaves thus became a cheaper source of farm labor. **Editor's Note: We have been building our Democracy for almost 400 years and still have a way to go. US criticizing today's fledgling democracy seems a bit hypocritical.**



#3 Freedom of Religion Began in 1636 After Massachusetts Expelled Roger Williams

Roger Williams immigrated from England to Boston in 1631. He refused preaching/teacher work because as a Separatist he did not agree with Boston's less radical Puritans. He left for more Separatist oriented Salem caused Boston's Puritans unhappiness. He soon moved to Separatist Plymouth where he got along with the people and studied the Indians. Eventually he preached ideas too unconventional for Plymouth and by 1633 he was back in Salem.

Roger Williams preached separatism, denounce as blasphemous the King's claim to Indian land, denounced the Bay Colony's loyalty oath as sacrilegious and he denied the right of civil authority to punish violation of the first five commandments. They related to idolatry, Sabbath-breaking, profanity, dishonoring your parents, and blasphemy. Eventually he was convicted of sedition and heresy. Order to leave Williams took his time but fear of imprisonment forced a quick winter departure where the cold didn't get him because he was helped by his Indian knowledge.

In 1836 he and his followers founded Providence where they signed a pact allowing government that could only deal with civil matters. [Anne Hutchinson](#) a Puritan spiritual advisor was also doing her best to upset Puritan Boston and she also ended up in Rhode Island.



Anne Hutchinson on Trial by Edwin Austin Abbey

Born	Anne Marbury baptised 20 July 1591 Alford, Lincolnshire, England
Died	August 1643 (aged 52) New Netherland (later The Bronx , New York)
Education	Home schooled and self-taught

Together they would uphold liberty of conscious. Providence grew rapidly. In 1640 Williams went to England where his received a charter that allowed religious freedom. Later, a more definitive charter specifically granting religious freedom. Tolerance was not enough, only freedom would suffice. Other colonies followed and in 1861, even Quaker established Pennsylvania allowed religious freedom. His ideas would travel back to England. In 1869 J Lock would write on [limiting government](#).

Over time the U.S has fostered faith by leaving it alone. This did not eliminate the negative attitude of some toward 19th century arriving Roman Catholics or 21st century Muslims from being looked upon poorly. But we have narrowed disputes. We do not argue over a person's freedom to exercise their religion. Instead we argue about the public expression of religion such as prayer in public schools and public display of the ten commandments.

#4 All Immigrants Welcomed By 1654 New Amsterdam

The Dutch West India Company settlement of New Amsterdam grew rapidly and soon had 500 diverse inhabitants. They spoke eighteen languages. It was established for profit so anyone who worked was welcome. In 1643 twenty-three Jewish people arrived looking for work. They had been expelled from their Portuguese controlled South American Dutch Colony. Anti-Semitic Governor [Peter Stuyvesant](#) wrote Holland asking to exclude them because they were poor and too dependent. The Jews wrote their

successful business friends in Holland asking for support with the Dutch West Indies Company. The company decided they could stay as long as they were not a burden. This was a symbolic turning point because most countries restricted immigrants to maintain their cultural, ethnic, and religious identity. There would be four great foreign immigrant waves and while assimilation was not easy, immigrant culture eventually became an important part of our culture. Assimilation is one of many contentious questions that began when during the Colonial period and continues today. Pizza anyone? Click to enlarge and watch a slide show.



By the 1660's New England had 70,000 people living in 100 towns. Not enough good farm land was available for second generation settlers and new immigrants. Indians had been hurt by a declining fur trade caused by beaver overkill. Needing money Indians sold land at low prices and borrowed money they couldn't pay back. Their land was then confiscated to remove the debt. From early colonial days some tribes assimilated successfully into the new economy but others did not. Trade had fostered an uneasy peace and as trade disappeared tensions mounted. Eventually the illegal sales of land to Roger Williams caused an Indian uprising. [King Phillip](#) was the son of Indian Chief Massasoit who had helped the Pilgrims survive their first winter. Unhappy with Indian relations with the newcomers, King Phillip sold his land to finance a military. He also united tribes and they destroyed

#5 The 1676 King Phillip's War Began Two Centuries of Indian Removal

many towns and livestock. Many soldiers and noncombatants were killed. The colonies were just as ruthless. Eventually the more numerous, better armed, and more cutthroat united colonists who got help from neutral Indian tribes won the war. King Phillip was beheaded. His body was separated into four parts with his head mounted on a pole and displayed in Plymouth. The per capita civilian losses and savagery of The King Phillip's War (1675–1676) were the highest in U.S. History. The process of marginalizing the Indians had begun as had the colony unification process.

One hundred years later writers changed the story from one of a brutal war to one that was more like their current battle against oppressive King George. By middle of the 19th century the story changed again. King Phillips was not like the western savages then stopping America's progress but a [noble savage](#) to be admired for his uncorrupted free lifestyle. Rendition of Attacking Native Click!



6 Freedom of the Press Began with the 1735 Zenger Trial

In late 1733 The New York Weekly Journal publisher Peter Zenger began printing opinions critical of the corrupt British colonial governor [William Cosby](#). A late 1734 arrest order was executed. An inappropriately large bail was set. Zenger's lawyers did not pay as they wanted to stir up publicity against the Governor and his friendly judge. Eventually Zenger was charged with [seditious liability](#). The law required the jury only determine if the defendant had perpetrated the material and the judge would decide if it was libelous. Things didn't look good as when the judge dismissed Peter's two lawyers and replaced them with a governor friendly lawyer.

The short trial was about to end when a star Philadelphia defense lawyer took over. He agreed that his client had published the material but he told the jury they should acquit because true statements could not be libelous. The jury acquitted. While no precedent was set what did begin was a belief that liberty required freedom of the press and speech. The trial would be publicized and soon state governors began acting more responsibly.

It would take decades to determine the exact legalities of freedom of the press and speech. President Adams would pass Alien and Sedition Acts to stop an adversarial press. Only a few were prosecuted though some were jailed. The law was repealed under President Jefferson. Leaders of every following generation have had freedom of the press and speech issues during difficult periods. Click to enlarge.



