



# U. S. History: From the Colonial Period to 1877

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## 6.2 WAR AND AMERICAN SOCIETY

<b>THE HOMEFRONT</b>	Battlefield victories alone did not determine the war's outcome. Struggles behind the lines were equally vital. One of the most important issues on the home front was the CONTEST BETWEEN PATRIOTS AND LOYALISTS for the support of neutrals.
<b>Committees of Correspondence, Safety and Inspection</b>	COMMITTEES OF CORRESPONDENCE, SAFETY, AND INSPECTION became the revolution's most important political agencies at the local level. They supported the war effort in a number of ways – from procuring arms and men to rounding up and prosecuting suspected traitors. These committees could sometimes be oppressive in their treatment of loyalists.
<b>Women</b>	Increasing numbers of WOMEN ASSUMED TRADITIONAL MALE OCCUPATIONS during the war in the process became politicized.
<b>Loyalists</b>	Between 20-30 percent of Americans remained LOYAL TO THE BRITISH MONARCHY in 1776. Their motivations varied. Some were ROYAL OFFICEHOLDERS. Others were MERCHANTS whose businesses were linked to the British imperial system. In addition, CULTURAL, ETHNIC, AND RELIGIOUS GROUPS (including Native Americans and African slaves) that had no reason to believe they would fare better under an independent American government remained loyal to Great Britain. Loyalist strongholds could be found everywhere, but the largest pockets were in the MIDDLE COLONIES and in the SOUTH.
	In June 1775, the First Continental Congress passed a resolution declaring loyalists to be TRAITORS. Thousands of LOYALISTS EVENTUALLY FLED THE COUNTRY, seeking sanctuary in England or Canada. The British military strategy depended on using loyalists to hold occupied territory, but in many colonies that strategy was poorly implemented and ended in disaster when the British decided to withdraw and left loyalists in the hands of their enemies.
<b>Financial Instability</b>	One of the nation's biggest problems was finding ways to finance the war. The Continental Congress was reluctant to impose taxes for fear of angering American colonists, so it financed the war by BORROWING MONEY, selling CONTINENTAL LOAN CERTIFICATES, and issuing large sums of PAPER MONEY. It also resorted to paying soldiers with promises of land. This policy touched off the most RAPID INFLATION in American history. As the war progressed, prices rose to exorbitant levels, and a vigorous BLACK MARKET in prohibited imports emerged. Congress tried to stop the inflationary trend by instituting PRICES CONTROLS, but the strategy did not work and the SOCIAL ORDER began to unravel. Mobs (many led by women) protested high prices and deprivation, threatening merchants and pressuring local governments.
<b>MULTIMEDIA QUEST</b>	<p>Explore one or more of the following web sites to learn more about life in Williamsburg, Virginia, during the Colonial and Revolutionary Era. (Site 1 is graphics intensive and is best viewed with a high speed connection. Sites 2-4 are suitable for high and low speed connections.)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Colonial Williamsburg's A Day in the Life</b>  <a href="http://www.bigchalk.com/cgi-bin/WebObjects/WOPortal.woa/wa/BCPageDA/pg~MuseumSplash">http://www.bigchalk.com/cgi-bin/WebObjects/WOPortal.woa/wa/BCPageDA/pg~MuseumSplash</a>  <i>A Day in the Life</i> introduces visitors to the lifestyles of a range of social classes in Colonial Williamsburg. Through eight interactive activities, visitors put themselves in the shoes of field slaves, house slaves, free blacks, trade apprentices, farmers, merchants, homemakers and gentry. In each role, you will be forced to make a series of decisions that help you understand the experiences of people of different genders, races, and classes</li> </ol>

during colonial times.

**Note:** You must register and be logged in as a BIGCHALK member to use *A Day in the Life*. (Registration is free.) To experience the audio, video and interactivity of *A Day in the Life*, you will need three plug-ins: Flash 5.0, QuickTime and RealPlayer 8 Basic. Most computers are now equipped with this software, but if you need to download them, the opening page of *A Day in the Life* web site has the relevant links.

- ***Choosing Revolution*** -- Visitors, playing the part of a gentleman and legislator, must review the opinions of 10 fellow colonials to decide whether to protest against the British Parliament's recent actions.
- ***Enslaved*** -- Visitors learn about how slaves came to America and then enact the role of a black male field hand.
- ***A Merchant's Account*** -- Visitors experience "a day in the life" of a white male merchant and learn about colonial goods and currency.
- ***To Run a Household*** -- Visitors take on the role of a middle class white woman addressing the daily issues of family life and service.
- ***An Apprentice's Life*** -- Visitors play the part of a young, white male apprentice to a blacksmith and create their own apprenticeship contracts.
- ***Keeping the Best Company*** -- Visitors learn about the many aspects of the genteel lifestyle, from tea to needlework to French lessons, creating a character collage for both male and female members of the gentility.
- ***Dress the Part*** -- Through an engaging drag and drop scenario, visitors undertake to dress individuals of six different classes based on their social status.
- ***The Price of Freedom*** -- Visitors make decisions from the standpoint of a free black woman, balancing practical issues with personal desires.

## 2. Colonial Williamsburg: History Explorer

<http://www.history.org/Almanack/almanack.cfm>

- ***Meet the People*** -- African-Americans, Colonial Children, The Geddys: A Family of Tradesmen, The Randolphins: A Family of Influence, People of Williamsburg (Biographies), George Washington, Martha Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Patrick Henry, George Wythe)
- ***See the Places*** -- Historic Buildings, Colonial Sites, a Gazetteer of Maps
- ***Experience Colonial Life*** -- African-American Experience, Animals, Christmas, Clothing, Family, Food, Gardening, Manners, Politics, Religion, Tools, Trades

## 3. Colonial Williamsburg: 18<sup>th</sup> Century Clothing

<http://www.history.org/history/clothing/index.cfm>

- ***Introduction to Eighteenth-Century Clothing*** -- *Looking at Eighteenth-Century Clothing* by Linda Baumgarten, *A Scrapbook of African-American Clothing in Colonial Williamsburg*, *A Scrapbook of Tradesmen's Clothing in Colonial Williamsburg*, *An Eighteenth-Century Paper Doll*
- ***Women's Clothing*** -- *Anatomy of a Gown, Shoes & Accessories*, *Fashions of Motherhood* by Linda Baumgarten, *Glossary of Terms*
- ***Men's Clothing*** -- *Anatomy of a Suit, Wigs*, *Glossary of Terms*
- ***Milliner's Shop*** -- *The Millinery Shop* by Edward R. Crews, *Costume in a Day*, *Inside the Milliner's Shop*, *Child-bed Linen* by Phyllis Putman, *Around the Globe*
- ***Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Costume Design Center (CWF)*** -- *Dressing for the Occasion* by Mary Miley Theobald, *CWF Costume Design Center Source List*
- ***Children's Clothing*** -- *Children's Clothing* by Linda Baumgarten, *18th-Century Paper Doll*, *Children's Glossary*

<b>DISCUSSION QUESTION</b>	<p><b>4. Colonial Williamsburg: Exhibits</b> <a href="http://www.history.org/History/jdrlweb/exhibits/treasureindex.cfm">http://www.history.org/History/jdrlweb/exhibits/treasureindex.cfm</a></p> <p>Twelve exhibits on the history and culture of the colonial Chesapeake including Discovery, Native Plants, Cooking, Garden Plants, Architecture, Education, Performing Arts, Fashion, Maps, 1768: Petition, 1776: Debate, Independence.</p> <p><b>What insights did you gain from your exploration of social life in Williamsburg, Virginia, during the Colonial and Revolutionary Era? You may focus on any aspect of life that interests you most.</b></p>
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