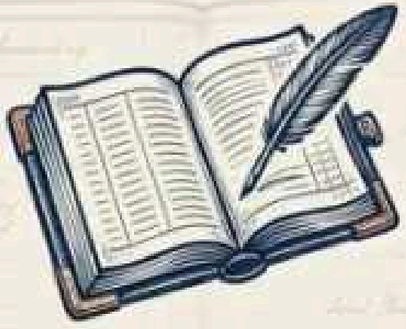
2.1 The Three Pillars of Colonial Evolution (1607–1763)

From Small Settlements → 2 Million People



Roots & Divergence

How did the English colonies take root and differ?



The Core Economy

How did slavery become the central engine of the colonial economy?

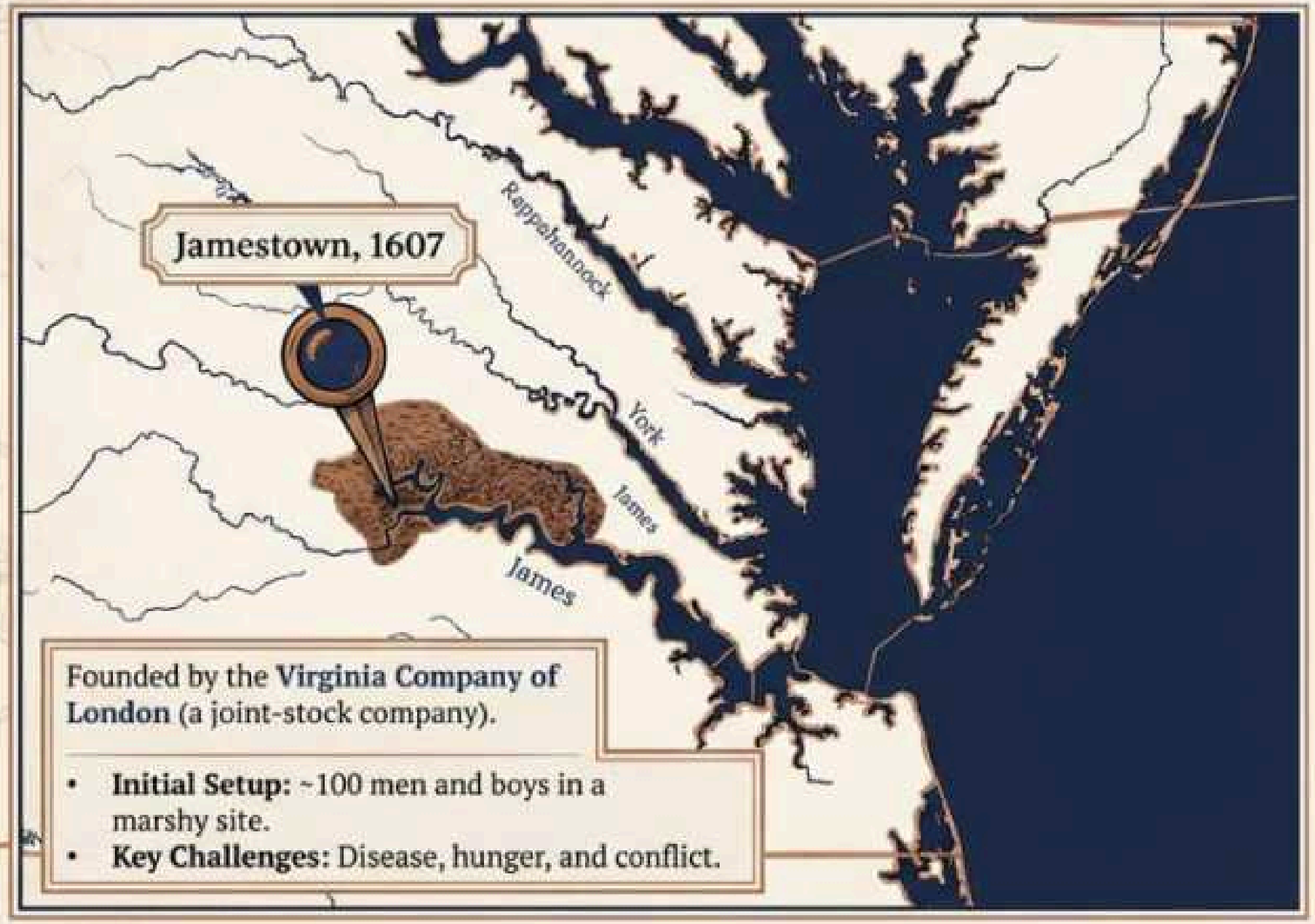


The Edge of Rebellion

How did European imperial wars push the colonies toward a break with Britain?

2.2

Jamestown: A Precarious Beginning



Founded by the **Virginia Company of London** (a joint-stock company).

- **Initial Setup:** ~100 men and boys in a marshy site.
- **Key Challenges:** Disease, hunger, and conflict.

The Starving Time (Winter 1609–1610)

500
Settlers

↓

60
Survivors

2.3

Tobacco & The Demand for Land

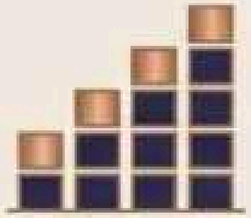
Innovation (1612)

John Rolfe introduces a sweeter tobacco variety.



Economic Boom

High demand in England requires massive land and labor.



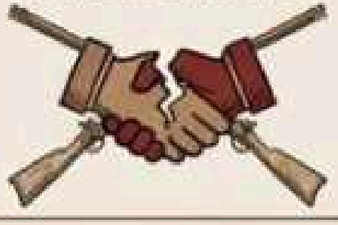
Incentive Structure

The 'Headright System' offers 50 acres of land per person brought to the colony.



Consequence

Planters spread aggressively along rivers, pushing against the Powhatan and ending initial trade relations.



2.4

1619: The Dual Milestones of Virginia



July 1619

The House of Burgesses

The first elected assembly in English America meets, establishing a precedent for self-governance.



Late August 1619

The First Africans

A ship brings ~20 Africans to the colony—the first documented arrival in Virginia.

**Legal status was initially unclear; some gained freedom before laws rigidified.*

2.5

The Turning Point: Bacon's Rebellion & Racial Slavery

Early Chesapeake



Labor relies heavily on indentured servants working for passage.

1676: Nathaniel Bacon leads frontier settlers and servants in rebellion against Gov. Berkeley.

The Shift

Elites transition to enslaved African labor and pass laws dividing populations by race.

Historian Edmund Morgan's Thesis: Racial divisions were actively codified by elites to prevent future unified class rebellions.

2.6

New England Origins: The Pilgrims

1620



Religious separatists sail from England to escape persecution.

1620



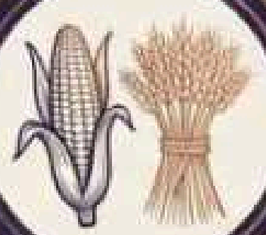
Signing of the Mayflower Compact, establishing a framework for self-governance before landing at Plymouth

1621



Alliance formed with Wampanoag leader Massasoit; Squanto (Tisquantum) serves as vital interpreter

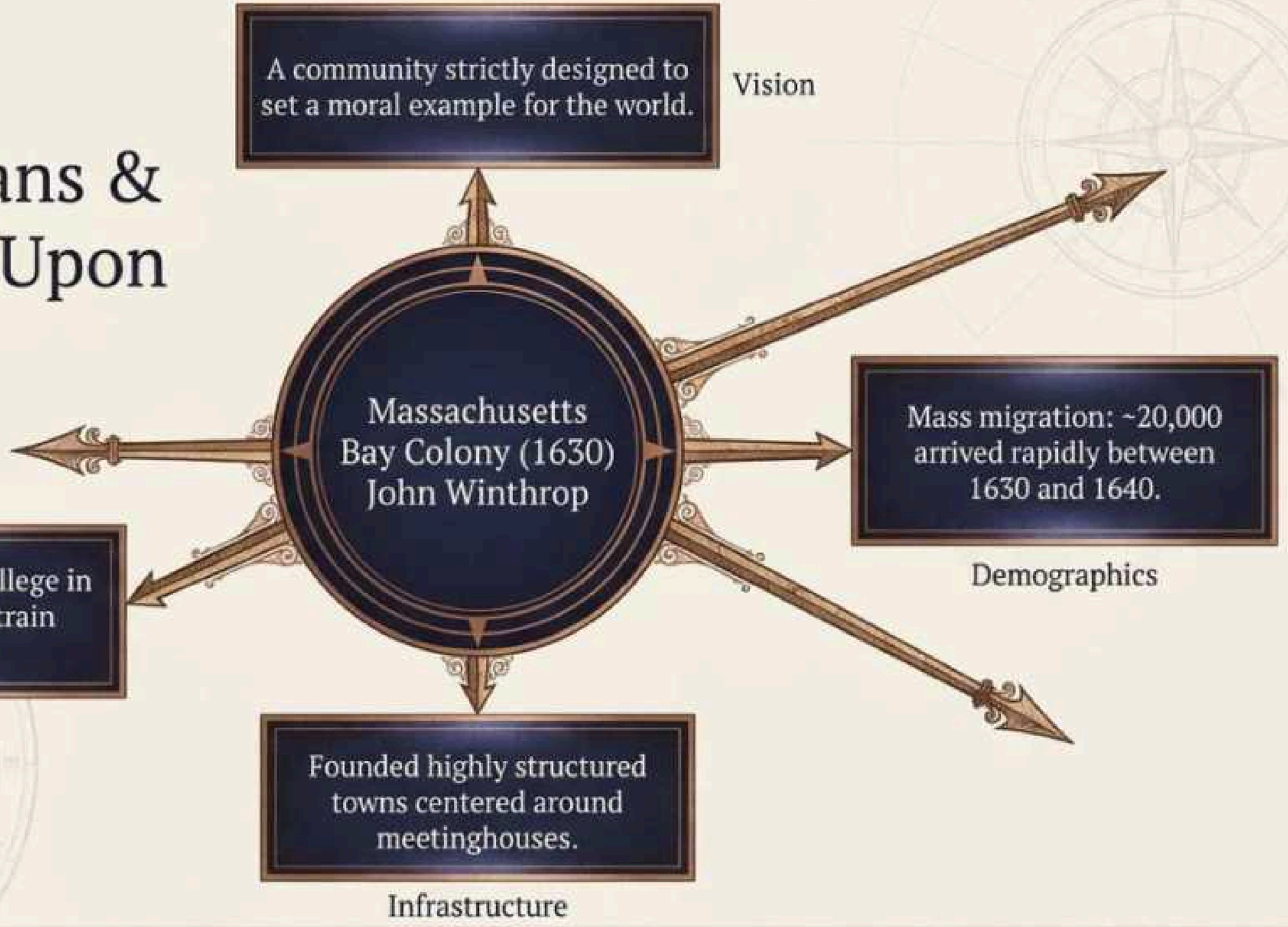
Autumn 1621



A shared harvest gathering, immortalized as the historical origin of Thanksgiving.

2.7

The Puritans & The "City Upon a Hill"



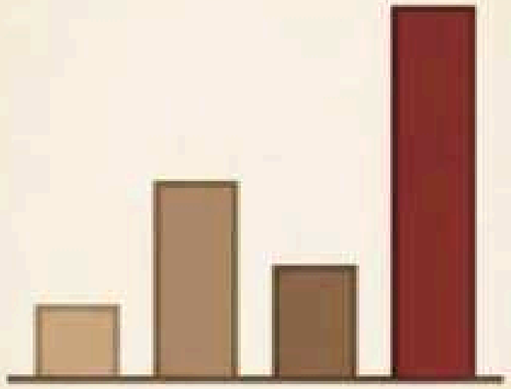
2.8

King Philip's War (1675–1676)



The Uprising

Metacom (known to the English as King Philip) leads Wampanoag resistance in a desperate bid to stop encroaching colonial settlements.



Devastating Scale

Ranks among the absolute deadliest wars in United States history relative to the total population of the time.

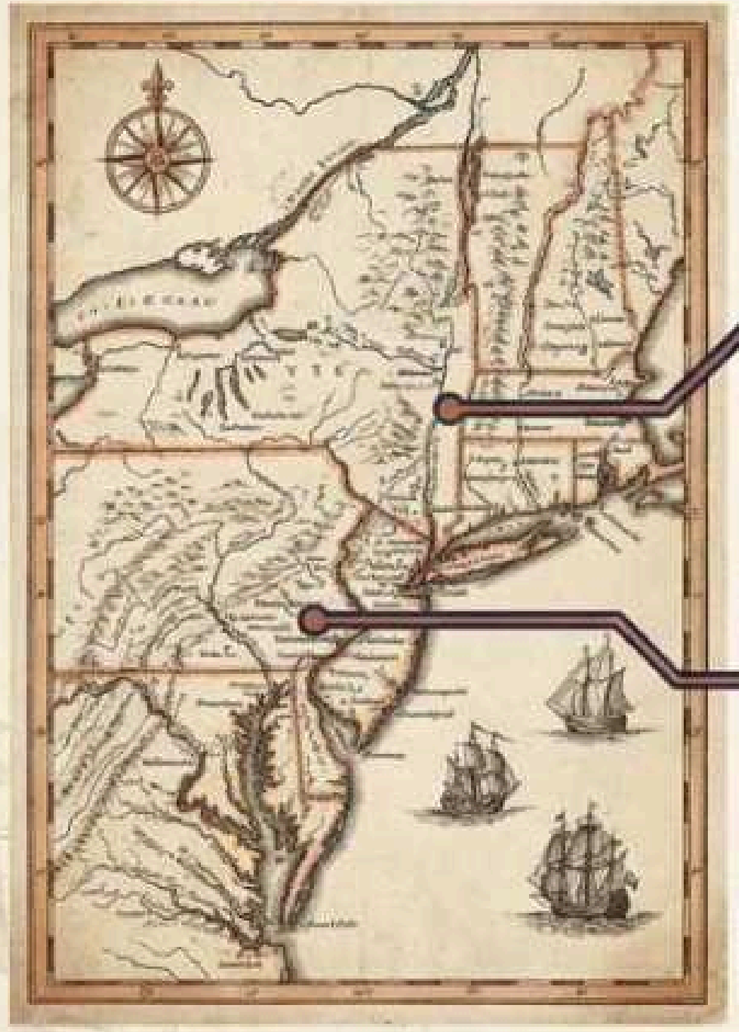


The Turning Point

Native power in southern New England is permanently broken. Captives are sold into slavery or face forced displacement.

2.9

The Middle Colonies: Commerce and Pluralism



New York (1664)

England seizes New Netherland from the Dutch, securing a major commercial and trading port.

Pennsylvania (1681)

Founded by Quaker William Penn, placing an explicit, radical emphasis on religious freedom.

Demographic Profile Box

A Pluralistic Core

Attracted English, Welsh, German, and others. Philadelphia rapidly rose to become the largest colonial city.

These colonies mixed faiths and peoples significantly more than New England.

2.10

The Southern Colonies: Rise of Plantation Agriculture

Maryland
(1634)

Purpose: Founded originally as a safe refuge for English Catholics.

Key Law: Passed a landmark Christian toleration act in 1649.

Carolina
(1663)

Purpose: Heavily influenced by wealthy settlers migrating from Barbados.
Economy: Built explicitly and deliberately as a **slave society** from its very inception.

Georgia
(1732)

Purpose: Founded by James Oglethorpe.

Geopolitics: Established initially as a **militarized buffer zone** against Spanish Florida.

2.11

The Scale of Enslavement

The Transatlantic Flow

12.5 million Africans forced across the Atlantic.

Majority sent to the Caribbean and Brazil.

North American Arrivals

~400,000 individuals survived the journey to the future United States.

Domestic Growth

In North America, the enslaved population grew primarily through births, compounding to reach ~500,000 by the American Revolution.

2.12 Codifying Slavery & Black Resistance



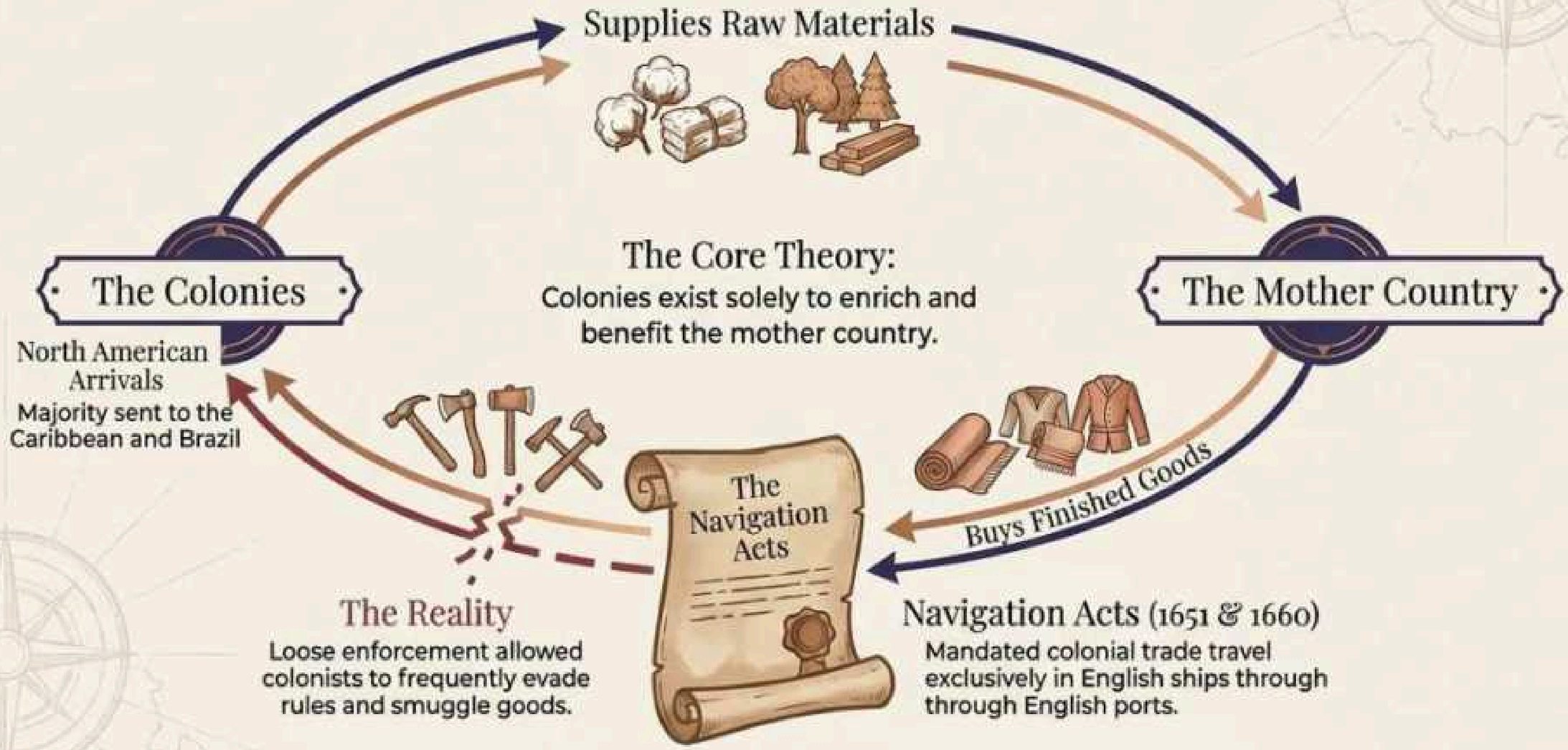
Legal Architecture

- **1662 Rule:** Virginia law declares slavery hereditary (status strictly follows the mother).
- **Slave Codes:** Sweeping laws restrict movement, assembly, and learning, granting owners ultimate power.

Persistent Resistance

- **Everyday Defiance:** Slowing down work, covert learning, and running away.
- **Armed Revolt:** Violent uprisings, most notably the Stono Rebellion in South Carolina (1739).

2.13 Mercantilism & The Imperial Economy

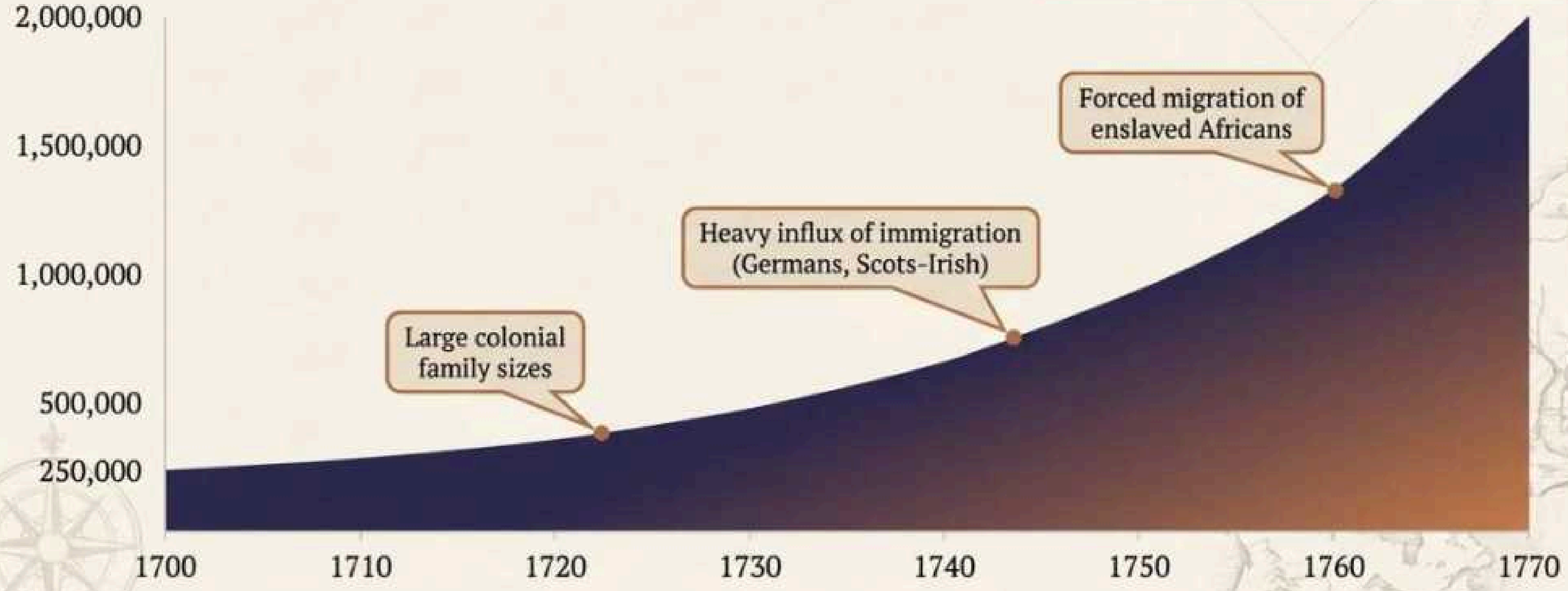


2.14

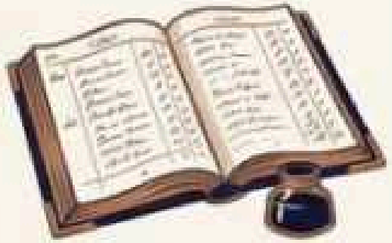
Explosive Colonial Growth (1700–1770)

The Catalyst

Growth was fueled by the perception of "plentiful land"—territory that was systematically taken from Native nations.



2.15 The Roots of American Politics

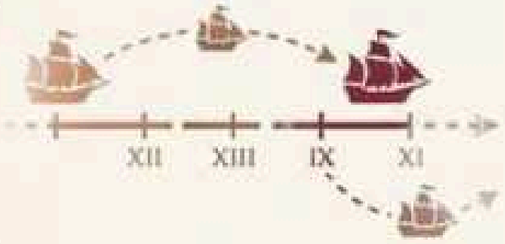


Local Power

Colonial legislatures—not Parliament—controlled local taxes and government spending.



Colonial assembly

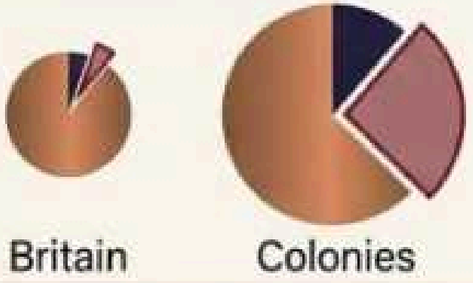


Salutary Neglect

Long periods of loose imperial oversight conditioned colonists to expect complete self-government as a default right.



Colonial minimal redcoat presence



The Franchise

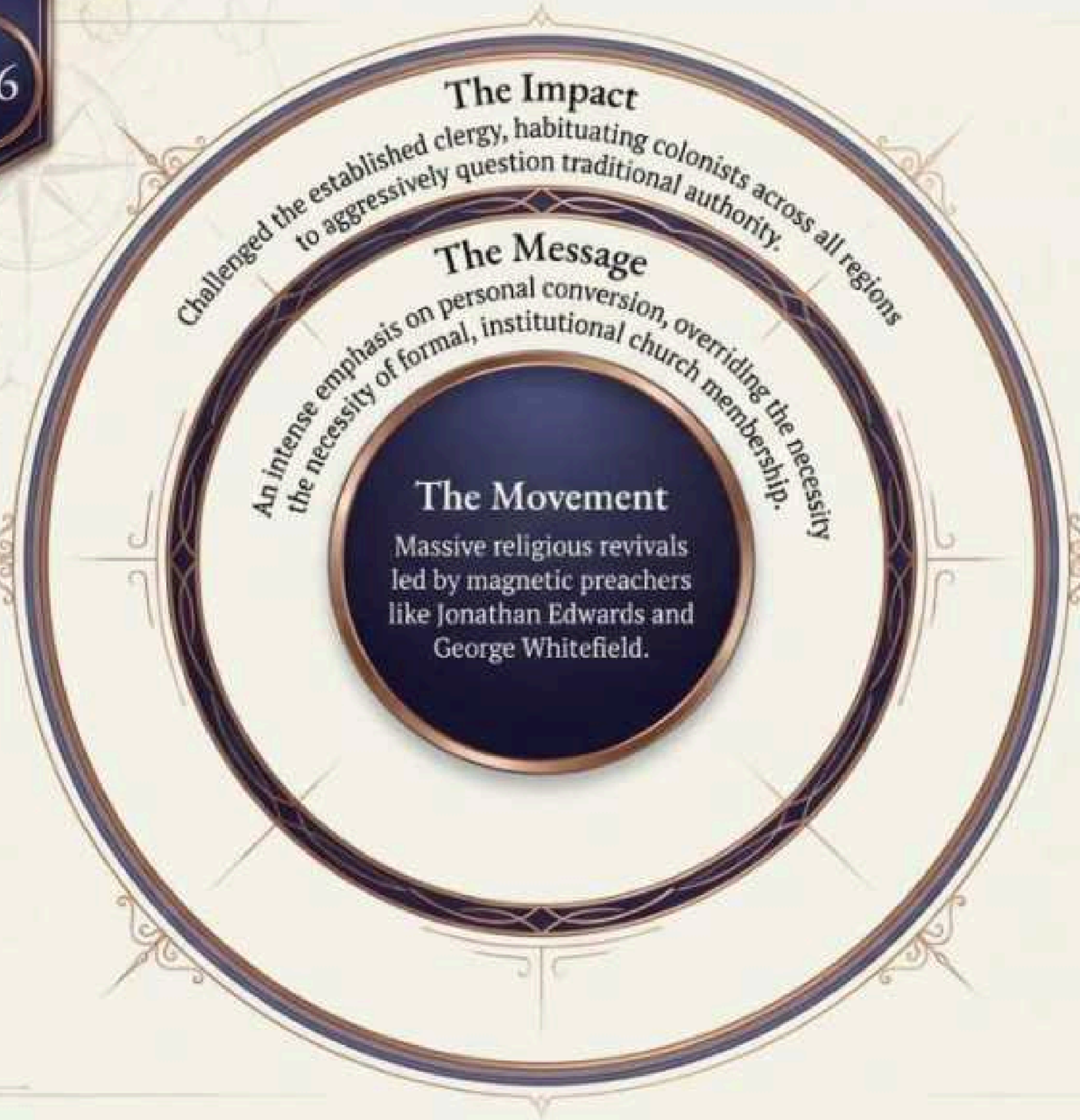
Voting was limited to property-owning men. However, massive land distribution meant a substantially larger share of free white men could vote in the colonies than in Britain.





2.16

The Great Awakening (1730–1750)



2.17 Wars for Empire: The French & Indian War



The Spark (1754):
Young Virginia officer George Washington clashes with French forces, igniting the decisive war for absolute control of North America.

1754

Albany Plan of Union



Early Unity Attempt:
Benjamin Franklin proposes a unified colonial government in 1754.

Outcome: Rejected. The fragmented colonies refuse this early attempt at unity.

2.18

1763: The Redrawn Map of North America



Treaty of Paris Outcomes

- ☑ British Victory secured by superior sea power and the decisive capture of Quebec (1759).
- ☑ France yields Canada and all lands east of the Mississippi to Britain.
- ☑ Spain receives Louisiana (west of the river).

The Native Impact

Native nations lose a vital French ally previously used to balance British power. This immediately erupts into **Pontiac's War** as Native fighters attack British forts in 1763.

2.19 The Price of Victory

Britain's national debt roughly doubled due to the immense cost of the war.

The British government decides the colonists must begin helping pay for their own ongoing defense.

Proclamation of 1763: London strictly bars settlement west of the Appalachian Mountains to avoid costly new Native wars.

Colonists, hungry for western land and accustomed to self-rule, are enraged.

These decisions set the stage for the American Revolution.

2.20 Synthesis: The Colonial Tapestry

Thought Exercise: Choose a colony (e.g., Virginia, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania) and identify three distinct traits:

1. Founders & Purpose (Corporate vs. Religious vs. Refuge)			
2. Economic Engine (Tobacco/Slavery vs. Commerce/Pluralism vs. Mixed Agriculture)			
3. Treatment of Dissent/Enslaved (Rigid Slave Codes vs. Religious Intolerance vs. Quaker Pluralism)			

Comparing foundational traits reveals profound, systemic differences. Moving past 1763, it is these deep divisions the colonies must overcome to unite against Britain.