

INTERCOLONIAL RELATIONS AT THE EVE OF REVOLUTION

"Ever At Variance
and Foolishly Jealous"

OUR PURPOSE

- Recognize that there is very little “colonial unity”
 - Deconstruct the hindsight bias of colonial unity
 - Set the stage for the true “radicalism” (per Gordon Wood) of the American Revolution
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A VIRGINIAN DESCRIBES RHODE ISLAND

- “Geography accounts for it with the aid of one or two observations. The cultivators of the earth are the most virtuous citizens. Merchants are the least virtuous.”
- “The latter reside principally in the seaport towns, the former in the interior country. Now, it happened that of the territory constituting Rhode Island and Connecticut, the part containing the seaports was erected into a State by itself, and called Rhode Island, and that containing the interior country was erected into another State called Connecticut. For though it has a little sea-coast, there are no good ports in it. Hence it happens that there is scarcely one merchant in the whole State of Connecticut, while there is not a single man in Rhode Island who is not a merchant of some sort,”
- “This circumstance has decided the characters of these two States and the remedies to this evil are hazardous. One would be to consolidate the two States into one.”
- -Thomas Jefferson

- More broadly, Jefferson continues... "In the North they are cool, sober, laborious, persevering, independent, jealous of their own liberties and just to those of others, interested, chicaning, (cheating) superstitious and hypocritical in their religion."
- "In the South they are fiery, voluptuary, indolent, unsteady, independent, zealous for their own liberties but trampling on those of others, generous, candid, without attachment or pretensions to any religion but that of the heart."
- "An observing traveler without the aid of a quadrant may always know his latitude by the character of the people among whom he finds himself"

REMEMBER THE THREE TYPES OF COLONIES

- Corporate
 - Connecticut, Rhode Island
- Proprietary
 - Penn in Pennsylvania, Lord Baltimore in Maryland
- Royal
 - NY, Carolinas, Georgia, Massachusetts

BRIEF COLONIAL DESCRIPTORS

- North
 - Small farms, religion, education
- Middle
 - Diverse, “best poor man’s country,” tolerance
- South
 - Plantation culture fiefdoms, slavery

THREE ATTEMPTS AT COLONIAL UNITY

1643 - New England Confederation

- Self-proposed, disbands

1680s – Dominion of New England

- Imposed by England, rebels

1754 – Albany Plan of Union

- In response to French and Indian War
- MA - "for the general defense of his Majesty's subjects and interests in N. America, as well in time of peace, as of war."
- Comes up with plan, sends it out to colonies, doesn't pass

COLONIAL DISUNITY BEFORE REVOLUTION

- History is not inevitable