

## CHAPTER 3

*An Era of Hard Times*

## VIRGINIA

1680-1729

Historians conventionally subdivide the time periods they study by events such as the span of a monarch's reign or the beginning or ending of wars or revolutions. Economic historians are as likely to subdivide time periods by trends in prices of critical commodities or by structural changes in market organization. For 1680-1729, Chesapeake historians have taken their cue from economic historians, defining these years as a distinct era characterized by a prolonged stagnation in the prices planters obtained for their tobacco, by a failure to increase the total amount of tobacco they produced, and by declining per capita incomes in the region overall. This ending of the initial period of expansive growth had profound impacts, both on the Chesapeake economy and on its society. The term "stagnation," of course, implies a time of little change. But once one takes into account diverging trends within three different economic subregions of the Tobacco Coast, it becomes clear that stasis is not an accurate description. The period was in fact one of marked adaptation and change as planters struggled to overcome the problems they encountered in making and selling tobacco and as they worked to develop a variety of alternative exports in order to take advantage of new markets throughout the Atlantic world.<sup>1</sup>

1. Russell R. Menard, "The Tobacco Industry in the Chesapeake Colonies, 1617-1730: An Interpretation," *Res. Econ. Hist.*, V (1980), 109-177; John J. McCusker and Russell R. Menard, *The Economy of British America, 1607-1789* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1985), chap. 6. Charles Wetherell, from an analysis of price and production data, disputes the presence of cycles in the tobacco economy. Although he raises some important questions about the measurement and interpretation of preindustrial cycles, among other things, his decision to use only English imports as a measure of production (excluding the increasing volume of Chesapeake tobacco shipped to Scotland) raises doubts about the merits of his interpretation ("'Boom and Bust' in the Colonial Chesapeake Economy," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, XV [1984-1985], 185-210). The most cogent critique is Douglas M. Bradburn and John C. Coombs, "Smoke and Mirrors: Reinterpreting the Society and Economy of the Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake," *Atlantic Studies*, III (2006), 132-157.

Nor was the Chesapeake untouched during these years by significant changes in the structure of the British government and by international contests for empire between Britain and France. Charles II died in 1685. The troubled reign of his successor, James II, who wished to re-Catholicize the Anglican church, to strengthen royal prerogatives, and to centralize administration of English colonies, lasted only four years. William, Prince of Orange and husband of James's sister Mary, at the invitation of leading men who wanted to remove James, invaded England in 1688. The next year, a Convention Parliament offered the British crown to William and Mary jointly. As a result, Roman Catholics were excluded from succession to the throne, Trinitarian Protestants were granted freedom of worship, and the powers of Parliament and of the peers and gentry significantly increased. Cabinet ministers answerable to the majority in the Commons emerged as the real executive government, with regular elections being mandated, the king's right to suspend legislation abolished, and nonparliamentary taxation made illegal, as was the maintenance of a standing army in peacetime and arbitrary royal fines and forfeitures. Henceforth, the crown was entirely dependent on Parliament for all public expenditures. This "Glorious Revolution" ended royal succession crises. Upon William III's death in 1702, Mary's sister Anne became queen, and, when she died without direct heirs in 1714, a transfer of the crown to the Protestant House of Hanover was effected with only minor disturbances.<sup>2</sup>

Most settlers in the English colonies in America enthusiastically supported the Glorious Revolution, hardly anticipating that as a result they would become involved in more than twenty years of global wars between 1689 and 1713. Partly as a result of mutual animosity toward the Netherlands and sympathy for the Catholic religion, Charles II and James II had pursued generally pro-French policies. William III, in contrast, implacably opposed French king Louis XIV's expansionist plans. Consequently, William led Britain into an alliance with the Netherlands against France, now indisputably Britain's major rival for empire in Europe, North America, and Asia. In addition to protracted warfare in Europe, fighting erupted on the North American continent between English and French colonists and groups of native Americans allied to one or the other of the rival European powers as well as between English and French in the Caribbean. King William's War (1689-1697) ended

2. A useful summary is Ian K. Steele, "The Anointed, the Appointed, and the Elected: Governance of the British Empire, 1689-1784," in P. J. Marshall, ed., *The Eighteenth Century*, vol. II of Wm. Roger Louis, ed., *The Oxford History of the British Empire* (Oxford, 1998), 105-127. See also David S. Lovejoy, *The Glorious Revolution in America* (New York, 1972); and Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven, Conn., 1992), 46-52.

inconclusively; the Peace of Rijswijk returned captured territories to their prewar status. Subsequently, England, the Netherlands, and Austria declared war on France in 1702 to prevent Louis XIV from uniting the thrones of France and Spain, thus also potentially gaining control of Spain's New World colonies in addition to new settlements the French were planting in Louisiana and in the area west of the Appalachian Mountains as a barrier against Anglo-American expansion. This European conflict over the succession to the Spanish throne quickly spread to North America as Queen Anne's War (1702-1713), with fighting for control of Canada, Spanish Florida, and the West Indies. The resulting peace gave England possession of Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, the region around Hudson's Bay, Saint Christopher, Gibraltar, and Minorca as well as a lucrative contract (the Asiento) to supply African slaves to Spanish colonies in North America. The main effects of these wars for Chesapeake colonists were losses of shipping to French privateers, disruption of trade to and from England and with other English colonies, and a drop in the number of slaves carried to the Tobacco Coast from Africa.<sup>3</sup>

Another result of the Glorious Revolution was a temporary end to proprietary rule in Maryland. Charles Calvert, third Lord Baltimore, then in England defending his charter, sent orders to proclaim allegiance to William and Mary, but the bearer of the message died en route, and the Catholic president of the Maryland Council failed to acknowledge the new rulers. A group of Protestant gentry (some of whom had already attempted a revolt in 1681) took over the province in a bloodless coup. Discontent with high taxes, with Baltimore's disallowing laws that did not please him, and especially with his policy of appointing primarily Roman Catholics and close relatives to provincial offices contributed to settlers' acquiescence in the takeover. The colony was controlled by a committee of Protestant Associators until 1692, when William III stripped Lord Baltimore of his political authority and sent a royal governor to rule Maryland in concert with the assembly. The Anglican church was established, and Catholics and Quakers, who could not or would not take the oaths now required to hold office or serve on juries, were barred from public life. Again, however, county courts succeeded in maintaining local order. Although conditions for poorer planters continued to worsen,

3. Jonathan I. Israel, "The Emerging Empire: The Continental Perspective, 1650-1713," and Richard S. Dunn, "The Glorious Revolution and America," both in Nicholas Canny, ed., *The Origins of Empire: British Overseas Enterprise to the Close of the Seventeenth Century*, vol. I of Louis, ed., *Oxford History of the British Empire*, 423-444, 445-466; Bruce P. Lenman, "Colonial Wars and Imperial Instability, 1688-1793," and N. A. M. Rodger, "Sea-Power and Empire, 1688-1793," both in Marshall, ed., *The Eighteenth Century*, vol. II, *ibid.*, 151-168; Jeremy Black, *Trade, Empire, and British Foreign Policy, 1689-1815: The Politics of a Commercial State* (London, 2007), chap. 5.

lower-class discontent was not a factor in this colonial "revolution of government." In fact, proprietary rule was restored in 1715, when the fourth and fifth Lords Baltimore, who had converted to the Anglican faith, succeeded their father and grandfather. Virginia, in contrast, experienced no major disruptions during this era. After 1676, politics at the provincial level were characterized by contests for power between royal governors, the councillors, and the lower house of assembly. Colonial assemblies were bent on claiming local powers similar to those gained by Parliament, leading inevitably to conflict with royal governors enjoined with enforcing metropolitan policies. Among ordinary settlers, the troubled tobacco economy remained their major concern along with a desire to retain their rights as Englishmen and to avoid arbitrary governments.<sup>4</sup>

Through the Glorious Revolution, Parliament won not only a larger role in governing England but also the right to intervene more deeply in colonial affairs. It resolved to broaden its mercantilist policy by more rigorously enforcing the Navigation Acts, by more consistently disallowing colonial laws in conflict with those of the mother country, and, in order to protect English manufacturers, by taking steps to stifle colonial manufacturing. Vice-admiralty courts were established in the colonies, the powers of customs and naval officers were enhanced and their numbers increased, and more effective registration of ships trading to the colonies was implemented. During the early years of William III's reign, the Privy Council and other royal administrative agencies neglected colonial matters. Parliament, responding to complaints from merchants about heavy losses of shipping in the war with France and to a perceived escalation of illegal trade, planned itself to establish and nominate members to a council for trade and plantations. To forestall

4. Lois Green Carr and David William Jordan, *Maryland's Revolution of Government, 1689-1692* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1974); Charles M. Andrews, *The Colonial Period of American History* (New Haven, Conn., 1936), II, chap. 9; Robert J. Brugger, *Maryland: A Middle Temperament, 1634-1980* (Baltimore, 1988), 31-40; Jack P. Greene, *The Quest for Power: The Lower Houses of Assembly in the Southern Royal Colonies, 1689-1776* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1963), 22-31; David Alan Williams, "Political Alignments in Colonial Virginia Politics, 1698-1750" (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1959), chaps. 1-6; Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York, 1975), 346-362; Carter Lee Hudgins, "Patrician Culture, Public Ritual, and Political Authority in Virginia, 1680-1740" (Ph.D. diss., College of William and Mary, 1984), chap. 4; Warren M. Billings, "The Glorious Revolution in Virginia: The Revolution That Wasn't" (paper presented at "The Glorious Revolution in America - Three Hundred Years After," College Park, Md., 1988); Alexander B. Haskell, "The Affections of the People: Ideology and the Politics of State Building in Colonial Virginia, 1607-1754" (Ph.D. diss., Johns Hopkins University, 2005), chaps. 6-7; Dunn, "The Glorious Revolution and America," in Marshall, ed., *The Eighteenth Century*, vol. II of Louis, ed., *Oxford History of the British Empire*, 456-457; Lovejoy, *Glorious Revolution in America*, 257-270.

such a diminution of royal prerogative, William created a new administrative agency, the Lords Commissioners of Trade and Plantations, or Board of Trade, in 1696. Composed of the president of the Privy Council, executive officers, and representatives of mercantile and industrial interests, the board was an advisory body that collected information, conducted investigations, and advised the crown (and Parliament upon request) about all aspects of colonial commerce, drafted instructions to colonial governors, and reviewed all colonial laws. They could not make decisions, but their recommendations were usually accepted and implemented by orders in council or acts of Parliament. According to Charles M. Andrews, "no part of the English executive was more consistently mercantilist in its relations to trade and the colonies or more conservative in its defense of the king's prerogative in America" than the Board of Trade. Unfortunately for Chesapeake planters, the board was especially receptive to the views of English tobacco merchants, who were often opposed to regulations designed to improve the quality and hence raise the price of tobacco (which colonists favored), and in favor of trade restrictions that injured tobacco growers.<sup>5</sup>

Stricter enforcement of the Navigation Acts, restrictions on various forms of intercolonial commerce, royal disallowance of laws passed by colonial legislatures to regulate their internal economies, and Britain's discouragement of colonial manufacturing all made it more difficult for Chesapeake colonists to cope with the severe economic problems that plagued the tobacco trade during the fifty years between 1680 and 1729. Although the period saw three or four short booms in the tobacco market, there were still almost four full decades when trade was severely depressed. Everywhere stagnant tobacco prices and adverse terms of trade and credit curtailed opportunities for small planters. The supply of indentured servants contracted drastically, especially in wartime, and minor operators remained unable to take advantage of more available, but still costly, slave labor to realize the sort of modest prosperity enjoyed by farmers of limited means in the mid-seventeenth century. Unable to obtain indentured servants and too poor to afford or too ill connected to procure slaves, small and middling planters had limited chances for improving their fortunes by growing more tobacco. Such men continued to make up the majority of planters and to produce more than half of the region's tobacco, but they no longer played a dynamic role in advances in agricul-

5. Andrews, *Colonial Period*, IV, chaps. 6-9 (quotation on 291); Ian K. Steele, *The English Atlantic, 1675-1740: An Exploration of Communication and Community* (New York, 1986), chap. 12; Black, *Trade, Empire, and British Foreign Policy*, chap. 6.

ford to buy the additional laborers that were critical to any marked improvement in family fortunes.<sup>7</sup>

Large planters were also caught short of cheap white labor, but, as mentioned previously, many of them had already switched to slaves between 1640 and the mid-1670s. The timing of their decision is critical, since most scholars argue that slavery was a labor system forced upon elites by shortages of indentured servants in the 1680s and 1690s, accompanied by a need to make tobacco more cheaply in depressed markets after 1680. But, in fact, by the late 1670s the region's provincial elites were already thoroughly committed to slavery, and about two-thirds of all Virginia county officers had purchased at least one slave. With black slaves already outnumbering white servants on many elite Virginians' plantations, the only additional European laborers many of them needed were a few servants with special skills, and these they continued to obtain through contacts in the British merchant community. The embrace of slave labor by the region's wealthiest, best-connected, and most-powerful planters who had the widest possible range of choices for solv-

7. Russell Menard, "From Servants to Slaves: The Transformation of the Chesapeake Labor System," *So. Stud.*, XVI (1977), 355-390; McCusker and Menard, *Economy of British America*, chap. 6; James Horn, "Servant Emigration to the Chesapeake in the Seventeenth Century," in Thad W. Tate and David L. Ammerman, eds., *The Chesapeake in the Seventeenth Century: Essays on Anglo-American Society* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1979), 51-95; Horn, "British Diaspora: Emigration from Britain, 1680-1815," in Marshall, ed., *The Eighteenth Century*, vol. II of Louis ed., *Oxford History of the British Empire*, 28-52; Henry A. Gemery, "Markets for Migrants: English Indentured Servitude and Emigration in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," in P. C. Emmer, ed., *Colonialism and Migration: Indentured Labour before and after Slavery* (Dordrecht, 1986), 33-54; Nicholas Canny, "English Migration into and across the Atlantic during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," in Canny, ed., *Europeans on the Move: Studies on European Migration, 1500-1800* (Oxford, 1994), 39-75; Farley Grubb and Tony Stitt, "The Liverpool Emigrant Servant Trade and the Transition to Slave Labor in the Chesapeake, 1697-1707: Market Adjustments to War," *Exp. Econ. Hist.*, XXXI (1994), 376-405; David W. Galenson, "The Settlement and Growth of the Colonies: Population, Labor, and Economic Development," in Stanley L. Engerman and Robert E. Gallman, eds., *The Cambridge Economic History of the United States*, 3 vols. (New York, 1996), I, 135-208; Alison F. Games, "Migration," in David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick, eds., *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800* (New York, 2002), 31-50; Lorena S. Walsh, "The Differential Cultural Impact of Free and Coerced Migration to Colonial America," in David Eltis, ed., *Coerced and Free Migration: Global Perspectives* (Stanford, Calif., 2002), 117-151; Christopher Tomlins, "Indentured Servitude in Perspective: European Migration into North America and the Composition of the Early American Labor Force, 1600-1775," in Cathy Matson, ed., *The Economy of Early America: Historical Perspectives and New Directions* (University Park, Pa., 2006), 146-182. The earlier literature posited that the new colonies of Pennsylvania and Carolina diverted servants away from the Chesapeake after 1680. The evidence on servant destinations shows, however, that less than 4 percent of servants went to these destinations in the 1680s and less than 2 percent between 1697 and 1707 (Grubb and Stitt, "Liverpool Servant Trade," *Exp. Econ. Hist.*, XXXI [1994], 378).

slavers, began aggressively contesting London's dominant role in the African trade. By the 1720s, Bristol became for a time Britain's leading slaving port as well as the leading supplier of Africans to the Chesapeake. As a result, the ethnic origins of new Africans changed yet again, since Bristol merchants were then buying most of their human cargoes in the Bight of Biafra, a region where the price of slaves was lower than on the Gold Coast and Slave Coast and European competitors fewer. More than half of the slaves brought into the Chesapeake between 1698 and 1729 were from this region, of whom the majority was probably Igbo, who spoke a common language and shared a common culture. In the early 1700s, slave buyers thus had to learn to manage an influx of bondpeople from an unfamiliar ethnic group that was numerous enough to retain some elements of homeland culture and so was perhaps slower to adopt English language and customs than the more diverse groups arriving earlier.<sup>10</sup>

Chesapeake planters obviously benefited from increased competition among slave traders as well as from another decline in West Indian sugar prices in the 1720s. As the volume of slave imports rose, the price of a prime male hand fell from a range of twenty-seven pounds to thirty pounds sterling in the 1710s to a range of eighteen pounds to twenty pounds in the 1720s. At this rate, slave buyers fortunate enough to lose few hands to seasoning might recoup their initial outlay with the proceeds of two or at most three tobacco crops. Once a planter bought one or two slaves, it became increasingly easy for him to buy more.<sup>11</sup>

The transition to slave labor was swift and dramatic throughout the re-

10. Lorena S. Walsh Database of Slave Trading Voyages to Virginia and Maryland (November 2008); preliminary results are published in Lorena S. Walsh, "The Chesapeake Slave Trade: Regional Patterns, African Origins, and Some Implications," *WMQ*, 3d Ser., LVIII (2001), 139-170. See also P. M. G. Harris, *The History of Human Populations, II, Migration, Urbanization, and Structural Change* (Westport, Conn., 2003), 313-318. For the campaign of separate traders, see William A. Pettigrew, "Free to Enslave: Politics and the Escalation of Britain's Transatlantic Slave Trade, 1688-1714," *WMQ*, 3d Ser., LXIV (2007), 3-38. For Bristol's greater efficiency, see David Eltis and David Richardson, "Productivity in the Slave Trade," *Exp. Econ. Hist.*, XXXII (1995), 465-484; and Eltis, *Rise of African Slavery*, chap. 5. For Igbo in Virginia, see Lorena S. Walsh, *From Calabar to Carter's Grove: The History of a Virginia Slave Community* (Charlottesville, Va., 1997); and Douglas Brent Chambers, "'He Gwine Sing He Country': Africans, Afro-Virginians, and the Development of Slave Culture in Virginia, 1690-1810" (Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 1996).

11. Chesapeake slave prices were compiled from period planter and merchant correspondence. For trends in the prices of African slaves, see also David Eltis and David Richardson, "Prices of African Slaves Newly Arrived in the Americas, 1673-1865: New Evidence on Long-Run Trends and Regional Differences," in Eltis, Lewis, and Sokoloff, eds., *Slavery in the Development of the Americas*, 181-218.

gion. Between the mid-1680s and mid-1690s, the aggregate unfree labor force in both Virginia and Maryland changed from primarily indentured servants to primarily slaves. In wealthy Virginia counties like York, white servants virtually disappeared from the workforce. Between 1701 and 1730 in Virginia as a whole, in 86 percent of inventoried estates with just one bound laborer that worker was a slave, and every estate with five or more laborers included at least one slave. Since very few slaves ever gained freedom, and since some of them also eventually produced children whose fate was the same perpetual bondage that their parents endured, the size of labor forces on large plantations increased dramatically. Shortly after the turn of the century, some of the richest planters accumulated enslaved labor forces of one hundred or more. No seventeenth-century planter ever acquired an indentured servant workforce even approaching this size. Although enslaved workers were divided among numerous quarters, on the bigger plantations planters had enough adult field hands to organize them into labor gangs. The extent to which the use of gang labor might have increased labor productivity on large plantations remains a subject for debate among economic historians. The early Chesapeake elite, like their sugar-growing counterparts in the Caribbean, apparently considered gang labor advantageous.<sup>12</sup>

Between 1680 and 1720, the enslaved population in the Chesapeake increased at almost twice the rate of the white population. The proportion of blacks rose from a mere 7 percent in 1680 to around 15 percent in 1690 and reached about 25 percent by 1720. Slaveowning elites had ever-greater need to protect their substantial investments in human property and to enact laws to control a growing segment of the population who had little or no stake in the society to which they had been forcibly brought. Individual plantation discipline proved inadequate to police growing numbers of blacks who were sometimes able to run away and remain at large for months, killing livestock and stealing from neighboring plantations, and occasionally violently resisting whites who attempted to capture them. Moreover, fears increased about slave marronage and the possibility of slaves' combining and organizing to foment insurrections. At the turn of the century, the Virginia and Maryland assemblies enacted fully articulated slave codes that denied blacks the civil

12. Menard, "From Servants to Slaves," *So. Stud.*, XVI (1977), 354-390; Coombs, "Building 'The Machine,'" chap. 7. For shifts in the size of work groups, see Lois Green Carr and Lorena S. Walsh, "Economic Diversification and Labor Organization in the Chesapeake, 1650-1820," in Stephen Innes, ed., *Work and Labor in Early America* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1988), 144-188; Allan Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves: The Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680-1800* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1986), 330-331; and Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1998), 41-42.



rights enjoyed by whites and that prescribed extraordinary measures for the policing of slaves. The early 1730s, in the wake of a series of threatened slave revolts, saw the passage of additional laws for suppressing and controlling slaves. Planters were accorded a free hand in doing whatever they deemed necessary to control their human property and to force them to work. Moreover, the authority of the slaveholder was by then effectively backed by a legal infrastructure of state-sponsored racism.<sup>13</sup>

Racism developed and spread throughout all levels of society as colonists of European descent began to think and speak of themselves first and foremost as "white," rather than as European or Christian, and to draw pride from the superior status that whiteness conferred. Already in the 1660s, censuses in the sugar colonies of the British West Indies universally used the dichotomy of "white" and "black," and slave laws outlined a system of governing blacks based entirely on coercion. Racial consciousness developed more slowly in the Chesapeake; "white" began to replace "Christian" or "free" in official documents only near the end of the century. In the 1680s and 1690s, for example, Maryland and Virginia laws regulating interracial sex were directed to "freeborne Englishe or other white women"; by 1699, "white" sufficed to define the identity of persons of European ancestry. Similarly, "white" first appeared as a category in a Maryland census of 1710, replacing the earlier category of "free," a shift that also appeared in more northerly mainland colo-

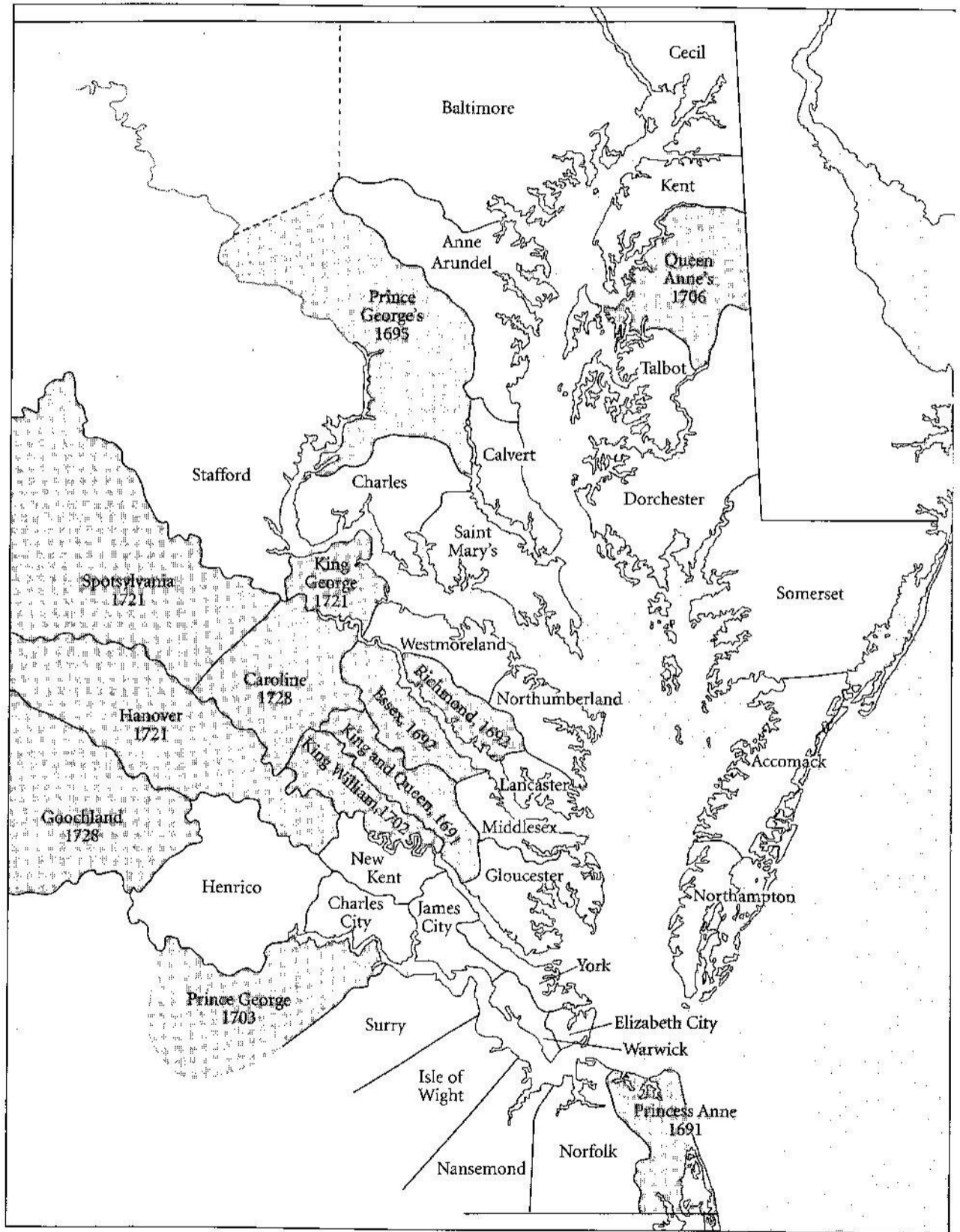
13. Coombs, "Building 'The Machine,'" chap. 5; Anthony S. Parent, Jr., *Foul Means: The Formation of a Slave Society in Virginia, 1660-1740* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2003), chap. 4; Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, Mass., 1998), chap. 5. Estimates of the black population of the Chesapeake in the early eighteenth century are based on scanty information and vary widely. Parent gives the number of blacks in Virginia in 1698 as 5,000, almost certainly an underestimate (*Foul Means*, 74). Peter H. Wood provides a similarly low estimate of 5,500 blacks in Virginia in 1700 but offers a high figure of 49,700 in 1730 ("The Changing Population of the Colonial South: An Overview by Race and Region, 1685-1790," in Wood, Gregory A. Waselkov, and M. Thomas Hatley, eds., *Powhatan's Mantle: Indians in the Colonial Southeast* [Lincoln, Nebr., 1989], 38). McCusker and Menard, *Economy of British America*, 136, estimates the numbers in both Virginia and Maryland as about 13,000 in 1700 and about 53,000 in 1730. Philip Morgan estimates there were 13,000 blacks in Virginia alone in 1700 and 40,000 in that colony in 1730 (*Slave Counterpoint*, 61). Allan Kulikoff's estimate for the Virginia black population in 1730 is 36,600 ("A 'Prolifick' People: Black Population Growth in the Chesapeake Colonies, 1700-1790," *So. Stud.*, XVI [1977], 415). Berlin presents a higher estimate for 1700—16,000 in Virginia and an additional 3,000 in Maryland; he has no estimate for 1730 (*Many Thousands Gone*, 369). A frequently cited estimate is 19,600 blacks in Virginia and Maryland in 1700 and 53,800 in 1730 (John J. McCusker, "Colonial Statistics," in Susan B. Carter et al., eds., *Historical Statistics of the United States: Earliest Times to the Present*, millennial ed., 5 vols. [New York, 2006], V, 561-562). Since more recent research on the transatlantic slave trade suggests that larger numbers of Africans were imported at the turn of the century than previously thought, the higher estimates for 1700 are probably closer to the mark.

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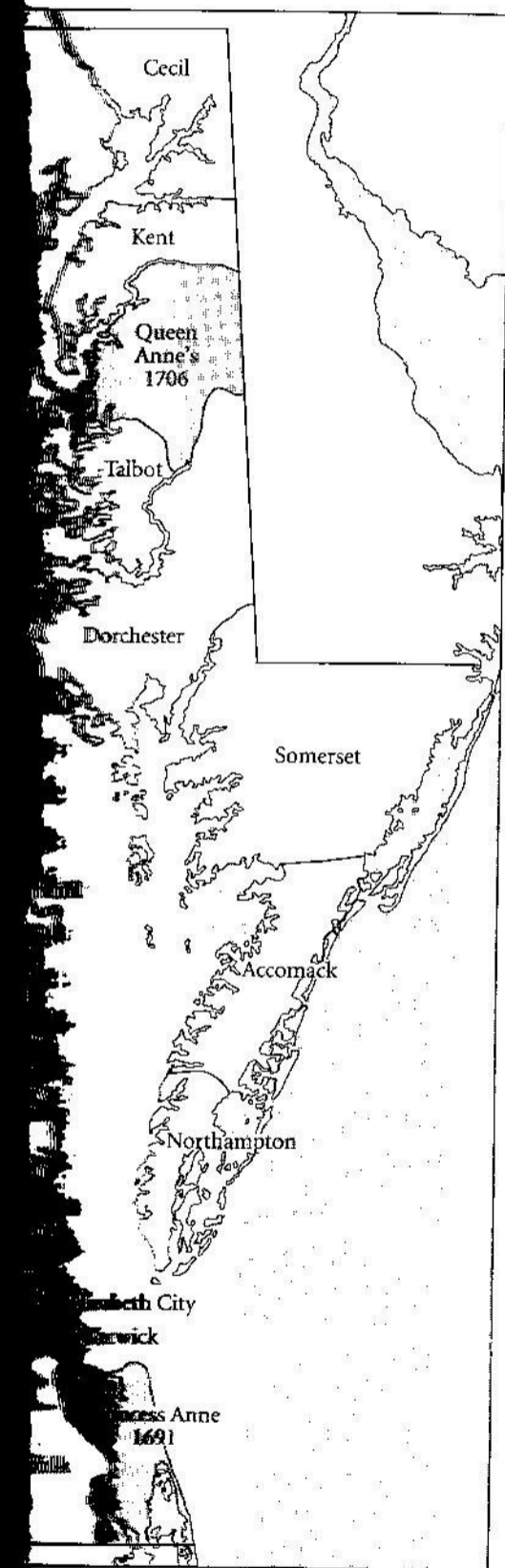
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MAP 7. Chesapeake Counties Established through 1729



born men for husbands. Consequently, creoles had little difficulty setting up households. Most prospective native-born couples could, with the help of parents, guardians, or other relatives, piece together the cow, sow, three barrels of corn, bed, pot, hoe, and ax that were the prerequisites for starting housekeeping in the Chesapeake. As Robert Beverley put it at the turn of the century, when native-born sons and daughters came of age, "they who have taken any care to improve themselves, generally get well Married, and live in Plenty, tho they had not a farthing of paternal Estate." Consequently, once native-born young adults grew to a majority in a local population, the area's economy would become somewhat less closely tied to the vicissitudes of the tobacco trade and rates of household formation among whites would become less closely related to spurts in immigration.<sup>16</sup>

The ordinary creole's initial advantage in getting started in planting was soon offset, however, by a growing number of young dependents. Since natives, and especially native women, married at much younger ages than did immigrants, they had more children. The amount of corn and tobacco that a couple could produce by themselves declined once the wife was encumbered with repeated pregnancies and the need to care for young children. A constant or even falling farm income had thus to support more children too small to make any significant work contribution. Since most adults still died young, only the very lucky or very healthy would benefit from the labor of maturing sons and daughters. Men born in the colony did often enjoy slightly longer life spans than had their immigrant fathers, but, so long as settlement remained largely confined to unhealthy tidewater areas, new, more lethal strains of malaria, introduced by forced African migrants, continued to claim a heavy toll, especially among children and pregnant women. A few years earlier, the rising fortunes of ordinary planters had been built in large part on the chance to acquire highly productive single white youths and adult indentured laborers. The shift to a predominately native-born population produced a permanent increase in the proportion of young dependents as contrasted to prime-age laborers. To meet these new local demographic

16. In this period, parents who lived to see one or more children reach majority usually turned over land to sons at age twenty-one, and sometimes before. Daughters received their dowries at marriage. Sons who lost their fathers in their minority got their inheritances at age twenty-one, and sometimes they were allowed to manage their property from age seventeen or eighteen. Orphaned daughters received their portions at age sixteen in Maryland and eighteen in Virginia, or earlier if they married young. See Lorena S. Walsh, "Till Death Us Do Part': Marriage and Family in Seventeenth-Century Maryland," in Thad W. Tate and David L. Ammerman, eds., *The Chesapeake in the Seventeenth Century: Essays on Anglo-American Society* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1979), 126-152; Robert Beverley, *The History and Present State of Virginia* (1705), ed. Louis B. Wright (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1947), 260.

demands, planters shifted more of their energies into producing goods and services for a growing resident population. This was a one-time change that inevitably brought a drop in per capita income earned from exports. Falling tobacco prices and a shortage of cheap labor made the transition infinitely more difficult for the ordinary Chesapeake planter.<sup>17</sup>

A third difference between immigrants and natives was that creoles were bound—both economically and socially—to the area of their birth in a way few immigrants ever were. Within a locality, at least the first and perhaps the second native-born generation found the obligations that kin ties imposed or the help that kin networks could supply a sufficient inducement to remain in the area where they had been raised. In the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, immigrants who failed to acquire land in one place were likely to move to another where opportunity appeared greater. Natives were much more likely to stay put, either from an obligation to help younger brothers, sisters, and cousins or from an expectation of aid and support from other kin. Given their higher level of commitment to a locality, creoles might have been more willing during bad times to devise ways to get by in the neighborhood where they had been born rather than to throw in the towel and move on.<sup>18</sup>

Sometime later than among whites, similar demographic changes appeared in the black population. Although in the region overall enslaved blacks were not yet fully reproducing, in the first three decades of the eighteenth century there were marked differences between reproductive outcomes on estates composed almost entirely of newly acquired slaves and on estates whose owners had earlier embraced slavery. Planters who obtained bondpeople through the provisioning trade with the West Indies in the 1660s and 1670s

17. Russell R. Menard, "Immigrants and Their Increase: The Process of Population Growth in Early Colonial Maryland," in Aubrey C. Land, Lois Green Carr, and Edward C. Papenfuss, eds., *Law, Society, and Politics in Early Maryland* (Baltimore, 1977), 88–110; Menard, "British Migration to the Chesapeake Colonies in the Seventeenth Century," in Lois Green Carr, Philip D. Morgan, and Jean B. Russo, eds., *Colonial Chesapeake Society* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1988), 99–132; Menard, "The Tobacco Industry," *Res. Econ. Hist.*, V (1980), 109–177; Menard and Lorena S. Walsh, *The Demography of Somerset County, Maryland: A Progress Report*, Newberry Papers in Family and Community History, paper 81-2 (Chicago, 1981); Lorena S. Walsh, "Summing the Parts: Implications for Estimating Chesapeake Output and Income Subregionally," *WMQ*, 3d Ser., LVI (1999), 53–94; Walsh, "Differential Cultural Impact of Free and Coerced Migration," in Eltis, ed., *Coerced and Free Migration*, 117–151; James Horn, *Adapting to a New World: English Society in the Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1994), chaps. 1, 3; Darrett B. Rutman and Anita H. Rutman, "Of Agues and Fevers: Malaria in the Early Chesapeake," *WMQ*, 3d Ser., XXXIII (1976), 31–60.

18. Lorena S. Walsh, "Staying Put or Getting Out: Findings for Charles County, Maryland, 1650–1720," *WMQ*, 3d Ser., XLIV (1987), 89–103. See also Clemens, *Atlantic Economy*, chap. 5.

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...Annals," 1780, p. 1  
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...Morgan, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery* (Philadel-  
...2004), 84-87.

bought, as was the common practice on Barbados, relatively even numbers of men and women. Such balanced sex ratios enabled most enslaved adults living on these plantations to find partners and to begin having children. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, these early slaveowners' sons and daughters were inheriting enslaved workforces that were primarily native born. On the whole, second- and third-generation elite creole planters inherited labor forces that were growing through births at a much higher rate than those of planters who had more recently acquired their first permanently bound human property. The costs for further increasing their workforces were thus lower than among families who started acquiring slaves at a later date.<sup>19</sup>

By the 1720s, although Africans still predominated among enslaved adults in the two colonies overall and sex ratios still favored males (who might have been brought in slightly higher proportions in cargoes of slaves coming directly from Africa), the proportions of black women and children were rising, especially in long-settled counties. In a given area, the proportion of dependent slaves could rise dramatically over the course of a few years, should the number of new imports decline. The Rutmans have estimated, for example, that in Middlesex County, Virginia, in 1710 about 70 percent of the black labor force were prime adults but that, by the 1720s, the proportion of prime workers had plummeted to near 40 percent. Similarly, in parts of Maryland in the first quarter of the eighteenth century nearly 70 percent of enslaved workers were productive adults, but in subsequent decades this proportion declined to less than 60 percent. These demographic changes had an impact on plantation costs, organization of work, and product per hand. At the same time, however, native-born slaves' ability to more than reproduce themselves eliminated the recurring capital expenditures planters who purchased indentured servants were required to make, and which West Indian slaveowners continued to incur owing to the lethal disease environment of the Caribbean and the harsh work routines associated with the cultivation and processing of sugar. The costs of rearing enslaved children to maturity were spread over a number of years, and, unlike the purchase of expensive Africans, could be paid for in large part by diverting a bit more labor into raising extra corn. Cloth was the only item that had to be purchased for young slaves from the proceeds of the tobacco crop, and, since planters allotted children only a bare minimum, this added outlay was hardly significant. Moreover, planters passed some of the costs of child rearing onto enslaved parents. Enslaved

19. Coombs, "Building 'The Machine,'" chap. 7. For slave-buying patterns in Barbados, see Jennifer L. Morgan, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery* (Philadelphia, 2004), 84-87.

mothers were required to make clothing for their younger children, and both parents often devoted much of their scant spare time to raising or catching food to improve the family's diet. As in the white population, an increased dependency ratio was a onetime transition from an age-imbalanced immigrant workforce with extremely high productivity to a more demographically normal but less productive one overall.<sup>20</sup>

#### *Developing Regional Economies*

The prolonged slump in tobacco prices between 1680 and 1729 prompted planters to adopt new strategies for coping with hard times. The strategy varied depending on the strain of tobacco grown and on the sorts of soils available. Beginning in 1681, prices fell and remained depressed (except for a brief recovery around 1700) until the 1710s, and then they improved modestly. The price of oronoco tobacco, the sort grown on Maryland's lower Western and upper Eastern shores, the Virginia side of the Potomac, and the north side of the Rappahannock, slumped most precipitously. It fell under a penny a pound in 1681 and remained stubbornly below this dismal level until 1713. The price of the sweet-scented strain, the variety usually cultivated between the north side of the James River and the south side of the Rappahannock, and the sort most favored by English consumers, also dropped to little more than a penny a pound in the early 1680s. Sweet-scented growers enjoyed a brief boom in the middle 1700s and again between 1715 and 1720 but suffered another severe slump in the 1720s (Figure 1).<sup>21</sup>

Stagnant European demand, warfare from 1689 to 1697 and again from 1702 to 1713 that disrupted markets and sent shipping costs skyrocketing, and additional English taxes and marketing charges all contributed to these woes. Until the late 1680s, planters and merchants continually improved productivity in cultivating and processing the leaf, in packing, and in shipping, thus lowering costs. In these circumstances, Chesapeake planters could still maintain a modest prosperity, while ever more European consumers could

20. Russell R. Menard, "The Maryland Slave Population, 1658-1730: A Demographic Profile of Blacks in Four Counties," *WMQ*, 3d Ser., XXXII (1975), 29-54; Allan Kulikoff, "The Beginnings of the Afro-American Family in Maryland," in Land, Carr, and Papenfuse, eds., *Law, Society, and Politics in Early Maryland*, 171-196; Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves*, chap. 8; Kulikoff, "A 'Prolifick' People," *So. Stud.*, XVI (1977), 391-428; Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 58-101; Darrett B. Rutman and Anita H. Rutman, *A Place in Time: Middlesex County, Virginia, 1650-1750* (New York, 1984), 187-188; Rutman and Rutman, *A Place in Time: Explicatus* (New York, 1984), chap. 12; Trevor Burnard, *Creole Gentlemen: The Maryland Elite, 1691-1776* (New York, 2002), 38-41; Coombs, "Building 'The Machine,'" chap. 7; Harris, *History of Human Populations*, II, *Migration, Urbanization, and Structural Change*, 340-342, 346-350, 400-401.

21. Walsh, "Summing the Parts," *WMQ*, 3d Ser., LVI (1999), 53-94.

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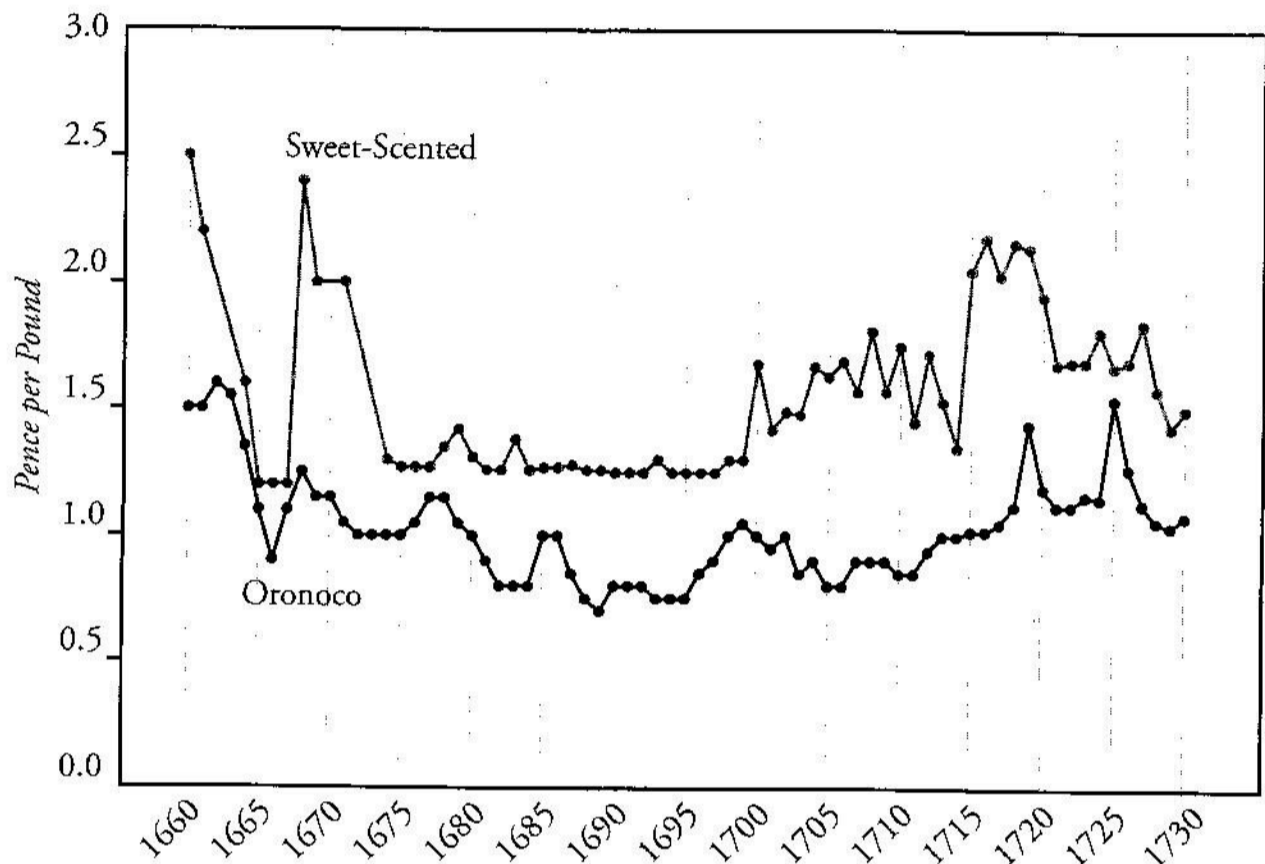


FIGURE 1. Oronoco and Sweet-Scented Tobacco Prices, 1660-1730. Drawn by Kimberly Foley. Menard, "The Tobacco Industry in the Chesapeake Colonies, 1617-1730: An Interpretation," *Res. Econ. Hist.*, V (1980), 157-166; John J. McCusker, "Colonial Statistics," in Susan B. Carter et al., eds., *Historical Statistics of the United States: Earliest Times to the Present*, millennial ed., 5 vols. (New York, 2006), V, 681-683.

afford to buy the alluring weed. By the early 1690s, most established planters had achieved the highest output per worker that could be obtained with the existing technologies, and, indeed, these production levels were never again equaled. Rising prices of land and labor meant that the average planter could cut his costs no further. And, with the price of manufactured tobacco no longer falling, few additional Europeans took up smoking. Chesapeake planters—in the aggregate—ceased expanding production. Consequently, income from tobacco, both per taxable and per capita, declined to a low in 1705 and exhibited only a modest recovery by the 1720s.<sup>22</sup>

Regionwide estimates of tobacco production and income, however, ob-

22. See sources cited in note 6, above, and R. C. Nash, "The Organization of Trade and Finance in the British Atlantic Economy, 1600-1830," in Peter A. Coclanis, ed., *The Atlantic Economy during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: Organization, Operation, Practice, and Personnel* (Columbia, S.C., 2005), 111, 126.

score the markedly different experiences of planters farming in sweet-scented, oronoco, and peripheral areas. Through 1730, residents of the peripheral tobacco areas (the lower James River basin and the lower Delmarva Peninsula), where only low-quality tobacco could be grown on the small proportion of this region's land capable of supporting any sort of agriculture, were about 20 percent of the total Chesapeake population. Few soils in these places were suitable for tobacco, and most planters dropped the staple crop entirely when tobacco prices were low overall, and especially abysmal for the inferior grades that they could raise. These planters turned instead to the production of naval stores, timber, cider, small grains, corn, and livestock as well as to subsistence farming. This shift was well under way by the mid-1670s, when tobacco from the periphery constituted only about 10 percent of the region's total exports and export earnings had already dropped to about two pounds per taxable, less than half that obtained elsewhere in the Chesapeake.

Between the mid-1670s and 1702, residents of the periphery suffered a further halving in export income, and yearly returns per taxable remained under one pound thereafter. Falling tobacco prices after 1680 served to reinforce, rather than to initiate, changes in the way Euro-American settlers on the periphery made their living. By about 1700, in the periphery earnings from the staple had become a minor factor in the calculations of all but a few fortunate planters who had access to exceptionally fertile soils capable of producing crops that could compete with those of the Western Shore. By 1710, planters in these areas produced only 5 percent of the region's tobacco exports. Most local entrepreneurs who were seeking greater fortunes looked primarily to some combination of local and intercontinental markets, unrelated to the tobacco trade, for new opportunities.<sup>23</sup>

When the peripheral tobacco-growing areas are excluded, revised output and income estimates suggest that planters in prime tobacco country realized higher earnings from exports across the seventeenth century than previously thought — about £5 per taxable rather than about £3.5, a sufficient inducement to persuade most to continue growing the weed. Similarly, income per capita hovered around £2 rather than £1. Moreover, after 1710, residents of oronoco areas were earning about £1 more apiece each year from the staple than were residents of sweet-scented areas (Figures 2, 3). The oronoco-growing areas accounted for about a third of the region's total population, but it produced half of the tobacco exported in the last quarter of the seventeenth century. Between 1710 and 1730, this subregion produced two-thirds of Chesapeake tobacco exports. Oronoco growers countered the lower prices their more

23. Walsh, "Summing the Parts," *WMQ*, 3d Ser., LVI (1999), 53–94.



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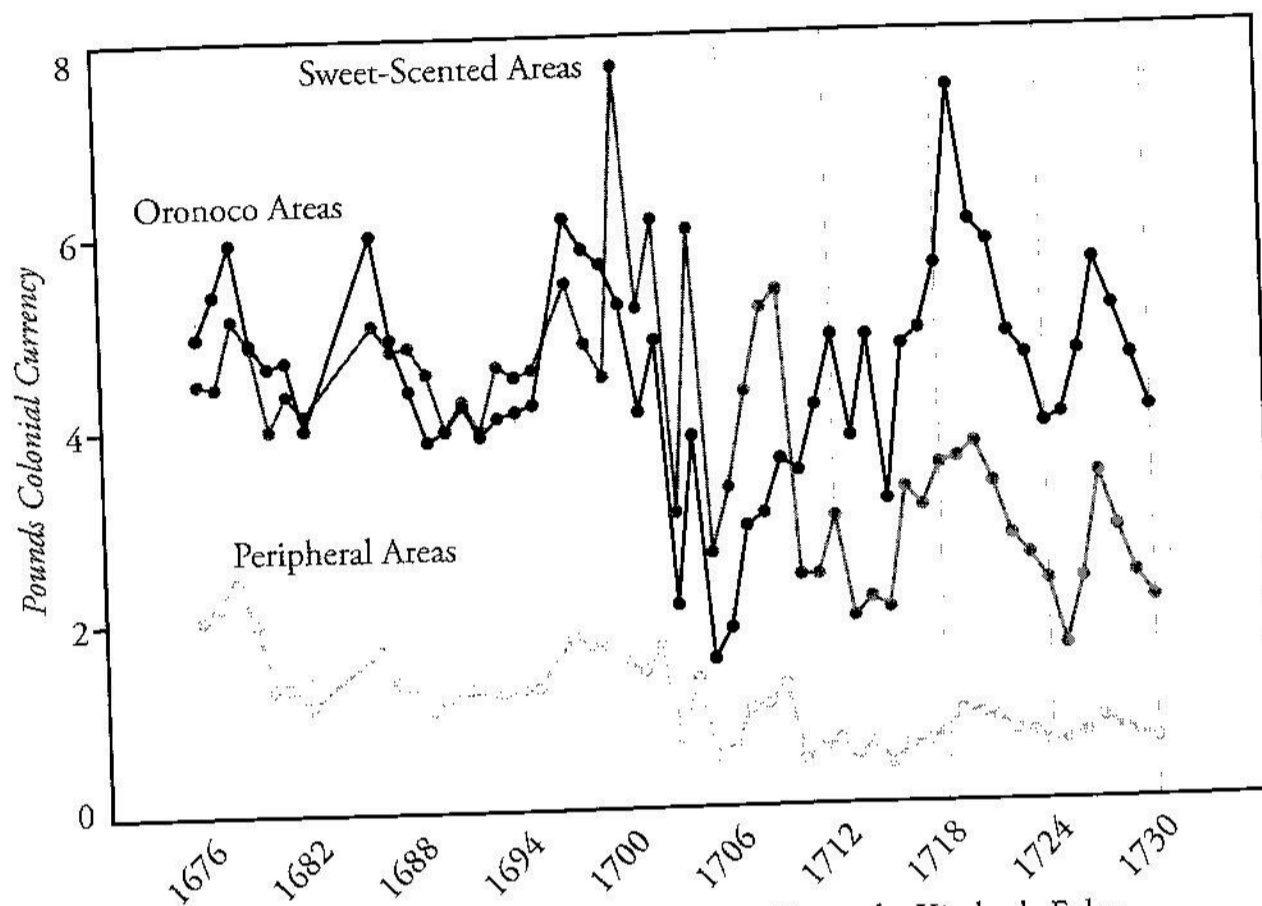


FIGURE 2. Tobacco Income per Taxable, 1676-1730. Drawn by Kimberly Foley. Lorena S. Walsh, "Summing the Parts: Implications for Estimating Chesapeake Output and Income Subregionally," *WMQ*, 3d Ser., LVI (1999), 88-94.

ordinary leaf commanded by making as much tobacco as they could. This strain was marketed in Britain and, from the turn of the eighteenth century, also increasingly reexported to new continental European consumers.

Sweet-scented growers, whose family members and large workforces accounted for nearly half of the total population, in contrast, attempted to capitalize on the price differential between the two strains by improving the quality rather than increasing the quantity of their output. Since the soils where sweet-scented could be grown were limited to the lower peninsula of Virginia and parts of the lower Rappahannock basin (see Map 6), this strain accounted for a steadily decreasing proportion of Chesapeake tobacco exports. Between 1675 and 1705, over 40 percent of exports came from the sweet-scented subregion, but as settlement expanded into the hinterlands, where only oronoco would grow, the share dropped to just over a quarter.

Up to the decade of the 1700s, the oronoco and sweet-scented areas remained in a relatively integrated market. Prices for the two strains moved in tandem, and levels and trends in income per taxable and per capita were quite similar. Neither subregion emerged with a clear advantage; what sweet-

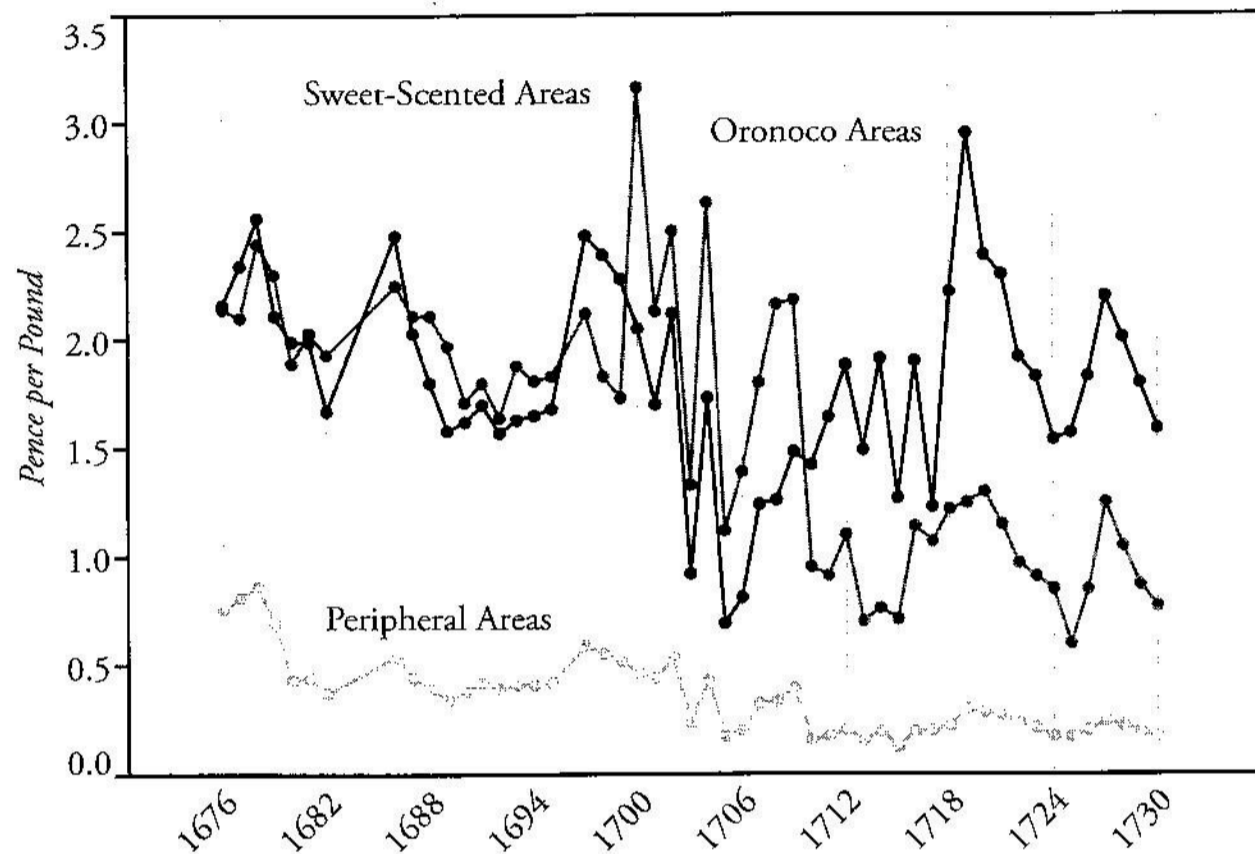


FIGURE 3. Tobacco Income per Capita, 1676-1730. Drawn by Kimberly Foley. Lorena S. Walsh, "Summing the Parts: Implications for Estimating Chesapeake Output and Income Subregionally," *WMQ*, 3d Ser., LVI (1999), 88-94.

scented growers lost in diminished output was offset by higher prices for what they did produce. Production per taxable dropped drastically in both oronoco and sweet-scented areas after 1700, but with differing results in terms of income. In the first decade of the eighteenth century, with the price of sweet-scented tobacco rising, producers in this subregion fared much better than did those who grew the more common oronoco strain. For a short time, the shift in emphasis from quantity to quality paid off. Higher profits underwrote new investments in African slaves, sustained the political power of the tidewater Virginia elite, and helped to finance the construction of most of the early, well-built public buildings and the initial development of viable urban settlements in the lower tidewater. Meanwhile, in the oronoco areas output and earnings dropped to lower levels than planters had experienced up to this time. Many of the first generation of native-born whites coming of age around the turn of the eighteenth century in the oronoco-growing region fared less well economically than had their immigrant parents, as, for example, did Robert Cole, Jr.<sup>24</sup>

24. *Ibid.*

pardoned. An upturn in tobacco prices beginning the next year brought a temporary halt to agitation for a cessation.<sup>26</sup>

In 1713, in response to another price slump, the Virginia governor and legislature tried a new tact, enacting a tobacco-inspection system that included most of the features of later, successful acts. This law foundered in 1717, though, more from problems with political patronage than from planter opposition to regulation per se. Governor Alexander Spotswood wanted to reward burgesses who supported his policies with tobacco inspectorships. Middling and small planters feared that such politically and economically powerful men who were both growers and buyers of tobacco would act partially to advance their own interests, so they refused to obey a law that was shortly disallowed by the king at the behest of British tobacco merchants. From 1724 on, limitations on the number of plants each laborer might tend were in effect. Although this later stinting might have forced some planters to cut back on their crops, in general it seems simply to have made into law what was already widespread practice. Those most affected by the new limits were probably small and middling growers who had not voluntarily switched to producing higher-quality tobacco, given the extra labor required for intermediate processing, and planters whose soils were incapable of yielding high-quality crops.<sup>27</sup>

In contrast, Maryland legislators, governors, and its proprietor were much less enamored of laws that would seriously curtail production. Repeatedly, they cited small-planter opposition as one reason for their failure to support either cessations, stints, or inspections. Periodic acts forbidding the tending of seconds (probably widely ignored) and the inclusion of trash tobacco or other foreign matter in hogsheads (much better enforced through individual information) was as far as that colony's officials were willing to go until 1728.

26. John C. Rainbolt, *From Prescription to Persuasion: Manipulation of Eighteenth [Seventeenth] Century Virginia Economy* (Port Washington, N.Y., 1974), chap. 5; Vertrees J. Wyckoff, *Tobacco Regulation in Colonial Maryland* (Baltimore, 1936), chaps. 3, 4, 5; Warren M. Billings, John E. Selby, and Thad W. Tate, *Colonial Virginia: A History* (White Plains, N.Y., 1986), chap. 10. For the 1682 riots, see *EJCCV*, I, 17-37, 48-49, 55; and Haskell, "Affections of the People," 304-313.

27. Leonidas Dodson, *Alexander Spotswood, Governor of Colonial Virginia, 1710-1722* (Philadelphia, 1932), chap. 4; Billings, Selby, and Tate, *Colonial Virginia*, chap. 10; Moss, "The Virginia Plantation System," chaps. 4, 5; Hemphill, "Virginia and the English Commercial System," chaps. 1-3; Calvin Brewster Coulter, Jr., "The Virginia Merchant" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1944), chap. 1; David Alan Williams, "Political Alignments in Colonial Virginia Politics, 1698-1750" (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1959), chaps 4-6; Beverley, *History and Present State of Virginia*, ed. Wright, 70-72, 74-75; Lewis Cecil Gray, *History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860*, 2 vols. (1932; rpt. Gloucester, Mass., 1958), I, chap. 10.

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In that year, they did pass a stint act (set at a higher limit than Virginia's), but the law seems to have been observed mostly in the breach and was soon revoked by the proprietor. Some of the representations might have been in part self-serving, but there seems no good reason to doubt Lord Baltimore's earlier assertion that most Maryland planters continued to regard the liberty of planting as much tobacco as they wished "their Birthright as Englishmen." The Maryland planters' intransigence was rooted in a strategy of maximum production that usually produced good results for oronoco growers. It was thus surely no accident that in 1732 it was poor oronoco planters in Northern Neck and Eastern Shore counties (who shared the Marylanders' interest in maximum production) who violently resisted the regulations regarding quality imposed by Virginia's new tobacco inspection act.<sup>28</sup>

#### *The Rise of the Commission System*

As increases in the volume of tobacco imports slowed between 1676 and 1700, and growth stopped completely over the first quarter of the new century, institutional arrangements in the tobacco trade became increasingly complex. In Britain, the small, temporary "adventure" form of enterprise that had prevailed at midcentury was supplanted by more complex and credit-dependent forms. Changes in the level of customs duties and in marketing arrangements encouraged concentration of the trade in the hands of a smaller number of large, heavily capitalized firms that specialized exclusively in Chesapeake commerce. Low prices and high duties hurt not only small planters in the colonies but also petty retailers and minor merchants in Britain.<sup>29</sup>

Beginning in the 1660s, large Barbadian sugar planters had responded to a similar problem — falling sugar prices on that island — by assuming the risk of shipping their crops to England, where they could obtain much higher prices than they could get by selling to merchants on the island. All staple planters who sold their crops in the colonies had the advantage of getting their proceeds immediately without having to wait until the crop was sold in Europe, and they did not have to hazard the risks of the ship's sinking or being captured, the crop being damaged in transit, or prices in Europe sud-

28. Wyckoff, *Tobacco Regulation*, chaps. 6, 7; Answer of Lord Baltimore to the Privy Council, Nov. 19, 1664, in William Hand Browne et al., eds., *Archives of Maryland*, 72 vols. (Baltimore, 1883-) III, 506-510; Billings, Selby, and Tate, *Colonial Virginia*, 240. Planter Thomas Cable reported that one Northampton County justice of the peace flagrantly violated the law by tending seconds and encouraged other planters to follow his example. See Cable to John Custis, Jan. 19, 1728, Thomas Cable Letterbook, 1723-1733, MS 173, MHS.

29. Jacob M. Price and Paul G. E. Clemens, "A Revolution of Scale in Overseas Trade: British Firms in the Chesapeake Trade, 1675-1775," *JEH*, XLVII (1987), 1-43.

denly collapsing. On the other hand, they gave up any opportunity to take advantage of the much higher prices offered in England from which planters who could wait longer for their pay might benefit substantially. Moreover, the Royal African Company, which had a monopoly of the trade in Africans, preferred to sell slaves for bills of exchange or for ready cash rather than for produce, and planters who consigned could draw such bills on their London commission agents (or "factors"). By the 1670s, the consignment system had become dominant in Barbados and was spreading to Jamaica and the Leeward Islands.<sup>30</sup>

As larger Chesapeake planters increasingly felt the pinch of falling tobacco prices in the 1680s and 1690s, they began to follow the West Indian example. In effect, the planters became entrepreneurs, shipping their crops on their own account and at their own risk to a commission agent in London or Bristol. Commission agents arranged for the unloading and storing of the cargo, paid the charges incurred for transport, freight, insurance, customs, and warehousing, sold the crop, and applied the profits according to the planter's instructions in return for a commission of 2.5 percent calculated on the gross value of all the transactions handled. During the war years of 1689 to 1697 and 1702 to 1713, the commission trade was suspended in the West Indies owing to heavy losses of sugar-carrying ships at sea. It expanded in the Chesapeake, however, where high wartime transport costs lowered tobacco prices in the country and raised them in Europe, but where shipping losses were not so severe. The large difference between prices offered in the country and those offered in Europe made elite planters more willing to hazard the greater risks the new system entailed. Moreover, an expanding marine insurance industry began to reduce the risks for those who were willing to pay the premiums. Consigning was most profitable during the peace years from 1714 until 1725, when tobacco prices in Europe began to fall. By 1730, as much as 40 percent of Chesapeake tobacco was shipped on consignment, either by planters or by local merchants. This tobacco was principally the produce of large planters who could afford to wait a year for their pay in order to get European prices for their weed, and who, as shipments of slaves direct from Africa became more common, had increasing need to draw bills of exchange to pay for them. The more regular correspondence between merchants and planters that the commission system necessitated also improved market in-

30. K. G. Davies, "The Origins of the Commission System in the West India Trade: The Alexander Prize Essay," Royal Historical Society, *Transactions*, 5th Ser., II (1952), 89-107; Nash, "Organization of Trade and Finance," in Coclanis, ed., *Atlantic Economy*, 95-151; Russell R. Menard, *Sweet Negotiations: Sugar, Slavery, and Plantation Agriculture in Early Barbados* (Charlottesville, Va., 2006), 2, 5-6, 91, 102-103, 121.

formation on both sides of the Atlantic. Middling and small planters, however, who still produced more than half of the region's tobacco, continued to sell their crops in the country to British factors or to local merchants.<sup>31</sup>

The consignment system promoted concentration of firms in England for several reasons. First, there were increased shipping risks. Merchants had to buy or charter ships with a large return capacity, and they would lose money if they failed to attract enough consignments to fill the vessels they sent out. Second, at the accession of James II, Parliament raised the duty on tobacco consumed in Britain from two pence to five pence per pound, more than 100 percent of the pre-duty price prevailing in England. Merchants opted either to pay the new impost immediately in order to obtain a 10 percent discount or to give bond for it. These financial responsibilities discouraged marginal importers, since only affluent merchants could find adequate securities to countersign their bonds. In addition, only larger firms could command the confidence of elite planters and could provide the range of commercial and quasi-banking services that these planters came to expect. Moreover, larger firms might have enjoyed economies of scale in wholesaling tobacco and in purchasing goods directly from manufacturers. Between 1676 and 1686, the number of Londoners who imported Chesapeake tobacco was halved from 573 to 292, and the average annual volume of tobacco these importers handled rose from 22,000 pounds to 59,000 pounds. Bankruptcies among merchants between 1710 and 1716, occasioned in part by more stringent collection of overdue customs bonds, further reduced the number of London tobacco importers to only 117 in 1719. These importers now handled an average of 193,000 pounds a year. No really large tobacco merchants operated in Bristol, but there, too, the number of importing firms declined after 1680, while the average poundage the surviving firms handled also rose.<sup>32</sup>

During King William's and Queen Anne's wars, trade with the outports expanded at the expense of London and Bristol because vessels sailing from

31. Price and Clemens, "Revolution of Scale," *JEH*, XLVII (1987), 6, 16-21; Nash, "Organization of Trade," in Coclanis, ed., *Atlantic Economy*, 98-112; Bergstrom, *Markets and Merchants*, chap. 6. In contrast to sugar and tobacco growers, South Carolina rice planters seldom used the consignment system. There were few quality gradations in rice and, hence, few opportunities to earn higher prices by consigning better grades to British markets. Rice planters did, however, later use the consignment system for indigo, a crop also characterized by wide variations in quality (Nash, "Organization of Trade," in Coclanis, ed., *Atlantic Economy*, 107-110). For general increases in the speed and extent of transatlantic communications, see Steele, *English Atlantic*, chaps. 7-9, 11.

32. Jacob M. Price, *Perry of London: A Family and a Firm on the Seaborne Frontier, 1615-1753* (Cambridge, Mass., 1992), 95-100; Price and Clemens, "Revolution of Scale," *JEH*, XLVII (1987), 9-22.

ports such as Liverpool, Whitehaven, and Glasgow on Britain's west coast were in less danger from capture by French privateers than were vessels whose home ports were on the south coast within easier reach of the enemy. Starting in the mid-1680s, Liverpool merchants began competing for a share of the region's tobacco, but initially they had limited success. In the early 1700s, some Liverpool traders still found themselves shuttling ships from one Chesapeake river basin to another in order to obtain a full cargo of tobacco, while others sent ships to the lower Eastern Shore, where they encountered few competitors for that region's poor-quality crops. Early Liverpool tobacco traders seem to have found ingenious ways to defraud royal customs agents by claiming to have imported large quantities of damaged, and thus duty-free, tobacco and by finding ways to understate the amount of tobacco they actually imported. Buying tobacco with indentured servants lured from Lancashire and Ireland at a time when European laborers were in short supply also afforded some aspiring Liverpool tobacco dealers a foothold in the staple trade. After the union with Scotland in 1707, Glasgow merchants, who enjoyed both a quicker and safer shipping route and lower operating costs than the English, also formally entered a trade in which they had previously participated only as interlopers. By the 1720s, the outports and Scotland together handled about 40 percent of Chesapeake tobacco.<sup>33</sup>

London, outport, and Scottish merchants catered to different sets of British and of European consumers with varying tastes. Sweet-scented growers enjoyed an advantage over oronoco growers in the home market at the beginning of the period, but by the 1720s their position was less favorable. Bristol merchants, who continued to deal primarily in finer tobacco for home consumption, did compete aggressively against London factors for a larger share of the crops from the York and Rappahannock river basins. Given the high duties imposed on tobacco sold domestically, however, the number of British consumers, the major buyers of sweet-scented, was not expanding much, and they were also finding less expensive, good-grade oronoco increasingly attractive. London merchants Micajah and Richard Perry, for example, informed Virginia planter John Custis in 1716: "You would hardly believe if we should tell you what a run there hath been in the home consumption of smaller sort of Browne aranoka tobacco which hath ben sold from 8 ½ to 9d p[er] pound and is so to this day. Which wonderfully lengthens out

33. Price and Clemens, "Revolution of Scale," *JEH*, XLVII (1987), 24-37; Lorena S. Walsh, "Liverpool's Slave Trade to the Colonial Chesapeake: Slaving on the Periphery," in David Richardson, Suzanne Schwarz, and Anthony Tibbles, eds., *Liverpool and the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (Liverpool, 2007), 98-137.



After 1713, merchants from the English outports and shortly thereafter from Scotland began to compete vigorously with London factors for the lower-grade, dull oronoco leaf grown along the James, the Potomac, and on the Eastern Shore that was suited to the French market. Outport merchants bought tobacco in the country at increasingly attractive prices, and, in order to secure their cargoes, either sold their merchandise more cheaply or extended planters more credit—or both. Growers of sweet-scented tobacco realized fewer benefits, since, with the partial exception of Bristol, most outport merchants had little interest in handling the more expensive strain and most did not care to trouble themselves with buying on consignment. In addition, the practice of stemming sweet-scented tobacco, which was a major means for cutting the cost of freight, limited possible alternative markets, since stemmed tobacco was a commodity the Scotch “did not care to be concerned in.” The entry of Scottish and outport merchants thus benefited primarily small and middling oronoco growers. Large planters, who continued to consign their own crops to England, realized gains from increased competition among outport merchants only if they sold ordinary oronoco leaf received for land rents, official salaries, or professional fees in the country.<sup>36</sup>

#### *Pragmatic Adaptations*

The Reverend Hugh Jones, an Anglican minister who taught natural philosophy and mathematics at the College of William and Mary between 1717 and 1721, concluded an account of Virginia that he published in England in 1724 with a long appendix in which he laid out a scheme for improving

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*Tobacco Adventure to Russia: Enterprise, Politics, and Diplomacy in the Quest for a Northern Market for English Colonial Tobacco, 1676–1722*, American Philosophical Society, *Transactions*, n.s., LI, pt. 1 (Philadelphia, 1961); Price, “The Economic Growth of the Chesapeake,” *JEH*, XXIV (1964), 496–511.

36. Robert Carter to William Dawkins, Aug. 1, 1723, Robert Carter Letterbook, 1723–1724, UVa (quotation); Jacob M. Price, “The Rise of Glasgow in the Chesapeake Tobacco Trade, 1701–1775,” *WMQ*, 3d Ser., XI (1954), 179–199; Paul G. E. Clemens, “The Rise of Liverpool, 1665–1750,” *Economic History Review*, 2d Ser., XXIX (1976), 211–225; Clemens, *Atlantic Economy*, chaps. 1, 4; Hemphill, “Virginia and the English Commercial System,” chaps. 1, 2. For the Dutch market, see David Ormrod, *The Rise of Commercial Empires: England and the Netherlands in the Age of Mercantilism, 1650–1770* (Cambridge, 2003), 198–201. John Oldmixon, *The British Empire in America* (1741), 2 vols. (New York, 1969), 340, noted an increase in demand for oronoco in Continental markets. See also William Woodford to Charles Chiswell, July 31, 1725, Letterbook of William Woodford, 1723–1737, University of Kentucky, Lexington, microfilm, M-1060-1, CWL; John Tayloe’s letters for 1716–1719, in Stephen Lyde Account Book, 1708–1711, and Accounts and Letters of John Tayloe I and John Tayloe II, 1714–1778, Tayloe Family Papers, MSS1T2118, b1, VHS; *Byrd Correspondence*, I, 376–377; and Higginson and Bird Letterbook, Galloway/Maxcy/Markoe Family Papers, 1654–1888, LC.