

Typology of Two Colonies: New France and Chesapeake Colonies

Colonialism the Western Hemisphere took many forms depending on the specific foundational purposes of each colony, the geographic realities of the locations of the colonies, and also the mother-country whose colonizers ultimately arrived in the targeted areas. Nancy Shoemaker, in her article *A Typology of Colonialism*, provides readers with a dozen different definitive forms of colonialism that were either attempted or successfully executed in the Americas or the Pacific. Alan Taylor, in his book *Colonial America: A Very Short Introduction*, examines basic defining characteristics of actual colonies established throughout the Americas. Applying Shoemaker's typologies to Taylor's overview, it is possible to contrast colonies of the Western Hemisphere. Based on this application, two colonies that appear ripe for comparison are the "extractive" colony of French New France and the English "planter" colonies of the Chesapeake Bay. These two colonies typify these typologies of colonialism as their purposes and geographies led to significantly different long-term outcomes.

The French colony of New France typifies the extractive colony as defined by Nancy Shoemaker. Shoemaker's definition of an extractive colony is "all the colonizers want is a raw material found in a particular locale" and then cites beaver furs specifically as an example of such a raw material. Furthermore, while extractive colonizers may be destructive to indigenous people, they "more typically depend upon native diplomatic mediation, environmental knowledge, and labor." Marriages between colonizers and native people were even common in extractive colonies.¹ New France had one particularly valuable resource to extract: animal furs. Alan Taylor explains "furs were an ideal colonial commodity that . . . could more than pay for its transatlantic transportation" and were of abundance in Canada.² French traders developed strong trading relationships with Indian tribes throughout the interior of the northern region and

¹ Nancy Shoemaker, "A Typology of Colonialism," *Perspectives on History* Vol. 53, No. 7 (Oct. 2015), 29.

² Alan Taylor, "New France" in *Colonial America: A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 35.

were not intended to be destructive. The outpost of Quebec “depended upon Indian goodwill to survive and prosper” as opposed to the dominating presence of the Spanish much further to the south.³ While building strong relationships and alliances with certain tribes or groups created tension with others, the French generally needed Indian trade partners to extract the furs they desired.⁴ A final piece of evidence Taylor provides in support of New France as an extractive colony is in the widespread practice of intermarriage between French traders and native women.⁵ The demand for a raw material, dependence on native populations to help obtain the resource, and marriages formed between French and Indians all typify the extractive colony.

The English colonies of the Chesapeake Bay, Virginia and Maryland, demonstrated a different type of colonialism as defined by Shoemaker: the planter colony. In planter colonies, “colonizers institute mass production of a single crop” and colonizers may belong to an upper class that allows for significant control. Additionally, planter colonies “import African slaves or indentured laborers” when labor demands cannot be met by the native population.⁶ French people in Europe were mostly disinterested by creating farms in New France for a number of reasons.⁷ In the Chesapeake, the opposite was true. By the early 1600s, colonizer John Rolfe had begun the process of establishing tobacco as a main commodity in the colony. In a span of only 14 years from 1624 to 1638, production of tobacco increased from 200,000 pounds to 3,000,000 pounds.⁸ This increase had a profound effect on the colony, as “the colonial population surged from only 350 in 1616 to 13,000 by 1650 . . . to 41,000 in 1670”.⁹ The Chesapeake was ruled by upper class individuals who took positions in the government.¹⁰ Labor in the Chesapeake was generally performed by either indentured servants or African slaves. According to Taylor, “three-quarters of the immigrants arrived as indentured servants”.¹¹

³ Taylor, “New France”, *Colonial*, 36.

⁴ *Ibid*, 36-37.

⁵ *Ibid*, 43.

⁶ Shoemaker, *Typology*, 29.

⁷ Taylor, “New France”, *Colonial*, 42.

⁸ Alan Taylor, “Chesapeake Colonies” in *Colonial America: A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 56.

⁹ *Ibid*, 56-58.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 58.

¹¹ Taylor, “Chesapeake Colonies,” *Colonial*, 59.

However, by the late 1600s, the transition almost completely away from servants to slaves had occurred and the system of racism to support the shift took hold.¹²

The colonies of New France and the Chesapeake Bay had many distinct qualities that show a much different colonial typology as defined by Nancy Shoemaker. The evidence provided by Alan Taylor shows a New France as a colony focused on extracting fur resources from the region. The French were never able to establish a large population in the colony, and depended on relationships with Indians in order to extract the resource. On the other hand, the Chesapeake came to be defined by its tobacco production, a planter society that grew rapidly and shifted away from the labor of indentured servants to slaves throughout the 17th century. These two colonies typify the extractive and planter colonies.

¹² Taylor, "Chesapeake Colonies," *Colonial*, 63-64.

Works Cited:

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