

# **From 'Factions' to Attack Ads – A History of American Politics**

**Class 1**

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# What We Will Cover in the Course - 1

- Politics before the Constitution
  - The Four Founding Cultures and their impact
  - The American Revolution
  - Notes About the Constitution
- From Washington to the Civil War
  - Factions
  - The Origins and Demise of the First Party System
  - The Origins and Demise of the Second Party System
  - Major Trends impacting on Politics

# What We Will Cover in the Course - 2

- From the Civil War to World War I
  - Reconstruction
  - Politics in the Gilded Age
  - The Nuts and Bolts of Politics
  - Political Machines
- From World War I to World War II
  - The 1920s
  - The New Deal
  - Intervention vs Isolation

# What We Will Cover in the Course - 3

- From WWII to Obama
  - Cold War and McCarthyism
  - The 1960s & Political Polarization
    - The South Becomes Republican
  - The New Conservatism
  - The Impact of Television
    - Attack Ads & Political Commercials
- Some Changes – Political Conventions & Voting
- Notes on Some Key Elections
- Some Keys to the 2016 Presidential Election

# What We Will Cover Today

- The Four Founding Cultures and their impact on American Politics
- Politics and the American Revolution
- The Founding Fathers and the Constitution
- The Founding Fathers' Views of Factions

# The Regional Culture Origins of American Politics

# Founding Cultures

- Settlement of the New World Consisted of Several Distinct Founding Cultures
- They consisted of:
  - Puritan New England
  - The South
    - Virginia Tidewater
    - Deep South
  - The Mid-Atlantic Colonies
    - Delaware Valley
    - New York
  - The Appalachian Frontier
  - The Spanish Borderlands

# Roots of the Different Cultures

- Different National Origins
- Different dominant religions
- Different areas of origin within the British isles
- Migration to America from the distinct regions took place
  - In different time frames
  - Involved differing social strata in each region
- The areas or colonies settled had distinctive geographies, climates, and economies



# The South

## Virginia/Tidewater South

# The Virginians/Tidewater South

- Climate
  - Hot, humid summers with high mortality
- Settlement Patterns
  - Dispersed Settlement on rich alluvial soils
    - Riverine plantations
    - Dispersed farms
  - Only one Town in Virginia in 17<sup>th</sup> century
  - Where 2 or 3 roads met, there was often a tavern or pub with a courthouse and an Anglican church at major country crossroads

# The Virginians/Tidewater South

- Most settlers came from the South and West of England
  - This area of England was dominated by a small landowning class with large manor houses who lorded over a mass of tenant farmers in nearby villages, many of whom were being displaced by the enclosure movement
- Settlers consisted of
  - Indentured Servants (at least 75%)
  - Royalist Gentry
  - Slaves

# The Virginians/Tidewater South

- Social Structure
  - Colonial Elite of Plantation Owners – about 10%
  - Yeoman Farmers – about 20%-30%
  - Lower Classes = about 60%-70%
    - Tenant Farmers
    - Indentured Servants & Free Laborers
    - Dependent Paupers
    - Slaves

# The Virginia/Tidewater Elite

- In Tidewater, successful tobacco planters and Royalist emigres strove to duplicate the world of the rural English gentry
  - Thus, they built brick manors and housed their servants (and slaves) in cottages clustered in village-like residential areas
- Tidewater society was a society of a few haves and a great many have-nots

# Key Events

- Three events greatly affected the evolution of Virginia/Tidewater society
  - 1617: John Rolfe successfully transplanted West Indian strains of tobacco to the Chesapeake
  - 1619: The first Africans arrive in Virginia
    - Initially, they were treated as white indentured servants but by the 1660s, Africans were servants for life (i.e. slaves)
  - 1640s: The English Civil War and the recruitment efforts of Governor William Berkeley prompts a mass immigration of the families that would form the Tidewater aristocracy

# The Virginians/Tidewater South

- Slavery began in 1619. As time went on, slavery became harsher
  - 1660s: Slaves now served *durante vita* rather than limited terms of indenture
  - 1691: Freeing of slaves forbidden unless freed slaves were exiled from the colony
  - 1705: Prohibition of interracial marriage & criminalization of interracial sex by white women
  - As skin color became the mark of slave identity, race began to obscure social class divisions

# Views with Political Implications

- A commitment to the defense of slavery
- A belief that taxes should be low
- A feeling on the part of the plantation elite that they were being economically exploited
  - Dependency on a cash-crop economy over whose selling prices they had no control
  - Belief that the English merchants to whom they sold their tobacco exploited them



# Liberty vs Freedom

- We have a concept of freedom based on the concept that we as individuals have “rights” that have to be respected by the state
  - One of these rights is the right to the equal protection of the law
- The elites of Tidewater, the Deep South, and New Spain had a concept of liberty which saw freedom as a privilege, not as a right

# Cultural Ideas with Political Implications - 1

- Education for Elites but not for the Common People
- A contempt for manual labor
- A sense that only governmental and military service, plantation ownership & management, and intellectual pursuits were appropriate for a gentleman

# Cultural ideas with Political Implications - 2

- High value placed on authority and tradition
- Very little emphasis on equality and public participation in politics
- Strong sense of “honor”
  - Honor as virtue and good conduct
  - Honor as valor, bravery & willingness to defend his manliness and good reputation

# The Deep South

# Origins of the Deep South

- The Deep South was founded with the settlement of South Carolina in 1670-71 by the sons and grandsons of English settlers in Barbados
- Unlike the Tidewater elite, who sought to recreate the rural English society of the landed gentry, the Carolina elite sought to recreate the slave society of Barbados and the English Caribbean

# The Deep South Economy

- The Deep South economy was initially based on the cultivation of rice, indigo, and Sea Island long fiber cotton – all of which were labor-intensive and profitable if the work was done by unpaid labor
  - Later, short fiber cotton production became the basis of the Deep South economy
  - Like tobacco, cotton production tended to exhaust the soil, Hence the need for territorial expansion
  - With the invention of the cotton gin and the industrialization of cotton textile production, cotton production soared and slavery became seen as a positive good and an economic necessity

# Impact of Climate

- Since South Carolina and other areas where cotton and rice were grown were hot and sweltering in the summer
  - This led the planters to congregate in cities like Charleston and later New Orleans and Natchez where they could congregate, socialize, and enjoy the finer things of life
  - This led the planters to leave management of their plantations to hired overseers.

# The Impact of a Black Majority

- Unlike Tidewater, the Deep South had a black majority and significant slave mortality
  - Blacks lived in concentrated numbers in relative isolation from Whites
- To control this Black majority, the White planter elite adopted both a rigid slave code and a caste society that lasted for roughly 3 centuries



# A Distinctive Black Culture

- With newcomers arriving with every slave ship (including slaves illegally smuggled into the Deep South after 1808), the slave quarters featured a cosmopolitan variety of African languages and cultural practices
  - This facilitated the preservation of a distinct Afro-Caribbean culture, reflected in a distinctive cuisine and music that would later have a major cultural impact

# Socio-Cultural Implications

- Fear of slave insurrection (and the needs of cotton production) led to a society that was militarized, caste-structured, gun-toting, deferential to authority, and aggressively expansionistic
- The cultural attitudes that characterized the Tidewater elite characterized the Deep South elite to an even greater degree

# Puritan New England

# The Puritans

- The Puritans in England were largely an emerging middle class of small property owners, farmers, self-employed shopkeepers, and skilled artisans
  - They were highly literate
  - They felt threatened by the economic upheaval, crime, and poverty of an England undergoing a rural 'enclosure' movement that was driving many English peasants off the land
  - They were largely concentrated in East Anglia, a center of the textile industry which in the 1620s-1630s was in a depressed state, but also the most densely settled, urbanized, and educated part of England

# Reasons for Emigrating

- The Puritans came to New England with the idea of creating a new religious utopia - a “city on a hill” that would serve as a model for the rest of the world
  - The Puritans favored self-governing communities and were opposed to the creation of a landed aristocracy
  - Consequently, they allocated land to townships which then divided the land among individual families in a largely egalitarian way

# Geography & Climate

- New England had a distinctive geography which greatly influenced its subsequent economic and political development
  - Land was generally poor due to stony, glaciated soil
  - Rivers not generally navigable but fast-flowing
  - Near excellent ocean fishing areas
- New England had a wet temperate climate that was cold in winter with a short growing season
  - Healthy for European settlers but relatively unhealthy for Blacks

# New England Colonial Economy

- Family Farms
  - Pioneer/Subsistence
  - Largely Subsistence
- Fishing
  - Export of salted fish, furs, timber, and timber products (planks, ships' masts, barrel staves, barrels & charcoal)
- Shipbuilding and related enterprises
  - Sawmills
  - Iron foundries
  - Barrel makers
  - Sail makers

# Puritanism & Politics

- Puritanism (and Calvinism) contributed four major ideas – all with political implications:
  - First, the idea of “the city upon the hill”
    - This introduced an idealist and utopian strain of thinking into American politics
    - It carried implications for the role of the State
  - Second, the idea that every person should be able to read the Bible
    - This led to public grammar schools and near universal literacy
    - It also made a high level of education a mark of status



# Puritanism & Politics - 2

- Third, the idea that the godly should rule over the unregenerate. This idea led in two directions:
  - A state ruled by the godly should criminalize and punish sin
    - Led to the idea that if something was immoral, it should be illegal
  - The state should perfect the society by instituting the reforms and creating the infrastructure and educated populace necessary for godliness to flourish
- Fourth, the ideas of American Exceptionalism and Manifest Destiny

# The Middle Colonies

**New Netherlands**

# Historical Notes - 1

- What became New York City was established in 1624 as a purely commercial settlement by the Dutch West India Company
- The Dutch policy of religious toleration attracted a mix of Dutch Reformed, English Puritans, English and Welsh Quakers, German Protestants, Scandinavian Lutherans, French Huguenots, and Jews

## Historical Notes - 2

- Immigrants mostly family groups of modest means and mostly farmers or artisans
- Dutch were a minority in their own colony with non-Dutch whites nearly half the colonists
  - Given Holland's prosperity and religious tolerance, it was not a country that produced many emigrants
  - 10% of the colonists were enslaved Africans
- The Governor and an advisory council were both appointed by the Dutch West India Company

# The Middle Colonies

**Delaware Valley**

# Historical Notes: Pennsylvania

- In 1681, the Duke of York granted Pennsylvania to William Penn.
- Penn saw the new colony as a “holy experiment” and an “example to the nations”
- Unlike Massachusetts or Virginia/Tidewater South, there would be no privileged church, no tax-supported religious establishment, and equal rights for all, including non-Quakers and non-British

# The Quakers

- The Quakers believed that each person had an “inner light” by which he/she encountered God
- God was found through mystical personal experience, not through the reading of Scripture
- All were equal before God, regardless of race, sect, or gender
- The golden rule constituted the ethical norm

# The Middle Colonies: Pennsylvania

- Settlers
  - Like the New England Puritans, most came in freedom as families of middling means. Only a third were indentured servants
  - Nearly 10% were Irish.
  - There were also significant numbers of Welsh, Dutch, and Germans – most of whom came from the Rhineland and spoke a mixed German-Dutch Rhenish dialect.
  - The vast bulk of the English Quakers came from the North Midlands.



# Delaware & Hudson Valleys

- Settlement patterns
  - Generally small hamlets supported by market towns
- Geography
  - Rolling fertile countryside with several major navigable rivers
- Climate
  - Temperate & favorable to European settlement

# Delaware & Hudson Valley

- Economic Characteristics
  - Good grain and cattle producing area
  - Well-suited for commercial and industrial development
    - The estuaries of both the Hudson and Delaware rivers provided excellent sites for ports (e.g. New York City & Philadelphia)
  - Close to Philadelphia were large deposits of building stone, coal, copper, iron ore, and dense forests

# Political Implications

- In contrast to the Puritans, the Quakers believed the State should be limited in its role and functions
  - The Holy Experiment was to be built from the bottom up, not the top down
- A strong commitment to pacifism
  - This led to the eventual loss of Quaker political control due to the unwillingness of the Quaker elite to defend the society against Indian attack
- A strong belief that slavery was wrong and should be abolished

# Notes About the Mid-Atlantic Colonies

- Unlike New England and the Tidewater/Deep South
  - They were ethnically and religiously diverse
  - They practiced religious toleration
- Unlike the Tidewater South (and much of New England)
  - They had an economy of small farms, commercial enterprises, and pre-industrial craft manufacturing
- They defined a distinctive culture and social order that precociously anticipated the American future

# Frontier Settlers

Border English, Lowland Scots & Scots-Irish

# The Borderlands

- Frontier largely settled by immigrants from the English-Scotch frontier and from Ulster
  - Northern counties of England
  - Scottish lowlands
  - Scottish and English settlers in Ulster
- War and conflict defined much of the culture of this borderlands area
  - The borderland area was a frequent theater of war
  - It was an area dominated by local warlords

# The Borderlands

- In this area of endemic violence,
  - Blood relationships loomed large. Loyalty to the family and the clan ranked far above loyalty to the crown
  - There was little trust in legal institutions. People resorted to either personal violence, clan feuds, or a powerful warlord for vengeance or protection
- Borderland culture was carried by the Scots and English settlers to Ulster – another land of endemic violence

# Notes about Borderland History

- In the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, the borderlands were finally pacified
- As a result of pacification, economic exploitation, famine, and decline of the linen industry, there was a large scale migration to America
  - Between 1717 and 1775, more than 250,000 emigrated to America



# Characteristics of Borderland Emigrants

- Most of the emigrants were tenant farmers with a minority of craftsmen and petty traders
  - Many from Ulster had worked in the linen trade, but had been thrown out of work by a major recession from 1772-1774
  - English border migrants were mostly Anglicans while the Scots and those from Ulster were mostly Presbyterian
- A small minority were landowning farmers
- About 1%-2% were members of the gentry or persons of wealth

# The American Frontier

- Because the American backcountry was occupied by strong and warlike Indian tribes, it was just as dangerous as Ulster and the British borderlands had been
- Warfare between borderers and Indians began in the late-17<sup>th</sup> century and continued until the early-19<sup>th</sup> century

# The Frontier

- Socio-economic class structure
  - A few very rich landlords.
    - The top decile of landowners owned 40% to 80% of the land in East Tennessee
  - A middle class that was small by comparison with other colonies
  - A large class of squatters who occupied the land but whose legal title to the land was not recognized
  - A large class of landless tenants
    - 1/3 to 1/2 of the taxable white males owned no land

# The Frontier

- Notes About the Backcountry Elite
  - Elite status was dependent upon one's wealth and power
    - A backcountry family that lost its property fell to a lower level of society and lost its elite state. There was no concept of genteel poverty
    - Unlike other elites, it was not distinguished by learning, breeding, intellect, or refinement
  - People who rose to positions of leadership commonly did so by bold and decisive acts
  - The politics of the backcountry consisted of charismatic leaders and personal followings

# Cultural Traits with Political Implications

- Strong tendency toward vigilantism
  - Vigilantism on the frontier reflected the tradition of retributive folk justice existing in the British borderlands
- Strong sense of personal “honor”
  - A man’s worth was based on others’ views of his courage and willingness to confront any insult or challenge
- A tradition of weak state authority combined with a popular distrust of the state

# Notes on Government

- All Colonial Governments consisted of an appointed Governor and an elected Assembly
- Local governments varied
  - Except for New England
  - In Tidewater, it was based on the county & parish
    - Governed by an elite of mostly plantation owners appointed by the governor
  - In the Middle Colonies, it was based on the county
    - Governed by elected county commissioners with other subordinate elected officials
  - On the Frontier, there was an elected sheriff
    - Mostly governed by ad hoc vigilantes or posses