

Wits

EMPIRE

A social matching game for 3 to 6 players. 52 cards. North America, 1500s to 1754.

What is on a card

A picture and a fact. Nothing else. Every card belongs to one **camp** — Spanish, French, Dutch, British. Every card is also about one **issue** — Economy, Religion, Native Relations, Settlement, Rule and Law. The card tells you neither. Working out the camp is the game.

Setup

Deal 5 cards to each player. Turn one card face up to start the pile, and the dealer names its camp out loud. The rest becomes the draw pile. If the draw pile runs out, shuffle the discards back over, leaving the top card where it is.

Your turn – the camp is the thing

Play a card from the same camp as the top card, and say the camp out loud.

“French.”

That is the whole turn. You never have to name the issue. **If you cannot play, dig:** draw one card and play it if it fits. Still stuck, draw again — up to three cards — then your turn ends.

The crossover – how the camp changes

Stuck in a camp you do not hold? Play a card from a **different** camp that is about the **same issue** as the card on top — and say both.

“Dutch. Same issue – religion.”

The camp is now yours, and the next player has to match it. Apart from a Wild Wit, this is the only way the camp changes. It is the hardest move in the game and the one that wins it.

Challenge – the rule that makes it Wits

Any player, at any time, may challenge a declaration — a camp, or a claimed crossover. **Wrong** and the player takes the card back and draws 2. **Right** and the challenger draws 2. The teacher's key settles it. Nothing is printed on the cards, so you can bluff — and that is the point.

Three questions that crack most cards

Does this sound like **trade, farming, or mining**? Does **religion or tolerance** play a big role? Are Native relations built on **alliances, or on control**?

Twin chain and Outwit

Hold a card matching the top card on **both camp and issue** and you may put it straight down, saying both. On your own turn it goes down as a **second card** after a legal play — the only way to shed two facts at once. Out of turn, slap it on the pile and play continues from you.

Winning

First player out of cards wins. At one card left, say **“Wit!”** Caught silent before the next player goes, draw 2. You cannot go out on a Wild Wit — your last card has to be a fact.

Action cards

Action cards are discarded onto the pile like any other card, but they carry no camp and no issue — so **the last fact card played is still what you match against**. Wild Wit is the one exception: the camp it names replaces the fact card's.

Wild Wit — play it on anything except a Devil's Advocate, then name the camp that comes next.

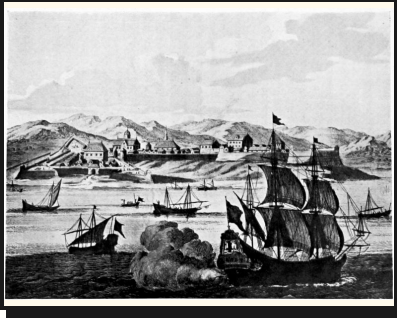
Quick Wit — this **is** your turn, and you need no legal play. Lay it down together with any card, even one that matches nothing by camp or issue. Name that card's camp, then argue the connection out loud. **The table judges.** Accepted, and you have shed two cards in one turn. Rejected, and you take both back and draw 2.

Devil's Advocate — the next player may not match the camp, and no action card will save them. Cross over on the issue, or take a flat draw of 2 — no digging.

Answer key

Teacher only. Settles challenges. Camps across, issues down.

	SPANISH	FRENCH	DUTCH	BRITISH
ECONOMY	Mining silver and gold to ship home Encomienda: forced Indigenous labor under Spanish control	The fur trade, run through Native allies Beaver pelts drove the whole economy	Trade, shipping, and banking The fur trade up the Hudson River	Tobacco plantations in Virginia Enslaved Africans became the labor force by the 1700s
RELIGION	A mission system run by Catholic orders The Church supplied the justification for conquest	Catholic missions that converted comparatively few Jesuits lived among Native peoples instead of resettling them	Tolerance drew Jews, Lutherans, and Catholics No established church was forced on settlers	Puritans came to New England for their own church Quakers made Pennsylvania a haven
NATIVE RELATIONS	Mestizaje: intermarriage produced mixed populations The Pueblo Revolt of 1680 drove them out for twelve years	Alliances with the Algonquin and the Huron Intermarriage created blended communities	The purchase of Manhattan, 1626 Fur trade alliances with the Iroquois	Farms pushed Native peoples off their land Wars over land, not alliances over trade
SETTLEMENT	St. Augustine, founded 1565 Soldiers and priests crossed over, few families	Small scattered forts along the rivers and lakes Quebec, founded 1608	New Amsterdam, a cosmopolitan port A diverse population, but thin on settlers	Family farms across New England Indentured servants crossed for a term of years
RULE AND LAW	Governors appointed by the Crown enforced royal law Royal officials, not settler assemblies, made the decisions	Ruled through a royal governor answering to the Crown Run as a royal province, with no colonial assembly	Run by the Dutch West India Company for profit The British takeover of 1664 made it New York	Self-government: the Mayflower Compact and colonial assemblies The Navigation Acts bound colonial trade to England



Mining silver and gold to ship home

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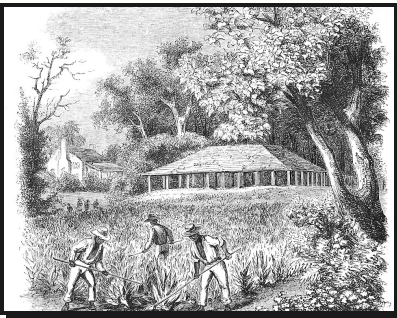
The fur trade, run through Native allies

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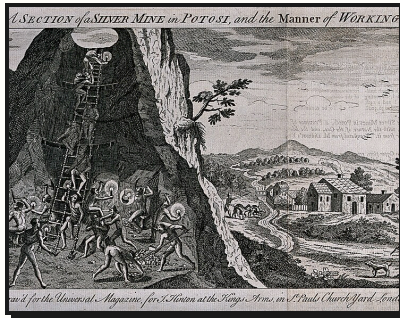
Trade, shipping, and banking

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Tobacco plantations in Virginia

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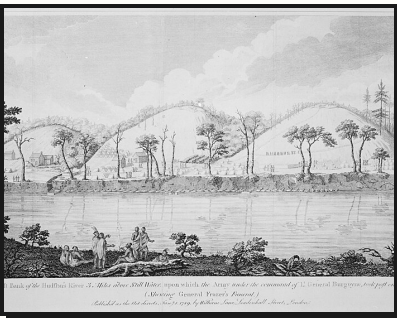
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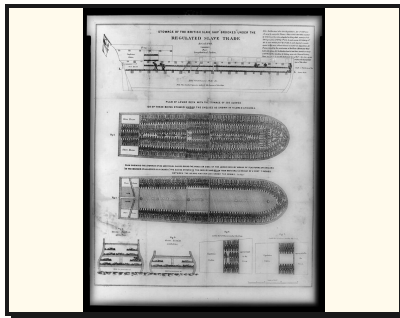
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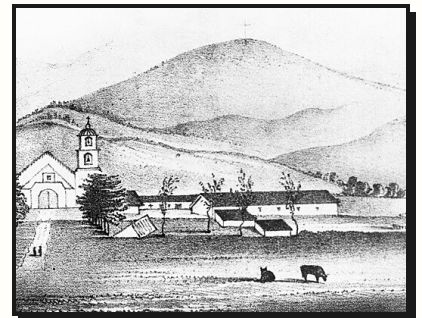
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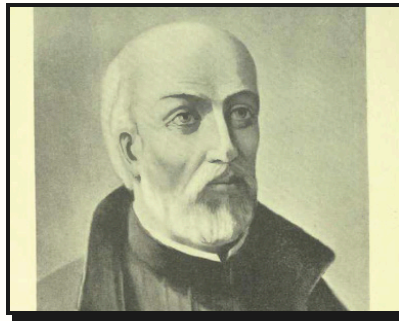
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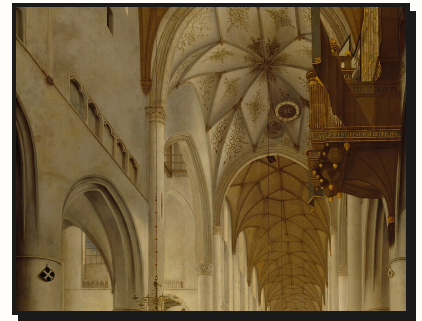
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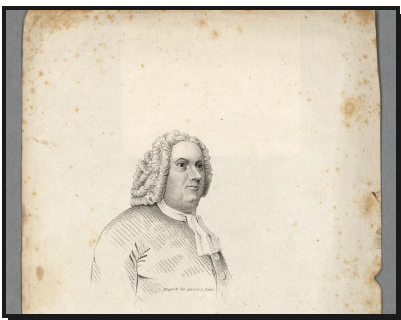
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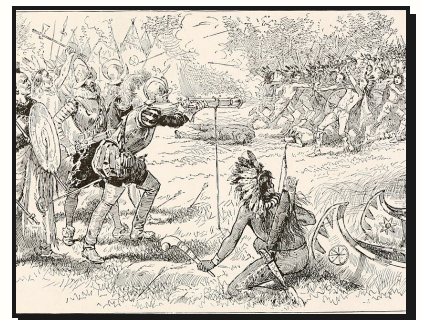
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Alliances with the Algonquin and the Huron

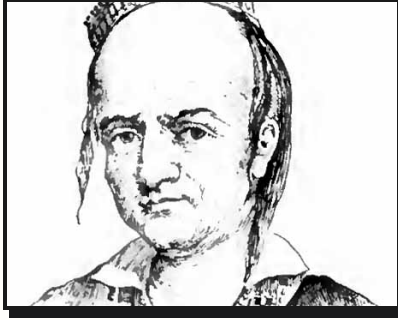
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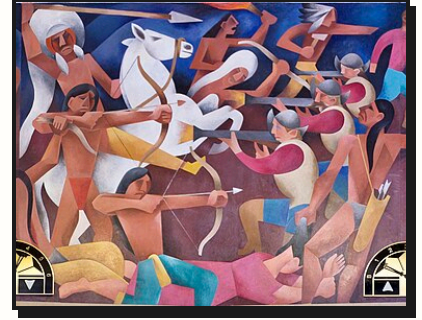
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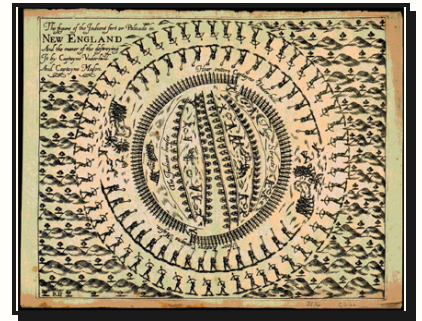
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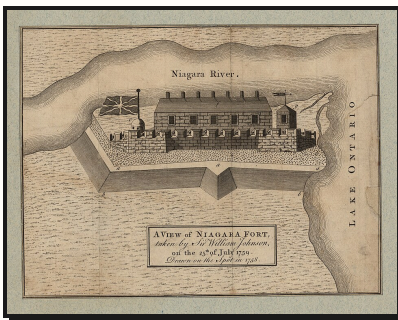
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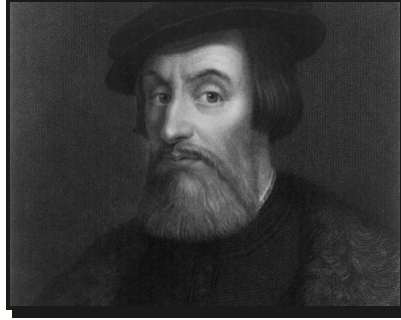
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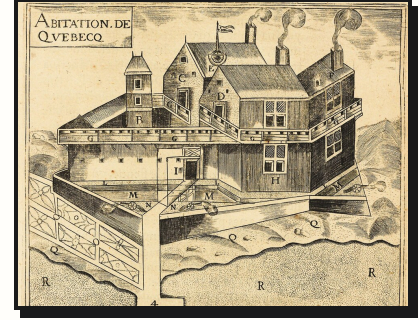
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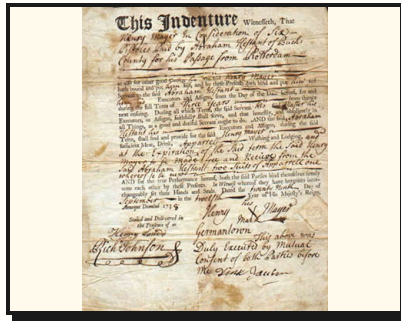
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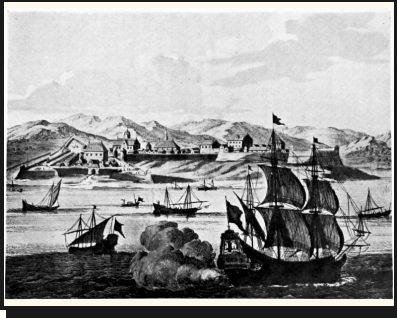
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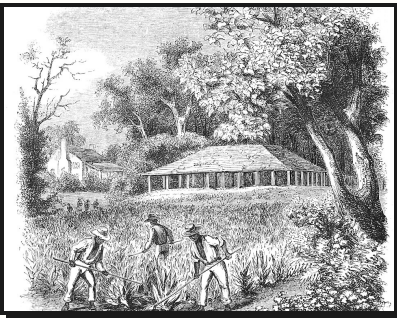
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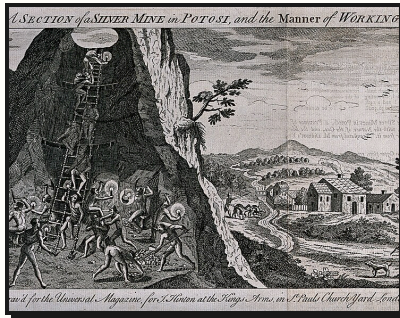
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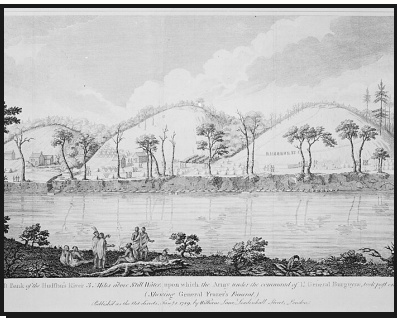
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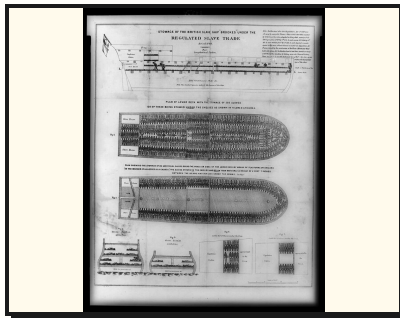
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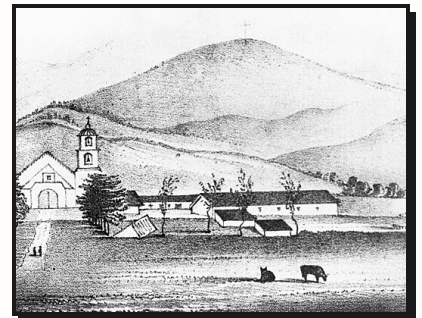
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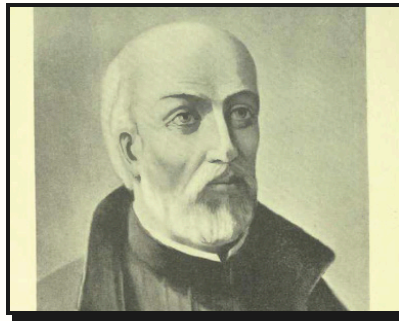
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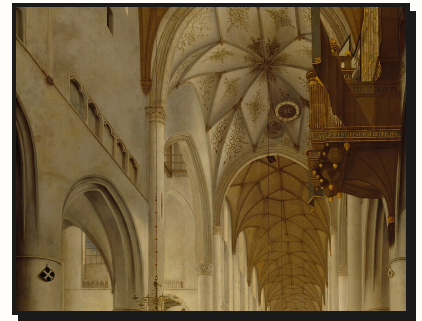
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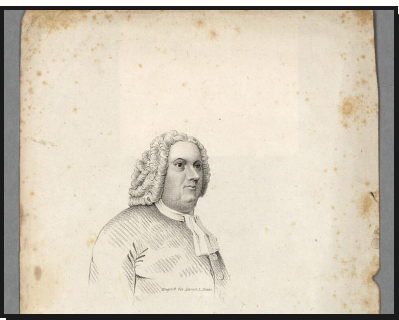
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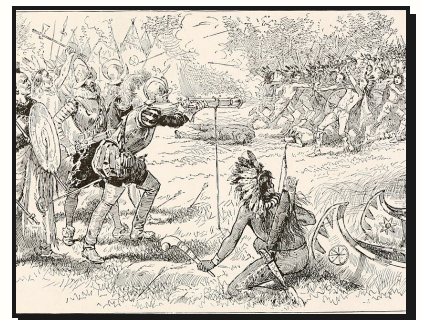
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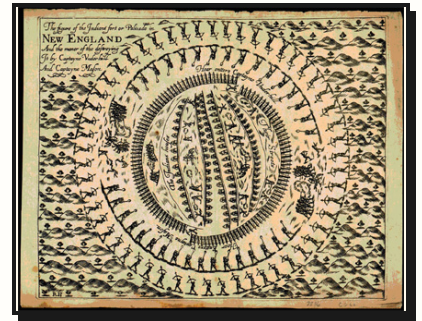
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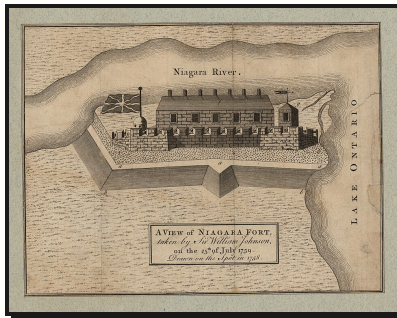
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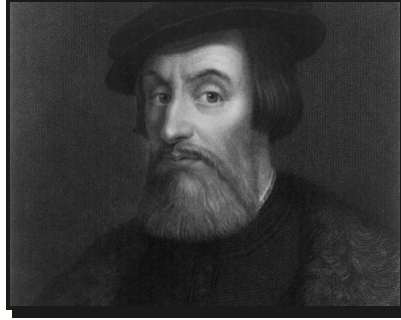
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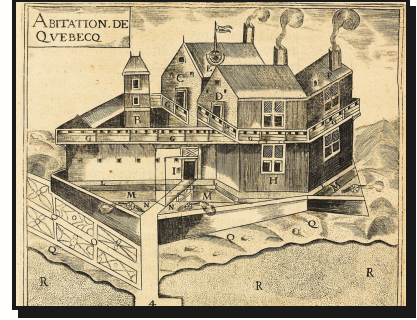
Family farms across New England

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Soldiers and priests crossed over, few families

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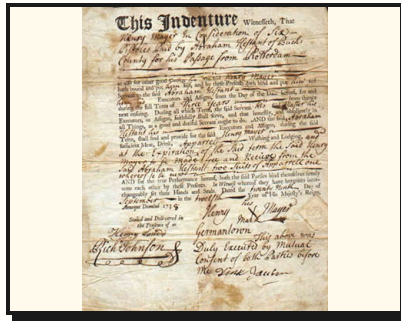
Quebec, founded 1608

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A diverse population, but thin on settlers

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Royal officials, not settler assemblies, made the decisions

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Run as a royal province, with no colonial assembly

WITS



The British takeover of 1664 made it New York

WITS



The Navigation Acts bound colonial trade to England

WITS

ACTION
Wild Wit

Play it on anything except a Devil's Advocate. Then name the camp that comes next.

ACTION
Quick Wit

Your whole turn. Play it with any card, even one that matches nothing. Name that card's camp and argue the connection. The table judges.

ACTION
Devil's Advocate

The next player may not match the camp, and no action card will save them. Cross over on the issue, or draw 2.

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Wild Wit

Play it on anything except a Devil's Advocate. Then name the camp that comes next.

ACTION
Quick Wit

Your whole turn. Play it with any card, even one that matches nothing. Name that card's camp and argue the connection. The table judges.

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WITS EMPIRE 2

ACTION

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The next player may not match the camp, and no action card will save them. Cross over on the issue, or draw 2.

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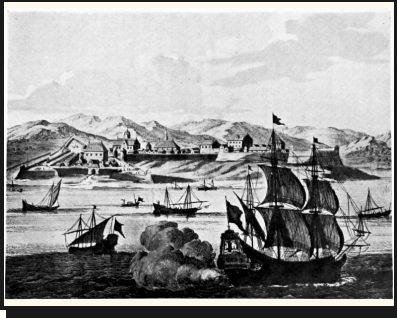
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Mining silver and gold to ship home

WITS



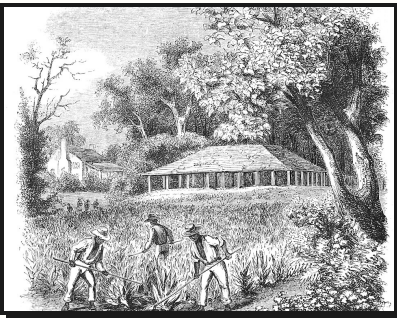
The fur trade, run through Native allies

WITS



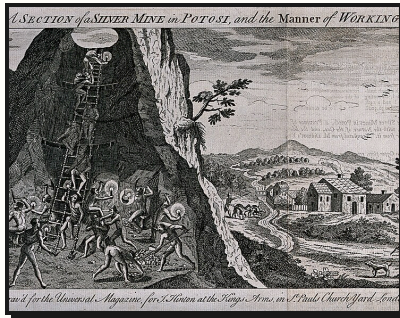
Trade, shipping, and banking

WITS



Tobacco plantations in Virginia

WITS



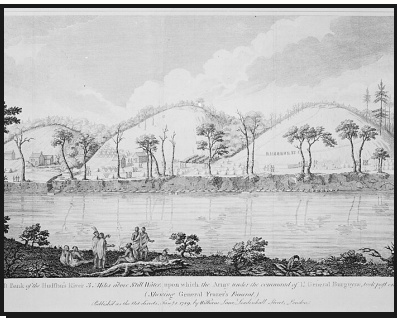
Encomienda: forced Indigenous labor under Spanish control

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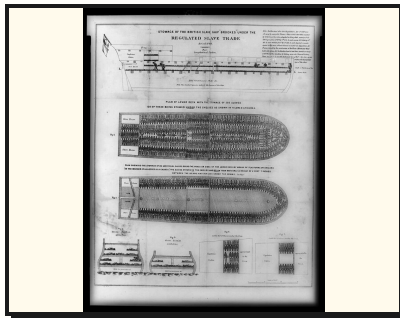
Beaver pelts drove the whole economy

WITS



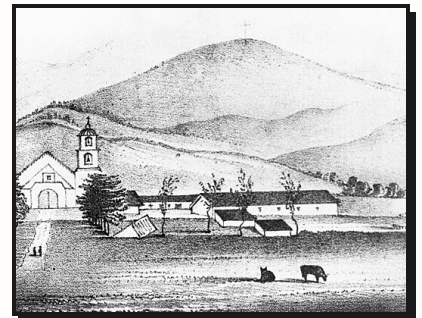
The fur trade up the Hudson River

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Enslaved Africans became the labor force by the 1700s

WITS



A mission system run by Catholic orders

WITS

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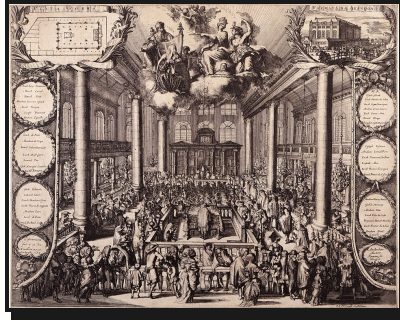
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Catholic missions that converted comparatively few

WITS



Tolerance drew Jews, Lutherans, and Catholics

WITS



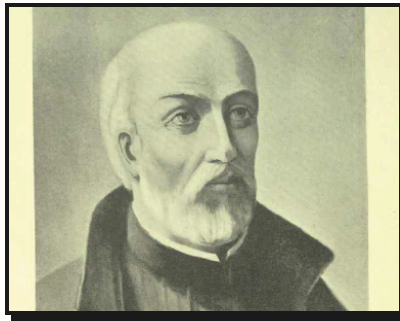
Puritans came to New England for their own church

WITS



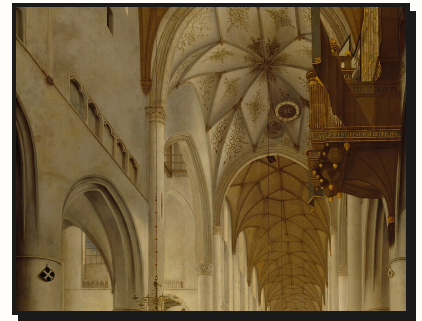
The Church supplied the justification for conquest

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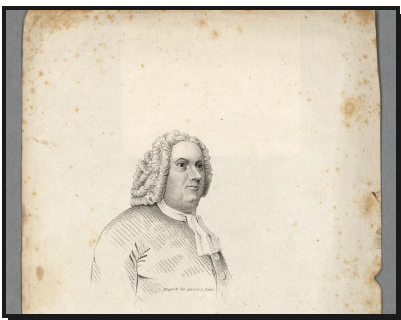
Jesuits lived among Native peoples instead of resettling them

WITS



No established church was forced on settlers

WITS



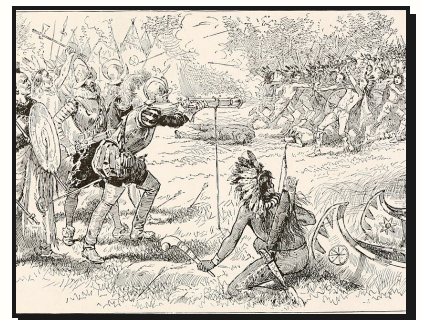
Quakers made Pennsylvania a haven

WITS



Mestizaje: intermarriage produced mixed populations

WITS



Alliances with the Algonquin and the Huron

WITS

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The purchase of Manhattan,
1626

WITS



Farms pushed Native peoples
off their land

WITS



The Pueblo Revolt of 1680
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WITS



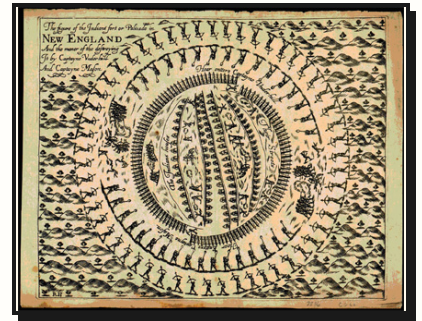
Intermarriage created
blended communities

WITS



Fur trade alliances with the
Iroquois

WITS



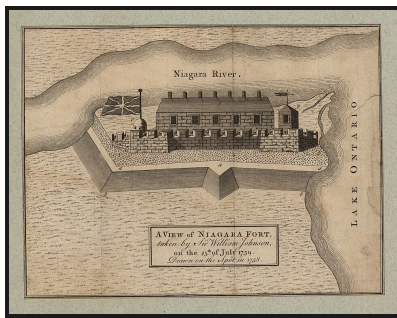
Wars over land, not alliances
over trade

WITS



St. Augustine, founded 1565

WITS



Small scattered forts along
the rivers and lakes

WITS



New Amsterdam, a
cosmopolitan port

WITS

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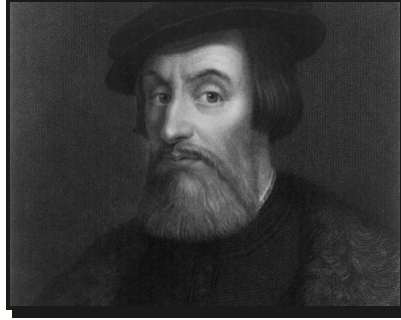
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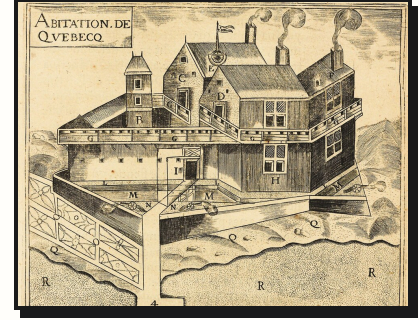
Family farms across New England

WITS



Soldiers and priests crossed over, few families

WITS



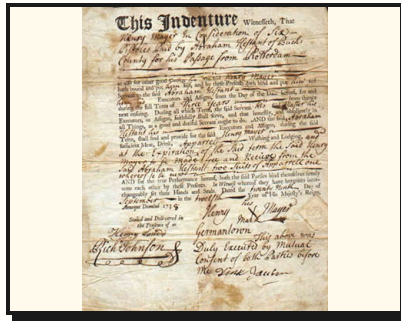
Quebec, founded 1608

WITS



A diverse population, but thin on settlers

WITS



Indentured servants crossed for a term of years

WITS



Governors appointed by the Crown enforced royal law

WITS



Ruled through a royal governor answering to the Crown

WITS



Run by the Dutch West India Company for profit

WITS



Self-government: the Mayflower Compact and colonial assemblies

WITS

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Royal officials, not settler assemblies, made the decisions

WITS



Run as a royal province, with no colonial assembly

WITS



The British takeover of 1664 made it New York

WITS



The Navigation Acts bound colonial trade to England

WITS

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Wild Wit

Play it on anything except a Devil's Advocate. Then name the camp that comes next.

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Your whole turn. Play it with any card, even one that matches nothing. Name that card's camp and argue the connection. The table judges.

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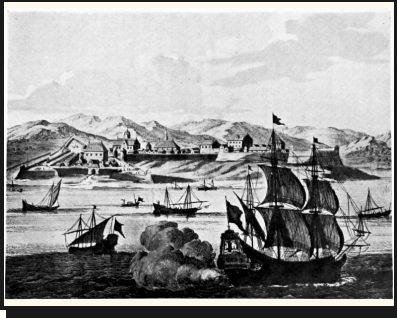
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Mining silver and gold to ship home

WITS



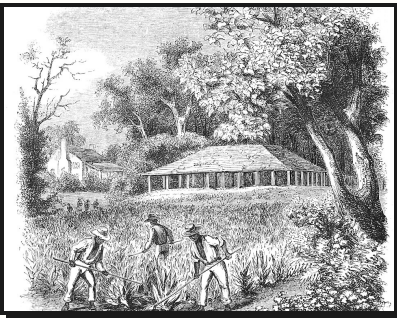
The fur trade, run through Native allies

WITS



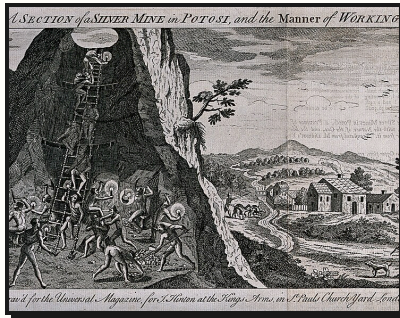
Trade, shipping, and banking

WITS



Tobacco plantations in Virginia

WITS



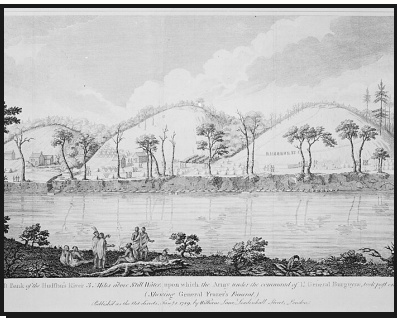
Encomienda: forced Indigenous labor under Spanish control

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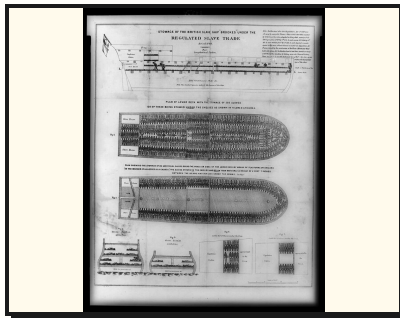
Beaver pelts drove the whole economy

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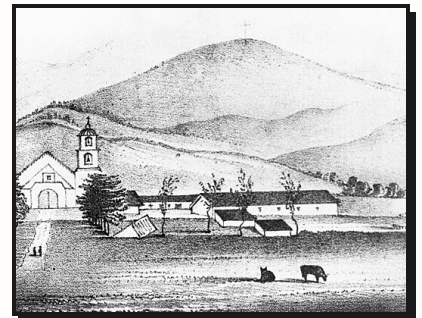
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A mission system run by Catholic orders

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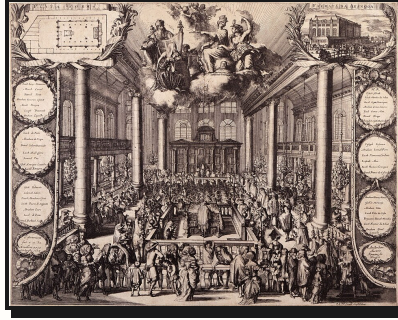
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Catholic missions that converted comparatively few

WITS



Tolerance drew Jews, Lutherans, and Catholics

WITS



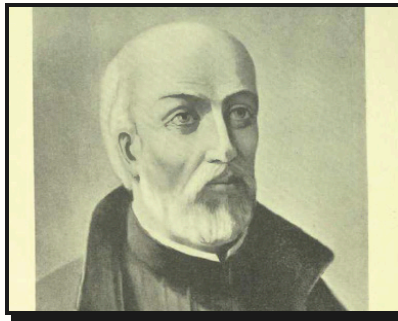
Puritans came to New England for their own church

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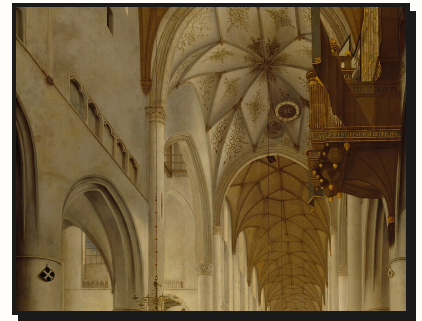
The Church supplied the justification for conquest

WITS



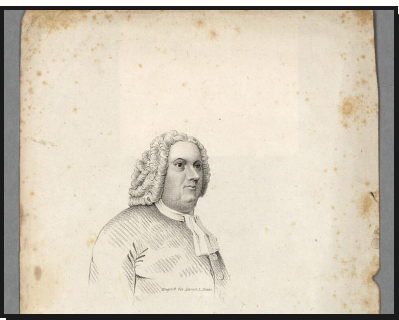
Jesuits lived among Native peoples instead of resettling them

WITS



No established church was forced on settlers

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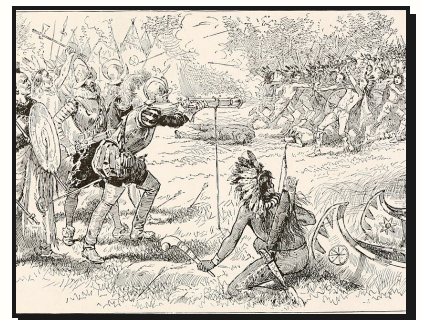
Quakers made Pennsylvania a haven

WITS



Mestizaje: intermarriage produced mixed populations

WITS



Alliances with the Algonquin and the Huron

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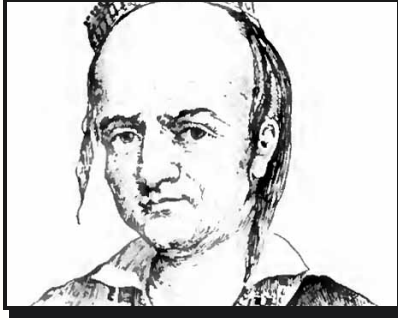
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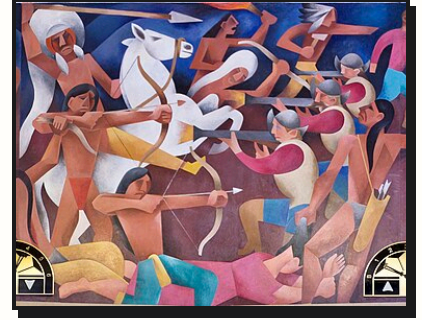
The purchase of Manhattan,
1626

WITS



Farms pushed Native peoples
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WITS



The Pueblo Revolt of 1680
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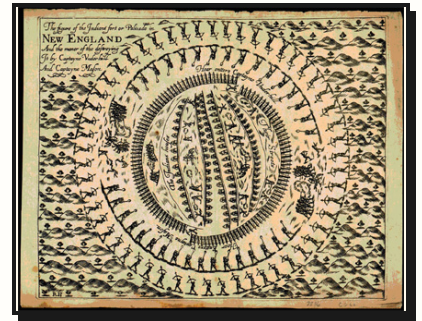
Intermarriage created
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Fur trade alliances with the
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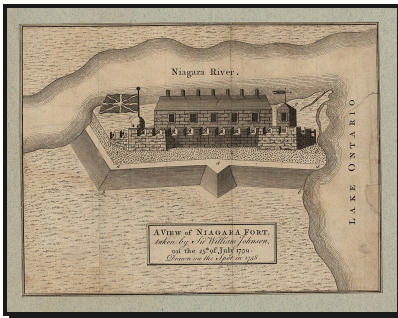
Wars over land, not alliances
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St. Augustine, founded 1565

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New Amsterdam, a
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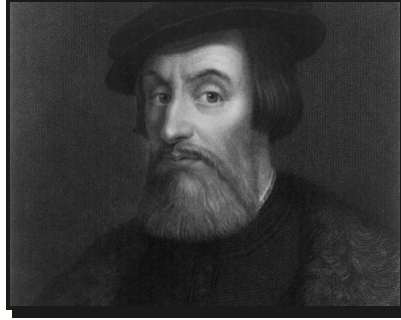
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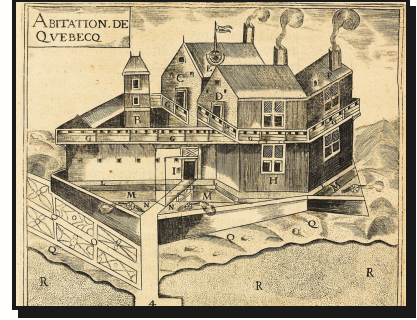
Family farms across New England

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Soldiers and priests crossed over, few families

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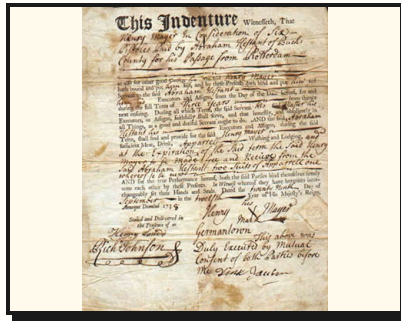
Quebec, founded 1608

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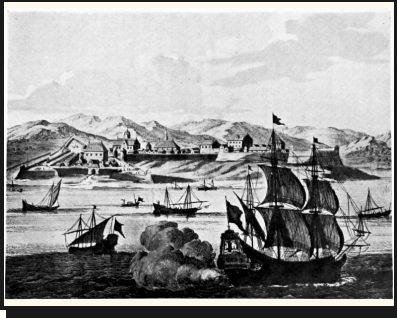
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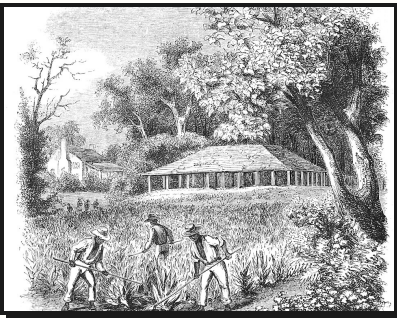
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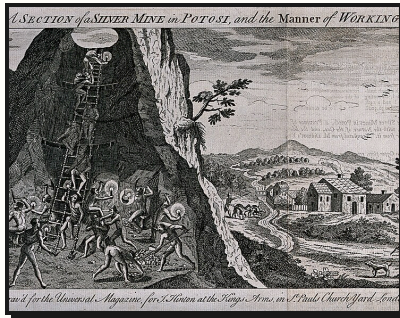
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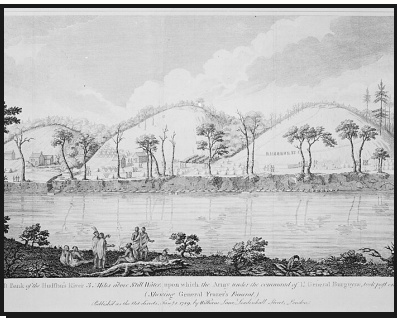
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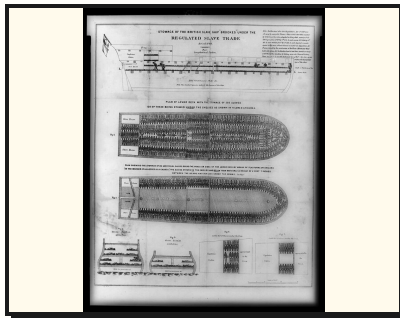
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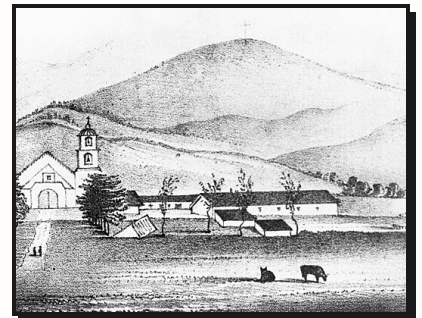
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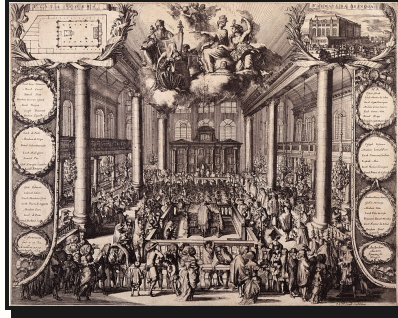
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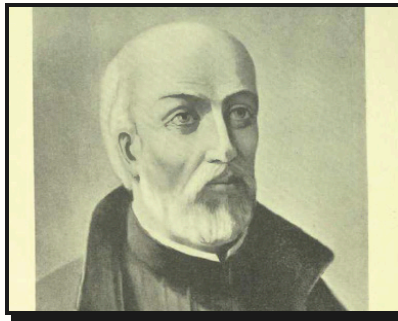
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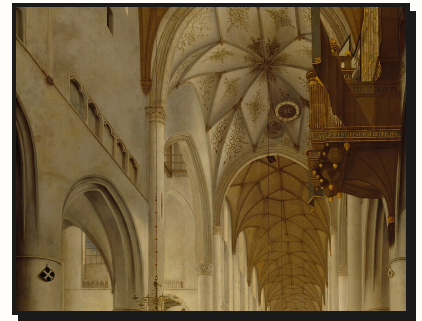
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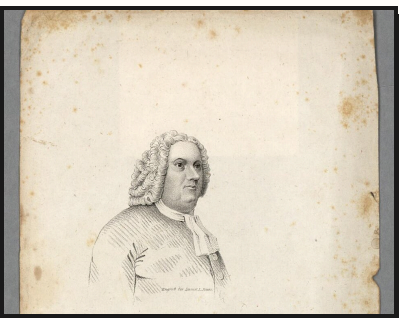
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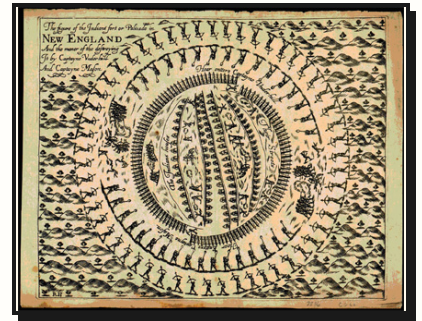
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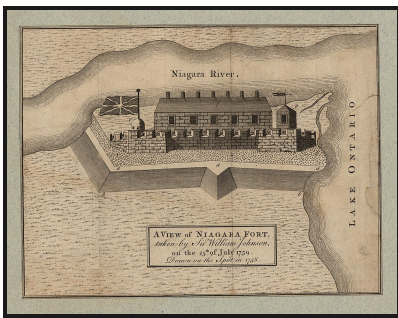
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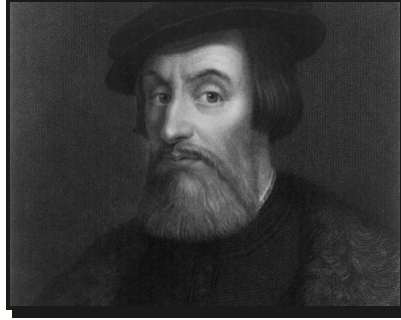
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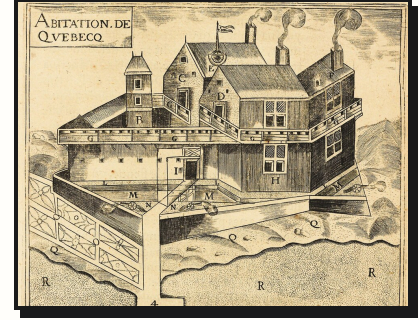
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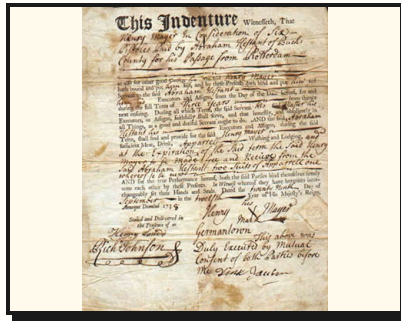
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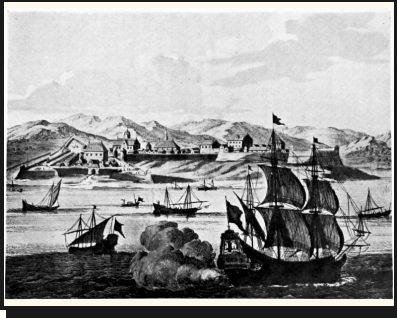
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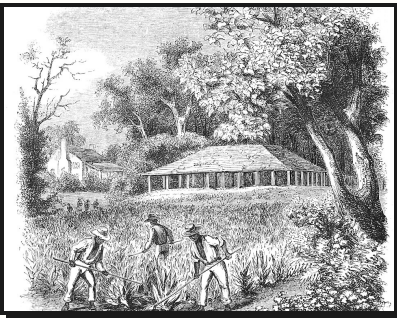
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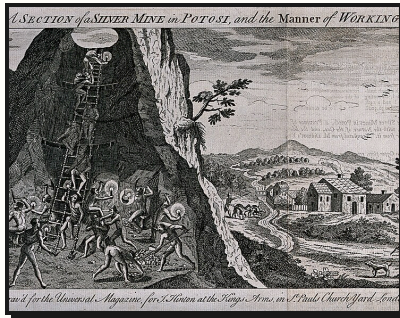
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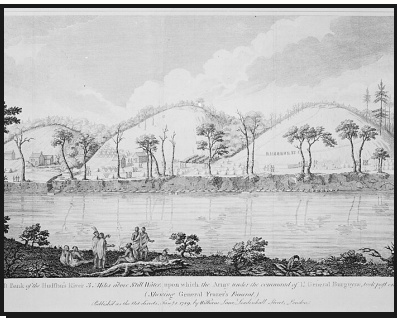
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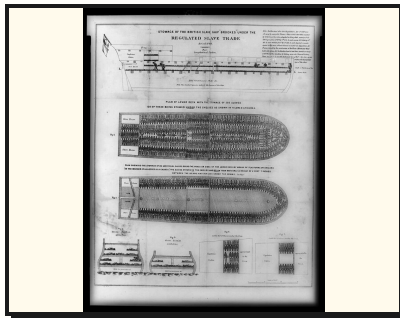
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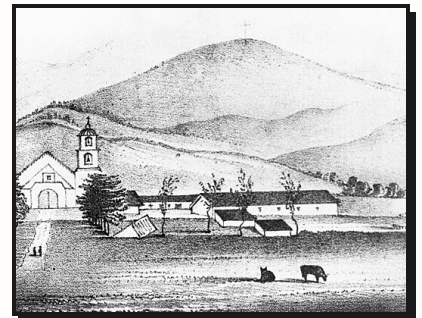
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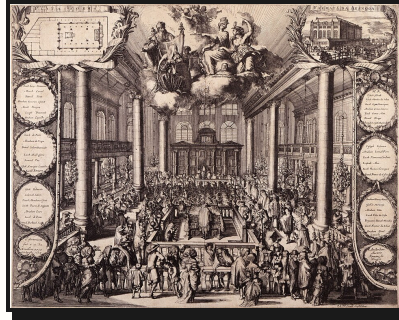
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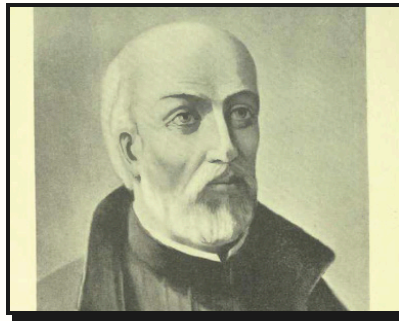
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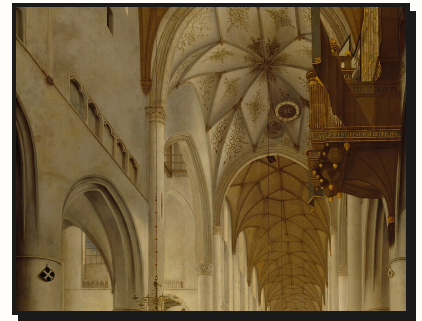
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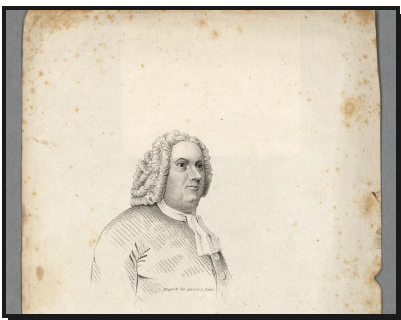
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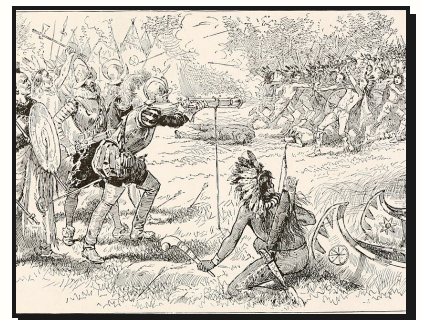
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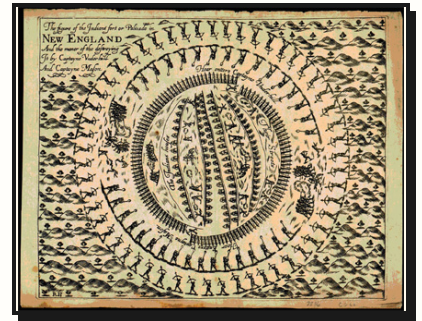
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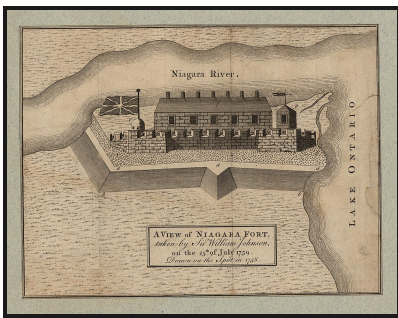
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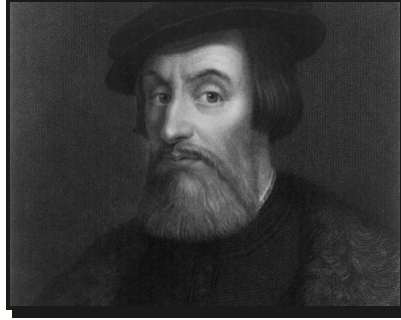
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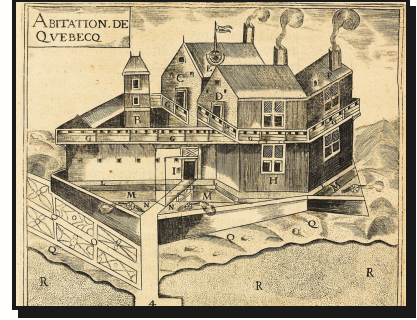
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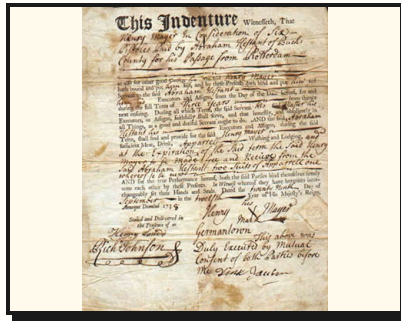
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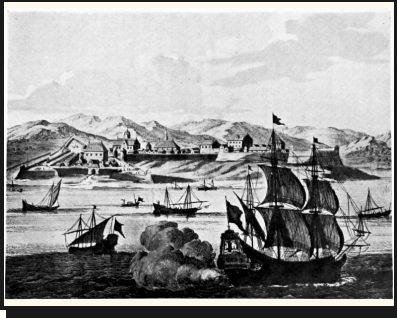
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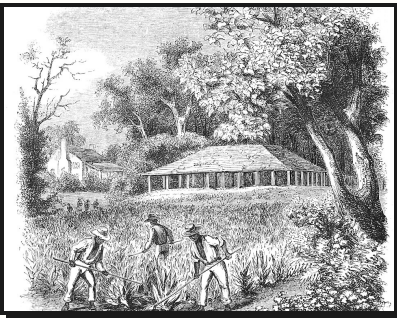
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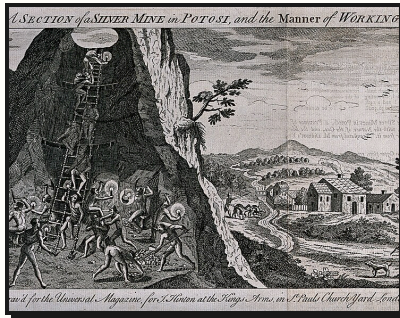
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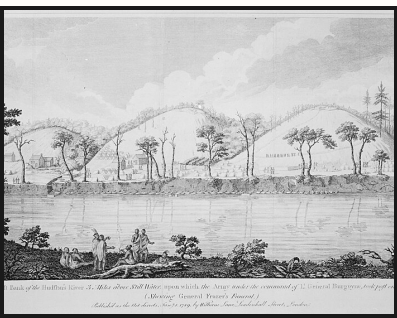
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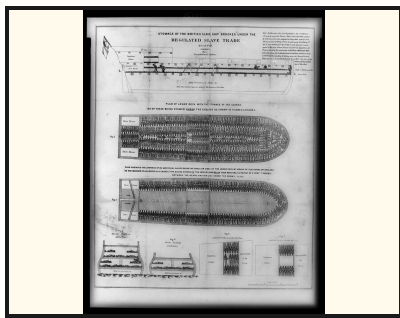
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WITS



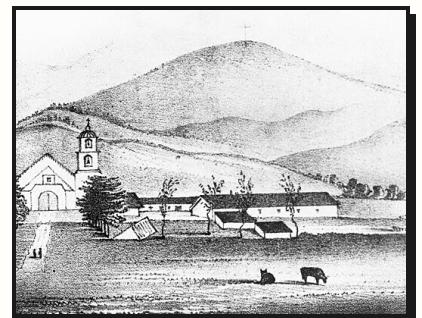
The fur trade up the Hudson River

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Enslaved Africans became the labor force by the 1700s

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A mission system run by Catholic orders

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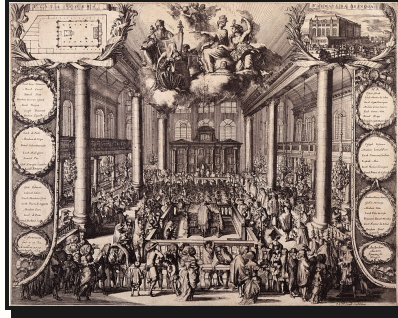
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Catholic missions that converted comparatively few

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Tolerance drew Jews, Lutherans, and Catholics

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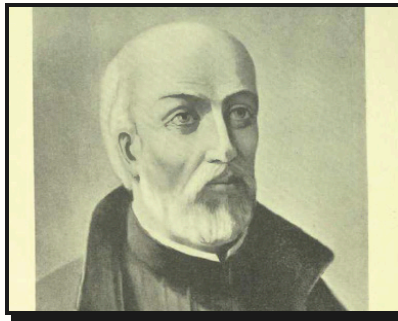
Puritans came to New England for their own church

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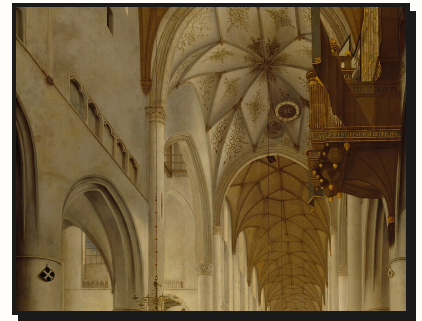
The Church supplied the justification for conquest

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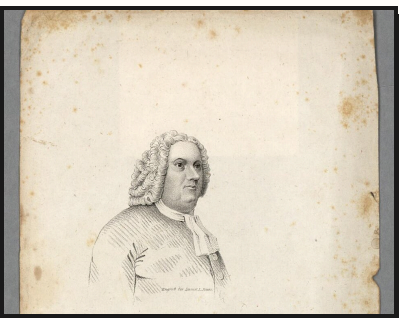
Jesuits lived among Native peoples instead of resettling them

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No established church was forced on settlers

WITS



Quakers made Pennsylvania a haven

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Mestizaje: intermarriage produced mixed populations

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Alliances with the Algonquin and the Huron

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The purchase of Manhattan,
1626

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Farms pushed Native peoples
off their land

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The Pueblo Revolt of 1680
drove them out for twelve
years

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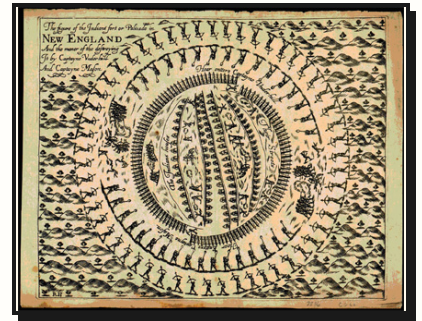
Intermarriage created
blended communities

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Fur trade alliances with the
Iroquois

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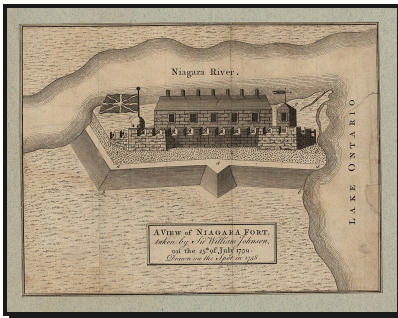
Wars over land, not alliances
over trade

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St. Augustine, founded 1565

WITS



Small scattered forts along
the rivers and lakes

WITS



New Amsterdam, a
cosmopolitan port

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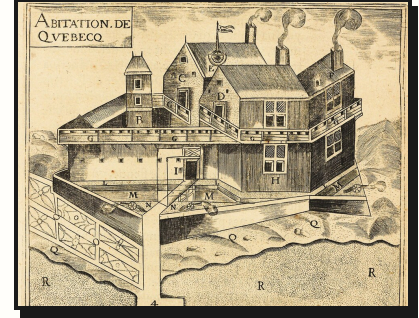
Family farms across New England

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Soldiers and priests crossed over, few families

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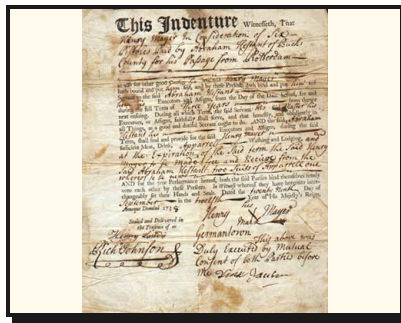
Quebec, founded 1608

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A diverse population, but thin on settlers

WITS



Indentured servants crossed for a term of years

WITS



Governors appointed by the Crown enforced royal law

WITS



Ruled through a royal governor answering to the Crown

WITS



Run by the Dutch West India Company for profit

WITS



Self-government: the Mayflower Compact and colonial assemblies

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Royal officials, not settler assemblies, made the decisions

WITS



Run as a royal province, with no colonial assembly

WITS



The British takeover of 1664 made it New York

WITS



The Navigation Acts bound colonial trade to England

WITS

ACTION

Wild Wit

Play it on anything except a Devil's Advocate. Then name the camp that comes next.

ACTION

Quick Wit

Your whole turn. Play it with any card, even one that matches nothing. Name that card's camp and argue the connection. The table judges.

ACTION

Devil's Advocate

The next player may not match the camp, and no action card will save them. Cross over on the issue, or draw 2.

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