***America’s History* Author Video: Chapter Two**

[[BIG IDEA: In what ways did European migrants transfer familiar patterns and institutions to their colonies in the Americas, and in what ways did they create new American worlds? How did Native Americans adapt to the growing presence of Europeans among them?]]

What do you think a colony is? When you envision the first American colonies, do you think of Pilgrims and Plymouth Rock and the first Thanksgiving, of Englishmen hoping to create a new home that was a lot like their old one? These images raise a further question: if you were going to plant a colony, would you want it to be fundamentally like the place you’re from—a place where you could continue to do the same things you had always done—or someplace fundamentally different—a place with new rules and new ways of living, where you could produce things you can’t get at home?

Chapter Two of *America’s History* is called “American Experiments,” and it highlights how many different kinds of American colonies there were. It asks you to think about what Europeans wanted to replicate when they created new American colonies, and what they wanted to change—and why. It’s about continuity and change.

It also asks you to think about what colonization meant for the Native American populations who already lived there.. We know that the arrival of Europeans caused catastrophes for Native peoples. What forms did those catastrophes take? And more importantly, what opportunities did they present to Native peoples who survived the first wave of colonization?

Most of us would like to think that colonization was an idealistic undertaking, where people hoped to create better worlds than the ones they came from. But for most people, it wasn’t that at all. Colonization was opportunistic; it was incredibly risky; it was exploitative; it was often brutal. Idealism did have its place in the colonization process, but mostly it came later, after mere survival had been taken care of.