

1640

1670

1700

1750 1760



The Granger Collection

# Why They Came

## Read Aloud

*By the middle of the 1600s, Europeans were streaming into North America by the thousands. They left their homes and friends to go to a new land. They began new lives, often with only the contents of one small trunk. Why would so many people leave everything they had known to come to the English colonies?*

## Focus Activity

### READ TO LEARN

Who came to the English colonies and why?

### VOCABULARY

- autobiography
- slave trade

### PEOPLE

- Jane Hoskens
- Olaudah Equiano

## THE BIG PICTURE

In the 1600s many groups of people came to the English colonies. The Pilgrims and the Puritans came seeking religious freedom. Others came in search of wealth. In the 1700s more people made the trip on their own instead of as part of a group. Times were so hard in Europe that, by 1760, “colony fever” had hit England. So the English government began passing laws forbidding people to leave the country. Still they came.

Some people who came were wealthy. Most were not. Many people sold everything they had to pay for the voyage. Others could not afford the trip. Some agreed to become servants in exchange for the cost of the voyage. Still others came against their will. Thousands of Africans were kidnapped and forced to come as slaves. Yet they all set out to make the dangerous voyage across the Atlantic Ocean. Many people did not survive.



## FREEDOM AND OPPORTUNITY

① The voyage to the colonies was dangerous and uncomfortable. Even people who traveled in the best quarters suffered hardships. They were all trapped for weeks in crowded conditions. Sickneses spread quickly. Many people did not survive. Yet the ones who did encouraged others to follow.

### Pulling Up Stakes

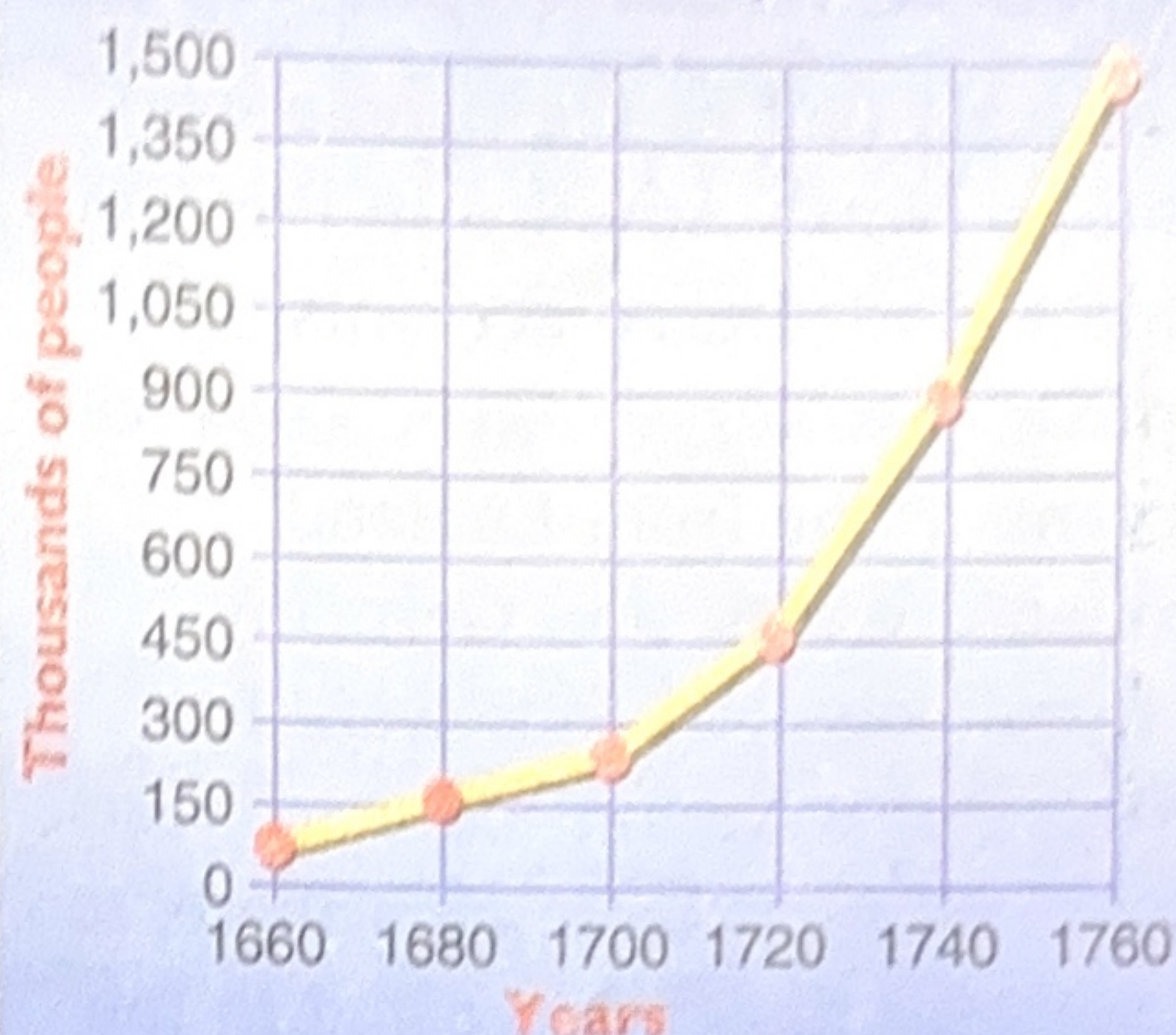
② The colonies offered a better way of life. The promise of cheap land, greater opportunity to earn a living, and religious freedom made the hard trip worth it for most of the immigrants who survived.

③ Once they arrived, many wrote home about their new lives. In a letter to his cousin in Scotland, a colonist wrote, "You would do well to advise all poor people . . . to take courage and come to this country." Look at the graph on this page to see how the population grew.

### The Voyage to America

④ "On the eighth of June . . . we left home at four o'clock in the morning," wrote Dutch newcomers, Jasper Dankers and Peter Sluyter. The voyage to the colonies usually lasted four months. Their trip was long and hard. Passengers in "great number

POPULATION OF THE  
13 ENGLISH COLONIES, 1660-1760



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

### GRAPH WORK

The population of the colonies grew quickly.

1. How many more people were living in the colonies in 1740 than in 1720?
2. In which twenty-year period did the greatest increase in population occur?

[were] lodged between the two decks" of the ship. Inside there was little air or light. The ceiling measured only 4 1/2 feet high. Dankers and Sluyter said that the "meat was old and tainted, . . . the bread mouldy or wormy, . . . the water smelt very bad."

④ Not everything was bad, though. At times, they saw remarkable things. One night, Dankers and Sluyter were awakened by the splashing of porpoises and two large whales that swam up to the ship.



Some colonists brought their belongings in beautiful, carved boxes such as this one.



## INDENTURED SERVANTS AND AFRICAN CAPTIVES

- ① At least half of the people who came to North America in the 1700s came as indentured servants or captives. The largest group of these servants came from England, Scotland, Wales, and Germany. In these countries jobs were few because of wars and poor harvests. Taxes and rents were high there, too.
- ② Some of those who came to the colonies were convicts who provided free labor. Others were forced to leave their homes. By 1750 over 250,000 people had been taken from their homes in Africa and brought to the English colonies. Once here, most were forced to work as slaves in the Southern Colonies.

### Indentured Servants

- ③ To pay the price of their passage to the colonies, many Europeans became indentured servants. In the 1700s, four out of five immigrants in both Maryland and Virginia were indentured servants. There were fewer in New England. Some indentured servants had little food and were treated badly. They often ran away to escape such treatment.
- ④ Others, like **Jane Hoskens**, were treated very well. Hoskens arrived in Philadelphia from London in 1719. Read this excerpt taken from her **autobiography**. An autobiography is the story of a person's life, written by that person. How did Hoskens feel about her new job as a teacher?

## MANY VOICES

### PRIMARY SOURCE

Excerpt from  
the **Autobiography** of  
Jane Hoskens,  
published in 1837.

*The [heads] of four families living in Plymouth, who had several children, agreed to **procure** a sober young woman, as a school-mistress to instruct them in reading. . . . And on their applying to their friends in town, I was recommended for that service. When we saw each other I **perceived** it my place to go with them; wherefore . . . I bound myself to them by indenture for three years, and went cheerfully with them. . . . The children learned very fast, which afforded comfort to me and satisfaction to their parents.*

**procure:** get  
**perceived:** thought



### The Slave Trade

- ① Some farmers in the colonies could not hire enough workers to tend their crops. Instead, they bought captives from the **slave trade**



in Africa. The slave trade was the business of buying and selling people for profit.

④ Read this excerpt from the autobiography of **Olaudah Equiano** (AHL uh dah ih kwee AH nah), a West African who was enslaved in 1756 when he was 11 years old. Why did many captives get sick and die?



### MANY VOICES

#### PRIMARY SOURCE

Excerpt from  
the Autobiography of  
Olaudah Equiano,  
published in 1789.

**T**he first thing I saw when I arrived at the coast was the sea and the slave ship waiting to pick up its cargo. The sight of the slave ship amazed me. This amazement turned to terror when I was carried on board. . . . We were packed together in chains so tightly we could hardly move or turn over. The cramped surroundings and the deadly heat almost **suffocated** us. Many slaves fell sick and died—a result of being packed so closely. The only reason they were packed so closely was to increase the profits of the slave dealers.

**suffocated:** prevented from breathing

⑤ One out of seven captives did not survive the trip. The illustration on page 231 shows how Africans were packed into ships. Those who did survive would become slaves.

## WHY IT MATTERS

Many different peoples came to North America in the 1700s. They played an important role in developing the English colonies. They built new cities, towns, and farms.

### ✓ Reviewing Facts and Ideas

#### SUM IT UP

- Beginning in the 1600s, many Europeans came to the English colonies seeking a better life.
- For many the voyage was long, terrifying, and difficult.
- In the 1700s captives from Africa and indentured servants from Europe arrived in the colonies.

#### THINK ABOUT IT

1. What hardships did people suffer to reach the English colonies?
2. What was the slave trade?
3. **FOCUS** For what reasons did people come to North America?
4. **THINKING SKILL** What conclusions can you make from the population graph on page 225? What details did you use?
5. **WRITE** Like Jane Hoskens, you want to go to colonies. But you must go as an indentured servant. Write a letter to your parents telling why.