

2-1 Notes

Influence From England

- **Magna Carta**
- Many rights Americans have are traced back to England
- Magna Carta, 1215, signed between nobles and King John
- Stated all land holders had certain rights
1)equal treatment under law, 2)trial by peers
- Contract that limited power of monarch and established rule of law

- **Parliament**
- Originally a group of informal advisers to the king who helped govern
- Over years began to include representatives and began making laws
- In 1688, Parliament removed King James II and put in William and Mary to rule
- Demonstrated it was stronger than the monarch, the Glorious Revolution
- Parliament drew up the English Bill of Rights
- Monarch can't suspend Parliament's laws, could not create special courts, could not put in taxes or raise an army without Parliament's consent
- Also established free elections, fair trial by jury, and no cruel and unusual punishment

- **Common Law**
- People developed rules and customs to live by
- These eventually came to have force of law
- In courts, decisions became basis of laws
- Judges would look for precedents in order to make a consistent ruling
- System of law based on precedent and customs is Common Law
- Still in place in England today, and US court tradition is based on this too

- England to America**
- **Virginia House of Burgesses**
 - 1600s-1700s, England begins settling colonies in North America
 - Jamestown, 1607, was first English settlement
 - Established by the Virginia Company
 - 1619, colonists could choose two representatives from each county to meet with governor and council
 - This was the House of Burgesses, the first representative assembly, in colonies

- **Mayflower Compact**
- 1620, Pilgrims arrive at Plymouth, Massachusetts
- Drew up the Mayflower Compact on way to N America
- 41 men signed it and was a written plan for government
- Stated that laws would be just and equal
- Set up a direct democracy where all men could vote and majority rule
- Establishes the tradition of town meetings in New England to this day

Early Colonial Governments

- **Other Settlements**

- Jamestown and Plymouth were successful
- By 1733, 13 English colonies had been established
- Each drew up own government

- **Early Governments**

- Many differences and similarities in each
- Each had a governor
- Some elected by colonists or appointed by king.
- Each had an elected legislature modeled after Parliament
- Over time, more and more decisions were made by the colonies than by Parliament and the king.
- By mid-1700s, most colonies had created successful governments, economies, and systems of roads.
- They felt they could make decisions without England
