



SECTION  
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# Early American Culture

## One American's Story

Colonist Eliza Lucas Pinckney was born in the West Indies. In 1738, she moved to one of her family's South Carolina plantations. Soon after her arrival, her father, a British army officer, was posted to Antigua. When her mother died, Eliza Pinckney was left to manage her family's plantations alone, at the age of 16.

Pinckney enjoyed studying plants. She became interested in one plant in particular.

### PRIMARY SOURCE

“Much of my time is spent on my experiments with indigo—the plant which produces such a beautiful blue dye. . . . I have also taken pains to bring the ginger [and] cotton . . . to perfection [but] have greater hopes from indigo.”

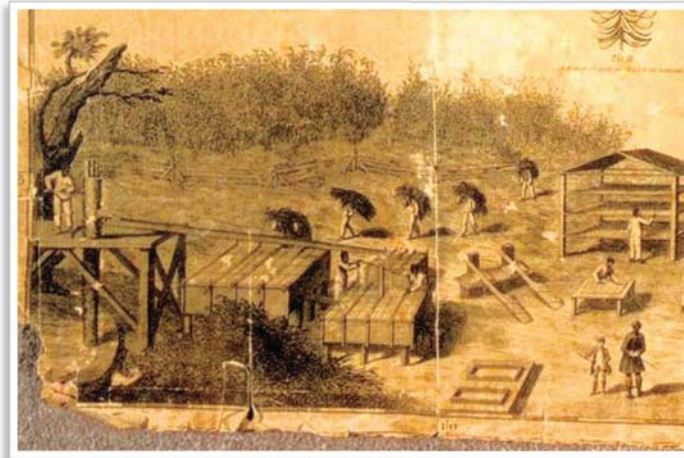
—Eliza Lucas Pinckney, quoted in *Colonies and Revolution*

Pinckney's experiments were so successful that indigo became South Carolina's second largest export. Pinckney's willingness to experiment was a quality well suited to colonial life. By the early 1700s, the colonists' adventurous energies were helping to create a new kind of society in the Americas.

## A New Kind of Society

**KEY QUESTION** How did the American colonies differ from older societies?

British culture remained the foundation of all the colonial societies. But life in the “New World” was unlike life in the old. Settlers faced new climates and new living conditions. As colonists adapted their old ways to a new world, an American identity was born.



(top) indigo being processed in South Carolina;  
(below) indigo-dyed dress