Great Awakening
The Transformation of European society
Eastern Edge of North America
1650--50,000
1700--250,000
1750--1 million, plus 240,000 Africans
1750--the inhabitants of the English colonies in North America were one-third as numerous as the English themselves

Changing Social Structure
--acceptance of hierarchy
--differentiate individuals by dress, by titles, in social etiquette, and even in penalties imposed in criminal proceedings
--measures of social respectability: age, parentage, social position, service to the community, and wealth
--philosophical commitment to hierarchy strongest among the elite
--the customary commitment to hierarchy and deference waned at the same time that stratification in society was increased
--deferential attitudes gave way to brash, assertive individualistic modes of thought and behavior
--"the democratic personality"
--society became more stratified and wealth became less evenly distributed
--aggrandizement of wealth
--trade, shipbuilding, and land speculation
--not unusual to see 300 to 400 slaves toiling on such plantations
Rural Areas:
Northampton, Massachusetts
--1676--upper 10% of property owners controlled 25% of the taxable wealth
--1759--upper 10% owns 34% of taxable wealth
Chester County, Pennsylvania
--1693--10% owns 24% of the wealth
--1760--30%
--1693--1760: lowest 30 percent of the landowners see a severe drop from 17.4% to 6.3%
Urban colonial America:
--stratification most rapid
--from 1725 to 1750 all major cities built almshouses and workhouses
--between 1720 and 1760, the poor in the cities increased more rapidly than the urban population as a whole

Boston:
--1687--upper 10% held 46% of the taxable property
--lowest 30% had 2.6% of wealth
--1771--upper 10% has 63% of wealth; lowest 30% had 10% of the community's taxable resources
The Great Awakening

Message:
--the old sources of authority were too sterile to solve the problems of the day
--a new wave of authority was needed, and that source is the individual himself
--like the Quaker "inner light," the "new light" with the awakened would enable them to achieve grace through the conversion experience
--"born again"
George Whitefield: arrives from England, 1739
his effect very strong in cities--crucibles of social change
assaulted traditional sources of authority
called upon people to become instruments of their own salvation
implicitly attacked the upper-class notion that the simple folk had no minds of their own
Fears of the Rich:

--Whitefield's popularity waned among the gentry
--revivalism had started out as a return to religion among backsliding Christians
--Whitefield followed by itinerant Awakeners whose social radicalism was far less muted
--turning into a social experience that profoundly threatened the established culture which stressed order, discipline and submissiveness
--fear public exhorting most
--outdoor meetings
--ruptured the idea of sacred space
women spoke publicly if spiritually moved
--a groundswell of individualism; a proto-democratic spirit
--model for radical activists to follow