

Chapter 6

DEERSKINS FOR A PISTOL

After the first colonies were successful, more people came to the New World and other colonies formed. Colonists began moving westward, away from the Atlantic Ocean. They began **interacting** with more Native Americans.

Some tribes fought the settlers. Some welcomed the colonists and traded with them. Regardless of whether they fought or welcomed them, the invasion of European settlers created problems for the American Indians

The biggest problem was disease. Explorers brought with them strange new illnesses from Europe. Perhaps the worst disease was **smallpox**, which killed hundreds of thousands of people. In 1738 and 1739, smallpox is believed to have killed more than half of the Cherokee nation.

Trade also created problems. As Native Americans interacted with the colonists, they realized that the settlers had many things they wanted, and which they hadn't had before. At the top of the list were guns and gunpowder, which Native Americans found useful in hunting and warfare. Many American Indians also wanted metal knives, hatchets, and tools. To get guns, gunpowder, metal tools, hatchets, and knives, Native Americans usually traded animal hides such as beaver, deer, bear. Most of these animal hides were shipped to Europe, where there was a huge **demand** for them.

The animal hide trade became so common that a regular rate of exchange existed. By the early 1700s, a Cherokee could trade three deerskins for a **hatchet** and 20 deerskins for a gun.

As the years passed, Native Americans grew to rely on things that came from white traders. This meant that they needed to trade and hunt more than before. This caused Native American hunters to go farther and farther away from their home villages to find beaver, bear, and deer. This led to more fights with other tribes over hunting grounds.