

New England Colonies

The New England colonies are made up by Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire. The people of New England shared certain characteristics and lacked the diversity experienced in the Middle or Southern colonies. The vast majority of New Englanders were white, English, extremely religious, and enjoyed large families.

Colonies New England in the northeast has generally thin, stony soil, relatively little level land, and long winters, making it difficult to make a living from farming. Turning to other ways of life, the New Englanders **harnessed** waterpower and established grain mills and sawmills. Large amounts of timber encouraged shipbuilding. Excellent harbors promoted trade, and the sea became a source of great wealth. In Massachusetts, the cod industry alone quickly furnished a basis for prosperity. So much in fact that Boston became one of the wealthiest towns through most of the 18th and 19th centuries.

With the bulk of the early settlers living in villages and towns around the harbors, many New Englanders interacted in “common spaces” within the town. Living so close to one another made places such as the village school, the village church and the village or town hall, places of common interest that everyone shared. Important town meetings or urgent announcements would be held in a “common space.”

Oak timber for ships' hulls, tall pines for spars and masts, and tar for the seams of ships came from the Northeastern forests. Building their own vessels and sailing them to ports all over the world, the shipmasters of Massachusetts Bay laid the foundation for a trade that was to grow steadily in importance. By the end of the colonial period, one-third of all British ships were built in New England. Fish, ships, and wood products swelled the exports.

Comparing The Colony Regions

Middle Colonies

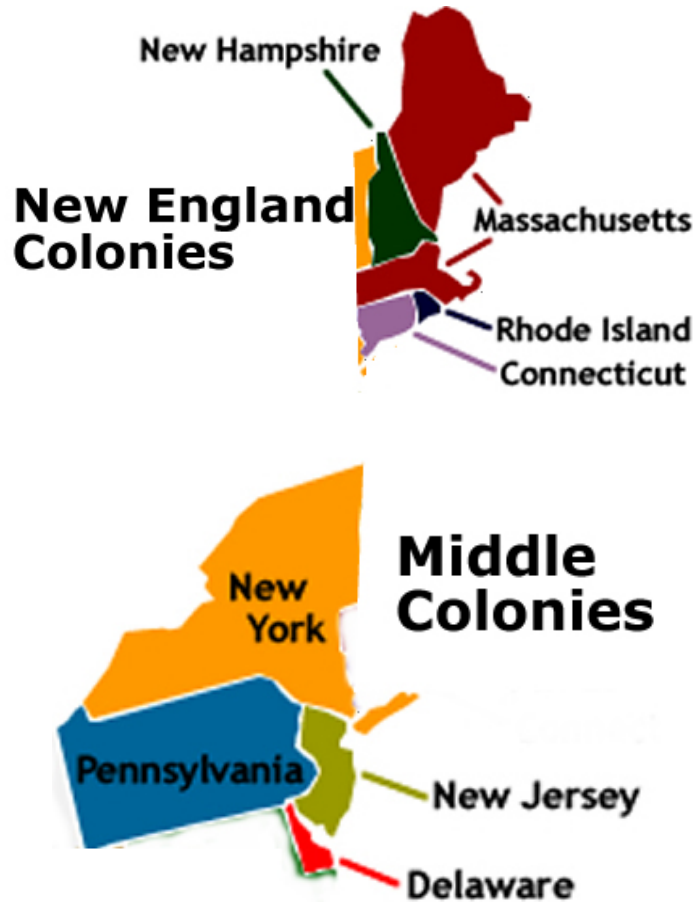
The Mid-Atlantic Colonies are Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey and Delaware. Just like in New England, the environment greatly impacted the way people who lived in the middle colonies made a living and went about their daily lives.

A major difference between New England and Middle colonies was the quality of the land. The Middle colonies had rich farmland and a moderate climate, which made farming much easier than it was in New England. Many people made their living raising livestock or growing grain. Due to the ease of farming, these colonies were able to provide food for their own people and to send to the other colonies; the Middle colonies became known as the “breadbasket

colonies. “ Philadelphia was the leading city for both political and economic life throughout the Middle Colonies.

Land in the middle colonies also consisted of coastal lowlands, which contained harbors and bays with wide, deep rivers. The location along the Atlantic Coast also allowed people in the Mid-Atlantic colonies to make a living through fishing. Those who did not make a living by farming or fishing were able to find work as either skilled or unskilled workers.

People in the middle colonies came from a variety of different cultures and participated in many different religions. Immigrants from many countries chose the Middle colonies due to the variety of options that were available to them. Despite the variety of cultures and belief systems, life in the Middle colonies still revolved around the village or city in which one lived in. Market towns were extremely important in the Middle colonies because people needed to go to town to trade the products they grew or made.



Southern Colonies



In contrast to the New England and Middle colonies were the rural southern colonies of Virginia, Maryland, North and South Carolina, and Georgia. “Common spaces” such as those in New England were absent in the South as most people lived on large tracts of land, miles upon miles apart. By the late 17th century, Southern economic and social stability rested on the great planters of the region. The planters, supported by slave labor, held most of the political power and owned the best land. They built great houses, adopted an aristocratic (grand, lavish) way of life and kept in touch as best they could with the world of culture overseas.

Charleston, South Carolina, became the leading port and trading center of the South. Dense forests also brought revenue: lumber, tar and resin from pine trees provided some of the best shipbuilding materials in the world. An excellent growing climate made the Southern colonies the most popular region for agriculture. Not bound to a single crop as was Virginia (tobacco), North and South Carolina also produced and exported rice and indigo, a blue dye obtained from native plants that were used in coloring fabric.

By 1750 more than 100,000 people lived in the two colonies of North and South Carolina. In the southern-most colonies, German, Scottish, and Irish immigrants populated the land. Living on the edge of the Indian country, frontier families built cabins, cleared land in the wilderness and cultivated maize and wheat. While the Southern region had some diversity among the people, it was nothing like that of the Middle Colonies. People in the South typically fell into one of three categories: Elite (white, planter), Yeoman (immigrant worker), or Slave.

	New England	Middle	Southern
Colonies			
Land			
Climate			
Economy			
Diversity of People			
Other interesting details			

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