

## ENGLISH COLONIES

Colonization brought many changes to the New World in both its land and its people. Europeans brought new tools and ideas to America. They also brought guns. In addition, the settlers unknowingly brought diseases which devastated the native people, sometimes killing entire villages and tribes of Native Americans.

There were thirteen North American colonies controlled by Great Britain by 1733. The colonies are usually thought of as belonging to three different regions, or groups: New England, the Middle Colonies and the Southern Colonies. Each of these regions is recognizable by the similarities in climate, location and natural resources. Due to these geographic factors, colonists in each region developed certain lifestyles and skills which would lead to economic differences. Sectionalism, based on the differences in the needs of each of the three regions during colonization, would eventually lead to conflict.

### New England

The colonies of New England were Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. The original colonists in New England came to the New World for religious freedom. They were able to do some subsistence farming and raising of livestock, but the winters were too long and too cold to raise many crops. Because of the nearness to the ocean and the vast amount of forest timber, however, New England colonists were able to build a strong economy based upon fishing, whaling, shipbuilding, lumber and trade with Europe. The geographic impact of the ocean and its waterways was tremendous for the people of New England, as it was for other colonists who lived along the coast. Trade with Europe was extremely important for the survival and prosperity of the colonies.

In 1620 a group of pilgrims who hoped to separate from the English church set sail aboard the *Mayflower*. They had faced persecution for not attending the official Church of England and no toleration was shown for their religious ideas. Facing jail, these Separatists, as they became known, traveled first to Holland and finally to the New World in search of a place where they could practice their religion freely and raise their families in an English society. The Pilgrims were led by William Bradford. They signed an agreement on board the *Mayflower*, outlining the rules that they wanted to live by in this new colony. This agreement was called the Mayflower Compact. This is considered to be the first formation of government in the United States. The settlers landed at Plymouth, in present-day Massachusetts, and founded a colony. They received a great deal of help from the local Indian tribe. They might not have made it through that first hard winter if the Indians had not brought them food and had not taught them how to grow crops, hunt and trap animals, and fish. The Pilgrims are credited with celebrating the first Thanksgiving when they invited Native Americans to join them in a feast lasting three days the following year.

Some ten years later, another religious group, called the **Puritans**, traveled from England to Massachusetts Bay to start a settlement based on the teachings of the Bible. Their founder was John Winthrop, who eventually became the **governor** of Massachusetts. All the New England colonies practiced some type of **self-government**. Connecticut also had a written **constitution**. Most of the settlers in Connecticut, like in Massachusetts, were Puritan, while those in Rhode Island could be of any faith. The colony of New Hampshire was founded by John Mason. Unfortunately, he died before he was able to make the trip to the new colony he helped to start. Unlike the other New England colonies, New Hampshire was founded not for religious freedom, but as a fishing colony.

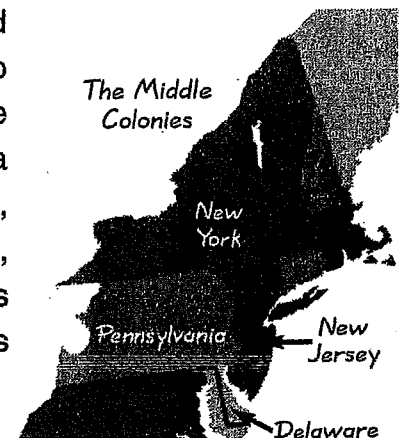
### **The Middle Colonies**

The middle colonies included New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware. These colonists came from many places and for many reasons. The settlers of the Middle Colonies farmed and raised livestock. They also were successful at shipbuilding, lumbering, fur trading, and a variety of other ways to make a living. Philadelphia, in the colony of Pennsylvania, was the first city to have a public school. It also was the first to lay out a grid system for designing its streets.

Colonists who came to New York were of different religious backgrounds. They came to try to make a better life for themselves. New York had a governor appointed by the British crown. When the Duke of York took over New Netherland from the Dutch, he renamed it New York.

The Duke of York awarded large amounts of land to friends. Those friends established the colony of New Jersey. New Jersey had a split government: Quaker colonists devised the guidelines for part of the colony. Puritan colonists governed the other part of the colony with strict laws.

Pennsylvania was founded by William Penn, who was a member of the Quaker faith. The Quakers had not been welcome in England, and Penn had caused a great deal of unrest by questioning their laws and customs. When Penn asked for land in the New World as repayment of a debt owed to him, King Charles II granted him the charter, happy to be rid of him. That territory would be named Pennsylvania. The Quakers saw this as an opportunity to find a safe place to live and practice their religion. Again, the need to avoid religious persecution forced the migration of a group of English citizens across the Atlantic Ocean. Penn, however, also advertised for colonists from all over Europe, regardless of their faith. The colony of Pennsylvania was very successful and became the first **democracy** in this country. Pennsylvania was self-governed.



The colony of Delaware was originally founded by the Dutch West Indies Company with the intention of developing trade. Delaware was a proprietary colony. This meant that the colony was run by business interests.

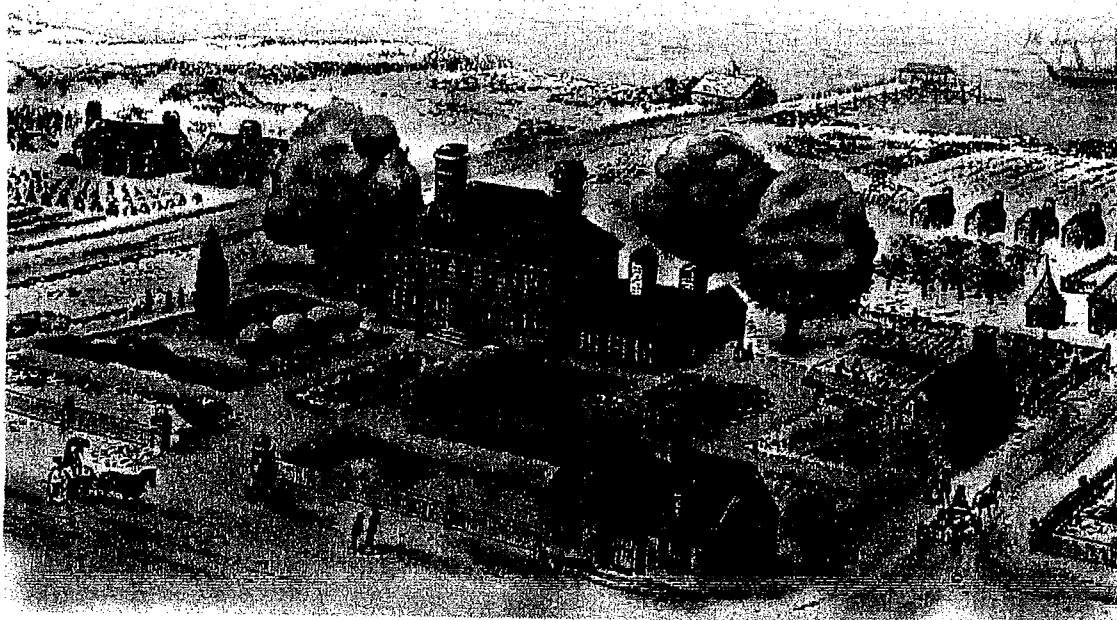
### **The Southern Colonies**

The Southern Colonies comprised Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia. This region had **fertile** land and a long **growing season**. These conditions were excellent for growing rice, tobacco, **indigo** and other **cash crops** which the farmers could sell for **profit**. The success of an economy based on agriculture eventually led to a tremendous **import** and **export** business with tobacco and other crops being exported to Europe and slaves and many supplies being imported to support the growing Southern Colonies.

This was the beginning of the **plantation**, or large-farm, system in America. The farmers brought in slaves, who had been kidnapped from their homes in Africa, and **indentured servants** to do the manual labor on the plantations. This was the start of large-scale **slavery** in America.

**Triangular trade** was developed. Goods were shipped from Europe, or even from New England, to West Africa, where they were then traded for slaves. The slaves were then shipped from Africa, under horribly crowded conditions, to either the British colonies in the Caribbean Islands or to the American colonies, where they were sold or traded for goods from the colonies, such as tobacco, rice and rum. Those goods were then shipped back to England. Slave **merchants** made large profits, totally disregarding the suffering of the Africans whom they transported.

*plantation*



The **Navigation Acts**, a series of laws passed by the British government, were written with the idea of keeping the Dutch Trading Company from profiting from the trade between the colonies and England. The acts stated that all goods shipped to and from the colonies must be shipped on either English or colonial ships. Colonists never fully supported this demand. When the Sugar Act was passed in 1733, problems between the colonies and England grew. The Sugar Act stopped colonial rum **manufacturers** from buying cheaper sugar from the French West Indies and forced them to buy more expensive British sugar. As the Navigation Acts continued to restrict the trade for the colonies, **smuggling** of goods became common. This caused economic problems for colonial rum makers and strong resentment toward the British government.

The colony of Virginia was founded by Sir Walter Raleigh and the Virginia Company. It had the first permanent settlement in America at Jamestown. Virginia grew as a result of the development of a large tobacco industry. The work was first done by indentured servants and then by slaves. By 1700, there were thousands of slaves living and working in the colony. The colony of Virginia was self-governing. Its governing body, the *House of Burgesses*, was the first representative government body in what would become the United States. It had the powers of a **legislature**; in other words, it could make laws.

North Carolina had been the site of the first attempt at settlement in America by the British. The unsuccessful settlement at Roanoke Island was off the coast of North Carolina. It was another proprietary colony.

South Carolina can boast the site of the first attempt at settlement by any European. Settlers from Hispaniola, an island in the Antilles, originally established San Miguel de Guadalupe in South Carolina. The settlers later relocated to what is now Georgia.

Founded in 1733 by James Edward Oglethorpe and King George II, Georgia was the last of the thirteen British colonies. The king planned to populate it with people who owed debts in England. These people faced jail, but could choose to start a new life in this new colony instead. The king liked this idea because the land of Georgia lay just north of the Spanish colony in Florida. King George II thought an English settlement here would act as a buffer against the Spanish and that it would keep them from attempting to start other settlements further north. Not many of the poor debtors chose to start a new life in Georgia. The settlement ended up including those looking for adventure and some looking for religious freedom in addition to the debtors. Many of the settlers disagreed with Oglethorpe's ideas of how he wanted the settlers to live. The new Georgians not only fought off the Spanish attacks, but also fought against laws imposed by Oglethorpe. Eventually, however, they made a good life in the Georgia colony.