

The Story of The Thirteen Colonies



In the early 1600s, many people were not satisfied with their lives in Europe. For a number of reasons, they decided to leave their homes. They hoped for opportunities in the New World.

There were big differences among the thirteen **colonies**. The best way to understand them is to know why the people came, and where they settled. Settlements did not start in one spot and then spread out. One colony began in the warm South. The next colony started in the colder climate of the North. Soon, as more and more people arrived, the spaces between the colonies were filled in, 13 in number. It is probably easiest to look at them in the order of the dates they arrived.

Virginia

In **1607**, three ships arrived at the Virginia coast after months at sea. These brave English people sailed up the James River. There they found-

ed the village of **Jamestown**. The river and the village were named after King James of England. The colonists considered themselves Englishmen. They honored the same laws as they always had.

These colonists arrived with dreams of finding gold and riches in the new land. There were "gentlemen" aboard. They had lived the lives of the very rich. So they knew nothing about real work. The others had skills. But none of them knew how to survive in the new land. Money could not help them.



Jamestown, Virginia: First permanent English colony in North America.

At first they built a town of mud huts. However, hunger, disease, and Indian attacks killed almost everyone. Of the five hundred colonists in Jamestown, only 60 lived through the winter of 1609. Then help arrived from **England**. Jamestown, the first colony in North America survived.

The settlers learned about the forests and the land. The colony prospered. In 1612, John Rolfe began to grow tobacco. Rolfe later married **Pocahontas**, the daughter of an Indian chief. This made peace between the colonists and the Indians.

People in Europe wanted to buy plenty of tobacco. However, it took many workers to raise a crop. By 1619, **slaves** were brought to Virginia. The farmers bought them to use as free labor. Slaves worked on their land and in their homes. The southern climate was perfect for farming. Small farms quickly grew into large **plantations**. Houses had shaded porches and a separate building for the kitchen. Virginia was very hot during the long summers.

Massachusetts

Another ship, the Mayflower, left England for Virginia in **1620**. A terrible storm blew them northward. They landed in Massachusetts instead. These were the **Pilgrims**, or **Puritans**, who wanted **religious freedom**. While on board, the Pilgrims drew up the **Mayflower Compact**. This was an agreement among all of them. Their new land would be ruled by the will of most of the people. They built villages, with the church in the center of town. The Pilgrims built houses made of wood with thatched, or mud and grass, roofs. During the winter, the great fireplace was kept going all day. Winter was long and harsh in the North.



First Sermon at Plymouth

Friendly Indians taught the Pilgrims how to clear the land. They introduced the settlers to new foods. Farming in the rocky soil was not easy. But deer and turkey were plentiful in the woods.

The Puritans had very strict religious rules. They soon forgot that they had come to the New World to be able to worship in their own way. They did not accept those who would not follow their way of life. Some people felt they had not found the religious freedom they had come for.



Roger Williams:
his belief in
religious
freedom led to
the founding of
Rhode Island.

Rhode Island

Roger Williams was driven out of Massachusetts for his beliefs. Rogers, a minister, walked south alone. He bought land from the Narragansett Indians in 1635. His colony, Rhode Island, welcomed people with different religious views. It became successful at fishing.

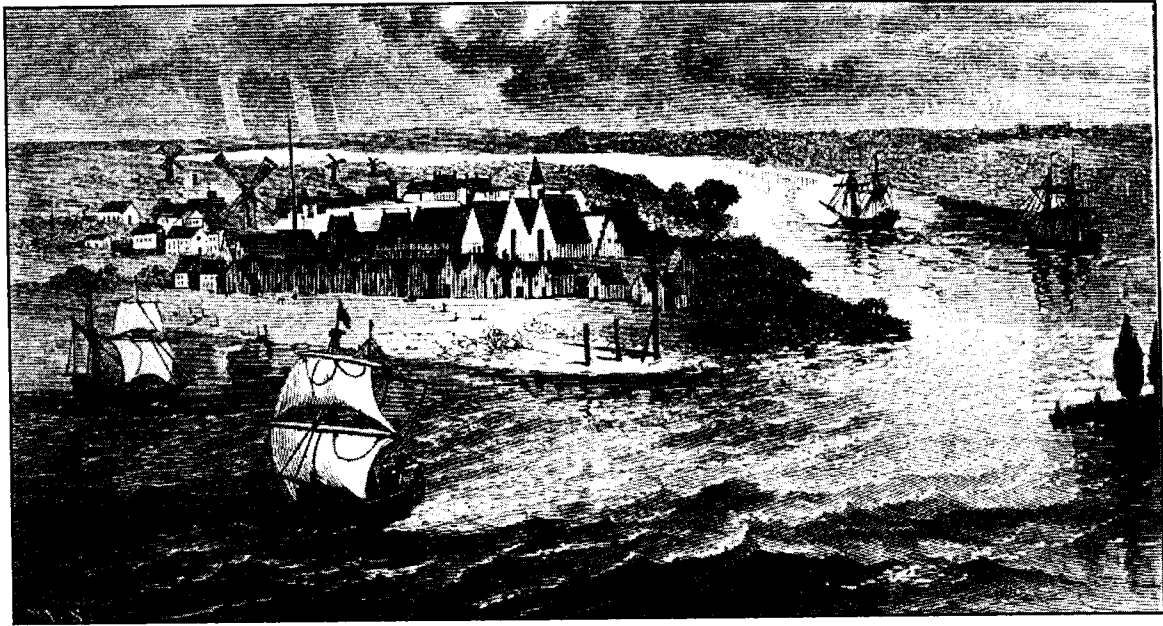
New Hampshire

Just to the north of Massachusetts, New Hampshire was established in 1623. Settlers were moving to new areas very quickly. Most of those living here traded furs or fished for a living. The mountains were covered with pine and oak trees. These would soon provide wood to build ships for American fishermen.

Connecticut

As they began to know the land better, others traveled south. They came upon wonderful farmland. In 1638, these colonists established Connecticut. At this point, they were moving onto Indian land. There was a fierce war. Many were killed on both sides. The Indians destroyed many New England towns. Finally, the Indians surrendered.

The colonies of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and Connecticut became known as the **New England Colonies**. The settlers of each of them had come from England. Their colonial government and customs were based on those of England.



New Amsterdam was later renamed
New York City.

New York

Meanwhile, **Dutch** colonists settled at the mouth of the **Hudson River**. They named their town **New Amsterdam**. Many of the Dutch sailed up the Hudson. The fertile, or rich, land was turned into large farms. In 1666, the English Navy sailed into the harbor. That ended the Dutch reign.

New Amsterdam was renamed New York. It was a natural **port**. Businessmen and craftsmen opened stores. They provided goods for all the colonies. Fishing fleets and ships, loaded with cloth, pots and pans, and even guns, arrived in the New York harbor. It became a busy center of trade. Banks and a stock market were opened in this growing financial center.

New Jersey

Across the Hudson from New York, the British claimed an area. The **Duke of York** named it New Jersey. Free land was offered to attract settlers. The promise of freedom of worship brought **Quakers** from the countries of Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Other colonists from New England came down, too. They found the land to be good for farming.

Pennsylvania

The Quaker **William Penn** founded Pennsylvania. This large colony was to the west of New Jersey. Penn insisted that there be religious freedom throughout Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania Dutch settled there. They operated huge farms in the area. This cultural group was free to live and worship without fear. Quakers came from Europe for religious reasons, too. The Quakers paid the Indians good prices for their land. The Quakers and Indians lived in peace in Pennsylvania.

Colonists from Sweden built the first log cabins there. These were wooden logs, placed on top of each other and held together with mud and grass.

William Penn planned the bustling city of **Philadelphia**. Its name means "the city of brotherly love." Benjamin Franklin left Boston to start a newspaper here.

Maryland

Maryland became a colony of rich tobacco fields and busy villages. It lies just north of Virginia. For hundreds of years there had been trouble between Catholics and Protestants in England. King Charles gave Maryland to Lord Baltimore, a Catholic. In 1633, a ship carrying about 200 passengers left England. Both Catholics and Protestants were on board, as well as two Catholic priests. Maryland became a colony where Catholics could practice their religion. Catholics and Protestants lived and worked side by side.

Delaware

A little snip of land on Maryland's coast was the colony of Delaware. Swedish settlers started the colony in 1638. They called it New Sweden. However, within 20 years the British took over the colony. Then there was a big quarrel. Pennsylvania wanted the Delaware River. It had no other way out to the sea. Maryland wanted Delaware because it was attached to their land. This argument went on until the American

Revolution. Then Delaware declared itself free from any other colony and free from England.

The colonies of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Delaware were home to people with varied cultures. They made up the **Middle Atlantic Colonies**.

The Carolinas

Look at the map on page 22. Skip over Virginia, which we've already mentioned. Just south of that colony, were North and South Carolina. Settlers looking for farmland kept going farther south. Rice and tobacco were crops that grew well in Carolina soil. Soon farms grew into plantations. Slaves provided labor here, too.

Georgia

Georgia lies just under South Carolina. This was a special colony. **James Oglethorpe** was a member of the English Parliament. He visited a friend in prison. Conditions in English prisons were terrible. Oglethorpe realized many of the prisoners had not done awful things. Most of them owed money. But they could not pay back the money without work. They would be in prison for life. He convinced Parliament those people



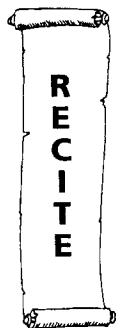
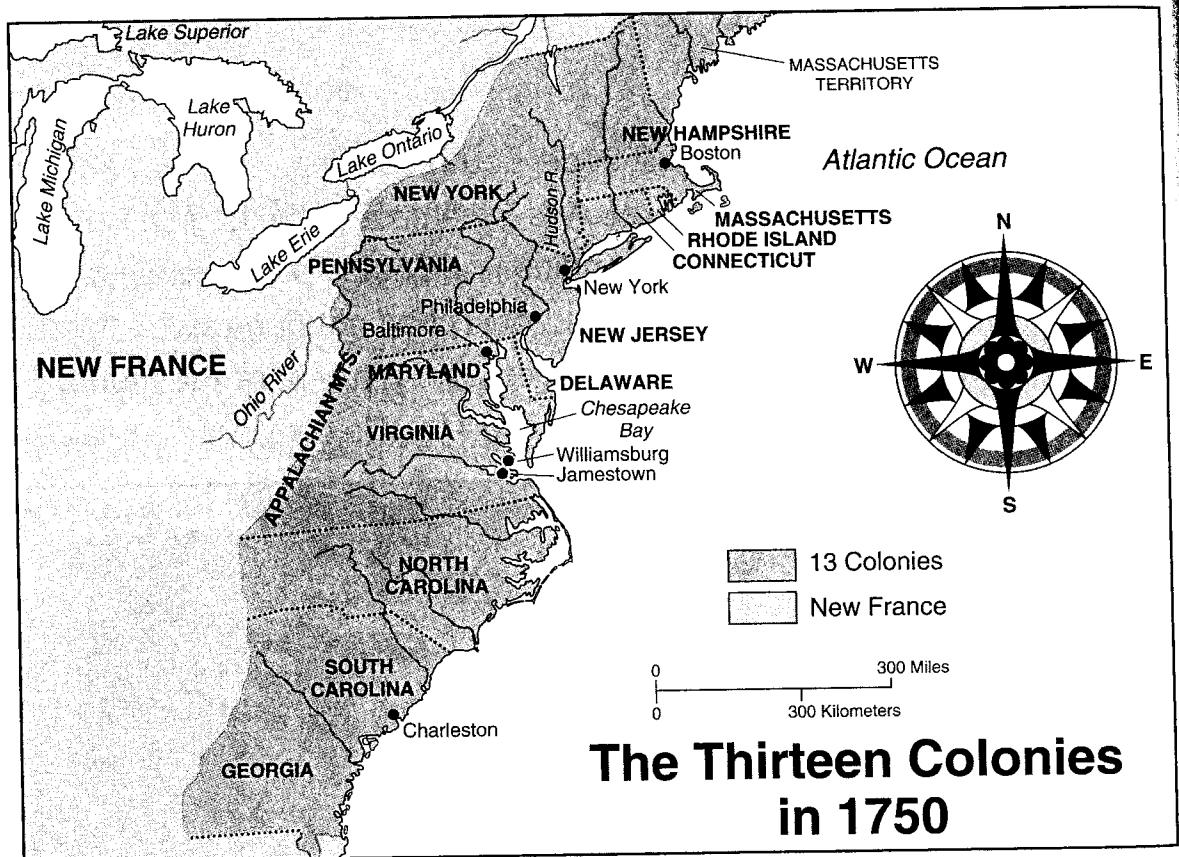
Tobacco Farm

needed a second chance. In 1732, prisoners and very poor people got passage to Georgia. There they received a small farm and a chance for a new life. Georgia became the last of the thirteen colonies.

You can guess that Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia were called the **Southern Colonies**. Their common interest was farming.

By 1770 more than 2 million people lived in England's 13 North American colonies. By 1776 the drums of freedom were rolling. The thirteen colonies would become the thirteen states of the United States of America.

The 13 Colonies in 1750



Name the thirteen colonies. Tell one important fact about each colony.

Go to page 140 to learn more about the Dutch and the English in New York!

