

Chapter 2: Thirteen Colonies

1. The Thirteen Colonies

The Southern Colonies

In 1607, England founded the colony of Jamestown in Virginia. Poor planning led to starvation, disease, and native conflict. Settler John Rolfe successfully planted tobacco making Jamestown profitable. Eventually, good leaders took charge and the settlement grew.

The Southern colonies had long, warm summers and mild winters. The soil was very good. Hence, southerners became great farmers producing many crops including tobacco, rice, and indigo.

The New England Colonies

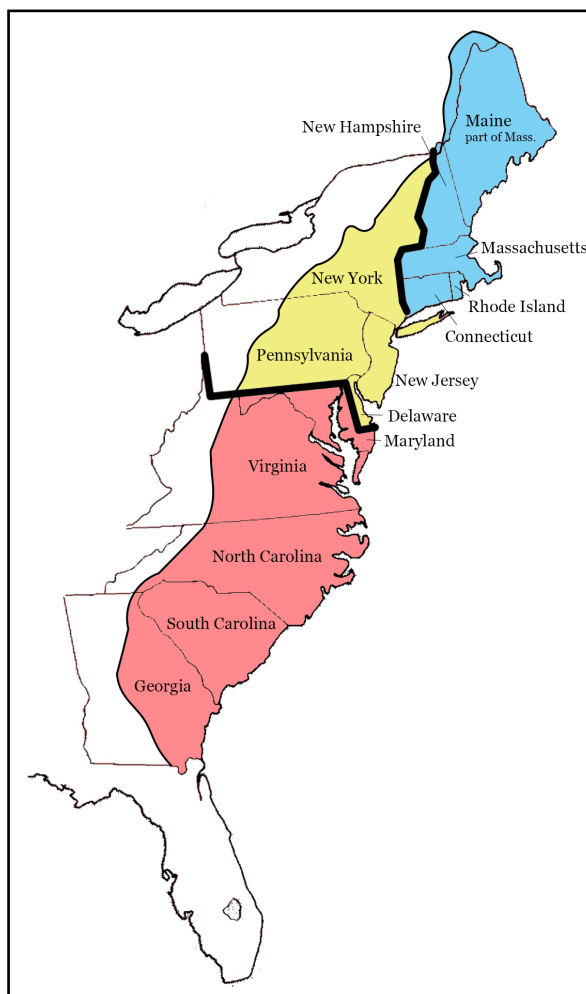
A group of pilgrims left England in 1620 on the ship *Mayflower* in search of religious freedom. They landed at a place they called Plymouth and started a colony. Beginning in 1629, a wave of thousands of Puritans from England also searching for religious freedom arrived nearby founding new settlements and colonies throughout the area.

The New England colonies had long, cold winters and generally rocky soil. So farming was difficult. They did have a lot of trees. Carpenters built large ships to fish and hunt whales. Others used ships to trade goods with other colonies, the Caribbean Islands, and Europe.

The Middle Colonies

The Middle colonies laid between the New England and Southern colonies. There were areas with warm weather and good soil like Pennsylvania so they farmed. Places like New York had a great

natural bay so they shipped goods and fished.



The thirteen British colonies in North America. blue=New England; yellow=middle colonies; red=southern colonies

2. Ideas

The Enlightenment

In the 1600s, **philosophers** or thinkers, began to look at the world differently. They wanted to explain how the world worked using reason and common sense, not magic and superstition.

John Locke was an English philosopher who published *Two*

Treatises of Government in 1689. He said all people were guaranteed **natural rights**: life, liberty, and property. People had a right to live their lives, to do things they want to do, and to own things especially land. More than anyone else, the colonists supported Locke's ideas.

The Great Awakening

Beginning in the 1730s and lasting until the 1760s, some ministers began traveling from colony to colony preaching with a new, emotional style that attracted thousands of people. Some ministers scared their audiences with sermons about hell and others preached about the glory of going to heaven.

These revivals led to new religions like the Methodists and Baptists who attracted people such as women and Africans that were rejected by older religions. Everyone who believed in Jesus Christ was going to heaven. The message that everyone was equal before God became a popular idea. The concept of **equality** spread from colony to colony.

3. Government

Colonial Politics

The King of Great Britain appointed a royal governor to run each colony. In theory, the governor had almost absolute power. To help the governor, voters elected men to the assembly who made laws and passed taxes. In reality, the assembly had the most power. If the governor did not do what the assembly wanted, the assembly could refuse to pay the governor his salary every month. The governor usually did what the assembly wanted.

In most places, only white men who owned property could vote or hold political office. In some colonies, a person also had to belong to a certain church to get involved in politics.

At this time, women had few rights. Eventually women would protest, hold marches, and give speeches for equal treatment, an education, and **suffrage**. They would not get the right to vote until the Nineteenth Amendment passed in 1920.

4. Cheap Labor

Indentured Servitude

The cost of labor or what workers were paid for their work could be expensive. In all colonies but mostly in the middle colonies, they used indentured servants as cheap labor. A colonial employer would pay for a laborer in England to come to America. In exchange, the laborer agreed to work for free for several years (usually four to seven years) to pay off the debt.

Slavery

Although **slavery** existed in all of the colonies, it began and became widespread in the southern colonies. Farming required a lot of work and it was cheaper for many southerners to import enslaved people from Africa rather than pay workers already in America.

Being enslaved was a terrible condition. Africans had no rights and had to do what they were told. If they rebelled, they could be beaten, starved, or worse. Slavery would not officially end until the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment in 1865.