

## North, Middle, and Southern Colonies

During the 16th and 17th centuries, many Europeans were moving to the Americas. They came for different reasons to the new colonies. The puritans in the north were setting up a new religious government. The middle colonies were a mix of many different peoples and cultures. Many were settling in the south to establish plantations and make money on agriculture.

Pre-revolutionary America was a very diverse place indeed. The most diverse places were the middle colonies of Pennsylvania, New York New Jersey and Delaware. More different ethnic groups lived in closer proximity than in any other place in Europe. The middle colonies had many Native American tribes and African slaves during the early years as well. Unlike New England with the Puritans, the middle colonies had a variety of religions. Quakers, Mennonites, Lutherans, Dutch Calvinists and Presbyterians made the presence of one faith, impossible

The largest cities in America were New York and Philadelphia. These cities had culture and gave rise to such notable thinkers as Benjamin Franklin who earned his respect in America and Europe. The middle colonies was a hodgepodge of people and served as a cultural thinking spot. The middle colonies also had fertile soil. Land was easily acquired. The wheat and corn from these areas would feed the American colonies through the revolutionary war. The middle colonies also maintained the middle ground between the north and the south. Elements from both, towns and large estates could be found. These were the perfect nucleus for English America.

Virginia was the first successful southern colony. While Puritan enthusiasm was fueling New England's commercial development, and Penn's Quaker experiment was turning the middle colonies into America's bread basket, the South was turning to cash crops. Geography and motive made these colonies different from the others.

Directly to Virginia's north was Maryland. Maryland's colonial economy would soon come to reflect that of Virginia, as tobacco became the most important crop. To the south lay the Carolinas. In the Deep South was Georgia, the last of the original thirteen colonies. English American Southerners would not enjoy the commonly good health of their New England counterparts. Outbreaks of malaria and yellow fever made life expectancies lower. Since the northern colonies attracted religious refugees, they tended to bring families in. Such family connections were less prevalent in the South.

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