

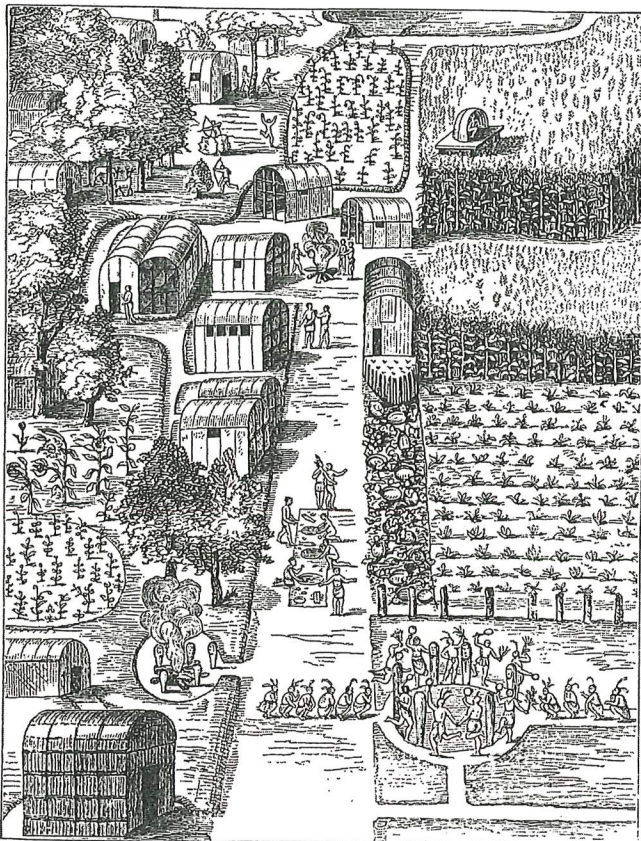
# Colonial AMERICA

**I**F YOU LIVED IN COLONIAL AMERICA—the period from the first colonies to the American Revolution—then you might have been alive during a time of great change. Of course, your perspective depended on who you were, where you were living, and what you did. Native Americans, European settlers, and enslaved Africans and indentured servants all experienced this time of change differently.

If you were one of the native peoples who lived in America before the settlers arrived, you would witness almost everything about your world changing, and not usually for the best. The Native Americans' lifestyles were completely different from those of the Europeans who began to settle in their area. There were many different tribes, each with its own language and way of life that was suited to their homeland. All tribes had a deep

respect for the land; tribes hunted, fished, and gathered fruits, as well as farming the fertile lands on which they lived. When the Europeans arrived, they brought with them new ideas about owning land and farming, which were not compatible with the way that natives had been living their lives for hundreds of years. Although different Native American tribes traditionally inhabited certain areas, most Native American cultures did not believe in individuals owning property. However, Europeans were accustomed to owning land and property.

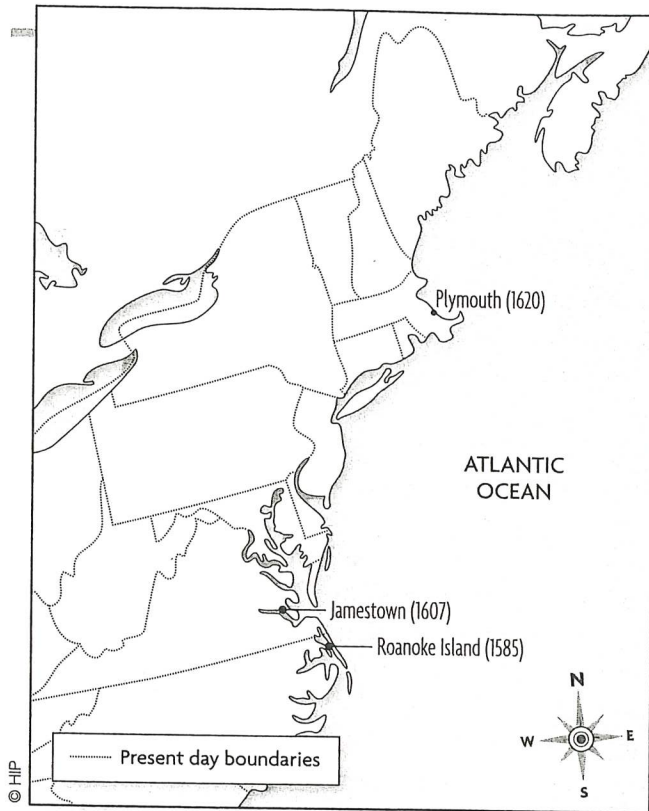
As the colonists settled on the lands once inhabited only by Native Americans, they traded with them. Natives traded corn and furs for colonial cloth or things made of iron. Some tribes established treaties with the newcomers and lived together peacefully



Scribner's Popular History of the United States, by William Cullen Bryant, 1896

An engraving of an Algonquin village, Secotan.





Map showing the English Colonies.

for many years. But as more settlers came to the 13 colonies, they used natural resources that Native Americans depended on for food, and claimed native land. This led to conflict and violence such as King Philip's War. We can learn about these times from the Native American female leader, or sachem, Queen Wetamo, and the white colonist Mary Rowlandson, who was captured by Native Americans. Eventually Native Americans had little choice except to move west to places where white settlers had not yet settled.

If you were a settler who lived in the original 13 colonies, chances are that you came there from England, or that your parents were English. The first settlers at Jamestown in 1607 were English. They came because they were hoping to get rich, after hearing stories of the Spanish explorers finding gold in South America, but the harsh environment of the New World nearly killed them. In 1620, another group of settlers arrived in America. The Pilgrims were not looking for riches. They just wanted to be able to practice their religion without being persecuted. The Puritans followed the Pilgrims ten years later, also seeking to establish a new church. Religious freedom was the reason why Quakers



New England Puritans walking to church in the snow.

North Wind Picture Archives





North Wind Picture Archives

Slaves unload rice barges in South Carolina.

settled in Pennsylvania. There was even a colony (Maryland) established for English people who were in legal trouble for not paying their debts. Some of the new residents of the colonies were indentured servants, who agreed to work for certain number of years, usually seven, to pay for their passage to the new world. After their indenture period was up, they were free.

Half of the people who settled in the colonies could trace their heritage directly back to England. The next largest group was forcibly brought from Africa to the colonies as enslaved people. As early as the mid-1500s, the Portuguese were capturing Africans and selling them as slaves to the Spanish to work in their colonies in the Americas. The first slaves to be sold directly to the American colonies came to Jamestown in 1619. After that, the number of slaves brought from Africa or the Caribbean increased every year. Enslaved people in the New England colonies often performed household duties and skilled labor, working as carpenters, blacksmiths, bakers, and weavers. In the southern colonies, some slaves performed these same household duties, but many more worked in the tobacco fields. They often brought the knowledge of how to cultivate rice and tobacco with them from their native lands. At first they often worked and lived side by side with indentured servants. But towards the end of the 1600s, slaves gradually began to live in their own quarters, which were like small villages. Unlike indentured servants, they were considered property and could not earn their freedom.

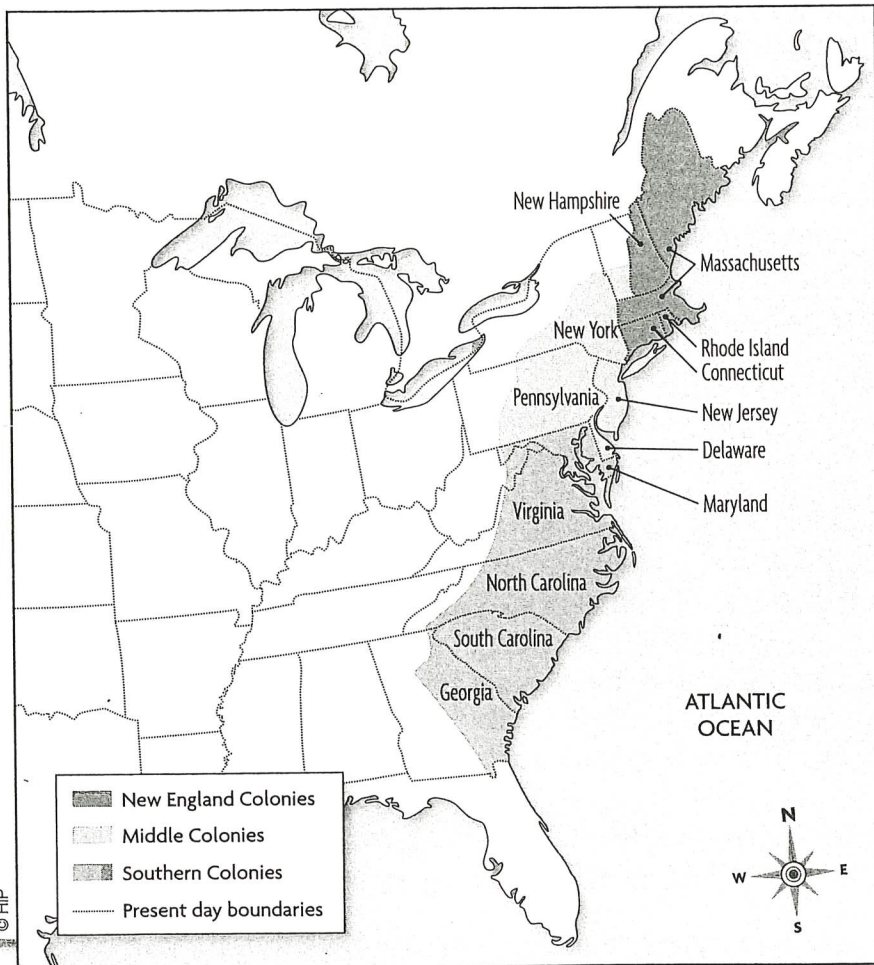
Life differed depending on where in the 13 colonies you lived. Over time, cities such as Boston, Philadelphia and New York had established



populations, but most people lived in scattered settlements on farms and small towns. New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut had rich forests for timber, good fishing, and plenty of game for trapping. This made it easy for them to trade goods with Europe. Farming was not very good because of the rocky soil and the number of trees, and most families only grew enough food to feed themselves. The Middle Colonies (New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware) had both excellent farming and good harbors for shipping. Farmers grew grain and raised livestock, and traded these raw materials for manufactured goods from Europe. The Southern colonies, including Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, grew both their own food and crops to trade, such as tobacco, rice, and indigo. Growing these kinds of crops required a lot of work and effort, so plantation owners relied on both slaves and indentured servants for labor. And no matter where you lived, there were artisans and tradesmen who created the goods that everyone needed, from candles to barrels to pewter, or provided services like doctors, wigmakers, and millers.

In Colonial America, there were people from many different places and cultures, including native peoples, Europeans, and Africans. While there was discovery and excitement, there was also tragedy and heartbreak. But

even today, hundreds of years later, we can still read what Colonial Americans wrote and hear their voices. Some of them we remember well, while the stories of others have been mostly hidden by history. People who lived in Colonial America were a diverse group with different perspectives, ideals, and values, really not so different from us today.



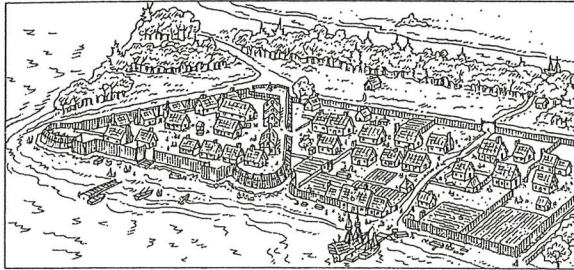
Map showing the Thirteen Colonies.



# COLONIAL AMERICA TIMELINE

**1607**

The Jamestown Colony is founded in Virginia.



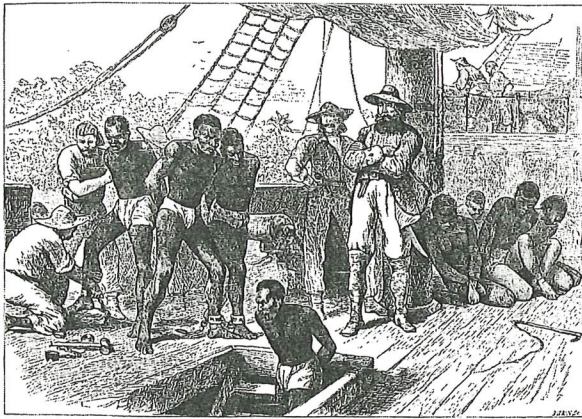
A pen & ink drawing of Jamestown.

**1609**

Henry Hudson explores the Hudson River in New York, tobacco is first planted and harvested by Virginia colonists.

**1619**

The first Africans are brought to Jamestown for sale as indentured servants.



Enslaved people being loaded onto a ship.

**1620**

The Pilgrims arrive in Massachusetts.

**1624**

Thirty Dutch families arrive to establish a colony in New York.

**1630**

900 Puritans arrive to set up a colony in Massachusetts Bay, which becomes the city of Boston.

**1634**

The first settlers arrive in Maryland.

**1636**

The colony of Rhode Island is founded as a place for those escaping religious intolerance in Massachusetts.



Roger Williams meeting the Narragansett Indians after being banished from Massachusetts Bay Colony.

**1652**

Rhode Island enacts the first colonial law making slavery illegal.

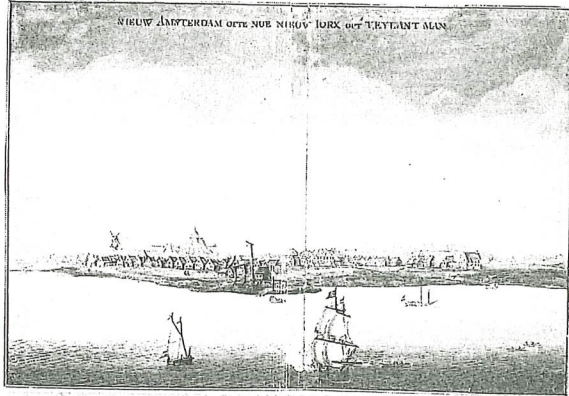
**1663**

King Charles II of England establishes the colony of Carolina.



**1664**

The Dutch city of New Amsterdam becomes New York when it is ceded to the English.



*Gezicht op Nieuw Amsterdam* by Johannes Vingboons, a 1664 painting of Nieuw Amsterdam.

**1675–1676**

King Philip's war is fought between New England colonists and Native Americans over colonial expansion into native territory.



Metacomb (called King Philip by the colonists) was the chief, or sachem, of the Wampanoag Indians in New England.

**1681**

Quakers found Pennsylvania.

**1682**

French explorer La Salle claims the lower Mississippi valley for France, naming it Louisiana.

**1692**

The Salem Witch trials take place in Salem, Massachusetts.

**1700**

The white population in the American colonies reaches 250,000 people.

**1706**

Benjamin Franklin is born in Boston.



Benjamin Franklin, in a painting by Charles Willson Peale.

**1712**

The Carolina colony is divided into North and South Carolina. Pennsylvania bans the import of slaves into its colony.

**1725**

The population of black slaves in the American Colonies reaches 75,000.

**1731**

The first public library in America is founded.

**1737**

The first colonial copper coins are minted in Connecticut.

**1754**

The French and Indian War begins.