

Charleston

Originally known as Charles Towne, the city is built on a peninsula between the Cooper and Ashley Rivers, which empty into the Atlantic Ocean. The city was founded in 1670 in what was then the southern portion of the Carolina colony. In 1729, Carolina was divided into two colonies, and Charleston became the capital of South Carolina. A trading center for rice, indigo, and slaves, Charleston was the largest city in the Southern colonies.

B. Southern Colonies

Virginia

The first permanent English colony was not established in North America until 1607, when colonists sailing under a charter from King James I planted the English flag at Jamestown. Rather than shoulder all the potential losses from an expedition, some London merchants decided to combine into a joint-stock company to finance a colonization attempt. It was similar to a modern corporation in which people buy shares to underwrite expenses with the expectation they will share in the profits. The merchants named their venture the London Company, later renamed the Virginia Company, and sought a charter from King James I. At that time, all land that had been discovered by explorers was claimed in the name of the nation under whose flag they sailed. As a result, anyone who wanted to settle on that land needed the monarch's permission—whether it was the king or queen of Spain, France, or England. The Virginia Company was granted a charter to settle the coast of an area that stretched from what is modern-day North Carolina, through Virginia and Maryland, to Delaware. In April 1607, the first 100 colonists—men and boys only—dropped anchor in a river they named James, in honor of King James I (1603–1625). (The colony, Virginia, had been named in honor of Queen Elizabeth [1558–1603], the “Virgin Queen.”) The river emptied into the Chesapeake Bay, an arm of the Atlantic Ocean.

After a search for a site that was accessible for trade with the local people and out of sight of Spanish ships, the colonists established their settlement and named it Jamestown. Unfortunately, the area was marshland and filled with mosquitoes. Farming such land would prove difficult. However, many of the men who came in the first three years of the colony were not interested in farming. They were gentlemen-adventurers, many of whom had never done a hard day's work. They had come to search for gold and silver and to trade for beaver and deerskins with the Native Americans. These trade goods were luxuries that would bring high prices in Europe. The charter also commanded the English to convert the native peoples to Christianity, but unlike the Spanish, the English crown did not send missionaries or soldiers to force Native Americans to obey.

The quest for riches made it difficult to get the men to work together. Finally, Captain John Smith took charge and told the men that those who did not work would not eat. Reluctantly, the men set to farming. Smith remained in charge until 1609, when he returned to England because of an injury.

Between 1607 and 1609, more colonists arrived, including a few women, but the difficulties of farming, disease (malaria and dysentery), and malnutrition dec-

imated the population. Some 900 colonists came during those years, but only 60 were left after what was called the “starving time.” Those who survived did so by eating dogs, cats, mice, rats, and horses. Some colonists robbed the colony’s storehouse. There were even accusations of cannibalism. Between 1610 and 1622, another 9,000 people came to Jamestown, but only 2,000 survived.

The Powhatan Confederacy and Pocahontas

The Virginia colonists had an up-and-down relationship with the native peoples of Virginia. The native peoples and the colonists had differing opinions on land use, which continued to cause conflict between the groups. The native people did not seek to own land exclusively, as the colonists did. The English had expected to be able to subdue and exploit the Native American populations, as the Spanish had. However, the English did not send an army to support the colonists. Instead, the colonists were left to themselves to figure out how to deal with the native peoples.

Powhatan was the name of a tribe, and the English called both the tribe and their leader, Wahunsonacock, by the name Powhatan. Wahunsonacock (Powhatan) was the leader of both the Powhatan and a confederacy, or loose organization, of Native American groups that was spread over most of the Virginia coast and into Maryland. (Powhatan is also discussed in connection with the Eastern Woodlands, on pp. 156–157.)

In the beginning, the Powhatan aided the colonists of Jamestown as much as the Wampanoag helped the Pilgrims in Plymouth Colony. The Powhatan showed the colonists new plants that would grow well in their fields and gave them food. However, when the colonists still were not growing enough food by the second year, Smith tried to force the Powhatan to give them food by burning their fields and villages. The Powhatan attacked. According to Smith’s history of the time, which certainly contains much factual material but may also contain some legends and exaggerations, at one point he was captured by Powhatan and about to be executed when Powhatan’s daughter, Pocahontas, stepped in and saved him. Smith wrote: “She hazarded the beating out of her own brains to save mine; and not only that, but so prevailed with her father, that I was safely conducted to James town, where I found about eight and thirty miserable poor and sick creatures.” Jamestown was then in the middle of the “starving time.” Smith goes on to give Pocahontas credit for saving the colony: “Such was the weakness of this poor commonwealth, as had the savages not fed us, we directly had starved. And this relief . . . was commonly brought us by this Lady Pocahontas . . . she, next under God, . . . was the instrument to preserve this colony from death, famine, and utter confusion.”

In 1614, Pocahontas married John Rolfe, a colonist, and took the Christian name Rebecca. When he returned to England for a visit, she went with him. Pocahontas was a sensation in England and was presented at the royal court. She was touted as “the first Christian ever of that Nation [the Powhatan], the first Virginian ever [to speak] English, [and the first to have] had a child in marriage by an Englishman.” Unfortunately, Pocahontas died, possibly of smallpox, before she could return to America.

After Smith’s return to England, other governors tried to force the Powhatan to cooperate. They told the Native Americans to ignore their chief Powhatan and bring food and furs to the colonists. Warfare broke out and continued through much of the first half of the 1600s.

Tobacco as a Cash Crop

John Rolfe is notable not only for being Pocahontas's husband but also for introducing tobacco agriculture into Jamestown. Local tobacco was not of a high quality, but in 1612, Rolfe tried growing milder tobacco imported from the West Indies.

Tobacco had been introduced to Europeans in the 1500s by the Spanish. Columbus's crew took the plant back to Spain with them after their exploration in the New World. Initially, tobacco was used for medicinal purposes, but recreational use soon spread across Europe. King James of England had written a pamphlet against tobacco smoking in 1604, calling it "a custom loathsome to the eye, hateful to the nose, harmful to the brain, dangerous to the lungs, and in the black stinking fume thereof nearest resembling the horrible stygian smoke of the pit that is bottomless." Nevertheless, the ranks of the tobacco smokers continued to grow, and, in time, many of them would be supplied with tobacco from the Virginia colony named for King James.

The first tobacco crop from Jamestown was sent to England in 1617, and, by 1619, tobacco had become the colony's chief crop. By 1669, the colony was exporting 15 million pounds a year. Early on, the Virginia Company had tried to dissuade colonists from relying on just one crop, but farmers who were seeing their profits jump each year ignored them. In 1624, all attempts to limit tobacco agriculture were lifted.

In 1619, a Dutch ship brought approximately 20 African laborers to Jamestown. These may have been slaves or they may have been indentured servants. In either case, they are believed to be the first African laborers brought to the English colonies in North America. For more on the beginnings of slavery in America, see "Slavery" on p. 184.

Maryland

After the Protestant Reformation in Europe, the people within a country were expected to practice the religion approved by their government. To do otherwise was to risk fines, imprisonment, and even death. In England, King Henry VIII had begun the Church of England, also known as the Anglican Church, in protest against the Roman Catholic Church's refusal to grant him a divorce from his wife, Catherine of Aragon. All English subjects were then expected to become Anglicans. The Anglican Church was the "official" or established church. From the time of Queen Elizabeth on, Catholics were persecuted and suspected of wanting to undermine the religion and government.

In 1632, Maryland was established as a haven for Roman Catholics. Lord Baltimore, a Catholic and friend of King Charles I, was given land along Chesapeake Bay to found a colony, which he named Maryland in honor of the English queen, Henrietta Maria. The colony was settled in 1634.

Like Virginia, Maryland's economy was based on tobacco agriculture. A few large Catholic landowners ran huge tobacco plantations, but they were outnumbered by small farmers and others who were Protestant. In an attempt to keep peace in the colony, Lord Baltimore had the general assembly, the legislative body for the colony, pass the Act of Toleration in 1649. This law ensured freedom of

religion by confirming that all people could practice their religion without interference. While Maryland is considered a Southern colony culturally, it is geographically part of the Middle Atlantic area.

North and South Carolina

A group of proprietors founded Carolina colony in 1663. It was named in honor of King Charles II (*Charles* in Latin is *Carolus*). The northern part of the colony was centered on the Albemarle Sound, not far from the Virginia border. Most farms in that area were small and worked by families.

The southern part of the colony grew up around the settlement of Charles Towne, later Charleston. Rice was introduced into the colony in the 1690s, but the land and climate of the northern part of Carolina were ill-suited to rice agriculture. However, the swampy area around Charleston was ideal for growing rice. Like tobacco, rice was labor-intensive and required large amounts of land and equipment. Fields needed to be flooded at certain intervals, so dams and dikes had to be built. Wealthy men began to buy up land and establish plantations. Slaves from Africa played an instrumental role in the successful cultivation of rice in South Carolina. Many of them had grown rice in Africa and were able to teach the Europeans how to cultivate the crop. By the mid-1700s, planters also began to cultivate indigo on a large scale.

In the beginning of the colony, the proprietors offered land to every man, woman, child, and servant—male and female—who would immigrate to Carolina. For a time, indentured servants provided much of the labor, but once agriculture became big business, planters began to import boatloads of enslaved Africans. By 1740, for every European colonist in Carolina there were two African slaves. Carolina was divided into North and South Carolina in 1729.

Georgia

Georgia was the last of the 13 English colonies to be established. In 1732, James Oglethorpe and a group of London businessmen received a charter from King George II to set up a colony between South Carolina and Spanish Florida. Named in honor of King George, the colony was to provide a place for English debtors. At the time, those who could not pay their debts were sent to debtors' prison.

In 1729, one of Oglethorpe's friends had been thrown into a London prison because of unpaid debts. The man was thrown into a cell with a prisoner who had smallpox; he contracted the disease himself and died. The loss of his friend stimulated Oglethorpe to begin a long campaign to reform and improve the horrible conditions in England's prisons. Oglethorpe also came to believe it was a tragedy that so many British citizens lingered in jail simply because they could not pay their bills. He began to push for the creation of a new colony in America, a place where the "worthy poor" could have a "second chance," and could be turned into farmers, merchants, and artisans. Oglethorpe envisioned a colony without slavery. In 1732, the colony became a reality, partly because the British wanted a "buffer" colony between the Spanish and Native Americans in Florida and the settlers of Carolina.

Few debtors took up the offer of 50 acres, tools, and supplies for a year. Poor immigrants from other countries including Ireland, Scotland, and Wales did settle in the colony, but it grew slowly. In time, plantation-style agriculture, including the use of enslaved Africans, was introduced.

Slavery

The first Africans were enslaved and brought to the Americas in the early 1500s by the Spanish to work on farms and mines in the Caribbean. The first Africans in the English colonies on the mainland arrived at Jamestown in 1619, a year before the *Mayflower* sailed to New England. These first Africans are believed to have been indentured servants, people who contracted to work for a certain period of time and then were released to work for themselves.

By the 1660s, however, many Africans were being treated as slaves. By then, it was difficult to find enough workers to farm the large tobacco plantations that the English were starting in the colony, so bringing captured Africans seemed to promise a steady supply of labor.

In the 1700s, importing Africans as slaves for the Southern colonies became big business for American merchants and sea captains. Slavery was not as important in New England, although there were slaves in those colonies. However, Northern colonies did gain economic benefits from slavery. Ships made in New England were used to bring slaves to the colonies, and ships made in cities such as New York City were used to transport slave products like cotton and tobacco to England and France. Slavery was less important in the Middle Atlantic colonies, where most farms were small and tilled by families, although again there were slaves on farms and in cities, working in houses and as skilled artisans and craftworkers.

The section of the trade network between Africa and the Americas was known as the Middle Passage. It was in the Middle Passage that Africans were transported in chains from Africa to the American colonies. Slave raiders, Africans armed with guns supplied by European slave traders, would kidnap members of enemy tribes or just hapless people—men, women, and children—who were in the wrong place, and march them in chains to the coast. There, the Africans would be put into slave factories, holding pens, until a slave ship came to pick them up.

On board the slave ship, the Africans would be chained together below deck in tight spaces with little food and water for six to ten weeks. They might be allowed on deck in good weather for exercise and fresh air. Sometimes, Africans jumped to their deaths from the railings rather than endure any more. The Middle Passage ended in the Caribbean, in South America, or in the Southern colonies, where the Africans would be marched off the ship in chains to be examined by prospective buyers and sold at auction. 52

C. New England Colonies

As noted in Section A, over time the New England colonies developed a maritime economy based in large part on fishing and shipbuilding, as well as on international trade. However, religion was also an important factor in the settlement of New England.

Massachusetts

Two groups settled what became Massachusetts: the Pilgrims and the Puritans. Both were religious dissenters who came from England in search of religious freedom.

The subsection on Maryland (on pp. 182–183) described the establishment of the Anglican Church and the persecution of Catholics that led to the establishment of Maryland. Religious disputes also led to the settlement of New England. A small group of English Protestants did not think that the Church of England had gone far enough in removing Roman Catholic practices. These people called themselves Puritans after their wish to purify the Church of England. One group of Puritans went so far as to separate themselves from the Church of England and form their own church. These people were called Separatists, and became the Pilgrims, or travelers, who settled in New England.

The Pilgrims

In 1608, a group of Separatists left England for Holland, where they could practice their deeply held beliefs without fear of reprisals. However, by 1618–1619, they found that their children were speaking Dutch and learning Dutch ways of life rather than English ones. The Pilgrims determined to hold fast to their English heritage and so left Holland to find a new life for themselves and their children near Jamestown in the Virginia Colony. Thirty-five Pilgrims, plus 47 other English people who wanted to start new lives, set sail on the *Mayflower* in September 1620. They spent 65 days at sea and landed not in mild and sunny Virginia, but much farther north in a cold and snowy climate.

When the Pilgrims first sighted Cape Cod, they rejoiced and gave thanks to God for allowing them to make the passage safely. One of the Pilgrim leaders, William Bradford, described their feelings many years later in his history, *Of Plymouth Plantation* (c. 1650):

Being thus arrived in a good harbor, and brought safe to land, they fell upon their knees and blessed the God of Heaven who had brought them over the fast and furious ocean, and delivered them from all the perils and miseries thereof, again to set their feet on the firm and stable earth, their proper element.

While still on board the *Mayflower*, the Pilgrims drew up and signed what is known as the Mayflower Compact. With this document, the 41 men who signed it agreed to consult together on rules for the colony. It is the first document in the English colonies to guarantee self-government. The text, as found in Bradford's history, reads as follows:

We, whose names are under-written, the loyal subjects of our dread sovereign Lord, King James, by the grace of God of Great Britain . . . Defender of the Faith, etc.

Having undertaken, for the glory of God and advancement of the Christian faith and honor of our King and country, a voyage to plant the first colony in the northern parts of Virginia; do, by these presents, solemnly and mutually in the presence of God and one of another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil body politic, for our better ordering and preservation and furtherance of the ends afore-said; and by virtue hereof do enact, constitute, and frame, such just and equal laws, ordinances, acts, constitutions, and offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general good of the Colony; unto which we promise all due submission and obedience. In witness whereof we have hereunder subscribed our names at Cape Cod, the eleventh of November, in the year of the reign of our sovereign lord, King James . . . Anno Domini 1620. (49)

According to legend, the Pilgrims first set foot in North America on Plymouth Rock, a large granite boulder on the shore at Plymouth. Today, the rock is enclosed to keep people from climbing on it. Although no reliable evidence exists to support the landing on Plymouth Rock, the story has become part of our national lore.

The Pilgrims called their settlement Plymouth Colony in honor of the English town from which they had recently set sail. With little food, no way to plant and grow food in the winter, and only temporary shelter, almost half the colonists died that first winter. Bradford noted:

In two or three months time, half their company died, especially in January and February, being the depth of winter and wanting houses and other comforts, being infected with the scurvy and other diseases . . . There died sometimes two or three a day . . . In this time of distress, there [were] but six or seven sound [healthy] persons who to their great commendations, be it spoken, spared no pains night nor day, but with abundance of toil and hazard of their own health, fetched them [the sick] wood, made their fires, dressed their meat, made their beds, washed their loathsome clothes, clothed and unclothed them.

In spring 1621, the Wampanoag under Chief Massasoit came to the aid of the Pilgrims. A Native American named Samoset visited them and spoke in broken English. Samoset told them of the territories nearby and of another Native American named Tisquantum (Squanto), who had been to England and spoke even better English than Samoset.

Tisquantum's story is remarkable. He had been kidnapped by an English explorer years earlier and had spent time in Spain and England. Later he had returned to America, only to find that his original people (the Patuxet) had died of diseases brought by the Europeans. Tisquantum joined the Wampanoag and Chief Massasoit. When the Pilgrims arrived, he presented himself as a translator, and eventually became an agricultural advisor as well. Tisquantum proved especially helpful to the Pilgrims. He made a peace treaty between the Native Americans and the colonists and taught the colonists how to raise corn, beans, and squash. He also showed them which wild plants were safe to gather and eat.

The Pilgrims learned quickly, and their harvest that fall was good enough to provide food for the coming winter, so they set aside time to give thanks to God.

From previous grades, students should be familiar with the story of the first Thanksgiving, celebrated with the native people. At this feast the Pilgrims most likely ate turkey, duck, or goose, and fish, shellfish, stews, and vegetables. In 1863, President Abraham Lincoln made Thanksgiving a national day of celebration for the blessings Americans receive during the year.

William Bradford records many other interesting details about the Pilgrims in his history. One of the most fascinating stories tells how the Pilgrims first adopted and later rejected a communal style of farming. The original plan was for all the Pilgrims to hold the land jointly, and all to share the fruits of the soil. This was called “the common course and condition,” and it was tried for a few years. However, Bradford noted that the system was problematic:

The experience that was had in this common course and condition, tried sundry years and that amongst godly and sober men, may well evince the vanity of that conceit of Plato’s and other ancients . . . that the taking away of property and bringing in community into a commonwealth would make them happy and flourishing . . . For this community (so far as it was) was found to breed much confusion and discontent and retard much employment that would have been to their benefit and comfort. For the young men, that were most able and fit for labor and service, did repine that they should spend their time and strength to work for other men’s wives and children without any recompense.

To alleviate the confusion and dissent, Bradford and the other Pilgrim leaders decided to assign each head of household some land and a certain amount of seed, and let them all farm for themselves. Bradford says this greatly improved the situation:

This had very good success, for it made all hands very industrious, so as much more corn was planted than otherwise would have been by any means the Governor or any other could use, and saved him a great deal of trouble, and gave far better content. The women now went willingly into the field, and took their little ones with them to set corn; which before would allege weakness and inability; whom to have compelled would have been thought great tyranny and oppression.

Bradford was governor of the colony at the time this happened. He was re-elected 30 times over the next several decades. The colony he governed was very religious. All men, women, and children were expected to attend church.

The Puritans and Massachusetts Bay Colony

In 1629, a group of English Puritans and merchants formed a partnership called the Massachusetts Bay Company. Its purpose was to establish a colony north of Plymouth, which was both a business venture and an experiment in living according to the Bible and Christian principles. The profits for the owners would come from farming, fishing, and trade for furs with the Native Americans. One thousand colonists came in the first year and 10,000 by the end of the 1630s. They began with a settlement at Salem and then moved south to establish settlements at places they called Boston, Charlestown, and Cambridge.

One of the leaders of the Massachusetts Puritans was John Winthrop. En route to America, Winthrop delivered a famous sermon, called “A Model of Christian Charity.” In this sermon he explained that everyone would be watching the Puritan experiment in godly living, to see if it succeeded or failed. In a famous simile, he compared the Puritan experiment to “a city upon a hill”: 51

For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill, the eyes of all people are upon us; so that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken and so cause him to withdraw his present help from us, we shall be made a story and a byword through the world, we shall open the mouths of enemies to speak evil of the ways of God and all professors for God’s sake; we shall shame the faces of many of God’s worthy servants, and cause their prayers to be turned into curses upon us till we be consumed out of the good land whether we are going.

To avoid this fate, Winthrop encouraged the Puritans to bond together:

For this end, we must be knit together in this work, as one man, we must entertain each other in brotherly affection, we must be willing to abridge ourselves of our superfluities, for the supply of others’ necessities, we must uphold a familiar commerce together in all meekness, gentleness, patience and liberality, we must delight in each other, make others’ conditions our own, rejoice together, mourn together, labor and suffer together So shall we keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, the Lord will be our God, and delight to dwell among us, as his own people, and will command a blessing upon us in all our ways he shall make us a praise and glory, that men shall say of succeeding plantations, the Lord make it like that of New England.

The experiment in living a life according to religious values was evident in how the company set up the government of the colony. Church and state were tightly linked. The legislature, which was called the General Court, met four times a year and included the governor, council, and representatives of each town who were elected by the freemen of their town. A freeman was a church member, but not all adult males who attended church were allowed to use the title “church member” and vote in elections. The Puritan ministers decided who was worthy to become a church member. By controlling church membership and, therefore, who could vote, the ministers controlled the policies of the colony’s government. Thus the church and government worked closely together.

Puritan Emphasis on Education

Knowing God’s word as revealed in the Bible was a central point of Puritanism. To ensure that everyone was able to read the Bible, in 1642 the General Court of Massachusetts passed the first education law in the colonies. According to the law, parents had to teach their children to read. In 1647, the General Court passed a law ordering every town of 50 families to support a school.

The following is an example of the kind of instruction that Puritans gave their children. It is taken from the *New England Primer*. This little book, which was first published in 1687, taught religion, reading, and writing.

The Dutiful Child's Promises

I will fear God, and honor the King.

I will honor my Father & Mother.

I will Obey my Superiors.

I will Submit to my Elders.

I will Love my Friends.

I will hate no Man.

I will forgive my Enemies, and pray to God for them.

I will as much as in me lies keep all God's Holy Commandments.

In the primer, even the alphabet was taught in connection with religious ideas. The children learned their letters from little rhymes like these:

A: "In Adam's Fall / We sinned all."

B: "Thy life to mend, / This Book attend."

J: "Job feels the Rod, / Yet blesses God." 50

New Hampshire

Puritans from the Massachusetts Bay Colony moved into the area that is now New Hampshire in the 1630s and 1640s. By the 1670s, the colonists there petitioned for status as a separate colony. In 1679, an English court agreed and New Hampshire became a royal colony.

Rhode Island

In 1631, Roger Williams, a minister from London, arrived in the Massachusetts Bay Colony and soon ran afoul of the colony's leaders. He believed that magistrates should not interfere with people's religious beliefs. He also advocated religious toleration and fair treatment for Native Americans. Williams believed that they should be compensated for lands taken from them. These ideas brought Williams into conflict with the Puritan leadership of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. William Bradford described Williams as "godly and zealous . . . but very unsettled in judgment" with "strange opinions." Another church leader, Cotton Mather, called him "the first rebel against the divine order in the wilderness" that the Puritans were trying to create.

In 1635, Williams was charged with heresy and divisiveness and banished from Salem by the Puritan leadership. Williams and his followers moved south. They purchased land from the Narragansetts and established a settlement that Williams called Providence in what is today Rhode Island. Williams wrote several books defending his views and calling for more understanding and better treatment of the Native Americans.

Another religious dissenter who had to flee the Massachusetts Bay Colony was Anne Hutchinson. Hutchinson had come to Massachusetts from England in 1634. In Massachusetts, women were not allowed to preach in church, so Hutchinson held meetings in her home, where she spoke against the strict religious regimentation of the colony. She also taught that good works were no indication of God's favor: faith alone could lead to salvation. Hutchinson's views that a devout person did not need to follow the rules of the church and the Bible but

instead could act according to his or her belief in God led to a controversy known as the “antinomian controversy,” which divided the colony. In 1737 she was brought before the colony’s leaders (including John Winthrop) and found guilty of heresy. Winthrop wrote that Hutchinson sealed her own doom by announcing at the end of her trial that it had been revealed to her that she was to come into New England and be persecuted there, and that “God would ruin us and our prosperity.” Hutchinson was told to recant or be banished. She chose banishment and found refuge, first in Williams’s settlement and later in New York. Hutchinson and most of her family were killed during a Native American uprising in 1643.

In 1643, the four settlements of dissenters that had grown up in Rhode Island petitioned the English king for a charter. It was granted in 1644 and the colony set up its own government, which guaranteed self-government and religious freedom.

Connecticut

Religious dissenters also established Connecticut. In 1636, a group led by Thomas Hooker, a minister, settled what is now Hartford. In 1639, they and members of several other towns in the area drew up the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut, the first constitution in the English colonies. Membership in the Puritan church was not a requirement for voting. In 1662, Connecticut was granted a charter.

D. Middle Atlantic Colonies

New York

The first settlement in the area of New York was a Dutch trading post established by Henry Hudson (see pp. 170–171) in 1609. In 1624, Peter Minuit, acting for the Dutch West India Company, allegedly purchased Manhattan Island from the Manhattan people for \$24 in trade goods. The Dutch named the city New Amsterdam in honor of one of their cities in the Netherlands and turned the settlement into an important fur-trading center. The entire area, including Long Island, was known as New Netherland.

The success of the Dutch drew the attention of the English, who decided to press their right to the area. They based their claim on John Cabot’s voyage of 1497. In 1664, the English captured the city and renamed the entire area New York in honor of the English king’s brother, the Duke of York. New Amsterdam was also renamed New York City.

New Jersey

The Duke of York gave the lower portion of New York to two friends who named it New Jersey after the Isle of Jersey in the English Channel. New Jersey was a proprietary colony managed for the benefit of the two men, but they offered religious toleration and representative government to all who immigrated to New Jersey.

Pennsylvania

In 1681, William Penn received a grant of land from the English king to repay a loan that Penn’s father had made to an earlier monarch. Penn was to be the sole

proprietor of the huge tract and, at the king's suggestion, named the land Pennsylvania, Latin for "Penn's woods."

Penn was a member of the Society of Friends, a Protestant group known familiarly as the Quakers. Quakers believed that all people had something of God in them and were, therefore, equal. They believed that every man and woman has direct access to God. It followed that there was no need for priests or churches, or for elaborate costumes or rituals, or even dogma and creeds. At their meetings, Quakers would generally keep silent and there was no planned program. They referred to themselves as "Friends of Truth" or just "Friends." Quakers refused to support the state church, swear oaths in court, or fight in wars.

Like Puritans, Pilgrims, and Roman Catholics, Quakers were persecuted in England for their religious beliefs. Penn hoped to make Pennsylvania a haven not just for his fellow Quakers, but for people of all religions. Because of Quaker beliefs, slavery was banned, and small farms rather than plantations developed in the colony.

Delaware

The English had occupied the area known today as Delaware since 1664, when they took it from the Dutch. In 1682, the Duke of York gave the area to Penn, who wanted an outlet to the Atlantic. The Lower Counties, as they were called, were represented in the Pennsylvania Assembly until 1704 when they were granted their own legislature. The Lower Counties did not have their own governor, however, and continued to be ruled from Philadelphia.