

Chapter 6

Life in the 13 colonies 1620-1763

Section 1

The New England Colonies: New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut. New England colonies were first based on farming, but this region had more valuable resources- also the sea was a great natural resource. The growing season in these colonies were very short. Most farms produced just enough for families to eat. This type of farming is called subsistence farming.

Harvesting the Sea: The most important catch was codfish. Fishing boats also brought back halibut, herring and mackerel. Fishing became an important part of the New England colonies economy. It was a great export product especially to West Indies. With the profits from exports New Englanders could import or buy goods brought in from Europe.

Business and Trade: Ship builders provided jobs for many artisans or craft workers. Carpenters and cooper- barrel making- found work.

Women in the Economy: Family farms, most wives worked side by side with their husbands. Women whose husbands worked at sea often opened up shops (cloth, candles or soap).

Triangular trade routes: regular trading routes that formed a triangle between West Indies, colonial America, Europe or Africa. Much of colonial trade involved stopping in two countries- making a triangle.

Education in New England colonies: Puritans believed people needed enough education to read the Bible and understand laws.

Dame Schools: women taught the alphabet, reading, versus from the bible and perhaps simple arithmetic. For colonial girls, this was probably their only chance at formal schooling.

Massachusetts School Law: Every township with more than 50 households must hire someone to teach its children to read and write. This law marked a step toward universal education. The first college in the colonies was

Harvard, founded in Cambridge Massachusetts, in 1636, the first colonial college manly trained ministers.

Community life Family life: The family was important in New England. Puritan children, like their parents had to work hard and follow the strict ideas of discipline Family life- many families were close and devoted to each other.

Observing the Sabbath: the Sabbath was a high point of their week. They would rest for several hours in the morning and one in the afternoon to make sure people stayed awake, tithing men would walk up and down the aisle carrying a long pole with a tether at one end, drowsy church goers were either tickled or rapped on the head.

Town Meetings: all free men of the town discussed town issues. Meeting were limited to landowning church members, but later included all white male landowners. The meetinghouse was where New Englanders met to deal with community problems and issues. Town meetings were an important step toward democracy.

Section 2

The Middle Colonies: New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware. The middle colonies were settled by people from many countries, with different beliefs, customs and languages. The New England colonies were English.

The Breadbasket Colonies: the middle colonies had many advantages- rich soil, a mild climate and a long growing season. Middle Colonies produced more meat and grains- then they needed to feed themselves. Cash crops- food crops grown to be sold. Beef and Pork were also exported. They turned their grains into flour and their corn into meal, they became known as “Breadbasket Colonies”. Most farmers in Middle colonies shipped their grains through two port cities- Philadelphia and New York City. People from the Middle Colonies prospered from agriculture.

Business, Trade and Cities: Artisans, such as iron makers, tailors, glassblowers, and silversmiths, had workshops attached to their homes.

Cities Grow Quickly: By the mid-1700s Philadelphia and New York passed Boston as the largest cities in the colonies.

A different kind of community: The New England Colonies were mostly English. The Middle colonies were settled by people from many countries, with different beliefs, customs and language. Religion- unlike the New England colonies the middle colonies did not have a single religion that was more powerful than any other,

Education and Training: Children were taught by private tutors or church or private schools. Not all young people continued their schooling. Any ambitious 12 or 13 year old could learn a craft by becoming an apprentice or trainee, to a master craft. At the end of training, an apprentice might become a paid assistant in the same shop or go to work for another artisan.

The Frontier: In the 1600s the frontier- a thinly settled area on the outer limits of the colonies. The frontier of the Middle colonies was the eastern foothills of the Appalachian Mountains. Frontier- of the Middle Colonies was the Appalachian Mountains.

Section 3

The Southern Colonies: Virginia, Maryland, North and South Carolina, and Georgia. Life in the South was mainly rural- mostly farms, with few towns and only one large city, Charleston. Southern colonies were mostly English like the New England colonies. Southern colonies belonged to the Anglican Church.

An Agricultural Economy: Most settlers in the Southern colonies made their livings from land, in one of two ways. 1) A few wealthy planters owned thousands of acres. They made up a rich upper class. 2) The rest were farmers- the lower class- who owned small farms or worked for a planter. South have three cash crops, 1) tobacco, 2) rice and 3) indigo. All three required many workers. Tobacco was the first cash crop of Virginia to bring farmers a profit, southern planters grew half of all tobacco shipped to England each year.

Rice and Indigo: In 1680 a ship captain brought some rice seeds to South Carolina from the African island of Madagascar. Planters in South Carolina and Georgia had swampy coastal land perfect for growing rice. Another important crop in South Carolina was indigo, a plant used to produce a rich blue dye. It was a valuable export to England, where textile manufacturers used indigo as a dye for cloth. Again this crop needed many laborers to harvest.

The African Population: By 1760 there were about a quarter of a million Africans in the colonies. Enslaved Africans were shipped directly from West Africa.

The Slave Trade: Most came from West Africa. Africans later told their stories of the horrors and brutality of the Middle Passage, the route between Africa and America. Slave traders view the people as cargo not human beings, packing in as many as possible to increase profits from the trip. Many died from ill treatment and lack of fresh food and water. Sometimes 50% or 60% died on a voyage. Many colonists did not think that slavery was wrong. The need for laborers was more important than the welfare of the Africans. Some believed that they were doing Africans a favor by teaching them Christianity and forcing them to forget African culture.

Slave Codes: laws that denied enslaved Africans most of their rights. Under these codes enslaved people were looked on as both a person and property. Under slave codes, enslaved people could not carry a weapon or hold meeting. In most places, it was against the law for them to learn to read or write.

Section 4

Democracy takes Root: 1) Changes in colonial governments. Charles II, the New King, wanted more control over the colonies and their profitable trade. Charles chartered new royal colonies in which he choose the governor and council. He changed the charters of Massachusetts and New Hampshire, making them royal colonies. 2) After Charles death 1685, his brother James of York set up Edmund Andros as royal governor, Andros tried to abolish colonial assemblies. 3) The people of England fear the King (King James II) would try to make their country Roman Catholic. So in 1688, the English Parliament unseated James and gave the throne to James's daughter Mary, a protestant and her husband William. People were so pleased by this peaceful change that it became known as the "Glorious Revolution".

Bacon's Rebellion: Nathaniel Bacon a planter of the Virginia frontier charged that Governor William Berkely was not doing his job. Bacon claimed the governor was not protecting the frontier from raids of Native Americans and was more interested in the profitable fur trade. Bacon led 300 small farmers in a raid against the Native Americans. (Bacon's Rebellion) Governor Berkely was ordered back to England to explain how he had allowed such disorders to raise in Virginia.

Control on colonial Trade: England wanted to control and regulate the colonists' trade to benefit them. Most European countries with colonies followed a policy called mercantilism. This policy meant that to gain wealth a country had to sell more goods than it brought. The American (English) colonies were important because of this policy. First they provided raw materials to the home country. Second, the colonists were a ready-made market for its products.

England passed laws to control colonial trade. These laws were known as the Navigation Acts- They said that the colonists must use English- built ships for all trade. Plus tobacco, cotton and indigo could only be sold in England or in an English possession. Colonists must buy English goods. Any crops or products bought or sold elsewhere would be taxed. As a last measure England imposed duties on the coastal trade among the English colonies.

Rights of the Colonists: Local government in each colony were shaped by the founders, by royal officials and by settlers themselves. Most colonists had an appointed governor and a legislature with two houses- the council and the assembly. Same organization as English Parliament. Members of the assembly or lower houses were elected by the voters of the colony. They passed tax bills and decide how it is spent. The assembly also ran the colonies military affairs.