

13 Original Colonies

CLIMATE, GEOGRAPHY, AND ECONOMY

The original thirteen American colonies were firmly established by the early 1700s. The colonies stretched for thousands of miles down the eastern coastline. The climate and geography of the different locations played a big role in shaping the economy of each colony.

The New England Colonies

The northernmost colonies consisted of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. The economy of the New England Colonies was built around the abundant forests and miles of ocean lining its borders. Shipbuilding, whaling, and fishing were very big industries in the New England Colonies. The long cold winters and overall harsh climate made large scale farming difficult. Farms in the New England Colonies tended to be small subsistence farms, a type of agriculture in which people lived on what they grew themselves.

The Middle Colonies

The Middle Colonies consisted of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware. The climate of was mild and the soil proved fertile for farming. Many farmers in the Middle Colonies produced cash crops such as wheat and corn. Mining was also lucrative in the middle colonies. Iron was used to make products such as kettles, nails, tools, and guns.

The Southern Colonies

The southernmost colonies consisted of Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. The South had the warmest climate with long hot summers and mild winters. The weather of the

Southern Colonies played a big role in determining the economy. Huge plantations were established for growing crops such as tobacco and cotton to be exported overseas. Due to the large-scale farming, the Southern Colonies had the largest population of enslaved labor.

Vocabulary

subsistence farm: a type of farm in which people live on what they grow themselves
cash crop: a crop grown for sale to make a profit
plantation: a large farm or estate dedicated to growing substantial amounts of crops for sale and profit