

Democracy in colonial america

[Politics](#), [Democracy](#)



Colonial America was democratic. Documents, agreements and other representative actions are a proof of the establishment of a democracy in the colonies. England was not democratic, and the colonies purpose was to separate themselves as much as possible from the Crown and their undemocratic flu. They had freedom of press and religion and were getting accustomed to doing things their way. Documents such as the Maryland's Act of Toleration, the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut and The Lady's Laws are prove of the spirit of democracy coming to light.

Oddly, pubs and taverns are an example of the origin of democracy. Since rich and poor people would be there daily, ideas would be shared and everyone was "forced" to listen to one another. The Fundamental Orders of Connecticut was the closest document for political democracy in the 17th century. It is considered the first written constitution of Colonial America. It was formed by elected representatives, which made it a representative government. It stated that two assemblies should be held each year. They were set to discuss and make laws.

It's an example of a democratic document because if a governor neglected his duty, the voters were able to take over. This gave power to people, which literally translates to 'democracy'. Another democratic feature of Colonial America was the Virginia's House of Burgesses. It was the first representative legislative body in the colonies although only men who owned land could vote. It basically provided a voice in the government because you could also choose representatives. In their first meeting in a church at Jamestown, they agreed on the minimum price of sale in tobacco.

They would also make and pass laws. Some of the best known Burgesses where: Patrick Henry, who introduced resolutions against the Stamp Act, Thomas Jefferson, who would later on write the Declaration of Independence and George Washington who became America's first president. Although America was considered to be democratic, undemocratic features could be observed. An example on how undemocratic America was back in the 17th Century is the Lady's Laws. This book states limited legal rights of women. These rights were based on a woman's marital status, race, class and religion.

It set limitations for them. Some of which include losing property and wages when they get married and even losing the custody of their children when divorced. The rights also depended on which "type" of woman you were. Black women didn't have rights, while Quaker woman had the same rights as a Quaker man. Indentured servants had the same rights as white women when their servitude ended. The fact that not every man was allowed to vote was also a undemocratic factor. This took away the power from the people and made Colonial America undemocratic.

The document had certain requisites that everyone in a colony should accomplish in order to have this right. Only a free adult male and resident of the colony was able to vote. Some were even forced to own land in order to express themselves. Neither women, slaves or sometimes Jews were allowed to vote. This left only a 10% - 20% voters in each colony. As in every democracy, there will always be something pulling the entire definition "power to the people" down. This does not mean that because America had undemocratic actions, it made the colonies not democratic.

These events just highlight that even though these actions were present, America somehow made it to be democratic. The documents, agreements and other representative actions prove the establishment of a democracy in colonial America. Other features like the taverns and pubs were also movements that brought up the spirit of a democracy that is still present today. Men and women from all races are equal and everyone has the right to press, religion, speech and association. By having these rights, anyone and everyone can achieve a democracy, like the one in colonial America.