

The three colonial regions

Countries, United States



In British North America, three colonial regions appeared in the different geographical areas; New England, the Middle colonies, and the Southern colonies. Although these colonies were founded by the English, different agricultural and industrial opportunities and immigrancy led to a distinctive economy, religion, and social order between the sectional differences of the American colonies before 1750. Each region had its own type of houses, crops, churches, and values but the things keeping them together was their political ties to mother England and the English origins of the majority of the people. The area that contained the colonies Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire, New England, had created its own sort of social distinctiveness. The English Puritans, who left England in search of religious freedom and economic success, settled this region in 1620 when they landed in Plymouth. By the next century, these Puritans created the majority of the region and therefore made New England the most culturally and religiously similar of the three regions. Puritans were very simple people who sought to purify the church at first, but later some wanted to totally reform it. When they established Massachusetts in New England, religion was the basis of their settlement. All church members could vote, but the government was still not a democracy. Governor Winthrop calls democracy the "meanest and worst" of all forms of government because he distrusted the common people. Also, Puritans believed everyone should be educated so they can read scripture for religious purposes. Even though New England was very homogeneous, it contained Rhode Island, the most democratic of all the thirteen colonies. Outcasts who were rejected in other colonies could come to Rhode Island for religious toleration and democracy. Economically,

New England was fairly prosperous. It had successful fur trading, fishing, and ship building industries. Like its religious and social uniformity, agricultural prosperity came almost only from cattle and grain. New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, which included Delaware, made up the Middle colonies. This region was totally different from the Northern colonies. Quakers, or the Society of Friends, founded Pennsylvania and made it a very tolerant colony. The people of Pennsylvania were very mixed because they welcomed all. It had great relations with Indians, it was tolerant of any religious group, and was against slavery. In New York, the Dutch settled and were later militarily rejected from the colony by England. Soon after, swarms of Scots-Irish settlers and Catholics came to all the Middle colonies. All these groups created a diverse social and religious society unlike the homogeneous New England. The Middle colonies prospered economically. They all had fertile soil and all exported grain except Delaware. The rivers of the Middle colonies helped them succeed in the fur trade and other industries. This region, not surprisingly, was the most advertised. Its religious, social, and economic diversity made it a great place to live and succeed.