

# How did geography affect where colonists settled

[Science](#), [Geography](#)



Beginning in 1607, when ambitious English colonists settled in Jamestown, and continuing until the last of the thirteen colonies was established; geography was a substantial factor in the development of colonial America. The crops that essentially saved the colonists lives, such as tobacco, rice, and indigo, wouldn't have grown without a certain type and amount of soil to grow properly. Also, the Appalachian Mountains and the dense forests provided a barrier for the colonists, preventing them from going too far west right away, and causing the colonies to form in the arrangement they did.

Finally, the population was the most dense in middle colonies, such as New York, New Jersey, Delaware, and Pennsylvania partly because of the mild landscape and fertile soil. Early in the 1600's, John Rolfe and his wife Pocahontas discovered tobacco. It was soon heavily sought after in Europe, and quickly became a cash crop for Virginia. After establishing the tobacco industry in Virginia, many of the other colonies soon followed suit. Unfortunately, tobacco quickly drains the nutrients of the soil that it is planted on.

Without the plentiful and fertile soil that these settlers were using, it would have been very difficult for the colonists to survive much longer. Tobacco wasn't the only crop that the colonists discovered early on, however. In South Carolina, many rice and indigo plantations began to emerge. In order for rice to grow, it needs to be planted in a swamp, or some other sort of low-watered area. The swamps of South Carolina were a perfect place to grow rice, and was considered a rich man's crop because of the labor it took to harvest and grow it.

Without certain soil and growing conditions, it would have been very difficult for the colonists to sustain themselves in the early years of America. The natural landscape of what is now known as the United States also was a big part of how the original thirteen colonies developed. The Appalachian Mountains stretch from Maine all the way to Georgia. This mountain range prevented the first colonists from going too far west. This, in turn, made it so that the population were more dense, and there was a higher concentration of people. The dense forests of the eastern seaboard disallowed for large cities to be created right away.

This geological factor forced colonists to spread out within the perimeters of the Appalachian Mountains and the Atlantic Ocean, without being too close together. Both of these factors could be overlooked easily enough, but did have a reasonable impact of the development of colonial America. Finally, the geography of the middle colonies, such as New York, New Jersey, Delaware, and Pennsylvania played a big role on the development and population of this area. In the sixteen and seventeen hundreds, the above colonies were the most populated of the thirteen establishments.

There was plentiful and fertile soil, in which tobacco was heavily grown. The Susquehanna River also flowed through this region, opening the possibility of fur trade. Other minor rivers that were found in the middle colonies were gentle, which provided for easy transportation and fishing. The land in the middle colonies was broad and expansive, making it easy for even the middle class residents to create an enjoyable and profitable lifestyle. In conclusion, there were many factors that contributed to the development of the colonial America, but geography was clearly a sizable influence.

If the geography of America wasn't the way it was, the colonists who settled here may have not survived as well as they did. By the time the tobacco industry was established, and small cities began to rise, Americans came to realize that not only were they surviving, but they were thriving. This realization had to do with more than the fact that they had separated themselves according to religion, or put aside the issue of the Native Americans. There is no question that the lay of the land had a substantial impact on the development of not only colonial, but also current America.