

Compare the
northern and
southern colonies in
social, political, and
economic str...



The Southern colonies were a very diverse and unique type of settlement. They had their own views and life styles that were like nothing ever seen before. The Southern colonies were dependant on their crops and invented and established many new ways to get the job done The Southern colonies were first established by adventures looking for gold.

England sent these early settlers to America as their form of colonization. Many of the other world powers at the time had already established many colonies in different parts of the world. When the first settlers arrived in America they were disappointed by the lack of gold there was to be found. They first arrived in the South and all they saw was marshy wetlands. England was about to “ pull the plug” on the Southern colonies but the colonies discovered the most profitable crop on the planet. This crop was tobacco and it was immediately called a “ Cash Crop”.

This crop quickly spread throughout Europe and because of its addictive nature the demand for this crop was ridiculously high. Since the only place tobacco could be grown were the Southern colonies the world looked to England and her colonies for this addictive crop. Tobacco was very easy to grow but required much labor. This led to the Southern colonies largest problem.

The labor shortage. At first the south tried to use the head-right system. This system failed because once the employee had enough money they would quit and go get their own piece of land. Next the South gave indentured servitude a chance.

Many people wanted to leave the overcrowded Britain and start fresh on a farm in America, but the price to come to America was too high for most of the middle to lower classes. So the plantation owners of Planter Class would pay for the voyage to America in turn for 7-10 years labor on their plantation. This was only a quick fix to the labor shortage and in the end it failed. Indentured servitude failed because most of the indentured servants were white, Christian males who eventually demanded rights. Among these rights were no labor on Sunday and the sale of the products they made on their own time.

After their indentured servitude was over the servants would go try to get land. To acquire this land the freed servants would have to fight and run off the Native Americans. The plantation owners dominated politics and outlawed the attacks against Native Americans because the fur trade with the Native Americans was raking in huge profits. This angered the poor farmers and freed servants because not only were they denied any say in politics and were taxed more than the rich they, now they had to stop fighting the Native Americans and stop acquiring land of their own. A man by the name of Nathaniel Bacon heard the cries of these poor piedmont farmers and decided to lead them in a rebellion against the city/town of Jamestown.

So Bacon and his army of rag-tag farmers stormed the capital of Virginia and overthrew the current government. They stayed in power for a few weeks before Bacon got sick and died. This uprising was the first rebellion in American history and it scared the Plantation owners. The Planter Class realized that another rebellion could happen at any time and decided that indentured servitude might not be the best solution for the labor shortage.

<https://assignbuster.com/compare-the-northern-and-southern-colonies-in-social-political-and-economic-structure-essay/>

The permanent solution to the labor shortage came in the form of slave labor. At first the Planter Class experimented with captured Native Americans as slaves but the Native Americans were not natural farmers, escaped easily, and were at high risk for European diseases. The perfect slave came in the form of Black Africans. They were used to farming in Africa and escape was virtually impossible. The Black slaves were used and immune to the European diseases. They were hard workers and eventually slave trade became a major factor in the growth of the South.

The Black African slaves arrived in America by a trading passage that was often referred to as Triangle Trade. American merchants took fish and lumber to the West Indies and traded them for molasses. Molasses was a thick brown liquid made from sugar cane and used for the production of rum. From there the merchants took the molasses and traded it with the West Africans for slaves which were shipped back to the West Indies and America through the Middle Passage. The Middle Passage was the last leg of the trip by sea in which the African slaves rode in the cargo hold of the ship until it reached the West Indies or America. This trip could last up to 2-3 months.

The slaves were kept in the cargo hold and were packed so tightly that there was no room to sit or stand. Many of the slaves died in the middle passage for one of three things. Many died of asphyxiation because of how hot the air was in the cargo hold. Some died of starvation, but most died of diseases. When the ship reached the Americas the slaves would be auctioned off never to see their families again. Slave labor made the Planter Class very rich but because of the dependency on the land and slaves there was a really small middle class.

<https://assignbuster.com/compare-the-northern-and-southern-colonies-in-social-political-and-economic-structure-essay/>

The social structure broke down like this the elite or Planter Class made up 5% of the population. This 5% dominated the politics. Because of the large plantations there were few cities in the Southern colonies which made the middle class very small. The middle class made up about 15% of the total population and had very little say in the politics.

The large poor class of 80% had no say whatsoever in the politics and the southern class pyramid had a hidden base of slaves which was approximately double the total population. The 3 biggest families in the South were the Fitzhugh's, the Lee's and the Washington's. The Fitzhugh family had its own private diary, ice house, orchard, and even their own horse racing track. 70% of the Southern Government was run by people who arrived before 1609.

These were the first families to settle in the South and therefore got the best land which in turn made the most profit. The Southern colonies were very fragile economically because they relied only on the production of tobacco and slave trade. The South was very different in many ways but somehow they made it work. The Southern colonies were boasted some of the most profitable plantations ever and used inventive techniques to get there.

The Northern colonies differed from the south in almost every way. They were more stable and used a variety of occupations to become the profitable colonies they eventually became. The North was founded by the Puritans. The Puritans left England in search of religious freedom.

When the Puritans arrived in the Northern colonies they had planned on

planting tobacco and earning a living that way but when they got here they
<https://assignbuster.com/compare-the-northern-and-southern-colonies-in-social-political-and-economic-structure-essay/>

found the soil was not good enough to support tobacco. The early northern colonists needed to find another way to make money so they branched out in many different ways. Some became merchants, fisherman, blacksmiths, clothing makers, or sailors. The North had many natural harbors and used them to its advantage. Because of all the harbors there were lots of cities which led to a large middle class.

There were still 5% elite but the 65% middle class also held their weight in politics. There poor class was only 30% and as a whole the North was very cash rich. This led to the opening of banks and stock markets and more new jobs arose. Because of the large middle class and the variety of occupations the Northern colonies were very stable. The Northern colonies and the Southern colonies differed a lot in their views and lifestyles but both were profitable and both eventually learned how to work as a whole rather than two separate entities.

These colonies were the roots of America and it was because of the actions of these colonies that we live in the kind of country we do today.