

3 Farming and Manufacturing in the Middle Colonies

★ Section Focus

Key Term cash crop

Main Idea The economies of the Middle Colonies benefited from good farming conditions, harbors for shipping, and the growth of manufacturing.

Objectives As you read, look for answers to these questions:

1. Why was farming important in the Middle Colonies?
2. What factors encouraged the growth of trade and manufacturing?
3. What kinds of people settled in the Middle Colonies?

Thomas Jefferson once wrote that a visitor to America could predict the character of the colonists based on where they lived. Northerners, he said, were cool and businesslike. Southerners were emotional and generous. In Pennsylvania, "the two characters seem to meet and blend and to form a people free from the extremes both of vice and virtue."

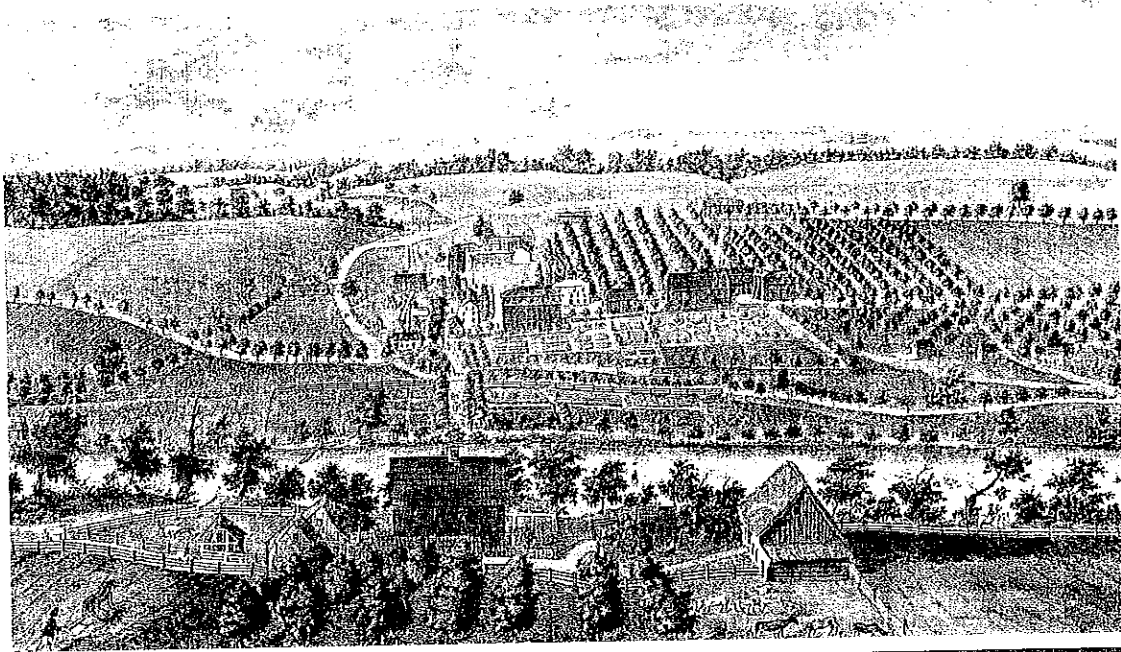
Indeed, the Middle Colonies—Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey, and New York—combined features of both New England and the South. Like the South, the Middle Colonies had rich soil, a good growing

season, and a number of large rivers. Farming thus flourished in the region. At the same time, like New England, the Middle Colonies developed trade and manufacturing. Towns and cities grew more rapidly than in the South.

THE "BREAD BASKET COLONIES"

As in New England and in the South, the first settlers in the Middle Colonies were farmers. The farmers of the Middle Colonies, however, did not live in small villages or on grand plantations. Instead, many of them

Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, on the Lehigh River, was a prosperous farming community when this view was painted in 1757. GEOGRAPHY Why was this town established by a river?



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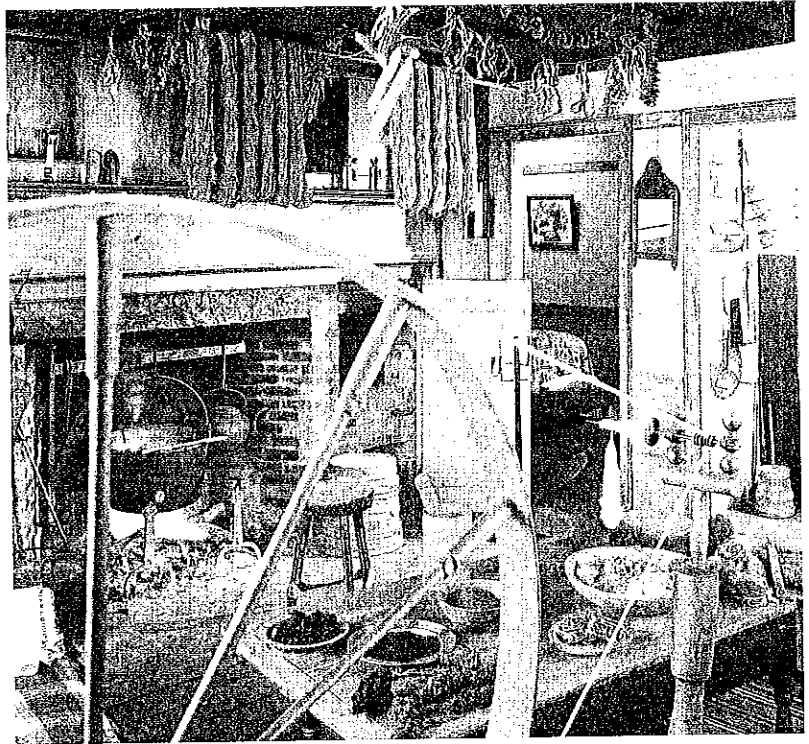
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The kitchen was the most important room in a colonial home and the center for much of women's activities. Here women cooked meals, made herbal medicines, and spun and dyed flax and wool to make the family's clothing. **ECONOMICS** How did colonial women contribute to the economic well-being of their families?



lived on large farms that extended inland from the seacoast.

Farmers in the Middle Colonies gathered rich harvests of wheat, barley, rye, and other grains. Fruit and livestock flourished in New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. Farmers in the Middle Colonies soon produced surplus grains. These grains were called *cash crops*—crops grown to be sold. (The tobacco, rice, and indigo of the South were also cash crops.) By 1760 New York farmers were selling more than 80,000 barrels of wheat flour a year to other colonies. Because the Middle Colonies produced so much grain, they became known as the “bread basket colonies.”

TRADE AND MANUFACTURING

As the Middle Colonies prospered, the farmers had larger surpluses to trade. Other settlers had timber and fur for sale. Two seaports, New York at the mouth of the Hudson River and Philadelphia on the Delaware River, became trading centers. Goods from the Middle Colonies were sold to other colonies, to the West Indies, and to Europe.

Colonial roads were poor. In fact, shipping a load of goods across the Atlantic was cheaper than sending it overland 100 miles within the colony. As a result, a brisk European trade developed. Colonial merchants took wheat and other items to Europe and returned with foreign goods. Many merchants in the Middle Colonies grew rich from this trade. By 1768, Philadelphia had replaced Boston as the largest seaport in the colonies.

The first settlers of the Middle Colonies made the fairly simple items they needed in their homes. As the colonies prospered, however, manufacturing grew. Women and men toiled in workshops. There they made clocks, watches, guns, locks, cloth, hats, and glassware. The iron industry in Pennsylvania and New Jersey grew quickly after many skilled German workers settled there. Iron ore, mined in the Middle Colonies, was heated in forges and turned into pig iron. From pig iron, workers made nails and iron tools. All of this, of course, was illegal under the old Navigation Acts. Yet both the colonists and the English long ignored those laws.



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SOCIETY IN THE MIDDLE COLONIES

The Middle Colonies attracted a greater variety of settlers than New England or the Southern Colonies. The Dutch and the Swedes had first settled the areas that became New York, New Jersey, and Delaware. English Quakers later founded Pennsylvania, but thousands of Germans and Scots-Irish also moved to the colony. Welsh, Irish, Scottish, and French colonists added to the variety of people in the Middle Colonies.

The Middle Colonies are sometimes called a "melting pot" because of the many groups who settled there. Each added its own customs to the colony. For example, the Dutch built brick homes with a wooden porch called a stoop. The Germans built an efficient wood-burning stove that others copied. The colonies benefited from this variety of new ideas.

The Middle Colonies became home to several different religious groups. Even if one group formed the majority in a place, it did not persecute those with different beliefs. Both the Quakers and the Dutch believed in religious toleration. The Quakers welcomed German Protestants to Pennsylvania. The Dutch allowed Catholics and Jews to settle in New York. On the other hand, Jews in New York were not allowed to build a synagogue until the 1750s.

The climate of tolerance that existed in the Middle Colonies encouraged settlers there to speak their minds. As one Philadelphia resident put it:

The poorest laborer upon the shore of the Delaware thinks himself entitled to deliver his sentiments in matters of religion or politics with as much freedom as the gentleman or scholar. Indeed, there is less distinction among the citizens of Philadelphia, than among those of any civilized city in the world. Riches give none. For every man expects one day or another to be upon a footing with his wealthiest neighbor.

SOCIAL HISTORY *Famous Firsts*

- 1639 First printing press in English colonies established by Stephen Daye.
- 1650 Anne Bradstreet, first woman author in America, publishes a volume entitled *The Tenth Muse*.
- 1728 Botanic garden established by John Bartram in Philadelphia. It is still in existence in its original location.
- 1731 First circulating library, Philadelphia.
- 1750 Conestoga wagon developed by German craftsmen in Pennsylvania.
- 1755 Verses to "Yankee Doodle" written.

The Middle Colonies had fewer schools and colleges than did New England. Religious groups ran most of the early schools. The Dutch Reformed Church in New York, Quakers in Pennsylvania, and Catholic priests in Maryland all started schools. Religious groups also formed some of the colleges, such as Princeton and Rutgers, that grew up in the Middle Colonies in the mid-1700s. Princeton had been founded during the Great Awakening to serve as a training center for "New Light" ministers. As in the other colonies, women and African Americans could not attend college.

SLAVERY IN THE MIDDLE COLONIES

Slavery was legal in the Middle Colonies until the Revolutionary War. Yet fewer slaves lived in the Middle Colonies than in the South. As in New England, the grain crops grown in the Middle Colonies required only seasonal labor. Fewer workers were needed. In contrast, the cash crops of the South needed heavy, year-round labor.

The movement to free the slaves began in the Middle Colonies. In 1688 the Quakers in Germantown, Pennsylvania, drew up the earliest American protest against slavery.

The movement continued under Quaker leaders like John Woolman, who was born in 1720. When still a boy, Woolman had killed a small bird with a rock. Feeling tremendous guilt, Woolman became convinced that people must "exercise goodness toward every living creature."

As an adult, Woolman focused on the plight of the slaves. "I believe liberty is their right," he wrote in his journal, "and I see they are not only deprived of it, but treated in other respects with inhumanity in many places." He worked tirelessly to convince Quakers to free their slaves. As a result of Woolman's efforts, Quakers were among the first to join the antislavery cause.

- 1. KEY TERM** cash crop
- 2. PEOPLE AND PLACES** New York, Philadelphia, Benjamin Franklin, John Woolman
- 3. COMPREHENSION** Why were the Middle Colonies called both a bread basket and a melting pot?
- 4. COMPREHENSION** What different religious groups settled in the Middle Colonies? What role did religious groups play in education?
- 5. CRITICAL THINKING** How did the lack of cheap inland transportation influence trade in the Middle Colonies?

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4 The Development of Self-Government

Section Focus

Key Terms search warrant ■ Magna Carta ■ jury ■ Petition of Right ■ English Bill of Rights ■ limited monarchy ■ libel

Main Idea Working from English ideas about government, colonists in America took steps to achieve self-government.

Objectives As you read, look for answers to these questions:

1. How did people in England win recognition of their basic rights?
2. What kinds of government grew up in the English colonies?
3. What issues caused political conflict in the colonies?

It was sunny, but very cold, that day in February 1761 as Boston's leading citizens made their way to the Council Chamber of the Town Hall. The governor and his council arrived, lace ruffles on their shirts and swords at their sides. Boston's foremost merchants took their seats on three long rows of chairs. In the chamber a great fire burned to chase the winter cold.

All eyes were on the five judges, splendidly garbed in scarlet robes and great wigs powdered white. "Oyez (OH-yay), oyez," the clerk called out, using the French word for "Hear ye." The court came to order.

RIGHTS AND ENGLISH LAW

The merchants had come to court to challenge a government plan to use blank search warrants to control smuggling. Signed by judge, a search warrant gives officials the right to search a person's property for a particular object. The blank search warrant, however, would allow officials to search any place at any time for any smuggled goods.

The lawyer who spoke for the merchant argued that the blank search warrant violated the principles of English law. In English law, he said, "A man is as secure in his house as a prince in his castle." The me...

