

The Mid-Atlantic Colonies



Also known as the Breadbasket colonies, the Mid-Atlantic colonies include New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, New York. The first settlers of the Mid-Atlantic colonies soon discovered that the land was good for farming, once the trees and rocks were cleared. The weather was also perfect for agriculture with its moderate climate. The Mid-Atlantic Colonies are located along the Appalachian Mountains and the areas of consists of coastal lowlands, harbors, bays, and many wide rivers.

Because the area is perfect for growing crops such as wheat, corn, and rye, these colonies became to be known as the "Breadbasket Colonies." Not only did they make money through agriculture, but they also made money through trading goods in the major market towns. Found throughout the middle colonies and through the work that unskilled and skilled workmen as well as fishermen did for the economy. The regions rich resources attracted people from many different countries in Europe and many people from varying religious backgrounds. William Penn, who founded the colony of Pennsylvania in 1682, attracted immigrants from many countries with his policies of religious liberty and freehold ownership, which meant that framers owned their land free and clear from leases and dues to landlords. The great majority of settlers who came to Pennsylvania and New Jersey before 1700 were English or Welsh Quakers and they remained the dominant social and political group unit the 1750's.

Shopkeepers and artisans-shipwrights, butchers, coopers (barrelmakers), seamstresses, shoemakers, bakers, carpenters, masons, and many other specialized producers- constituted the middle ranks of seaport society. Wives and husbands often worked as a team and passed their craft onto their children. Most of these artisans and traders earned enough income to maintain a modest but dignified existence. Farmers depended on market towns as places to trade their livestock and their crops such as grains, fruits, and vegetables. Along with the market towns, the Mid-Atlantic colonies included small towns and villages as well as big cities such as Philadelphia. Philadelphia became the largest and wealthiest city in the English colonies.