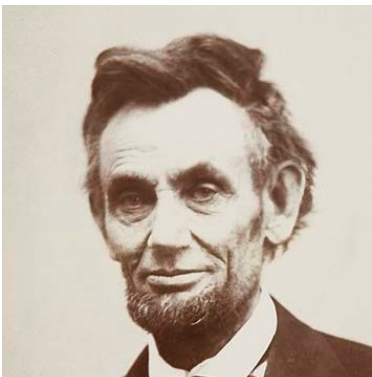


Where did the United States come from?



SUPPORTING QUESTIONS

- 1 WHAT MADE THE COLONIES SO DIFFERENT IF THEY WERE ALL SETTLED BY PEOPLE FROM THE SAME COUNTRY?
- 2 WHAT IS FREEDOM?
- 3 WAS THE SPREAD OF THE UNITED STATES ACROSS THE CONTINENT DESTINY OR DESIGN?
- 4 WAS THE CIVIL WAR A RIGHTEOUS JUDGEMENT FOR AMERICA'S EMBRACE OF SLAVERY?



www.inquiryhistory.com

DEVELOPED AND COMPILED BY
JONATHAN LOOMIS

SOURCES FOR ORIGINAL TEXT INCLUDE
c n x . o r g
c o u r s e s . l u m e n l e a r n i n g . c o m
u s h i s t o r y . o r g
s a g e a m e r i c a n h i s t o r y . n e t
l e a r n n c . o r g
w i k i p e d i a . o r g



CREATIVE COMMONS ATTRIBUTION
4.0 INTERNATIONAL LICENSE

1

F I R S T Q U E S T I O N

WHAT MADE THE COLONIES SO DIFFERENT IF THEY WERE ALL SETTLED BY PEOPLE FROM THE SAME COUNTRY?

Where did the United States come from?

INTRODUCTION

The United States was created by English speaking people who lived in 13 distinct colonies strung out along the Atlantic coast. By the time they declared independence in 1776, they had been living there for over 150 years. They were all from the same mother country, but the 13 colonies were all different. In fact, most historians agree that only by the particular alignment of factors, brilliant leadership, and a willingness to compromise, did they ever agree to fight for independence at all.

Why were they so different, and how so? Why do we have to speak of them as 13 colonies rather than England in America? Certainly you and your friends are not so different. Even you and your neighbors are not so different that you would need to create separate colonies if you moved to a new land. Why was it then that the English settlers ended up so divided? Why were the British colonies so different?

1 WHAT MADE THE COLONIES SO DIFFERENT IF THEY WERE ALL SETTLED BY PEOPLE FROM THE SAME COUNTRY?

VIRGINIA AND THE SOUTH

English businessmen pooled their resources to form joint-stock companies to share in the cost and risk of investing in America. The first such company paid for the establishment of **Jamestown** in Virginia in 1610.

Jamestown was a failure in the beginning. The settlers did not know how to farm so they starved. Only with help from the local Native Americans did some settlers survive. However, they discovered that they could grow tobacco, which they could sell back in Europe. Tobacco made Jamestown and the surrounding Chesapeake Bay region profitable. **John Smith** was an influential leader in Jamestown in these early years.



The area around Jamestown was settled by the Powhatan Native American people. They had a tense relationship with the English settlers. Sometimes they helped the settlers, but when the English took Native lands they went to war.

An important tradition established in the Chesapeake Bay region was the **House of Burgesses**. Neither England nor Virginia were democracies since the poor had little influence in both societies. However, the wealthy plantation owners in Virginia met regularly to make laws for their colony. This House of Burgesses helped establish a tradition of self-rule that the colonists were willing to fight for in the 1770s.

Much of the work done in the British colonies was first done by **indentured servants**. These poor people from Great Britain could not afford to pay for passage to America. Someone in America paid it for them in exchange for a set number of years of work. This system of indenture had some problems. Wealthy people who paid for the passage of others were rewarded with land,



Jamestown: First successful English colony in America. Settled in 1607, John Smith helped save the settlers from starvation. Eventually the colony became financially successful when John Rolfe learned to grow quality tobacco in Virginia's soil.



John Smith: Leader of the Jamestown colony. He is famous for ordering that the settlers would not eat if they did not work, and dealing with Powhatan. He also wrote a famous memoir his experience in the colony.

Secondary Source: Photograph

This photograph shows the reconstructed Jamestown Fort. The original site of the fort has mostly been overtaken by the shifting James River. Today you can visit a rebuilt version a few hundred yards from the original site.



Virginia House of Burgesses: A legislative body created in colonial Virginia. It was an early example of democracy in America.



Indentured Servant: White immigrants to America whose passage was paid for them. In turn, they worked for a set number of years in order to off the debt.

1 WHAT MADE THE COLONIES SO DIFFERENT IF THEY WERE ALL SETTLED BY PEOPLE FROM THE SAME COUNTRY?

a practice that made the rich richer. Another problem was that the indentured servants could run away and blend in since they were English.

Slavery was not an English invention. The Spanish and Portuguese had been using African slaves for many years. The first African slaves in the English colonies were probably brought from the Caribbean Islands rather than directly from Africa.

Eventually, slaves were brought directly from Africa to the Southern Colonies. Compared to life in Brazil or the Caribbean Islands, life for slaves was better in America. American slaves lived long enough to have children, which led to a natural increase in the slave population. This meant that the importation of slaves died out in American in the 1800s.

Merchants made a lot of money buying and selling slaves. They were an important part of the **Triangle Trade**. Slaves were purchased in Africa and brought to the Americas. Sugar, tobacco, cotton and other raw materials were loaded onto the ships in America and taken back to Europe. In Europe the ships were reloaded with finished products like furniture and guns, which were shipped off to Africa.

✓ **Triangle Trade:** The trade of slaves, raw materials and finished products between Africa, Europe, the Caribbean and the British Colonies.



Primary Source: Painting

An illustration of slave life on a plantation. The main house where the White owners lived is visible in the background. The music and dance was a blend of various African and European cultural traditions.

In time, slaves were seen as property the same as horses or wagons. This was called **chattel slavery**. Strict laws, or codes, were passed throughout the colonies defining the various rights slaves did not have, and restricting aspects of their lives. Some slaves resisted, but these rebellions were always stopped, and resulted in the passage of more strict slave codes.

✓ **Chattel Slavery:** System of slavery in which the slaves are considered property with no individual rights.

In the colonies, owning slaves became an important symbol of status for Whites. Only a few wealthy Whites actually owned slaves. In the Chesapeake Region (VA, NC, DE, MD) slaves worked on plantations growing tobacco. In

1 WHAT MADE THE COLONIES SO DIFFERENT IF THEY WERE ALL SETTLED BY PEOPLE FROM THE SAME COUNTRY?

the Deep South (SC, GA) slaves worked on plantations growing rice, sugar and eventually cotton.

The most socially segregated society was in South Carolina, which had been founded by Englishmen from the island of Barbados. Slaves outnumbered Whites in both colonies. In the Deep South, cotton and rice were the main products.

NEW ENGLAND


In England, everyone had to belong to the official **Church of England** which was led by the king or queen. Some did not like this. They either wanted to purify the church or separate from the church. Both groups caused problems for the government so they were encouraged to leave.


Plymouth was founded by **separatists** called **Pilgrims**. They arrived on the Mayflower. They were a small group, but set an important precedent in America by agreeing to the **Mayflower Compact** and holding elections for community leaders.


The Plymouth Colony would have failed if it were not for the help of local Native Americans. The tradition of **Thanksgiving** comes from this colony.





A much larger group came to nearby **Massachusetts Bay Colony**. They were **Puritans** rather than separatists. They believed in a covenant with God. They thought that if they were good Christians, God would reward them and make their colony prosper. They also believed their colony would be an example of a pure society on earth that everyone else could copy. They referred to it as

 **Anglican Church:** The official Church of England. It is a protestant church created by Henry VIII when he wanted a divorce. In America, it is called the Episcopal Church.

 **Separatists:** English followers of John Calvin who wanted to leave the Anglican Church. They included the Pilgrims.


 **Pilgrims:** English Separatists who founded the Plymouth Colony. They lived in the Netherlands briefly before coming to America on the Mayflower.

 **Mayflower Compact:** 1620 agreement signed by the Pilgrims outlining the government for the new colony, including the right to vote for church members.

 **First Thanksgiving:** Celebration held in the fall of 1621 in Plymouth to celebrate the harvest. It was attended by both Pilgrims and their Native American friends.

Secondary Source: Illustration

Fishing was an important element of colonial New England's economy.

 **Massachusetts Bay Colony:** Colony created by Puritans in 1630. It was centered around the city of Boston and eventually absorbed Plymouth.

1 WHAT MADE THE COLONIES SO DIFFERENT IF THEY WERE ALL SETTLED BY PEOPLE FROM THE SAME COUNTRY?

a **city upon a hill**. These are still important ideas in American myth. Many thousands of Puritans came over time and eventually the Plymouth Colony was absorbed into Massachusetts.

Puritans were strict. Everyone had to follow the colony's rules, which included attending church. They believed strongly in education, because they wanted people to be able to read the Bible. They founded Harvard and Yale Universities to train new ministers.

New England was not settled as a business like Jamestown. New England was made up of towns with families instead of plantations with single owners and slaves. New Englanders exported fish, lumber, built ships and traded.

THE MIDDLE COLONIES

New York was first founded by settlers from the Netherlands. They came to trade for beaver. Like the English colonies in the Chesapeake and Deep South, they had a society with a rigid social hierarchy. However, the Dutch were traders and people from many countries came to New Amsterdam. The Dutch were not in America for long. When the English took their colony they renamed it New York, but the cosmopolitan, pluralistic, trading-based tradition lives on.

Pennsylvania was also founded as a colony for religious dissidents from England. The **Quakers** were a group who believed in pacifism and equality. They were persecuted in England but William Penn, a wealthy Quaker obtained land from the king as a refuge for his fellow Quakers. They founded the town of Philadelphia, treated Native Americans with respect, and guaranteed religious freedom for residents of their colony. Pennsylvania played an important role in later years as a meeting place between North and South with its tradition of openness. The Founding Fathers met in Philadelphia to write the Declaration of Independence and Constitution.

During the colonial era, the most famous American was Benjamin Franklin. He was an author, publisher, and scientist who made his home in Pennsylvania.

Maryland was founded as a haven for Catholics who were persecuted in England. Like Pennsylvania, although it was founded as a home for a particular religious group, it offered religious freedom for all people. Maryland is next door to Virginia and developed a slave and tobacco based economy like its larger neighbor.

Georgia was first founded as a home for poor people back in England who were in debtor's prison. Over time, Georgia came to resemble South Carolina in its social structure and economy.

While English settlers dominated the coastal regions of America and the government of the colonies, other groups also made the trip across the Atlantic. German settlers and **Scotch-Irish** avoided the coasts and moved



Puritans: English followers of John Calvin who wanted to fix problems with the Church of England. They founded the Massachusetts Bay Colony and were led by John Winthrop.



City Upon a Hill: Phrase used by John Winthrop to describe the Massachusetts Bay Colony as an example for the world of a godly society.



New York: Dutch colony in America that was taken over by the English. It is known as a center of business and a place open to many different kinds of people.



Pennsylvania: Quaker colony established by William Penn. Because of the Quaker belief in peace and equality, Native Americans were respected and their land was purchased rather than taken.



Quakers: Also called the Society of Friends, a religious group that believed in total equality and were pacifists. Their leader, William Penn, founded Pennsylvania as a haven in America.



Maryland: Colony north of Virginia along the Chesapeake Bay that was established by Lord Baltimore as a haven for English Catholics.



Georgia: Colony established by James Oglethorpe as a home to debtors. He wanted the poor of England to have a chance to start a new life. The experiment failed due to strict laws banning alcohol and slavery. Eventually it became more like South Carolina.

1 WHAT MADE THE COLONIES SO DIFFERENT IF THEY WERE ALL SETTLED BY PEOPLE FROM THE SAME COUNTRY?

inland, making their home in the **Appalachian Mountains**. These people were fiercely independent, distrustful of the wealthy and those in government, and have left an enduring mark on American culture in states such as West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas and to a lesser degree on their neighbors.



Scotch-Irish: A group of immigrants from the borderlands of England who settled mostly in the interior regions of America, especially in the Appalachian Mountains. They are well known for their individualism and resistance to government control.



Appalachian Mountains: Range of mountains that run North to South and divided the English colonies from the area claimed by France.

Secondary Source: Painting

Edward Hicks painting this work entitled the Peaceable Kingdom in 1839 depicting the utopian world the Quakers hoped to build in America. In the background Quakers and Native Americans meeting in peace.

CONCLUSION

The English who arrived on American shores in the 1600s spread out along the coast and created 13 distinct colonies. We can group them by region. For example, the New England colonies are close together and share much of the same history, and are clearly distinct from South Carolina and its slave-based culture. But even Rhode Island and Connecticut, as close together as they are, are still different places. Why is this? Why did the English who came to America, despite all being from the same homeland, end up creating such different colonies?

1 WHAT MADE THE COLONIES SO DIFFERENT IF THEY WERE ALL SETTLED BY PEOPLE FROM THE SAME COUNTRY?

SUMMARY

BIG IDEA: The United States is made up of many different people, but the origins of the nation lie in English settlements along the Atlantic coast in the 1600s. People came there for different reasons, and some were brought from Africa as slaves.

The English developed their first colony in America at Jamestown. It was a business venture that failed in the beginning. The settlers did not know how to farm so they starved. Only with help from the local Native Americans did some settlers survive. However, they discovered that they could grow tobacco, which they could sell back in Europe. Tobacco made Jamestown and the surrounding Chesapeake Bay region profitable.

Work in the colonies was done both by indentured servants and eventually by African slaves. Merchants made a lot of money buying and selling slaves. They were an important part of the Triangle Trade. Slaves were purchased in Africa and brought to the Americas. Sugar, tobacco, cotton and other raw materials were loaded onto the ships in America and taken back to Europe. In Europe the ships were reloaded with finished products like furniture and guns, which were shipped off to Africa.

In time, slaves were seen as property the same as horses or wagons. Strict laws, or codes, were passed throughout the colonies defining the various rights slaves did not have and restricting aspects of their lives. Some slaves resisted, but these rebellions were always stopped, and resulted in the passage of more strict slave codes.

New England was settled by religious dissenters who wanted to create a new life for their families far from the control of the English church leaders. They created a society based on religion and towns rather than wealth and cash crop exports.

Plymouth was founded by separatists called Pilgrims. They were a small group but set an important precedent in America by agreeing to the Mayflower Compact and holding elections for community leaders. A much larger group came to nearby Massachusetts Bay Colony. They were Puritans rather than separatists. They believed in a covenant with God. They thought that if they were good Christians, God would reward them and make their colony prosper. They also believed their colony would be an example of a pure society on earth that everyone else could copy. They referred to it as a city upon a hill.

Between New England and the Chesapeake colonies that grew up around Jamestown, there were a variety of other English colonies. These were often more focused on trade and more tolerant of differences. In the interior, non-English groups settled who also left their mark on the nation.



KEY CONCEPTS

Triangle Trade: The trade of slaves, raw materials and finished products between Africa, Europe, the Caribbean and the British Colonies.

Chattel Slavery: System of slavery in which the slaves are considered property with no individual rights.

City Upon a Hill: Phrase used by John Winthrop to describe the Massachusetts Bay Colony as an example for the world of a godly society.



PEOPLE AND GROUPS

John Smith: Leader of the Jamestown colony. He is famous for ordering that the settlers would not eat if they did not work, and dealing with Powhatan. He also wrote a famous memoir his experience in the colony.

Virginia House of Burgesses: A legislative body created in colonial Virginia. It was an early example of democracy in America.

Indentured Servant: White immigrants to America whose passage was payed for them. In turn, they worked for a set number of years in order to off the debt.

Anglican Church: The official Church of England. It is a protestant church created by Henry VIII when he wanted a divorce. In America, it is called the Episcopalian Church.

Separatists: English followers of John Calvin who wanted to leave the Anglican Church. They included the Pilgrims.

Pilgrims: English Separatists who founded the Plymouth Colony. They lived in the Netherlands briefly before coming to American on the Mayflower.

Puritans: English followers of John Calvin who wanted to fix problems with the Church of England. They founded the Massachusetts Bay Colony and were led by John Winthrop.

Quakers: Also called the Society of Friends, a religious group that believed in total equality and were pacifists. Their leader, William Penn, founded Pennsylvania as a haven in America.

Scotch-Irish: A group of immigrants from the borderlands of England who settled mostly in the interior regions of American, especially in the Appalachian Mountains. They are well known for their individualism and resistance to government control.



DOCUMENTS

Mayflower Compact: 1620 agreement signed by the Pilgrims outlining the government for the new colony, including the right to vote for church members.



EVENTS

First Thanksgiving: Celebration held in the fall of 1621 in Plymouth to celebrate the harvest. It was attended by both Pilgrims and their Native American friends.



LOCATIONS

Jamestown: First successful English colony in America. Settled in 1607, John Smith helped save the settlers from starvation. Eventually the colony became financially successful when John Rolfe learned to grow quality tobacco in Virginia's soil.

Massachusetts Bay Colony: Colony created by Puritans in 1630. It was centered around the city of Boston and eventually absorbed Plymouth.

New York: Dutch colony in America that was taken over by the English. It is known as a center of business and a place open to many different kinds of people.

Pennsylvania: Quaker colony established by William Penn. Because of the Quaker belief in peace and equality, Native Americans were respected and their land was purchased rather than taken.

Maryland: Colony north of Virginia along the Chesapeake Bay that was established by Lord Baltimore as a haven for English Catholics.

Georgia: Colony established by James Oglethorpe as a home to debtors. He wanted the poor of England to have a chance to start a new life. The experiment failed due to strict laws banning alcohol and slavery. Eventually it became more like South Carolina.

Appalachian Mountains: Range of mountains that run North to South and divided the English colonies from the area claimed by France.