

COLONIAL PERIOD: THE ECONOMY

Over 90% of the people who lived in the English Colonies earned a living from farming. Farmers used such hand tools as the ax, hoe, scythe, sickle, and spade. Some farmers made wooden plows that were pulled through fields by a team of horses or oxen. The colonists planted the same crops on the same plot of land for several years without using fertilizers. When the soil wore out, they simply cleared more land. German immigrants were the first to rotate their crops and add fertilizer to the soil.



Farmers in the Middle Colonies and Southern Colonies benefited from the fertile soil and longer growing season there. In New England, the soil was rocky and the growing season short. But even the New England farmer was able to produce enough vegetables, grain, and meat to feed his family. And sometimes he even had extra crops to sell or exchange for things he did not grow or make himself.

Many colonists who were not farmers earned a living as skilled craftsmen. Blacksmiths, shoemakers, tanners, and other craftsmen provided the townspeople with a variety of goods and services.

Map Exercise: Use the information on the map on the next page to answer the following questions.

- (1) _____ The Indians showed the colonists how to plant and cultivate this crop, and how to grind the kernels into meal. It was the most important crop during early colonial times. What was it?
- (2) _____ Wheat eventually became the chief grain in the colonies. Farmers in one section exported so much wheat and wheat flour that these colonies were called the “bread colonies.” Was this section the New England Colonies, Middle Colonies, or Southern Colonies?
- (3) _____ Planters in Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina specialized in a crop which they sold to England. This “golden weed” brought huge profits to the planters, who had a difficult time keeping up with the overwhelming demand for it. What was this cash crop?
- (4) _____ Irrigation methods were used by farmers in South Carolina and Georgia in order to grow what food crop?
- (5) _____ Clothing manufacturers in England bought large quantities of a blue dye that was made from a plant growing in the Southern Colonies. What plant was the source of this blue dye?
- (6) _____ In the mid-1700s, some settlers began to grow what crop which was used in making rope?
- (7) _____ Strips of wood were placed edge to edge and fastened together to make barrels. They were also used to make the sides of wooden ships. What were these strips of wood called?
- (8) _____ Tar and pitch were products taken from pine trees which grew in the great forests of the Appalachian Mountains. Tar was applied to wood and ropes to keep them from rotting. Pitch was used to keep the wooden ships watertight. What term was given to these products?
- (9) _____ Saddlers, harness makers, and certain other craftsmen specialized in making leather goods. The leather which they worked with came from what product?

- (10) _____ Were the colonial fishing and shipbuilding industries centered in the New England Colonies, Middle Colonies, or Southern Colonies?
- (11) _____ Did men who were trappers earn a living along the Atlantic Coast or on the frontier?
- (12) _____ Which product was used by the colonists to construct houses?
- (13) _____ Indigo was a major product in how many of the colonies?
- (14) _____ What product was made from molasses?
- (15) _____ Were colonial farms found mainly on the Atlantic Coastal Plain, in the Appalachian Mountains, or in both plains and mountain areas?


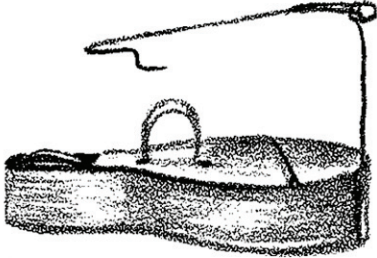
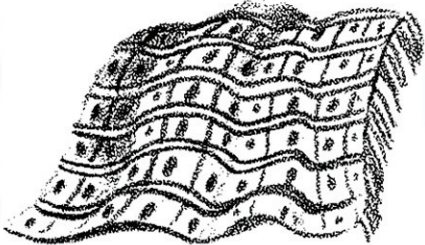


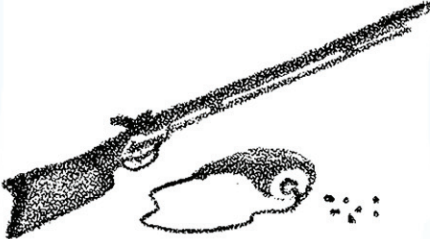





Matching Exercise: The people listed in column one below provided the colonists with a variety of goods and services. See how many of these skilled workers you can match with the kind of work they performed.

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| (1) _____ joiner | (a) made hides into leather |
| (2) _____ sailor | (b) built schooners, brigs, and sloops |
| (3) _____ shipwright | (c) used a metal alloy, consisting mostly of tin, to make household utensils for the majority of colonists who could not afford products made of silver |
| (4) _____ blacksmith | (d) constructed articles, such as furniture, from pieces of wood |
| (5) _____ weaver | (e) specialized in making an article of clothing that had a crown and a brim |
| (6) _____ fisherman | (f) made candles for a living |
| (7) _____ grist mill operator | (g) forged iron into kettles, hinges, weather vanes, nails, axes, hoes, and many other products |
| (8) _____ hatter | (h) used a hand loom to make clothing |
| (9) _____ chandler | (i) worked on merchant ships that carried goods between Europe and America |
| (10) _____ trapper | (j) made and repaired equipment used by persons who rode horses |
| (11) _____ cooper | (k) manufactured beverages |
| (12) _____ glassmaker | (l) operated a public house, often called a tavern, where travelers could eat and sleep |
| (13) _____ pewterer | (m) designed, made, and repaired small firearms |
| (14) _____ saw mill operator | (n) earned a living from cod, halibut, herring, and mackerel |
| (15) _____ silversmith | (o) owned a business which ground grain into flour |
| (16) _____ tanner | (p) turned a valuable metal into such items as candlesticks, bowls, platters, sets of tableware, and coffee and tea pots |
| (17) _____ brewer | (q) made footwear, usually out of leather |
| (18) _____ saddler | (r) produced bottles, window panes, and fine tableware |
| (19) _____ innkeeper | (s) provided the colonists with building materials |
| (20) _____ gunsmith | (t) made barrels that were used for shipping such products as rum, tobacco, and naval stores |
| (21) _____ carver | (u) made designs or figures on or in wood, stone, or metal |
| (22) _____ cartwright | (v) made and repaired wheels and wheeled vehicles |
| (23) _____ wheelwright | (w) manufactured 2-wheeled vehicles used in farming and transporting freight |
| (24) _____ shoemaker | (x) made fasteners for doors, trunks, and drawers |
| (25) _____ locksmith | (y) caught fur-bearing animals for a living |

Antique Auction

- (1) The class will be divided into two teams for the playing of this game.
- (2) Class members will try to guess today's estimated dollar values of the antiques pictured below. These articles were made during the 1600s and 1700s by colonial craftsmen, and are now prized by museums and collectors. Starting with the silver teapot, fill in the space beneath the picture with the number of dollars that you think the article is worth today.
- (3) After everyone has written a dollar amount in the first space, the teacher will determine which class member has come closest to the actual price. The nearest bid can be either above or below the actual price.
- (4) The person who is the closest will score points for their team equal to the dollar value of the article. For example, if the article is worth \$50, then the team scores 50 points. If both teams have players who submit bids that are equally close, then each team receives the points.
- (5) If someone guesses the exact dollar value of the article, the team gets an additional 100 bonus points.
- (6) The winning team will be the one which has the most points at the end of the game.

 <p>silver teapot \$ _____</p>	 <p>wrought-iron betty lamp \$ _____</p>	 <p>handwoven coverlet \$ _____</p>
 <p>wooden apple corer \$ _____</p>	 <p>silver coffee pot \$ _____</p>	 <p>Revolutionary War musket \$ _____</p>
 <p>bottle \$ _____</p>	 <p>silver candlesticks \$ _____</p>	 <p>rocking chair \$ _____</p>