

13 Things You Didn't Know About the 13 Colonies

by Liana Mahoney

You probably already know the story of America's thirteen colonies. It's a story of perseverance, danger, adventure, and luck. It is the story of Virginia, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Maryland, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Delaware, North Carolina, New Jersey, South Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Georgia.



At first, these colonies were loyal to England, but it wasn't long before they wanted to govern themselves. In 1776, the United States of America was born. Here are 13 facts that you may not know.

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1. There was a lost colony.

In 1585, Sir Walter Raleigh established a colony on Roanoke Island, just off the coast of North Carolina. Living conditions here were harsh, and many of the colonists died. Just a year later, in 1590, the colony was abandoned.

John White left his family temporarily to sail back to England for more supplies. When he returned two years later, the colony had vanished! Everyone was gone. Carved into the bark of a tree was a single word: Croatoan. To this day, the fate of the Roanoke colony remains a mystery, and Roanoke is known as The Lost Colony.

2. Virginia was the first colony to establish a form of representative government.

In 1619, male landowners elected an assembly of leaders called the House of Burgesses.

Burgesses. The role of the House of Burgesses was to make laws for the Jamestown colony. This was the first form of representative government in the colonies, and it planted the seed for the future democracy that would later govern the United States of America.

3. The first institution of higher learning was founded in Massachusetts.

Harvard College was founded in the Boston, Massachusetts area a mere sixteen years after the Pilgrims landed in Plymouth.

4. The colonies' names

Some, such as Massachusetts, were named after royalty. Massachusetts is a Mohican Indian word for a name from Dutch words which it was first settled.

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5. Swedish settlers built

Settlers from Sweden built log cabins for homes. They came to New Netherland, which they claimed and renamed it in 1664.

6. North Carolina was famous for its pirates!

Edward Teach was a famous pirate known as Blackbeard. Up until the time of his death in 1718, he hid in the colony of Carolina after robbing ships of their treasure.

7. The colony of Georgia was founded for people who were going to prison.

James Ogelthorpe founded Georgia in 1732 because he felt that people who were

imprisoned for their debts should be able to work on their own farms to earn money and pay off their debts.

8. Most domestic and farm animals were brought to the United States by the colonists.

Pigs, domestic dogs, cows, horses, and chickens were brought to mainland America by the colonists.

9. The colonies were founded for a variety of different reasons.

While colonies were founded for the purpose of religious hopes of finding wealth

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Pennsylvania were founded in the

10. England had other colonies including

In what is now Newfoundland and Nova Scotia

11. The Great Seal of the United States features a shield with 13 stripes and holds

The Great Seal is on the back of the dollar bill

12. To help pay for the Revolutionary War, the colonies had to borrow more than ten million dollars from France, Spain, and the Netherlands.

including the eagle wearing a shield of stars and stripes and it is displayed on the

This was an enormous amount of money at the time! It goes to show just how expensive a war can be, in addition to the loss of lives and the destruction of property. After the French and Indian War, Britain needed money to pay for its war expenses, so King George III began adding taxes to many of the colonists' goods. This taxation

Name : _____

angered the colonists and was the main reason they decided to break away from England and become an independent nation.

13. On September 9, 1776, two months after Independence Day, the Continental Congress officially changed the name from "United Colonies" to "United States of America." And that, as you probably already know, is the end of the story.

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Name : _____

13 Things You Didn't Know About the 13 Colonies

1) Match the name of the colony to the word/group of words that best represents it.

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------|
| a) mystery | Massachusetts |
| b) danger | Maryland |
| c) prosperity | North Carolina |
| d) "Red Island" | Roanoke Island |
| e) Religious freedom | Virginia |
| f) Legislature | New York |
| g) Higher learning | Rhode Island |

2) Why did King George III tax the colonies? What was the colonists' goods?

3) What was the 'first' colony? What was the first settlement in America?

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