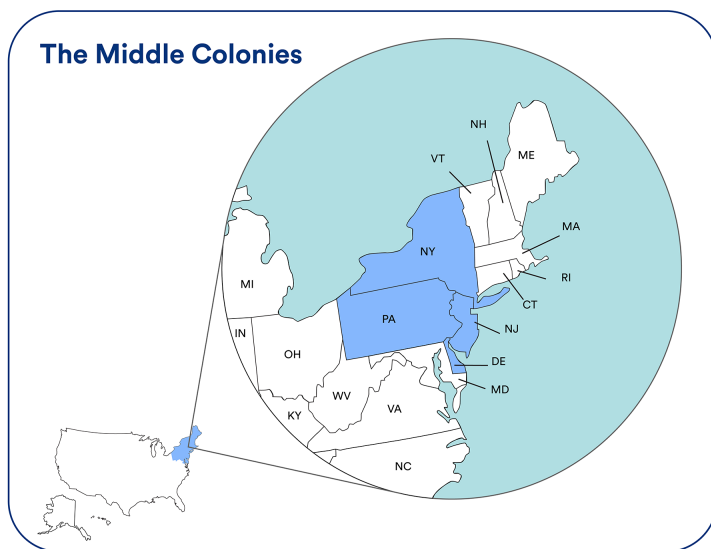


Assign



Swedish colonists harvesting crops along the Delaware River. Illustration: Alamy



The middle colonies were made of the four states of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware. Map: Newsela staff

The Middle Colonies were the middle part of the Thirteen Colonies. These colonies were British at first. In 1776, the American colonies gained independence. The Middle Colonies turned into states. They became New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New York and Delaware.

New York

Henry Hudson explored the Middle Colonies in 1609. The Swedes and the Dutch fought over the land in the 1630s. In the end, the Dutch took the land. They called it New Netherland. In the 1660s, the English took over and renamed the area New York. Over time, the colony's land was split. It became the Province of New York and the Province of Pennsylvania.

New Jersey

James II had two friends. He gave them the land between the Hudson and Delaware Rivers. This land became the Province of New Jersey. One of the owners sold his share to the Quakers. This sale divided New Jersey. It became East Jersey and West Jersey. In 1702, Queen Anne united these into New Jersey.

Pennsylvania

King Charles II gave the land for the Pennsylvania Colony to William Penn in 1681. Penn called for religious tolerance. In 1704, Dutch land given to Penn was separated. It became part of the Delaware Colony.

Delaware

Delaware changed hands between 1631 and 1655. The Dutch and Swedes both claimed it. The Dutch kept control of Delaware until 1664. That's when it was renamed New Castle. A friend of the duke governed Delaware from 1664 to 1682. William Penn received his land grant of Pennsylvania in 1681. Delaware was part of that. But in 1701, it became separate.

Economy Of The Middle Colonies



A major export in the 1800's, corn is still a major crop in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.
Photo: Aimintang/Getty Images

The Middle Colonies were like New England in some ways. It was like the Southern Colonies in others. Land was owned and worked by the same family. New York's Hudson Valley was different. There, the Dutch owned large pieces of land. They rented it to farmers.

The Middle Colonies had richer soil than New England. They grew wheat and other grains. They became known as the Bread Basket Colonies. There were large rivers in the area. New York and Philadelphia became important ports.

Large forests attracted the lumber industry. Pennsylvania made iron products. Other important industries included printing and publishing.

Demographics Of The Middle Colonies

The Middle Colonies were very diverse, meaning different kinds of people lived there. Settlers came from all parts of Europe. The Middle Colonies were also the most religiously diverse part of the British Empire. It was a very tolerant area.

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