

The American Colonies: Why do the New England, Middle and Southern colonies develop different ways of life?



Overview:

In May 1607, about 110 Englishmen arrived at the mouth of a great bay on the coast of Virginia. It was to be Jamestown, the first permanent English colony in what is now the United States. Over the next 243 years the east coast of North America is developed into the 13 colonies and separated into the regions of New England, Middle and Southern colonies. These regions develop distinct cultures, economics, religious beliefs and governments. These distinctions will inevitably carry the United States into Civil War in 1861. This Document Based Question asks why these distinctions arose.

Task:

Read the documents carefully. As you read them, think about the regional differences between the New England, Middle, and Southern colonies. Our goal today is to identify some differences through the examination of primary and secondary sources. Answer the questions using evidence presented in the documents. We will work on Document A together and then the remainder you will do on your own. This will be turned in.

Document A

“.....As for monsters, I have found not trace of them except at the point in the second isle as one enters the Indies, which is inhabited by a people considered in all the isles as most ferocious, who eat human flesh. They possess many canoes, with which they overrun all the isles of India, stealing and seizing all they can. They are not worse looking than the others, except that they wear their hair long like women, and use bows and arrows of the same cane, with a sharp stick at the end for want of iron, of which they have none. They are ferocious compared to these other races, who are extremely cowardly; but I only hear this from the others. Another island, I am told, is larger than Hispaniola, where the natives have no hair, and where there is countless gold; and from them all I bring Indians to testify to this. To speak, in conclusion, only of what has been done during this hurried voyage, their Highnesses will see that I can give them as much gold as they desire, if they will give me a little assistance, spices, cotton, as much as their Highnesses may command to be shipped, and mastic as much as their Highnesses choose to send for, which until now has only been found in Greece, in the isle of Chios, and the Signoria can get its own price for it; as much lign-aleo as they command to be shipped, and as many slaves as they choose to send for, all heathens.The eternal and almighty God, our Lord, it is Who gives to all who walk in His way, victory over things apparently impossible, and in this case signally so, because although these lands had been imagined and talked of before they were seen, most men listened incredulously to what was thought to be but an idle tale.

But our Redeemer has given victory to our most illustrious King and Queen, and to their kingdoms rendered famous by this glorious event, at which all Christendom should rejoice, celebrating it with great festivities and solemn Thanksgivings to the Holy Trinity.....”

1493.

Yours to command,
THE ADMIRAL

Source: Excerpt of a Letter from Christopher Columbus to Luis de Sant Angel Announcing His Discovery 1493

Questions:

1. Why does Columbus mention monsters and what did he say he found?
2. How does Columbus describe the native peoples?
3. What did Columbus find that had value?
4. How does Columbus tie god into the event?

Should Government be based on Religion? (Doc B)

John Winthrop on why government should be based on Religion. (Yes)	Roger Williams on why government should not be based on Religion (No)
It is yourselves who have called us to this office, and , being called by you, we have our authority from God.....If you stand for natural corrupt liberties.....you will not endure the least weight of authority.....but if you will be satisfied to enjoy such civil and lawful liberties, such as Christ allows you, then will you quietly and cheerfully submit unto that authority which is set over you.... For your good.	I....only propose this case; There goes many a ship to sea, with many hundred souls in one ship, which is a true picture of a commonwealth....It hath fallen out some times, that both Catholics and Protestants, Jews and Turks, may be embarked in one ship; upon which supposal, I affirm..... that none of the Catholics, Protestants, Jews or Turks be forced to come to the ship's prayers or worship or compelled from their own particular prayers or worship.

***Note:** John Winthrop, a founder of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, believed that the colony should be governed on religious principles. Others, such as Roger Williams, disagreed and were banished from Massachusetts.\

Sources:

- *Little Speech' on Liberty" by John Winthrop*
- *"Letter from Roger Williams to the town of Providence Massachusetts"*

Questions:

1. How might Winthrop view people who held different religious views?
2. Why might Williams have used the image of a ship at sea to make his case for religious freedom?
3. How do both passages show both men valued freedom of religion?

4. How do these passages illustrate colonial intolerance for cultural or religious differences?

A Foreign Perspective on the Middle Colonies (Document C)

.....As First, their Land costs them (as I said but just now) little or nothing in comparison, of which the Farmers commonly will get twice the encrease of Corn for every Bushel they sow, that the Farmers in England can from the richest Land they have.

In the Second place, they have constantly good price for their Corn, by reason of the great and quick vent [trade] into Barbadoes and other Islands; through which means Silver is become more plentiful than here in England, considering the Number of People, and that causes a quick Trade for both Corn and Cattle; and that is the reason that Corn differs now from the Price formerly, else it would be at half the Price it was at then; for a Brother of mine (to my own particular knowledge) sold within the compass of one Week, about One Hundred and Twenty fat Beasts, most of them good handsom large Oxen.

Thirdly, They pay no Tithes, and their Taxes are inconsiderable; the Place is free for all Persuasions, in a Sober and Civil way; for the Church of England and the Quakers bear equal Share in the Government. They live Friendly and Well together; there is no Persecution for Religion, nor ever like to be; 'tis this that knocks all Commerce on the Head, together with high Imposts, strict Laws, and cramping Orders. Before I end this Paragraph, I shall add another Reason why Womens Wages are so exorbitant; they are not yet very numerous, which makes them stand upon high Terms for their several Services, . . .

Reader, what I have here written, is not a Fiction, Flam, Whim, or any sinister Design, either to impose upon the Ignorant, or Credulous, or to curry Favour with the Rich and Mighty, but in meer Pity and pure Compassion to the Numbers of Poor Labouring Men, Women, and Children in England, half starv'd, visible in their meagre looks, that are continually wandering up and down looking for Employment without finding any, who here need not lie idle a moment, nor want due Encouragement or Reward for their Work, much less Vagabond or Drone it about. Here are no Beggars to be seen (it is a Shame and Disgrace to the State that there are so many in England) nor indeed have any here the least Occasion or Temptation to take up that Scandalous Lazy Life.

Jealousie among Men is here very rare, and Barrenness among Women hardly to be heard of, nor are old Maids to be met with; for all commonly Marry before they are Twenty Years of Age, and seldom any young Married Women but hath a Child in her Belly, or one upon her Lap.....

Source: Gabriel Thomas, *An Historical Description of the Province and Country of West-New-Jersey in America* (London, 1698), 1-31, passim; reprinted in part in Albert Bushnell Hart, ed., *American History Told by Contemporaries* (New York, 1898), volume 1, 573-75.

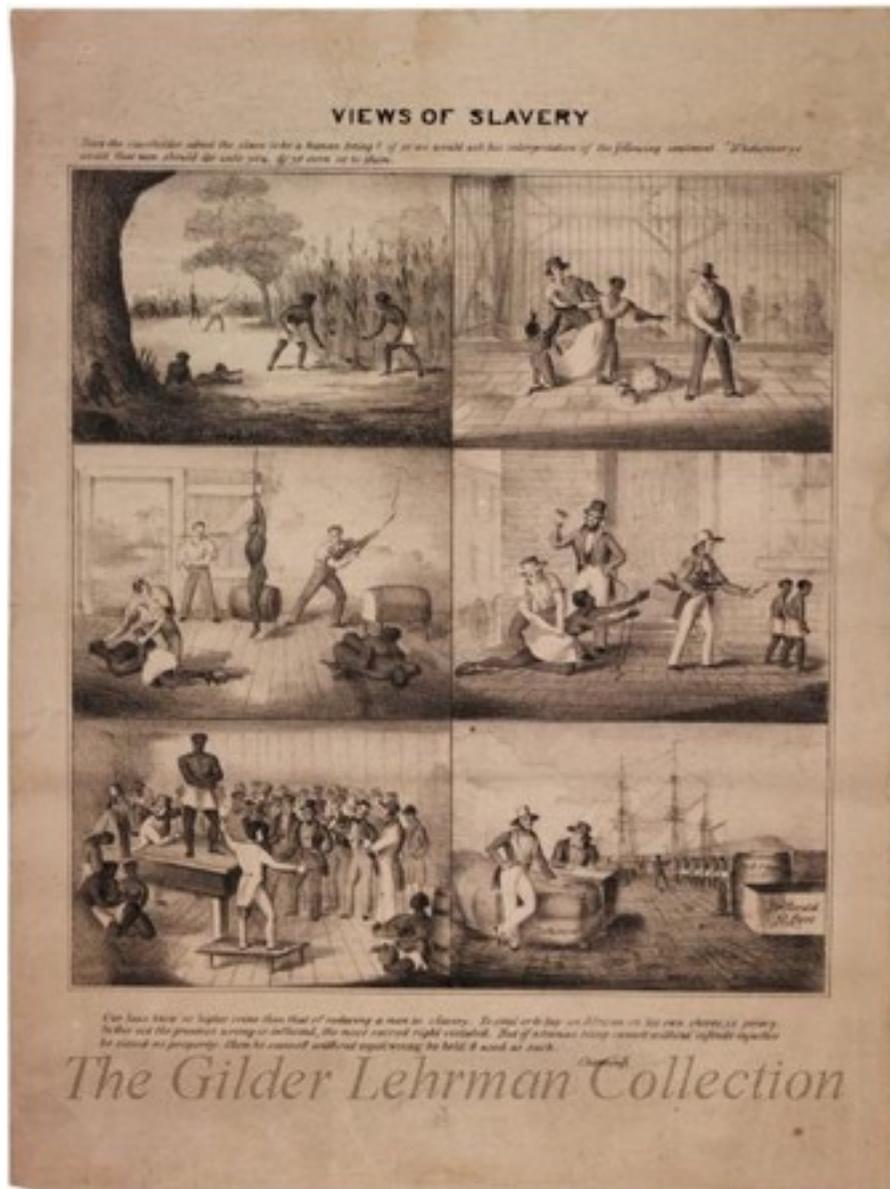
Questions

1. How does the price of land and the fertility of land in the Middle Colonies compare with that of England?
2. How does the author describe the taxes and government of the Middle Colonies?
3. Why does the author attempt to convince the reader that what he has described of the Middle Colonies is factual?

4. In the last paragraph why does the author discuss the lack of jealousy and barrenness (women who cannot have children) among the colonists in the Middle Colonies?

Perspectives on Slavery in the Southern Colonies (Doc D)

Source: *Broadside with Unknown Author from the Gilder Lehrman Collection #GLC6477*



Summary: Abolitionist broadside with six images depicting kidnapping, torture, auction, and labor of slaves. With the quotation, "Our laws know no higher crime than that of reducing a man to slavery. To steal or to buy an African on his own shores is a piracy."

Questions:

1. How does the author of the broadside view slavery? (Give Examples)

2. What do you think the quote means when it says “our laws know no higher crime than that of reducing a man to slavery”?
3. In what two ways are southerners depicted earning money from slavery in the broadside?