

COLONIAL LIFE

General Life

- The colonial people were homebodies.
- There was a lot of work to be done and everyone had to work hard.
- Every person in the family had to do their share of work.
- Over 90% of the population in colonial America lived outside of towns and villages, residing on farms throughout the rural landscape.

General Life

- Colonial men had to hunt for wild birds and animals.
- They also cut down trees for firewood and planted and harvested crops.
- Planting was done in the spring and harvesting was done in the fall.
- There were gardens to weed and corn rows to hoe.
- Most of the men were farmers, but some trained to do different trades.
- Farm work was very hard and there were always chores to do.

General Life

- An average family farm in the north had about ten cattle, sixteen sheep, six pigs, two horses, and a team of oxen to pull plows and wagons.
- The men were responsible for tending to the crops, planting and harvesting depending on the season.
- They were also trained to take care of their homes and had to know how to build fences and butcher livestock.
- The day usually began with an alcoholic drink as well. Cider was the most popular with rum coming in as a close second.

Colonial Farms



Colonial Women

- The women of the family worked just as hard as the men.
- They had clothing to make and meals to cook.
Almost everything needed for the home was made in the home.
- The women would make the candles and soap.
These jobs would take more than a day.
- Clothes for the family had to be made and there was spinning, weaving and knitting to be done.

Colonial Women

- The women of the family would get up very early in the morning to start preparing the meals for the day.
- Preparing meals in the colonial days meant that birds had to be plucked and bread had to be baked. Virtually nothing was prepared as we see today.



Colonial Children

- The children of a colonial family also had their chores to do.
- They were always working.
- They would start doing chores at a very early age because laziness was considered a sin.
- The girls would help with the cooking and also do many of the inside chores.
- They would sweep the floors, make beds, feed the chickens, milk cows, and gather vegetables from the garden.

Colonial Children

- Boys in colonial times would work just as hard as their fathers.
- They would walk around the fields barefoot and help the plants by pulling out the weeds.
- They also had the job of caring for the animals and running any errands.
- Boys would also learn to hunt with their fathers.
- They would also learn to make furniture and repair broken barrels and buckets.
- Colonial life was very hard, but everyone knew they had to help to make their home successful.

Cooking!

- The center of all family activity in a colonial home was the kitchen.
- It was the busiest and warmest room in the house.
- There was a large fireplace that was used for cooking and for heat.
- Many of the fireplaces were so big that a person could stand in it.
- A woman had to be careful when she was cooking so her long skirt would not catch on fire.

Cooking!

- There were a lot of different tools in a colonial kitchen.
- All the tools needed were made of iron so they could stand a fireplace's heat.
- The kettles were very heavy.
- One tool was a skillet with legs.
- The skillets had legs so they could be put on the coals to cook.
- In some colonial kitchens there were bread ovens.
- To place the bread in the oven or take it out of the oven, a long flat shovel was used called a peel.

Cooking!

- Women played an important role in cooking.
- The woman of the house began cooking the meals before dawn.
- Meals would take hours to prepare.
- The mother would build a fire, bring in the water, pick vegetables from the garden, milk the cow, gather eggs and hang meat to dry early in the day.
- Colonial meal structures/times were also different from what we know today.
- Breakfast was taken early if you were poor, later if you were rich.

Cooking!

- Colonial men helped with the meals by trapping and hunting animals and fish.
- When the meat was ready for cooking it was boiled, broiled or simmered in stews.
- Colonial families owned farm animals to give them milk and eggs and grew fruits, vegetables, and grains.
- They also learned how to use herbs, roots and berries that grew in their surroundings.

Cooking!

- There were many kinds of herbs such as thyme, sage, marjoram, and dill.
- These herbs were good on meats and stews.
- Sweets and desserts were something the colonists loved.
- Usually pies, cobblers, and cakes were served at the end of a meal.
- If there wasn't enough time to make a pie, Apple Tansey was served.
- This sugary dessert was made from apples covered with a sauce made of beaten eggs, cream, nutmeg, and sugar.

Cooking!

- The colonists also went wild over ice cream, a favorite dessert.
- Colonists found a way to make a kind of syrup from the sap of a maple tree.
- It was used to sweeten food especially popcorn.
- Tea was also made from roots and leaves.
- Dandelions were used to make a coffee- like drink.
- There was milk to drink, but colonial people thought water would make them sick so they did not drink it.

Food



A NEW ENGLAND KITCHEN.
A HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATION.

Breakfast

- The Colonial American breakfast was far from the juice, eggs and bacon of today.
- The stoic early settlers rose early and went straight to the chores that demanded their attention.
- In frontier outposts and on farms, families drank cider or beer and gulped down a bowl of porridge that had been cooking slowly all night over the embers...
- In the towns, the usual mug of alcoholic beverage consumed upon rising was followed by cornmeal mush and molasses with more cider or beer.

Breakfast

- Cider was made from peaches or apples.
- The colonists also drank beer, even for breakfast.
- Before the cold days of winter arrived, everybody worked very hard.
- It was very important that food be prepared to last for the winter months and that nobody would be hungry.
- Apples, peaches, and pumpkins were peeled, sliced and hung to dry.
- Meat and fish was smoked, salted or pickled.

Breakfast

- Families in the Middle Colonies added special items such as scrapple (cornmeal and headcheese) and Dutch sweetcakes which were fried in deep fat.
- It was among the Southern planters that breakfast became a leisurely and delightful meal, though it was not served until early chores were attended to and orders for the day given.
- Breads were eaten at all times of the day but particularly at breakfast.

Breakfast

- By the nineteenth century, breakfast was served as late as 9 or 10 o'clock.
- Here might be found coffee, tea or chocolate, wafers, muffins, toasts, and a butter dish and knife...
- The southern poor ate cold turkey washed down with ever-present cider.
- The size of breakfasts grew in direct proportion to growth of wealth.
- Breads, cold meats and, especially in the Northeast, fruit pies and pasties joined the breakfast menus.

Dinner

- Early afternoon was the appointed hour for dinner in Colonial America.
- Throughout the seventeenth century and well into the eighteenth century it was served in the "hall" or "common room."
- While dinner among the affluent merchants in the North took place shortly after noon, the Southern planters enjoyed their dinner as late as bubbling stews were carried into the fields to feed the slaves and laborers.

Dinner

- In the early settlements, poor families ate from trenchers filled from a common stew pot, with a bowl of coarse salt the only table adornment.
- The earliest trenchers in America, as in the Middle Ages, were probably made from slabs of stale bread which were either eaten with the meal or thrown after use to the domestic animals.
- The stews often included pork, sweet corn and cabbage, or other vegetables and roots which were available.

Dinner

- A typical comfortably fixed family in the late 1700s probably served two courses for dinner.
- The first course included several meats plus meat puddings and/or deep meat pies containing fruits and spices, pancakes and fritters, and the ever-present side dishes of sauces, pickles and catsups.
- Soups seem to have been served before or in conjunction with the first course.
- Desserts appeared with the second course.

Dinner

- An assortment of fresh, cooked, or dried fruits, custards, tarts and sweetmeats was usually available.
- "Sallats," (salads) though more popular at supper, sometimes were served at dinner and occasionally provided decoration in the center of the table.
- Cakes were of many varieties: pound, gingerbread, spice and cheese.



Supper

- What is there to say about a meal that probably did not even exist for many settlers during the early days of the Colonies and later seemed more like a bedtime snack made up of leftovers?
- In the eighteenth century supper was a brief meal and, especially in the South, light and late.
- It generally consisted of leftovers from dinner, or of gruel (a mixture made from boiling water with oats, "Indian," (corn meal) or some other meal).

Supper

- One Massachusetts diary of 1797 describes roast potatoes, prepared with salt but no butter.
- Ale, cider, or some variety of beer was always served. In the richer merchant society and in Southern plantation life, eggs and egg dishes were special delicacies and were prepared as side dishes at either dinner or supper.
- Supper took on added importance as the nineteenth century wore on.
- This heretofore casual meal became more important as dinner was served earlier in the day.

Colonial Medicine

- Medicine was practiced differently in colonial times than from today.
- Treatments sometimes worked, but often led to weakness and or death.
- Most family illnesses were treated at home.
- There was always a supply of medicinal herbs and other remedies because each family grew their own herbs and made their own medicine.
- They believed that herbs could cure anything.

Colonial Medicine

- Sometimes the cures were very different.
- For itching, it was recommended to use one quart of fish worms, one pound of hog's fat, half a pint of turpentine and good brandy to be rubbed on the infected part.
- For a chill, it was thought that the dry shell of a turtle boiled in water would be good if the person drank 2 to 3 doses of the liquid.
- Wild daisy mixed with animal fat was good for rubbing on a cut.

Colonial Medicine

- Sage mixed with fat and cornmeal was supposed to cure a headache.
- Sometimes a cure was worse than the illness, so people learned not to complain much.
- There were hardly any doctors in colonial times and they were not well trained.
- There were no stethoscopes or thermometers.
- They had not been invented yet.
- Doctors had to do a lot of guessing as to what was wrong with his patients.
- Many doctors thought that illnesses could be cured by cleaning out the germs.

Colonial Medicine



Colonial Medicine

- They would cut open a vein in the sick man's arm and let some blood come out.
- Sometimes they would give their patients something to make them throw up.
- Leeches were also used to suck blood from a patient's body.
- Many times this would weaken a sick person and he would die.
- It was definitely dangerous to get sick.

Colonial Medicine

- There were no dentists, but there were apothecaries. These were like drugstores.
- They would sell herbs and other cures for sickness. Chalk was sold for upset stomachs, bark from trees for fever, and other potions that were believed to heal the sick.
- The apothecary also served as the dentist.
- He would pull the rotten teeth of the colonists.

Transportation

- In colonial times travel by land was in the old-fashioned stagecoach, on horseback, or afoot.
- The roads were usually execrable.
- Many of the towns were wholly without roads, being connected with their neighbors by Indian trails that were so small, horses were sometimes too big to travel on them.
- Often the colonist had to walk while carefully pulling his horse or mule.
- When the people traveled there was no place for them to sleep.

Transportation

- Travelling in the winter time was only done if absolutely necessary as roads and trails became snowy and slippery from ice.
- Wagon wheels would be replaced with sled runners and horses had to go even slower so they wouldn't fall.
- To travel from place to place the people used horses, sleds, and wagons.
- Because the colonist did not travel a lot or go very far from home, they usually walked.
- The colonist only went someplace if they had a reason.

Transportation

- Unlike today, people did not travel for pleasure and some people never saw any other place except for where they were born.
- The best roads in Colonial America were found in Pennsylvania and they all led to and from Philadelphia since it was the greatest city of the time.
- Conestoga wagons lumbered into the busy city, laden with grain and produce from the river valleys and the mountain slopes.
- A governor of Massachusetts relates that he made extensive journeys afoot, and speaks of being borne across the swamps on the back of an Indian guide.

Transportation

- A favorite mode of travel was on horseback.
- A farmer went to church astride a horse, with his wife sitting behind him on a cushion called a pillion; while the young people walked, stopping to change their shoes before reaching the meetinghouse.
- Great quantities of grain and other farm products were brought from the remote settlements on pack horses, winding their weary way through the lonely forest by the Indian trails.

Transportation

- Not until 1766 was there a regular line of stagecoaches between New York and Philadelphia.
- The journey was then made in three days; but ten years later a new stage, called the "flying machine," was started, and it made the trip in two days.
- A stage journey from one part of the country to another was as comfortless as could well be imagined.

Transportation

- A stage journey from one part of the country to another was as comfortless as could well be imagined.
- The coach was without springs, and the seats were hard and often backless.
- The horses were jaded and worn, and the roads were rough with boulders and stumps of trees, or furrowed with ruts and quagmires.

Transportation

- The mail was carried by post riders, who followed the main roads as far as there were any.
- On reaching the road less settlements they found their way through the forest as best they could by the trails and bridle paths.
- The postman left a city, not at regular intervals, but only when he received enough mail to pay the expenses of the trip.
- The remote settlements were fortunate if they received mail once a month. Benjamin Franklin was appointed post-master general in 1753, and he served about twenty years.

Transportation

- He soon made the service a paying one to the Crown.
- Yet even then the amount of mail delivered in the whole country in a year was less than that now delivered in the city of New York in one day.
- Newspapers were not carried in the mails, but by private arrangement.
- The newspapers were small and ill-printed, and contained little that we would call news.



Transportation

- The chief contents were bits of poetry, advertisements for runaway slaves and indentured servants, arrivals of cargoes, bits of European news, and essays on politics, morals, and religion.
- *The Boston News Letter*, established in 1704, was the first permanent newspaper in America.
- At the opening of the Revolution there were thirty-seven newspapers printed in the colonies, with a combined weekly circulation of about five thousand copies.
- The first daily was not printed until 1784.

Homes

- When the colonists first came to America, there were no homes to move into.
- Some families would build a small hut and live in it until their home could be built.
- In colonial times most homes were simply one big room.
- It was used for sleeping, eating, cooking, and working.
- The older children would sleep in the attics while the grown-ups and babies slept in the large room.
- The babies slept in cradles close to the fire.

Homes

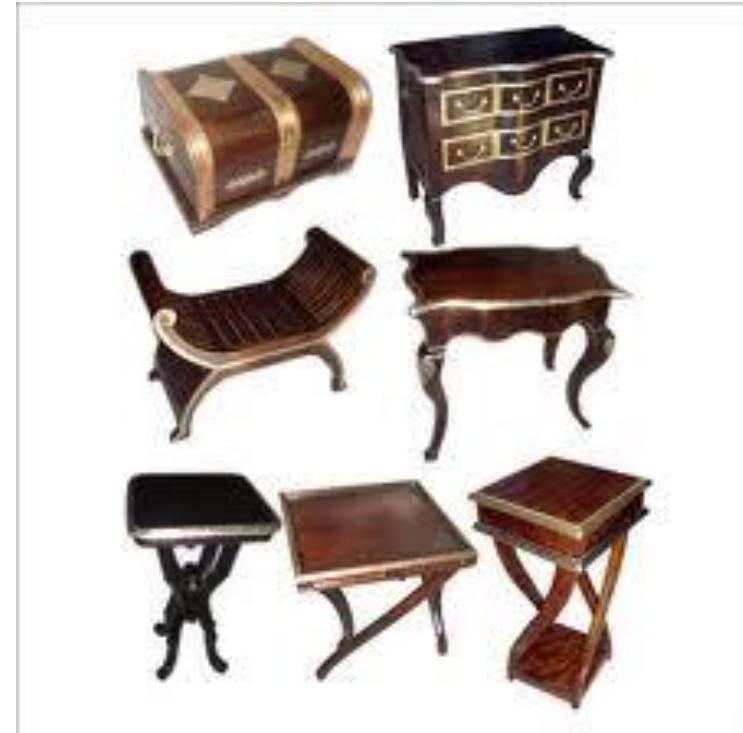
- Bags filled with scratchy straw were used for mattresses in the attic.
- Mothers and fathers slept in a jack-bed.
- They could not sleep stretched out because the bed was short to save space and it was not long enough to lay straight.
- A colonial home was very cold in the wintertime and it was not easy to heat the house.
- Each home had a giant fireplace and people burned huge logs in them to help keep the room warm.

Homes

- Sometimes the logs were so big that they had to be dragged into the house by horses or mules.
- They were kept burning all year long, even on the hottest days of summer.
- Sometimes in the winter, homes would get so cold that the ink used for the quill pens would freeze.
- There was not much furniture in a colonial home.
- Sometimes a table was just a wooden board placed on two sawhorses.

Homes

- If there were chairs, the father was always the one to sit in one.
- However, most of the time there was only one chair and the family would have to sit on the floor.
- Some homes had a big bench called a settle.
- It was not comfortable to sit on, but it was a place to stay warm during the winter because it had a high back and sides.



Homes

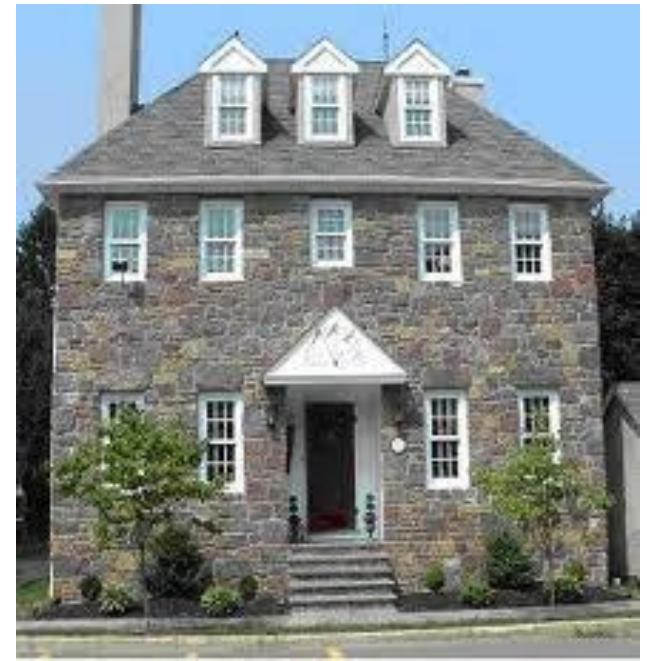
- The colonists had no glass so they would cover the windows with cloth or paper rubbed with fat to let in some light.
- There were many kinds of houses.
- One home was called a saltbox house because it had the same shape as the boxes that salt used to come in.
- Colonial homes did not have bathrooms.
- The people would have to go outside to small places called privies or necessaries.
- The people would also have to get water from a well.

Homes

- They did not use the water for drinking or frequent bathing because they thought it was unsafe.
- When the colonists did take a bath they would stand in a large tub placed by the fireplace and wash themselves.
- There were no closets for hanging clothes in a colonial home.
- If a home did have a closet it was a small, private room and it was a special honor for people to meet in someone's closet.

Homes

- Clothes were kept in trunks and chests or they were hung on pegs.
- As a colonial family grew, the homes got bigger.
- Extra rooms were attached when time and money would allow.
- No matter how large the space was, each family thought their house was a "Home Sweet Home."



Games, Toys, and Recreation

- In the colonial days everyone was very busy, but there was still time for games and recreation.
- Children would play games to help them with skills like running, jumping and throwing.
- All of their games were made from things they had because there were no factories or stores that made toys.
- In the colonial days there were many children in a family, so the boys and girls always had lots of playmates.

Games, Toys, and Recreation

- Some of the games and toys helped the children to learn how to solve problems.
- Archery helped the boys aim, making hunting easier for them.
- Quoits, a game played with rope circles and stones, helped the children practice their aiming and throwing.
- A favorite game of many colonial children was hoops.
- The boys liked to run and push their hoops while the girls would toss and catch their hoops with two sticks.

Games, Toys, and Recreation

- Colonial children also liked to play games like tag and blind man's buff.
- They also enjoyed singing and playing games like "London Bridge is Falling Down" and "Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush".
- The boys liked to play ball.
- It was a leather bag filled with feathers.
- They would also shoot marbles, fly kites, and spin tops.
- The girls played with dolls.
- The dolls were made of rags and cornhusks. Girls would also sew samplers using tiny stitches.

Focus: Nine Man Morris

- This game was played by colonial kids. It was played in the dirt with a couple of rocks and acorns. It can be played on paper. Use nine pennies, nine nickels, and a drawing like this. Two players are needed to play the game. Each player decides on using pennies or nickels. Begin by taking turns placing one coin on one of the dots. The goal is to line up three pieces in a row while blocking the opponent from doing the same. Capture one of the opponent's pieces whenever a line of three is completed. When a player is down to two pieces, the other player wins.

Games, Toys, and Recreation

- **Popular Colonial Games & Toys**
- Which Do You Know?
- Yo-Yo
Puzzles
Hoops
Kite Flying
Jump Rope
London Bridge
Tennis
Spinning Tops
- Hopscotch
Jacob's Ladder
- Leap Frog
Bow & Arrow
Blind Man's Bluff
See Saw
- Bubble-Blowing
Marbles
Rocking Horses
Swinging
Cards
Ice sliding
Jack Straws
(or pick-up sticks)

Colonial Children

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Colonial Clothing

- In colonial days most people made their own clothing.
- They used wool, linen, and leather.
- The colonists would grow the flax plant to make linen thread and they raised sheep to get wool.
- Many times a person would have two sets of clothing, one for everyday and one for Sunday.
- They would wear the same thing almost everyday.
- That meant the clothing would get very smelly because most people only took baths a few times a year.

Colonial Clothing

- Every person in the family would have to make clothes.
- The children would gather berries and roots to make dye to color the thread.
- Grandmother would card the wool and girls and woman worked at the spinning wheel.
- Young girls learned how to knit and they would make stockings and caps.
- Boys and men would weave clothes on the loom and the woman would make the clothes for the whole family.

Colonial Clothing

- Everything was done by hand.
- Families worked all the time to make clothing.
- While boys watched the sheep in the field, they would use a small loom to weave.
- Sometimes a woman would tie a spinning wheel on the back of a horse and use it to spin thread while they went visiting.
- Colonial people thought it was a sin to be idle, so they found work to do all the time.

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Colonial Clothing

- The colonial people liked bright-colored clothing.
- Yellow, red, purple, and blue were their favorite colors.
- Thread was dyed with poke berries and it was used to make red capes for woman and girls.
- Woman and girls would keep their hair covered all the time.
- They wore mob caps.
- Boys had long hair and an odd fashion craze was the wig for men.
- The wigs were human hair, goat hair, or horse hair.

Colonial Clothing

- If a person was really poor, his wig was made out of thread.
- The wig would fit very tight on the head and the worst thing for a man would be that he "flipped his wig" or the best thing would be to be known as a "big wig" because that meant that the man was wealthy.



Colonial Clothing

- Shoemakers would make shoes that fit either foot.
- There was no right or left shoe.
- The men would wear knee-length pants called breeches, a waistcoat, which would be called a vest today, and a coat.
- Young boys wore loose-fitting dresses until they were five and then they began to dress just like their fathers.



Colonial Clothing

- Young girls dressed like their mothers.
- Wealthy ladies wore stays.
- These were undergarments stiffened with whalebone and laced up so tightly that women could hardly breathe.
- Poor women would not wear these undergarments because they could not do their work.
- Babies would wear a soft pillow around their middle to keep them from getting hurt when they fell.
- If they did fall, they fell right on his pudding which is what the pillow was called.

Colonial Education

- In colonial times, education was important.
- Some children went to school and some didn't.
- Those that did go would learn to read, write, and do arithmetic.
- Parents wanted their children to learn how to read so they could read the Bible.
- They wanted their children to study their religion.



Colonial Education

- Schools in colonial times were not like schools today.
- The schools had only one room and the children had to sit on hard benches.
- These were not comfortable.
- One teacher would teach all of the children of every grade level.
- There were no books for the kids to study from.
- The children learned from hornbooks.
- These were paddles with paper nailed to them, then covered with a thin shaving of cow horn to keep the paper from tearing.

Colonial Education

- The alphabet and a prayer were written on the paper.
- Teachers taught the students how to write and good penmanship was important.
- The teachers did not care if a kid could not spell because there were no rules for spelling, but they did want everyone's handwriting to look good.



Colonial Education

- Colonial school rooms were very cold in the winter.
- They were heated by a fireplace and every child had to bring firewood for the fire.
- If they forgot then they would have to sit the farthest away from the fire and they would get very cold before the day was over.
- There were no blackboards in colonial schools, so the kids wrote with a lump of lead or coal on a piece of birch bark because it cost a lot to make paper.

Colonial Education

- Teachers would discipline their students in tough ways.
- Children who did not know their lessons were called dunces and they would have to sit on a tall stool with a pointed cap on their heads.
- Sometimes the kids would have to wear signs showing they had not behaved.
- These punishments would hurt a child's feelings and make him feel silly.

Colonial Education

- There were other punishments that would hurt.
- Sometimes a teacher would make a child wear a cut branch on the end of his nose if he did not behave.



Colonial Education

- The first school that boys and girls went to was a Dame School.
- The kids would go to the teacher's home and learn how to read and write.
- When they knew how to do this, they were finished with Dame School.
- However, the law said that all boys should go to school to learn more than to read and write, so they would go to school and use the *New England Primer* to learn their lessons.

Colonial Education

- When they knew everything in the book, they would go to another school.
- Girls would learn to read and write, but the people felt it was more important for girls to know how to care for the house and to spin and cook, so they would not go to school very long.
- Teachers were called schoolmasters and they would get paid by a kid's family.
- Many times they would be paid by corn and other foods. If the schoolmaster had too much food, he would have the boy trade the food for something he needed.