

Colonial Life

Brief #4

Focus

The colonists worked hard and lived in towns, cities and on farms.

In the late 16th and early 17th centuries, most colonists lived on farms. But as the population increased, towns and cities grew.



Colonial Farms

Most farms in colonial America were small family farms. Life on a farm was not easy. Farmers did not have the machines that they have today. Farmers had to rely on animals to help them plow their fields. The crops had to be harvested by hand. Many farms relied on the labor of slaves and indentured servants to do the work. Most farms were self-sufficient. **Self-sufficient means that you rely only on yourself for what you need to survive.** Women

on farms made soap and candles. They spun wool that was made into clothing. They churned butter by hand.

Often many family farms would help each other. They shared their livestock. **Livestock are farm animals like cows, horses, and sheep.** The men helped each other plant and harvest the crops. The women spun yarn together and prepared food.



Colonial Cities

Colonial cities, just like cities today, were busy places. They were more densely populated than towns or farms. Some of the largest colonial cities were the following:

- Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- Boston, Massachusetts
- Newport, Rhode Island
- Charleston, South Carolina

All of these cities are located on ports. A **port is a place where ships dock to load and unload people and cargo.** Colonial cities had churches, government buildings, and taverns. Newspapers were published in big cities.



Union Fire Company

Fires were a big problem in the colonial cities. Most buildings were made of wood. The buildings were heated by fireplaces. The buildings were also built close together. If one building caught fire, it quickly spread to others. In 1736, Benjamin Franklin founded the first volunteer fire company in the colonies. It was called the Union Fire Company.

Vocabulary

1. self-sufficient
2. livestock
3. port
4. well
5. mill