

The Thirteen Colonies



1. Virginia - 1606 | Founded by the London Company

Three ships sent by the London Company equipped with 144 men set out for Virginia in 1606. There, they established the first settlement, Jamestown. Sir Walter Raleigh had been attempting to establish the land since 1586, calling it Virginia after Queen Elizabeth I.

2. New York - 1626 | Founded by the Duke of York

Peter Minuit purchased Manhattan Island from the Native Americans for jewelry in 1626. This is where the city of New York was founded. The colony had been known as New Amsterdam until 1664, when the land was threatened by the arrival of English warships. The town surrendered without a fight after the English made a deal with them. The English came in and renamed the town after James, Duke of York, who was given control of the colony.

3. Massachusetts - 1630 | Founded by the Puritans

In 1630, Massachusetts was settled as "Massachusetts Bay Colony" by a group of Puritans under the leadership of Governor John Winthrop. King Charles I had given the group a grant to create the colony. Although, rather than obtaining the wealth and sending it back to England, the Puritans transferred the charter to the new colony.

4. New Hampshire - 1623 | Founded by John Mason

This land was granted to Captain John Mason. He named the settlement after his hometown in Hampshire County, England. He began to send settlers to the land to create a fishing colony, but died before he ever saw the result of his money and efforts.

5. Maryland - 1633 | Founded by Lord Baltimore

This colony was originally founded to be a safe haven for English Catholics fleeing persecution in Europe. Cecil Calvert, 2nd Baron Baltimore (Lord Baltimore) established it in 1633. It was the first settlement of the New World to grant religious freedom to all Trinitarian Christians.

6. Rhode Island - 1636 | Founded by Roger Williams

Rhode Island was founded by five separate groups, many of these groups had been dismissed from or had left the Massachusetts Bay Colony for quarrelsome reasons. The colony was known as "Roodt Eylandt" by Adriaen Block, a Dutch trader exploring the area for the Netherlands before Roger Williams officially established the land in 1636.

7. Connecticut - 1637 | Founded by Thomas Hooker

When the Dutch established the first trading post in the Connecticut River Valley in 1636, the official founding of this colony had begun. From 1636-1637, the Pequot War occurred between the settlers of the new colony and the Pequot Indians. It ended with the defeat of the Indians. Thomas Hooker, an English yeoman and clergyman established the settlement in 1637.

8. Delaware - 1638 | Founded by Peter Minuit and New Sweden Company

European colonists from the Netherlands and Sweden came together to found this colony in 1638 under a charter from the Swedish King, Gustavus Adolphus. Peter Minuit, who had governed New Netherland and purchased Manhattan Island, helped lead the group. Delaware was the first permanent colony to be founded.

9. North Carolina - 1653 | Founded by the Virginians

Virginian colonists established the colony of North Carolina in 1653, naming it after Charles IX of France and King Charles I of England. This is also the territory that the first English settlement was built and mysteriously disappeared in. In 1587, Roanoke was established by Sir Walter Raleigh and occupied by John White and some 121 settlers. In 1590, when John returned, all of the colonists had disappeared.

10. South Carolina - 1663 | Founded by eight nobles with a royal charter for Charles II

Eight nobles were sent to Carolina on a royal charter from King Charles II and ended up founding what is now South Carolina. South Carolina became one of the wealthiest colonies shortly after its establishment due to its large exports of cotton and tobacco.

11. New Jersey - 1664 | Founded by Lord Berkeley and Sir George Carteret

The Duke of York was granted the lands between the Connecticut and Delaware Rivers by King Charles II. He then granted some of this land to Lord Berkley and Sir George Carteret. This territory would become New Jersey, named after the Isle of Jersey, Carteret's birthplace.

12. Pennsylvania - 1682 | Founded by William Penn

English Quaker William Penn established this colony in 1682 after being given a grant from King Charles II in 1681. Part of the original colony territory had been called New Sweden, but after Penn's arrival and establishment of counties and government, the Swedish settlers were no longer the majority.

13. Georgia - 1732 | Founded by James Edward Oglethorpe

The last of the original thirteen colonies, Georgia was established much later, in 1732. Englishman, James Oglethorpe took control of this region that had been a territory many had fought over in the past years. He named it after King George II of Britain.