

Lesson 2: Cities, Towns, and Farms

Vocabulary

self-sufficient able to take care of oneself without help

town common an open space in a colonial town where animals could graze

City Life

In 1723 the city of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was growing. Benjamin Franklin helped Philadelphia become a successful city. He started the city's first newspaper, library, and hospital. He also set up the first volunteer fire department in the 13 Colonies. Philadelphia was the largest city in the 13 Colonies by the mid-1700s. Other colonial cities were New York, Boston, and Charleston.

Colonial Towns

Small towns were set up in New England and the Middle Colonies. Many towns in New England were **self-sufficient**. This means that the towns provided most of their own food and services. Food was grown in fields surrounding the town. Families living in the town owned small plots of land. They grew crops and raised animals on this land. The towns were built around a **town common**, or open grassy area where sheep and cattle could graze. Blacksmiths, coopers, shoemakers, and other workers often had workshops around the town common. The most important building in New England towns usually was the meeting house, where town meetings were held. Many towns in the Middle Colonies were busy marketplaces. Farmers sold crops in these marketplaces. They also came to buy clothing and tools. Most New England and Middle Colony towns had workshops and mills.

Southern Plantations

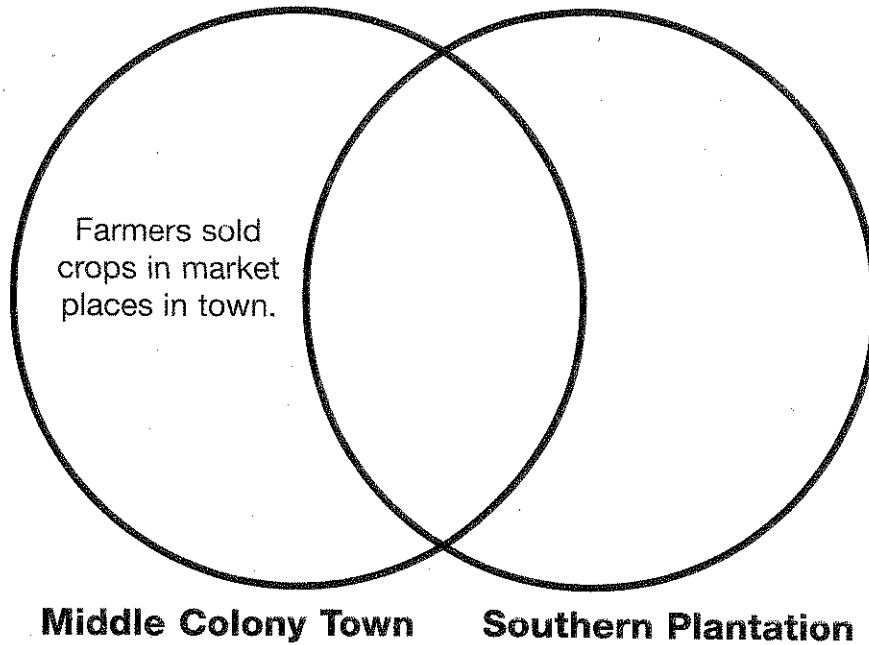
The Southern Colonies had large farms called plantations. Plantations grew cash crops such as tobacco, rice, and indigo. They were mostly self-sufficient. These farms were owned by wealthy landowners called planters. Enslaved Africans did most of the work on the plantations. People called overseers gave the slaves orders. Overseers often beat slaves if they did not follow their orders. Many slaves had to work very long hours.

Farming Families

Most colonists lived on small family farms. Farming families worked very hard. They made or grew most of what they needed.

Lesson 2: Review

1. **Compare and Contrast** Complete the diagram comparing and contrasting a Middle Colony town and a Southern plantation.



2. What are some ways that Benjamin Franklin helped improve life for people in Philadelphia?

3. **Critical Thinking: Evaluate** You know that New England towns were often built according to a careful design. Do you think this design helped the towns to become self-sufficient? Explain.

4. What types of crops were grown on plantations in the Southern Colonies?

5. Suppose you lived during colonial times. What are four different kinds of places you could live? Which would you choose?
