



Colonial American Agriculture: Early Beginnings in Virginia

Traveling To The Colonies

Colonists traveled from many European nations. Once in America, some farmers were able to own land for the very first time. The colonists also had the chance to choose the crops that they would grow on the land. They believed that by colonizing North America they would have a better chance growing warm weather crops. These warm weather crops included tobacco.

Joint stock companies bought land in the new colonies and used their ships to send people and supplies to the land. The only way that the colonists would survive on the land was if they were able to adapt to

its economic possibilities. Colonists were mainly craftsmen and tradesmen while living in Europe, but their move to the New World meant that they had to cultivate a new, agrarian lifestyle.



Tobacco

Tobacco was profitable for merchants in England, Scotland and Ireland. The colonists farmed the tobacco, which was a very labor-intensive crop. The raw material was then sold to the merchants for transportation, labor and processing. Tobacco was rarely used in its raw form and was most often used after it had been processed. Thus a colonist successfully employed sailors, processors and tradesmen through this single crop.

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"Cultivators of the earth are the most valuable citizens. They are the most vigorous, the most independent, the most virtuous, and they are tied to their country and wedded to its liberty and interests by the most lasting bonds."

- Thomas Jefferson to John Jay, August 23, 1785