

Name: _____

Colonial Perspectives: Farmers

Not all farmers in Colonial times were large land owners with slaves or indentured servants. Some people set out to farm with just their families or people they paid. These farmers were called yeoman farmers. They would often have small farms, just enough to support themselves and their families. They were very hard workers and did not own slaves but chose to farm on their own. Most farms in the Northern and colonies were owned by Yeoman while most farms in the Southern colonies were owned by large land owners. The Middle Colonies were often called the "breadbasket" because they grew so much food, like wheat. The Southern colonies became famous for growing tobacco and cotton.

A typical day for a farmer would mean getting up as soon as the sun came up and working. They would work until the sun went back down and then sleep in a modest one to two bedroom home with dirt floors. A farmer would work every day of the week, except on Sunday. Most farmers were religious people and would save Sundays for church. Women and children had to work just as hard as men. Women would often be expected to help work the crops, dry fruits and vegetables to have for the winter, sew clothing, and keep the house organized and clean. They also had to make sure the children were educated. Most children on small farms had to work and were not able to go to school, and in most places there were no schools that they could attend.

The colonies in America provided land and with land came opportunity. With hard work and determination a person could work that land and make enough money to support himself and his family. Many people in the community looked up to the farmers as hard-working, honest people. They became very respected by people and earned spots of honor in their Colonies.



Name: _____

Colonial Perspectives: Julia

The sun just came up so my husband is now awake. I got up several minutes ago and started some oatmeal for breakfast. The children will be up soon. We have so much work to do before harvest. The sun is even hotter than normal this year but we still must work all day. My children have grown up so fast. I miss the days when they could stay inside and complete their school work and then have time to play outside. There is very little time for play now that we have moved to the colonies. My husband was having difficulty finding work in England and we knew that we had to make some changes before we ran out of money. We used most of our money to buy our tickets over here. And when we got here the rest was spent on land and seed for our crops. We grow vegetables, mostly corn, and sell it in the local town to the other colonists. So in order to have crops we all have to work.

My children pitch in and help out with all the chores around the house and around the farm. I know they miss being in England too even though they don't say it. I try to make sure they still have an education. We come in to the house for lunch and I have them read and write while I prepare lunch. After we come in from the fields for the night I help them with counting and arithmetic while supper is cooking. My husband tends to the animals while I do that. We work every day, except Sunday of course. We make sure we go to church and give the children some time to rest on that day.

Most of the time I love being here. Its hard work but my family seems happy. My husband is proud of the hard work he does, and the people in town really respect him. My son wants to stay on the farm when he grows up and have his own family here. My daughter wants to be a silversmith. We've told her that is a man's job but here in America anything is possible. Maybe by the time she grows up she will be able to make her dreams come true like my husband has.

