

What was life like before the Revolution?

All thirteen American colonies ruled by England were along the Atlantic Ocean. About two and a half million people lived in the colonies.

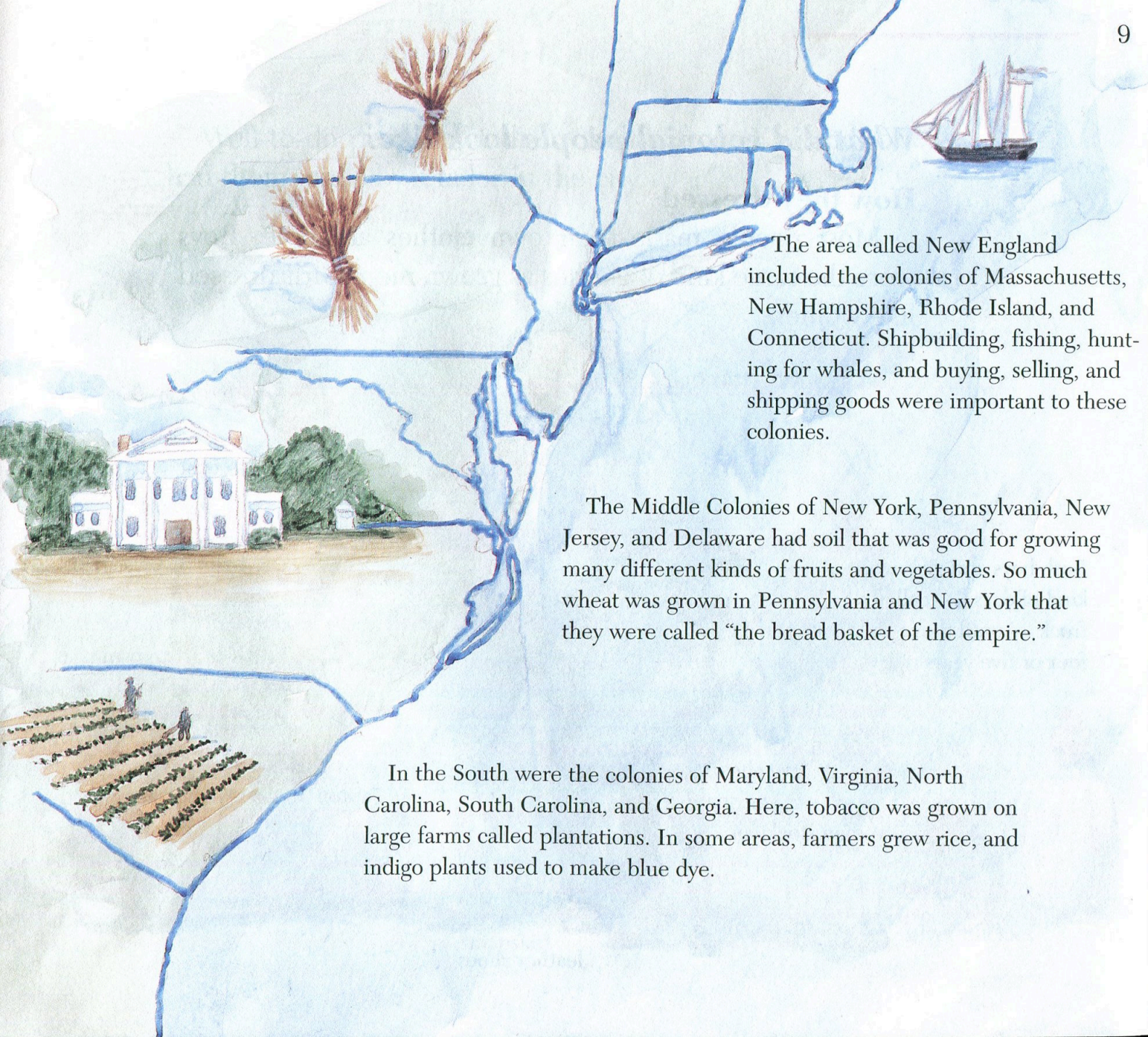


You could travel on the Boston Post Road from Boston to New York, then on to Philadelphia. These were the three largest cities in the colonies. Other roads went south from Pennsylvania to South Carolina. All the roads were narrow and rough.

It was better to travel by water if you could.

Mail went by stagecoach between New York and Philadelphia three times a week in spring and summer, and twice a week between Boston and Philadelphia. In fall and winter, service was less often.

Each colony was interested only in its local problems. The colonies did not work well together.



The area called New England included the colonies of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. Shipbuilding, fishing, hunting for whales, and buying, selling, and shipping goods were important to these colonies.

The Middle Colonies of New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware had soil that was good for growing many different kinds of fruits and vegetables. So much wheat was grown in Pennsylvania and New York that they were called “the bread basket of the empire.”

In the South were the colonies of Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. Here, tobacco was grown on large farms called plantations. In some areas, farmers grew rice, and indigo plants used to make blue dye.