



Revolutionary Times



Containing the Latest News from the Sons of the American Revolution

Formation and Naming of the North American British Colonies

The British created 13 colonies on the East Coast of the North American continent (year formed and naming).

1. Virginia (1607)
This colony was named after Queen Elizabeth I, the “virgin queen.” (West Virginia wasn’t a separate state until 1861.)
2. New Hampshire (1623)
It was named by John Mason after the county of Hampshire in England (home of Jane Austen and Charles Dickens).
3. Massachusetts (1630)
Named for an Algonquian tribe, the Massachusett, which translates to something along the lines of “people of the great hill” or “at the place of large hills,” referring to the famous Blue Hills southwest of Boston.
4. Maryland (1633)
Calvert, the second Lord Baltimore, received a charter from Charles I of England and the colony was to be named after Charles’ wife, Queen Henrietta Mary (she went by Queen Mary).
5. Connecticut (1636)
The name Connecticut is derived from the Algonquian ‘quinnehtukqut’ that means “beside the long tidal river.”
6. Rhode Island (1636)
Italian explorer Giovanni da Verrazzano in the early 16th century referred to an island that he compared to Island of Rhodes in the Mediterranean. Some suggest Dutch explorer Adrian Block named it “Roodt Eylandt” meaning “red island” in reference to the red clay that lined the shore.
7. Delaware (1638)
The bay, river, colony and now state were named in 1610 by English explorer Samuel Argall in honor of Virginia’s governor, Thomas West, Lord De La Warr.
8. North & South Carolina (1663)
9. Beginning in 1712, there were separate and distinct governments of the northeastern and southwestern sections of Carolina, and they were referred to as North & South Carolina. Each became a separate royal colony in 1729. Named for King Charles I. The Latin version of Charles is “Carolus,” from which “Carolina” is derived.
10. New York (1664)
It was originally called New Netherland when the Dutch founded it - when the British took over in 1664 it received its present name that honors King Charles II’s brother, the Duke of York and Albany. (The word York comes from the Latin word for city.)
11. New Jersey (1664)
It was named for the island of Jersey in the English Channel in honor of Sir George Carteret. (Carteret had been governor of the Isle of Jersey.)
12. Pennsylvania (1681)
In May of 1680, William Penn petitioned King Charles II for land in the New World. Penn wished to call the land “New Wales,” or simply “Sylvania,” Latin for “woods.” King Charles II insisted that “Penn” precede the word “Sylvania”, in honor of William’s late father, creating Pennsylvania or “Penn’s Woods.”
13. Georgia (1732)
Georgia is named for King George II. King George granted the charter in 1732, stipulating that the territory bear his name. (The -ia suffix means ‘state of’ and comes from the Greek language.)

This broadsheet is dedicated to the 250th Anniversary Celebration of the Declaration of Independence for more information visit the National Society Sons of the American Revolution website at: www.sar.org

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