



The Thirteen Colonies

Louis B. Wright

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If the origin of the colonial period was accidental, the ending was not. The representatives of the thirteen colonies who approved the Declaration of Independence in 1776 charted a collision course, aware of the obstacles in their path and the risks they were taking.

The events that led to their decision took place over a period of nearly 300 years. Looking back, the wonder is that it culminated so quickly. For a century after its discovery, the New World was little more than a lode to be mined by adventurers seeking profits. It wasn't until the end of the sixteenth century that serious efforts were made to establish permanent colonies. Even then, the perils of the journey and threats of starvation inhibited settlement.

But settlers gradually came, spurred, in part, by the fear of religious persecution, but above all, drawn by the hope of owning land. They were a mixed lot: English Separatists from Leiden, French Huguenots, Dutch burghers, Mennonite peasants from the Rhine Valley, and a few gentleman Anglicans. But they shared a quality of toughness.

Here is their story from award-winning historian Louis B. Wright.



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