

Name _____

Colonial America

Date _____

HELP WANTED: JOBS IN COLONIAL AMERICA

During the 1600s, a town crier's job was to stand on the street and call out the news.

This just is...

What kind of job would you have had if you were a colonist? At first, you would have probably been a farmer. Farming was the most common job in the colonies. Farmers raised cash crops such as corn, wheat, rice, and tobacco. Then they sold their crops to England and to other colonies.

As the colonies grew, fishing grew too. You could have tried your hand at fishing or whaling, especially if you lived in Massachusetts. The waters there were rich with fish and whales. That's where the colonies' most important fishing ports were.

Europe supplied a lot of wood in colonial times. Lumbering became an important industry. As you considered ways to make a living, you might have chosen to be a logger.

Or you might have become a shipbuilder. At the time, ships were made of wood. The wood in the colonies was good for building ships, and there was a shortage of good shipbuilding wood in England. So shipbuilding became an important business in the colonies.

If you weren't a farmer, a fisherman, a logger, or a shipbuilder, you might have been a cooper. In most colonies, there was an iron ore mine. The colonists sent some crude iron back to England to be finished, but they kept a lot of the iron. So you might have found yourself employed in the ironworks, turning the metal into kettles, pots, or wire. Then again, you might have been a blacksmith who hammered out nails, hinges, and tools from hot iron.



Complete each item.

1. Underline the term *cash crops* in the fourth sentence. What do you think the term means?

2. Draw a box around each colonial job mentioned in the article. Then list them. _____
3. Why did shipbuilding become an important business in the colonies? _____

4. Why were the colonies' most important ports in Massachusetts? _____

5. Underline the term *crude iron* in the fifth paragraph. What do you think the term means?

6. Which one of these colonial jobs would you have chosen? Why? _____

