

Information on the Colony of Massachusetts

Directions: Use this information as well as your textbook to create a brochure to entice people to come to your colony. The Chamber of Commerce Representative should read this handout aloud. Then, as a group, create a brochure that includes all of this information—as well as visuals, graphics, and illustrations.

Founder

A group of Separatist Protestants called the Pilgrims, looking to preserve their religious freedom, and led by William Bradford, sailed to Plymouth Bay in 1620 aboard a ship called the *Mayflower*. In 1630, they were followed by another group of Protestants, the Puritans, under the leadership of John Winthrop, who founded the Massachusetts Bay Colony in the area around Boston.

Reasons for Being Founded

These Pilgrims and Puritans came to North America to be able to practice their religion in their own way, and to create a place for others who believed as they did to live and worship with them.

People in the Colony

Native Americans greeted the first settlers and helped them survive the first winter, which was colder and harsher than the English settlers had expected. Many tribes lived throughout the New England area.

Other Puritans, who shared the beliefs of the first settlers, also came to live in the Massachusetts Colony.

Climate and Geography

Settlers found the land to be fertile and covered with rich pasture for cattle and forests for timber. The coast was sandy with cliffs and provided good ports.

Winters were bitterly cold, and many of the first settlers did not survive. Summers were warm and humid.

Economy

Colonists raised food (corn and other vegetables) for their families and for local trade, kept cattle on the pasture land, trapped fur, and forested timber for lumber. Some colonists were shopkeepers and tradesmen in the small towns, while others started a shipping industry, making use of the good natural ports along the coast.

Religion

Puritan settlers came to Massachusetts to have “purity of conscience and liberty of worship.” The laws of their colony were based on their religious beliefs. Colonists lived their entire lives around religious worship. They believed they were setting up a kingdom for their god here on earth, and only true believers were allowed to live there.

Politics and Government

Massachusetts was a theocracy. That is, it was ruled by ministers who believed they received their power from God. The only voters were white men who were in good standing with the church. They voted to elect their ministers, and these religious leaders made laws based on the church’s dogma, or religious and moral beliefs. In later years, when Puritan control was relaxed, colonists voted for colonial representatives at annual town meetings.

Information on the Colony of Virginia

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Founder

Sir Walter Raleigh, an English explorer and adventurer, came up with the idea of sending an expedition to Virginia in the late 1500's. He named the colony after his friend and benefactor, Queen Elizabeth I of England, who was called the Virgin Queen because she was not married.

The first expedition in 1584 disappeared, and it was assumed that they had been kidnapped or killed by the Native Americans living in the area. But other expeditions survived and Virginia was made a colony in 1607.

Reasons for Being Founded

Raleigh saw the colony as an investment, a way to earn money by trading the raw materials to be found there. Settlers would be sent to set up farms in Virginia, then sell what they produced and trade for what they needed through the Virginia Company of London, the company set up by the investors who would own Virginia. This way, the Virginia Company could make money by setting prices.

People in the Colony

In this, the first English colony in North America, most settlers were English. Men were given 50 acres each, plus an additional 100 acres if they bought stock in the Virginia Company. Many of these settlers brought their white indentured servants and also held black slaves.

In addition, people skilled in various trades (shoemakers, brickmakers, tailors, etc.) came to provide their talents to the settlers, and unskilled laborers came to escape unemployment in England while providing cheap labor to the plantation owners.

Climate and Geography

Virginia had mild winters and hot, humid summers. The rain and fertile soil made the colony an excellent place to farm.

The Atlantic coast region of Virginia had low, fertile lands suitable for large plantations, and quiet bays where ports could be established to handle the shipping of raw materials from the colony. In the far western reaches of the colony, wooded mountains were hard to clear for farms, and farms here were small and self-sufficient.

Economy

Virginia settlers found that tobacco grew best and brought the best price, so huge plantations were given over to the production of tobacco. These settlers introduced the slave trade in 1619 in order to provide a source of cheap labor for their plantations. This slave trade and the shipping of crops and slaves were lucrative businesses for the colonists.

Religion

The official state-established Church of England was also the official religion of the colony of Virginia. The rules of the religion often affected the laws of the colony; for example, all colonists were required to attend church twice each Sunday.

Politics and Government

Free, white, landowning men elected their representatives to the House of Burgesses, which had 22 members. The Virginia Company appointed six members to the Governor's Council. Over both of these legislative bodies was the Governor, appointed in England and sent to represent the King or Queen.

Virginia colonists had a reputation for self-government and did not need to pay taxes, since the Governor and other appointed leaders were fully supported by the large amounts of public lands set aside for them.

Information on the Colony of Pennsylvania

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Founder

Many European countries had claims on the land called Pennsylvania. Samuel de Champlain, a French explorer, had been in the area in 1608. Sweden and the Netherlands also made claims on the colony. But England won the dispute, saying the land had been claimed for them by John Cabot in 1497.

In 1681 the English king gave the land grant of Pennsylvania to William Penn, to whom he owed \$100,000. He did not have the money to pay the debt, so he gave him the land. Penn was a Quaker and had been imprisoned for his different religious beliefs. The king probably thought that this would be a good way to get Penn out of England.

Reasons for Being Founded

William Penn was glad to receive the land grant. He wanted to set up a colony where all people would be allowed to worship in any way they chose. He made Pennsylvania a haven for people suffering from religious persecution.

People in the Colony

English Quakers followed Penn to the colony. Other Protestants being persecuted by Catholics in Europe soon followed: Lutherans, Mennonites, Amish, and Moravians from Germany; Presbyterians from Scotland and Ireland; Huguenots from France; and Jews from all over Europe.

Even though the Quaker religion looked down on the ownership of slaves, many of the colonists did own slaves, including William Penn himself. Slaves made up about 20 percent of the population.

Climate and Geography

The colony was covered with rolling hills, trees, and fertile soil. The weather was hot and humid in the summer and cold, with snow, in the winter.

Economy

Most colonists were farmers who raised vegetables, corn, and wheat and grazed dairy cattle. There were also some merchants and tradesmen (cobblers, silversmiths, blacksmiths, etc.) in the towns. Some colonists were in the lumber business, clearing trees for farmland and selling the timber for shipbuilding and export to England.

Religion

Pennsylvania had a strong tradition of religious tolerance and welcomed settlers seeking religious freedom. Penn even named the capital, Philadelphia, the “City of Brotherly Love.”

Politics and Government

Pennsylvania also offered political freedom and self-government. Free men in the colony elected 200 representatives to the Pennsylvania General Assembly each year. These men voted on laws that were proposed by the Provincial Council, 72 men also elected annually. A Governor oversaw the legislature.