

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 Rhode Island

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Founder

Though first seen and explored by Italian and Dutch explorers, Rhode Island was finally established as a colony in 1636 by Roger Williams, a preacher from the colony of Massachusetts.

Reasons for Being Founded

Roger Williams had come into conflict with the leaders of Massachusetts, who were Puritans. He preached that all people should be able to worship their god in any way they wanted. The government of Massachusetts put him on trial several times for his “dangerous opinions.” They allowed him to remain in Massachusetts as long as he kept his mouth shut. But Williams did not, so they ordered him to be put on a ship and returned to England.

Instead, Williams and his family left the Massachusetts colony and moved to a place near a Native American village on Narragansett Bay, a place he called “Providence,” meaning “direction of God.” He was soon followed by others who wanted to escape religious persecution and to find what Williams called a “haven for justice.”

People in the Colony

Rhode Island was home to many Native Americans when Roger Williams arrived and, at first, the white European colonists got along with the Native Americans.

The Williams family was followed by others looking for a place where they could worship as they chose, many from the nearby Massachusetts colony.

A few aristocratic families who settled in Rhode Island owned large farms that were like southern plantations, and these people owned African slaves to do the work on the farms.

Climate and Geography

Early explorers noticed the area's red clay soil, and some historians think the name of the colony came from the Dutch name for the area, "Roodt Eyelandt," which means "Red Island." Most early colonists made their living by cattle and dairy farming, since this red clay soil and hilly, forested land was usually too poor for large-scale agriculture.

Large quiet bays made Rhode Island an ideal shipping port. Later settlers turned to the sea to earn a living, as shipbuilders, sailors, traders, and fishermen.

The winters were colder and harsher than the English were used to, and the summers were more humid.

Economy

Landowners of large farms were cattle and dairy farmers. Most other colonists lived on farms that produced just enough for their families with a little left over to trade. Common crops were corn, beans, squash, and tobacco.

Any business related to shipping was big business for Rhode Island. Shipbuilders constructed large ships built to cross the Atlantic with goods needed by England (such as rum, sugar, wool, and beef) and return with manufactured goods needed by the colonists. The colony was also a haven for pirates and privateers. Though there were few slave owners in Rhode Island, the colony was one of the world's slave trading centers, earning slave traders large fortunes.

Religion

Rhode Island was founded as a place for religious freedom and was populated by Quakers, Baptists, Anglicans, Puritans, and Congregationalists.

Politics and Government

Rhode Island was ruled by a Governor, a Deputy Governor, ten assistants to the Governor, and a General Assembly that was elected by colonists in each of the towns. This Assembly had the power to make laws, create a local militia to defend the colonists in wars with Native Americans, and monitor trade.

Information on the Colony of Connecticut

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Founder

The area later called Connecticut was claimed by Dutch explorer Adrian Block in 1614 and by an Englishman from Massachusetts, John Oldham, in 1633. England “won” the argument, which cleared the way for settlement by English colonists escaping religious persecution in Massachusetts. Thomas Hooker, a Puritan minister, led his congregation to Connecticut in June of 1636, and is generally considered the founder.

Reasons for Being Founded

Thomas Hooker had come to Massachusetts, a colony built on Puritan principles, because he was not allowed to practice his Puritan faith in his native England. But he was disturbed by the lack of democracy in Massachusetts, and left the colony for Connecticut to find even greater religious freedom.

People in the Colony

Native Americans lived near the Quinnequktuq (“beside the long tidal river”) River when some white Europeans came to North America. In 1631 some Native Americans invited the Massachusetts Colony’s governor to settle in their area. In exchange, they asked for English protection in their fights with other Native American tribes. Instead, they were often at war with the colonists and forced into slavery.

Dutch and Swedish settlers also lived in Connecticut, as their governments also had claims on the area. African slaves and indentured servants were brought into the colony by their white “owners.”

Climate and Geography

The winters in Connecticut were much colder than English winters, and summers were mild.

The terrain was hilly and covered with forests. The soil was suitable for farming, though most farms were small. Colonists along the coast used the sea to make a living, through fishing, whaling, and trading.

Economy

Colonists grew the food they needed for their families plus a little more to trade. Common crops were corn, pumpkins, beans, squash, and apples. Cattle were raised for beef and milk. Colonists hunted for game, did their own weaving and built their own homes with logs from the forests around them.

Shipbuilding, fishing, and whaling along the coast were other ways to make a living in Connecticut.

Religion

Since most colonists came to Connecticut from Puritan communities, they followed the Puritan religion. But these colonists made sure to separate their religious codes from their colonial laws more completely than colonists in Massachusetts.

Politics and Government

Connecticut's colonists had the world's first written constitution, called the Fundamental Orders. It called for a government "based on the consent of the governed," which was a radical idea for the time. One representative from each town, six magistrates, and one Governor were all elected by the free white men of the colony.

Information on the Colony of New York

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Founder

A French explorer and mapper, Samuel de Champlain, described his explorations through New York in 1608. A year later Henry Hudson, an Englishman working for the Dutch, claimed the area in the name of the Netherlands. It was to be called New Netherlands.

Reasons for Being Founded

The Dutch granted the charter for the colony to the Dutch East India Company, which set up trading posts and exploited the area's rich natural resources. In 1664 the colony was surrendered to the British and its name was changed to New York. The Netherlands and England had been at war in Europe, and European wars often spread to the "New World" in this manner.

People in the Colony

The first white settlers represented the Dutch West India Company. Dutch patrons (called "Patroons") also set up "patroonships," in which 50 people could receive a large grant of land if they promised to farm it and share the profits with the patron. Some English Puritans, who had fled to Holland to escape religious persecution in their homeland, received permission to move to the colony to find religious and political freedom.

Other settlers came as indentured servants. About one out of five people in the colony were African slaves, who were allowed to buy their freedom if they could ever come up with the money. There were also many Native American tribes in the area who were driven further north by the arrival of the Europeans.

Climate and Geography

New York had hot, humid summers and bitterly cold, windy winters with much snow.

The terrain was swampy near the coast and the Hudson River. Further north were mountains covered with forests. The ground was rocky, but the soil was good for farming once it was cleared of rocks and trees.

Economy

Colonists made their living in a variety of ways: fur trapping, lumber trading, shipping, the slave trade, and as merchants and tradesmen in the colony's towns.

Most colonists were farmers, who cleared large acres of land by hand to grow crops. Corn was the most popular, since it could be eaten by people and animals. Also grown were flax (to make fabric), wheat, vegetables, and tobacco. Some colonists mined for iron to send to England for manufacturing into finished goods.

Religion

New York was situated between the Puritan colonies of New England and the Catholic Colony of Maryland, so the settlers were of many faiths. They had considerable religious freedom.

Politics and Government

The colony was run by a Governor appointed by the King of England. He made all the laws, and there was little self-government. Sometimes, the colonists were able to gain more freedom (the right to elect the mayor of New York City, the chance to set up an Assembly), but these freedoms did not last long.

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.

Information on the Colony of Maryland

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Founder

Captain John Smith claimed the area around the Chesapeake Bay for England in 1608. King Charles I of England gave the land to his friend, Lord George Calvert, who acted as Lord Proprietor. Calvert was required to pay two Native American arrows a year and half of any gold or silver discovered there. Little gold or silver was ever discovered, so Calvert was free to run the colony as he wished at a small price.

Reasons for Being Founded

A Lord Proprietor often ran the colony from England as a business, but Lord Calvert had other ideas in mind. He had recently been converted to Catholicism and wanted a haven from religious persecution. He thought Maryland would be a “Land of Sanctuary” for those people seeking religious or political freedom.

People in the Colony

Most settlers were Catholics, but many persecuted Protestants from England also came to live in Maryland: Quakers, Baptists, Puritans, and Wesleyans

Each male settler was granted 100 acres; in addition, he received an extra 100 acres for his wife and any children over the age of 16. Each child under 16 earned the father an extra 50 acres. Indentured servants were given 50 acres once they earned their freedom.

Many Native Americans lived in the area and Maryland law forbade forcing them into slavery. Some African slaves were in the colony, but not large numbers.

Climate and Geography

Maryland was on both sides of Chesapeake Bay, the largest bay in the United States. The surrounding land was low and fertile, since it was covered with silt from the bay.

The winters in Maryland could be cold, with lots of rain and some snow. Summers were hot and humid.

Economy

Colonists supported themselves on farms where they raised flax (to make cloth), grains such as corn and wheat, vegetables, tobacco, and fruit trees. They were also involved in the lumber business, shipping, fishing, and raising cattle for beef and milk. Some colonists mined for iron that could be exported to England and manufactured into finished goods.

Religion

Most colonists were Catholic, but Maryland granted religious freedom to all its inhabitants. There were many settlers from many religions.

Politics and Government

Maryland was mostly independent of England, and colonists were allowed to govern themselves. The original charter from Charles I granted Lord Calvert, the Lord Proprietor, more power than most colonial leaders. Free men elected representatives to govern the colony and owed their loyalty to Calvert, not to the King. Calvert had the power to print money, create an army, and declare war.

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 South Carolina

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Founders

Eight Lords Proprietors (friends of King Charles II who had helped him become king after his father had lost his position during the English Civil War) founded South Carolina in 1690. They were: Earl of Clarendon, Duke of Albemarle, William Lord Craven John, Baron Berkeley of Stratton, Sir George Carteret, Sir John Colleton, Sir William Berkeley, and Anthony Ashley Cooper.

Reasons for Being Founded

The eight Lords Proprietors were given this grant of land (called Carolina) by King Charles as a gift to thank them for their support. The Lords Proprietors considered it an investment, a way to earn money. Settlers would pay their own way over to the colony, then sell what they produced and trade for what they needed ONLY through businesses owned by the Lords. As middlemen, the Lords could make money.

People in the Colony

When the first white settlers arrived from England, they found about 30 tribes of Native Americans already living in the area. Until the African slave trade became more common, Native Americans were often forced into slavery.

Settlers were usually white Europeans who were fleeing religious persecution in their homelands: French Huguenots (Protestants), Quakers from England, and Jews from all over Europe. These settlers often brought along their indentured servants (usually white Europeans) and African slaves. The Lords promised 150 acres of land to every freeman who came to South Carolina, plus 150 acres for every indentured servant he brought along. Bringing a woman or boy gave the freeman 100 more acres.

Climate and Geography

The winters were shorter and milder than the harsh English winters. Summers were long, humid, and hot, with a long growing season for crops.

Off the coast were many picturesque sea islands that were often too isolated to be settled. The coastal plains were low and swampy, and settlers often became sick from malaria caught from the mosquitoes that bred there. Native Americans taught the settlers about roots that could be made into a tea that the Europeans called “sassafras.” This tea relieved many of the

symptoms of malaria. But this area was good for growing rice, and many settlers started large rice plantations along the coast. Inland, the soil was a red clay. There farmers planted cotton. The far western part of the colony was covered with wooded mountains. The weather was cooler and the land more rugged. Some settlers started smaller, self-sufficient farms instead of large plantations.

Economy

Most settlers were farmers, growing cotton, tobacco, indigo, and rice. These cash crops were usually grown on large plantations, using slave labor. The slave trade and the shipping of crops and slaves were also lucrative businesses during this time.

Farmers on small farms grew the food they needed plus a little extra to trade for other goods. They also hunted for deer and cut down lumber for building.

Native Americans lived by hunting and gathering. They bartered with the food and animal skins they acquired.

Some craftsmen came to the colony to set up businesses. South Carolina was known for its silversmiths and furniture makers.

Religion

South Carolina was unique for its religious liberty. John Locke, a famous political philosopher of the time, wrote the charter for the colony, which said that "seven or more persons agreeing to any religion shall constitute a church" and that "no person shall use any . . . abusive language against the religion of any church. . . . No person shall disturb . . . or persecute another for his . . . religion or way of worship." Compared to the religious persecution many settlers had experienced in their homelands, this was great freedom.

Politics and Government

The colony was ruled by a system of laws written by John Locke at the request of the Lords Proprietors. It was called the Fundamental Constitution of Carolina. Real governing power was retained by the government in England, so South Carolina was really a province, not a colony. Over time, the colonists were able to secure some local control over their government: they elected five representatives to serve with five agents representing the Lords on a Council. This council was ruled by a Parliament and the Lords Proprietors.

Information on the Colony of Georgia

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Founder

George II founded Georgia in his own name in 1732, later granting the business rights of running the colony to eight Lords Proprietors and even later to 21 Trustees. They gave the job of setting up the colony to James Edward Ogelthorpe, an idealistic political activist of his time, who was famous for having headed up a committee on prison reform.

Reasons for Being Founded

Many European nations had competing claims for land in North America; both England and Spain claimed the land that became Georgia. George II saw settling the colony as a way to wrest the colony away from Spain (which did not yet have widespread permanent settlements in the area).

James Ogelthorpe, however, had a vision of making Georgia a place of refuge for the poor debtors he had seen during his committee work on English prisons. If a man owed money and could not pay it back, he was thrown into prison, which was a horrible place. While he was imprisoned, he could not earn money to pay back his debts and gain his freedom. Ogelthorpe imagined sending the “industrious yet unfortunate poor” to Georgia, where they could work to settle the wilderness and earn money for the Trustees in order to pay back their debts.

People in the Colony

When the first white settlers arrived, they found Native Americans already living in the area. Until the African slave trade became more common, Native Americans were often forced into slavery.

Settlers were debtors from English prisons and white Europeans from many countries (France, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Germany, the Netherlands, and what is now Switzerland and Austria) who were seeking religious freedom and cheap land. Some settlers were missionaries who tried to convert the Native Americans to Christianity. Some settlers brought their white indentured servants, and by 1751 African slaves were imported to provide cheap labor.

Climate and Geography

The winters were shorter and milder than the harsh English winters and the summers were long, hot, and humid. The settlers were bothered by the violent thunderstorms that blew in from the Atlantic Ocean, the variable daily temperatures and the gnats, fleas, and lice that plagued them in the summer.

Along the coast were fertile swamps where plantations grew rice and indigo, a plant used to make blue dye. Inland, cotton and tobacco were grown on the fertile, red-clay plains. The far western part of the colony, called the “backcountry,” was mountainous and forested. The weather was cooler and the land more rugged. Here farmers started self-sufficient farms instead of large plantations.

Economy

In Georgia, most settlers were farmers, growing cotton, indigo, tobacco, and rice. These cash crops were usually grown on large plantations using slave labor. Though slave labor had originally been outlawed in the colony, it was later introduced in order to make Georgian farm products more competitive in price with the farm products of other, slave-owning, colonies.

Other settlers made their living by farming their own small farms, trading with Native Americans, or working in various trades—as shoemakers, brickmakers, tailors, blacksmiths, silversmiths, and pottery makers.

Religion

In addition to providing a place for debtors from English prisons, Ogelthorpe envisioned Georgia as a place where “foreigners persecuted for conscience’s sake” could find a safe place to live. Many settlers came to Georgia to escape religious persecution, so the colony had a tradition of religious freedom.

Politics and Government

Georgian landowners (free, white men) elected representatives from among themselves to the Common House of Assembly. These lawmakers were watched over by the Upper House of General Assembly, whose members were appointed by the Trustees. Above the two legislative bodies was a Governor, appointed by the Trustees and the King in England. The Governor had the final word, since he represented the colony’s “owners” who looked upon Georgia as a business investment.