

COLONIES BY ENGLISH

● The Chesapeake Colonies: Foundation of Virginia

In the early 1600s, many people from England moved to America. This was because there wasn't enough land in England, many people didn't have jobs, and they were unhappy with the government and religion. By 1642, around 65,000 English people had moved, with about half settling in mainland America and the rest going to the West Indies.

The first group to arrive in Virginia came in 1607. They were 104 people who started a settlement called Jamestown. The original project, started by Sir Walter Raleigh, was now managed by a business company that had permission from King James I. The

company's investors, including merchants and noblemen, expected to make money from Virginia by growing crops suited for warm weather. Most of the settlers were sent at the company's expense to work as servants under company officials.

However, Jamestown struggled in its early years. The colonists suffered from hunger, disease, and death. Most of them did not have the skills or motivation to survive in the wild. Since they were just employees of a company, they had no real reason to work hard. The place they chose for their settlement was unhealthy, and the local Native Americans became hostile. As a result, two-thirds of the first settlers died within months, and many later settlers also died at a high rate. The early years of the colony were difficult. The crops that the organizers had hoped would make money

failed, and the colony made almost no profit. Many merchants in London lost confidence in Virginia's success and focused on other colonies like Bermuda and the West Indies.

The colony survived only because of strict rules set by company officials. The colonists were forced to work in the fields and attend prayers every day. Eventually, the colony found a way to make money—tobacco farming. Tobacco had been introduced to England in the 1560s and was becoming popular. One of the colonists, John Rolfe (who later married the Native American princess Pocahontas), started experimenting with tobacco in 1613. A few years later, he found a way to process it so that English smokers liked it. By 1618, Virginia exported 50,000 pounds of tobacco, and

by 1627, exports had grown to 500,000 pounds.

By 1618, new leadership took over the Virginia Company, led by Sir Edwin Sandys. He started a new plan to improve the colony. Two major changes were introduced:

1. Colonists were given land and a voice in the government. Those already in Virginia received 100 acres, while new settlers who paid their own way got 50 acres (called a "head-right") plus an extra 50 acres for each servant they brought.

2. The first representative government in America was created. This was called the Virginia House of Burgesses, and its first meeting was held on July 30, 1618.

The Sandys group sent about 5,000 settlers (mostly servants) to Virginia before 1623. They also spent a lot of money trying to make the economy more diverse instead of relying only on tobacco. However, these efforts didn't get much support. The colony struggled because it was hard to find enough food and shelter for the new arrivals, and it was difficult to make a steady profit. In 1644, an attack during a war with Native Americans led to the deaths of 350 people, and all settlements outside of Jamestown were destroyed. At the same time, some members of the Virginia Company accused its leaders of wasting money and mismanaging the colony. In response, King Charles I took direct control in 1644,

canceled the company's charter and making Virginia a royal colony. Since the new government allowed landowners to keep their property and did not interfere with the House of Burgesses, most Virginians were satisfied with the change. From that point until the American Revolution, Virginia was ruled by a royal governor, usually an English nobleman. The Anglican Church was already established, and taxes were collected to support its clergy.

During its first 18 years, the Virginia Company had spent a huge sum of 100,000 pounds on the colony but made little to no profit. It had sent around 7,000 settlers, but by the time of royal control, only 1,400 were still alive. However, Virginia became more stable and continued growing without needing more

money from England. By 1640, the population had reached 8,000, and by 1700, it had grown to 74,000.

● Maryland's Establishment and Early History:

The early struggles of Jamestown served as a lesson on what not to do when starting a colony. Later leaders realized that to attract good settlers, they needed to offer them land and a say in the government. These ideas were later applied when Maryland was founded. Unlike Virginia, Maryland was not established by a commercial company but by an individual proprietor.

In 1634, Cecilius Calvert, also known as Lord Baltimore, received control of land in northern Virginia from King Charles I. He

also gained the right to govern it and enjoy feudal privileges. Being a Catholic convert, Baltimore wanted Maryland to be a safe place for English Catholics. However, since few Catholics wanted to move, he allowed Protestants as well and supported religious tolerance. From the start, Maryland had a majority Protestant population, but to protect the Catholic minority, Lord Baltimore ensured that religious freedom was made official by law in 1649.

Growth and Development of Maryland

The first settlers arrived in 1634, receiving land grants (though Baltimore charged them more than Virginia did). In 1635, Maryland formed its first legislative assembly. The colony focused on tobacco farming, which helped it thrive quickly

without suffering severe food shortages. By 1689, its population had grown to 45,000.

Political Conflicts in Maryland

Maryland's political history was turbulent, mainly because people resented the power of Baltimore and his family. They continued to collect taxes (quitrents) and gave government positions to their relatives. The colony also faced problems when Puritans arrived, as many saw Catholics as anti-Christian, leading to tensions. Many people opposed religious tolerance and revolted against Maryland's proprietary government. In **1691**, the colony was placed under **direct control of the English Crown**, and the **Anglican Church** became the official religion. However, in **1715**, Lord Baltimore regained

his **hereditary rights**, which remained in place until the **American Revolution**.

● The Foundation of Massachusetts

Massachusetts Bay was established by Puritans who did not separate from the Church of England but wanted to reform it from within. During the 1620s and 1680s, it seemed unlikely that Puritans would gain power in England. The Stuart monarchy made it difficult for them to spread their beliefs, and they were restricted from preaching freely or holding government positions. To create a society based on their religious ideals, a group of Puritan ministers, merchants, and landowners decided to establish a colony. Their leader, John Winthrop, was a wealthy landowner known for his intelligence, strong moral character, and generosity despite his strict

beliefs. In 1628, they secured land, and in 1629, the Massachusetts Bay Company received a royal charter. It remains unclear how they managed to get approval despite their opposition to the king. To attract settlers, the colony's founders promoted New England as an ideal place to live, highlighting the availability of free land but omitting details about harsh winters and poor soil. However, they made it clear that only those willing to accept Puritan beliefs and strict moral discipline would be welcome. While many people migrated to New England for economic reasons, they chose it over Virginia or the West Indies primarily for religious freedom.

The settlers of the New England colonies were mainly middle-class farmers and craftsmen who brought their families with them, with only a small number being servants.

The first wave of Puritan migrants, led by John Endicott, arrived in Salem in 1628. Two years later, a fleet of eighteen ships carrying about 900 passengers, including John Winthrop and other leaders, reached the colony. Boston was chosen as the main settlement, and immigration continued until 1640, increasing the population to about 18,000 or 20,000. Settlers faced significant challenges, such as food shortages and a high death rate, but within a few years, they adapted by farming and fishing, allowing them to enjoy a higher standard of living than they had in England.

Massachusetts was different from other colonies because its leaders moved there themselves, bringing their charter with them. Stockholders of the Massachusetts

Bay Company who remained in England sold their rights to those who migrated, effectively transferring the colony's legal control from London to Boston. As a result, Massachusetts operated with considerable independence from English authority. Although structured as a business venture, its leaders prioritized religious and political control rather than democracy. Winthrop and his associates led the migration to maintain power in their own hands. They valued religious freedom, but only for themselves, not for non-Puritans.

From the beginning, many colonists objected to the authoritarian leadership. Over time, a series of changes made the Massachusetts Bay Company's charter evolve into a governing constitution. Initially, only stockholders, or "freemen,"

had political power, electing a governor and a board of assistants. In 1630, some settlers were made freemen, but they were only allowed to fill vacancies among the assistants. In 1634, freemen demanded access to the full charter, which Winthrop had kept hidden, and discovered they had the right to make laws. This led to the formation of the General Court, where elected deputies represented the freemen. In 1644, the legislature was divided into two houses, and officials, including the governor, were elected annually.

Despite these changes, the colony maintained its Puritan character by limiting political rights to church members. Only individuals of good character and sound doctrine, as confirmed by ministers, were allowed to join the church. Under this system, about one-fifth of adult men in

Massachusetts gained voting rights.