

New England Colonies

Colonial America Articles

Article 4

1630-1638

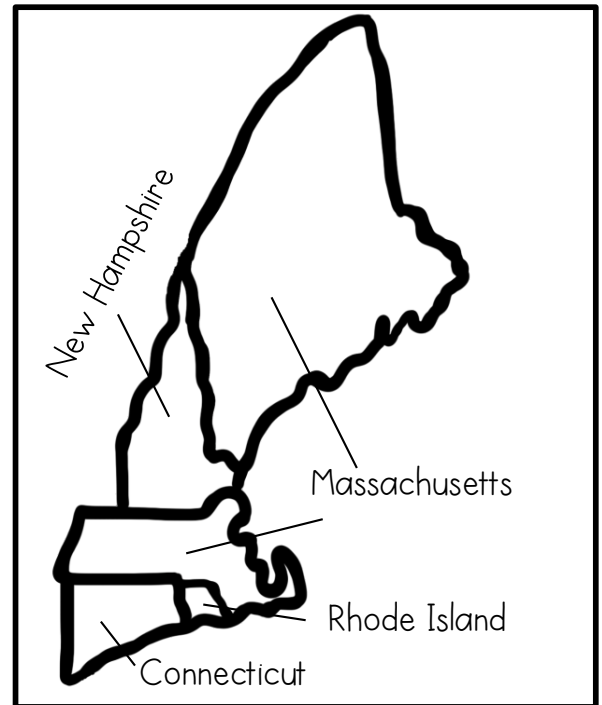
The New England colonies were made up of the colonies of Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island.

Geography and Climate

The New England colonies were flat along the rocky coastline, which made good harbors. It became hilly and mountainous further inland. The land was covered in dense forests. The soil was rocky, which made farming difficult. The New England colonies had very harsh winters and mild summers. This made the growing season only about five months long.

Economy

Because the soil was rocky and the climate was often harsh, colonists in New England only farmed enough to feed their families. Some of these crops included corn, beans, and squash. The New England colonies, however, were full of forests, giving the colonists the important natural resource of trees. These trees provided wood that colonists were able to use to build homes, buildings, and ships. **Lumber** became very important to the shipbuilding industry because they built ships for the colonies. Ships and lumber were also exported to England. Also, because the New England colonies were along the coast, many colonists fished. The fishing industry included whaling and cod, among other types of fish. Whale oil was an important resource that was used as fuel for lamps and could also be sold. Because the New England colonies focused on the shipbuilding and fishing industries, they imported **agricultural products** (farm products) from other colonies and England.



Life of a New England Colonist

The Puritans wanted religious freedom. They wanted to purify the Church of England. They came to the New World in search of a place that they could practice their religion without being **persecuted** (treated badly). This led them to leave England and create the New England colonies with a strong tie between the church, the government, and every day life. The Puritans had strict religious beliefs. Their lives revolved around work and prayer. The Puritans worked very hard and were very serious. They did not have parties, play music, or celebrate holidays. They believed in living plainly- plain and simple clothes and homes. They went to church often and created their villages around the Meeting House where they held church, meetings, and school. Free white men who owned property were allowed to vote. It was important for children to learn to read so they could read the Bible. The Puritans believed in education and founded Harvard in 1636. Even women learned to read and played an important role in the Puritan household.