



A general map of the middle British colonies in America, containing Virginia, Maryland, the Delaware counties, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. With the addition of New York, and the greatest part of New England. Map from: Library of Congress.

The English settled several colonies in North America. Those colonies are divided into three different groups. They are the New England colonies, the Middle colonies and the Southern colonies. There were four New England colonies. Those are Massachusetts Bay, New Hampshire, Connecticut and Rhode Island. The New England colonies had a lot in common.

## **Physical Characteristics Of New England**

The land in New England had been covered in ice during the last Ice Age. It left boulders everywhere. The rocky soil was bad for farming. However, there were many forests. Colonists could cut lumber. Also, the sea was full of fish.

## **The People Of New England**

Most New England settlers were from England. Many of them were escaping mistreatment. They were treated unfairly because of their religion.

The New England colonists settled in small towns. They farmed the land around the town.

Native Americans were also living in New England. A group called the Pequot lived in Connecticut. The English started a war with the Pequot. Many Pequot were killed or sold into slavery.

## **Major Occupations In New England**

**Agriculture:** It was hard to grow crops in New England. Farmers had to be creative.

**Fishing:** Fishing was a huge business by 1700. The colonists caught fish and shellfish. They also hunted for whales.

Trade: New England colonists traded with England and other colonies.

## **New England Religion**

Calvinism and the Social Contract Theory: Many New England settlers followed the Calvinist religion. The Calvinists agreed with the idea of the social contract. The idea says that the government is an agreement. It is like a contract between people to gather as a society.

Predestination: Calvinism believes that God has already decided everything.

Congregationalism: In this type of religion, church members govern the church. They choose their own leaders.

Intolerance: The settlers left England to freely practice their religion. However, they did not support freedom of religion for others. The Massachusetts Bay colony had rules about religion. People who did not follow their religion could not vote. They could be kicked out of the church or the colony.

## **The Spread Of The New England Population**

The first small towns lasted a few years. However, townspeople soon needed more land to farm. Some broke away and created many new small towns. In the 1790s, cities started to grow.

In summary, New England was created by people who had very similar backgrounds. The area did not have good farmland. The settlers turned to trade and fishing. People in towns worked small pieces of land.

Slavery was not needed for trade in New England. In the Southern colonies, there was more farming than trade. Farms depended on stolen labor. This difference was important when the colonies became the United States. Americans started talking about states' rights and slavery.