

The New England Colonies

New England started as one large colony settled by two different religious groups. In 1620, the Pilgrims came from Great Britain on the *Mayflower* and started a colony in Plymouth Bay. The Puritans arrived in 1629 and started the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

The Pilgrims had a charter promising them land in Virginia, but on the trip across, their ship blew off course. Unfortunately, they were unprepared for life in the North. They arrived just before winter, and there was not enough food. Half of the colonists died that first winter.



The Puritans received a charter for land north of Plymouth. Unlike the Pilgrims, the Puritans arrived with food. They were prepared and did well their first winter.

The Puritans wanted to simplify the Church of England. They did not believe that religion should have fancy ceremonies. Puritans thought that all church members should be equal. The Puritans set up their own church in the new colony and made strict rules that everyone in Massachusetts had to follow, even if they were not Puritans.

Over time, people left Massachusetts to start other colonies. In 1636, small groups of people moved to the Connecticut River Valley. Roger Williams, a Puritan minister, founded the colony of Rhode Island. By 1679, the colonists in New Hampshire had broken away from Massachusetts to form a new colony.

Making a Living

The northerners quickly learned that their new home was not very good for farming because the soil was rocky, and the winters were cold and long. The colonists could only grow enough food to feed their own families. The people living in New England had to find other ways to earn money.

In the early years, most colonists lived in towns along the ocean, and the men became shipbuilders, traders, and fishermen. The inland forests provided both wood for building ships and a variety of fur-bearing animals, which helped fur traders grow rich. Fishermen in the port towns provided food for the colonists of the region.



Comprehension Question

In what ways was life in the North difficult?
How did the northerners cope?