Essay On The American Colonies Essay, Research Paper

Essay on Colonies

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The New England and Southern Colonies were both settled largely by the

English. By 1700, the regions had evolved into two distinct societies.

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The southern colonies have characteristics that are the antithesis of

the New England colonies attributes. New England was colonized for Freedom

of Worship and freedom of political thought. The Southern colonies were

developed for freedom of economic opportunity. The New England colonies had

aspirations for a distinct society, where they could show their homeland,

how a country should be run. The southern colonies had goals for

mercantilism, and increasing the prosperity of England. The New England

colonies were based on theocracy, where the state forced the people to live

and worship in an orthodox way. The southern colonies(Virginia) had a

government based on a royal government, where the state was governed by a

governor and council named by the king, and an elected assembly chosen by

the people. Finally, the New England colonies wanted to establish the

colony for religious motives, while the southern colonies were established

for economic motives.

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England and the rebels of England (Pilgrims), made up the New England

and southern colonies. “God Almighty in his most holy and wise providence

hath so disposed of the condition of mankind, in all times some must be

rich, some poor, some high and eminent in power and dignity, other mean and

in subjection. Yet we must be knit together in this work as one man.”(John

Winthrop, A Model of Christian Charity) This statement by John Winthrop,

demonstrates importance of religion in the lives of the New England

settlers. “We must delight in each other, make others’ conditions our own,

rejoice together, mourn together, labor and suffer together, always having

before our eyes our commission and community in the work, our community as

members of the same body.” (John Winthrop, A Model of Christian Charity).

The use of the word “together” and “community” indicates that the New

England settlers were of a communal nature, they were less individualistic

than the southern colonies. The New England colonies were based on

religious freedom, thus their society was reflected the religion.

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“These underwritten names are to be transported to Virginia, embarked in

the Merchant’s Hope, Hugh Weston, Master, per examination by the minister

of Gravesend touching upon their conformity to the Church discipline of

England, and have taken oaths of allegiance and supremacy:” (Ship’s List of

Emigrants Bound for Virginia). The use of the word “Master”, shows, that

the southern colonies were more of a individualistic state rather than a

communal state(New England). This individualism was the effect of the

motivation of the southern colonies for economic opportunity.

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“We whose names are underwritten, being by God’s providnce engaged together

to make a plantation….” (Articles of Agreement). The New England

settlers, again were of a communal nature, in how they are binding together

for the good of the community. “We intend by God’s grace, as soon as we can

with all convenient speed, to procure some Godly and faithful minster with

whom we purpose to join in church covenant to walk in the ways of

Christ.”(Articles of Agreement). The statement above, shows how the

minister, was the head of the theocracy, of the small communities.

Furthermore, the “Articles of Agreement”, demonstates the importance of

sharing within the community. This article, was another product of the

motivation of the New England settlers for religious freedom.

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“This court… in the interim recommends [that] all tradesmen and laborers

consider the religious end of their callings…”. The puritans believed

everyone had a specific duty in life, something that one was proficient at.

Almost all the mores and society itself radiated from religion, as a

result, many people who couldn’t endure the rigidity of such a society were

exiled and the dissenters created new societies.

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“The worst[among us were the gold seekers who]with their golden promises

made all men their slaves in hope of recompenses. There was no talk… but

dig gold, wash gold, refine gold, load gold..” (Captain John Smith, History

of Virginia). The southern colonists were a people who settled in the

southern colonies for econmic motives. The people were more materialistic,

and individualistic, thus greed prevailed. Conversely, the New England

settlers were of a spiritual nature, and were dispassionate in

materialistic matters. The drive of the southern colonists were toward

economic prosperity.

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“For by our nearest computation we leave at our backs as many

servants(besides Negroes) as there are friedman to defend the shores and

all our frontiers [against] the Indians….[This] gives men fearful

apprehensions of the danger they leave their estates and families in, while

they are drawn from their houses to defend the borders.”(Governor Berkeley

and His Council on Their Inability to defend Virginia Against a Dutch

Attack). The southern colonists were protective of their land, and were

seeking more and more land. The colonists’ idea was for more economic

prosperity coming from more and more land. The southern colonists were

motivated for economic prosperity.

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“Let us observe the sudden rise of their estates…[compared] with the

quality in which they first entered this country.” (Bacons “Manifesto”).

This statement shows how the southern colonists had progressed by arriving

to America because of their economic motivation. The advancement is a

result of economic drive toward prosperity.

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The colonies were settled chiefly by the same race of people. The

distinct quality that seperated the southern colonists from the New England

colonists is that the motivation of the two were distinct, and as a result

two colonies diverged in their goals. The southern colonists were aiming

for economic prosperity; the presence of vast quantities of cheap land in

America opened opportunities for economic advancement unknown in

overcrowded Europe. The religious freedom was a major contribution because

in Europe religious toleration was almost unknown, and dissenters were

looked down upon.