A comparison of the new england and the chesapeake bay colonies essay sample

Countries, England



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From earliest English colonization the New England region and the Chesapeake region developed differently. Yet these two areas were later to unite as the major driving force behind the American Revolution. Compare and contrast their development socially politically and economically. Also describe the role geography played in their differences.

The colonies of New England and Chesapeake differed for two primary reasons. The way the two colonies regarded their Indian neighbors were dramatically different. This coupled with the overall differences in personalities of the settlers brought forth the differences between these two colonies.

Beginning with the first season of the New England colonies, the Indians were essential to the survival of the New England colonies. The Puritans that settled in the New England region came over poorly equipped. The climate of

the New England region was especially harsh during the winter; the storms brought forth by the winter were severe and often. The Indians in the area would help the Puritans survive by teaching them how to hunt for food and giving them some food as well. This was radically different from the Chesapeake's attitude towards Indians. The Chesapeake region was constantly fighting with the Indians, sometimes even avoiding work in order to defend their homes against local tribes.

The economic situations of the two regions were diverse too. The New England colony went through a general slow building process; their economy was very stagnant with advances few and far between. They survived mainly on the catching of fish, and their crops were only supplemental fodder. This was due primarily to the infertility of the soil in the New England region. The constant storms during the harsh winter devastated what few crops could cultivate in the barren soil.

The Chesapeake colony's economy was even worse; they barely made enough money to stay alive, sometimes less. The major economical revolution came in the form of tobacco; John Rolfe introduced a highly exceptional breed of tobacco. The tobacco thrived in the ideal soil of the Chesapeake region. The farmers turned wealthy in a very short time. The farmers would try to limit their dependence on tobacco but few other plants were best suited for the soil of that region. The economy of the Chesapeake region became entirely dependant upon tobacco. With all the wealth came expansion and along with expansion came a high demand for labor. The labor was provided in the form of indentured servants and later slaves. The

indentured servants would normally create their own plantations after finishing their service, but the slaves were perpetually in service.

The lives of the people in the New England region were strictly ecclesiastical. All laws were derived from the bible, as well as daily life. Those who did not adhere to the strict standards of the region such as Anne Hutchinson and Thomas Hooker were expelled to other lands. The governing body consisted of local men who were respected by all. No one challenged their authority. Rarely was anything allowed if the town did not support it unanimously. The law was seldom broken and those who dared to break the law were punished swiftly and severely.

Life in the colony of the Chesapeake area was much more secular. The inhabitants were very religious people, but they did not function nearly as well as the New England colony. The town rarely gathered together and there was no formal governing body. Everyone did what they wanted as long as it was not bothersome to the others. The Chesapeake colony lacked the skilled people that the New England colony had. No one was especially skilled in a useful area of work such as blacksmith or construction.

The colonies of Chesapeake and New England were disparate in most ways but both eventually succeeded economically and despite the overwhelming differences, they united to fight a common enemy. This diversity in regions led to prosperity and proved to be invaluable to the Revolutionary War.

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