

Massachusetts and virginia in the olonial days essay examples

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According to Grant, the American colonial history was strongly impacted by various events of the English political life (Grant, 2012). The development of the North American colonies depended directly on the political will of the English monarch, but it didn't stop it from gaining diverse and sometimes very contradictory tendencies.

Individuals and families that received permission from the monarch of England were colonizing the New World. The newly formed colonies reflected the social classes of the people who settled there. West divides the colonizers into three main types: joint stock companies that were searching for the new markets and profits, the Protestants who were hoping to implement their principles, and the aristocrats who were searching for the vast feudal estates (West, 2008). The starting capabilities of all three were more or less equal, but soon it became clear that the living conditions of the New World were more favorable for the former category of settlers.

The first settlement in North America was founded by the London Virginia Company. In 1607, the shareholders of this company founded Jamestown fort within the area that was later named Virginia (West, 2008). During this time the only rulers of the colony were the governors and council appointed by the company. The first representative assembly was established in 1619 (West, 2008). The General Assembly as it was called, was designed to make life in the colony more attractive and to particularly stimulate immigration from the Old World. Hence, this Assembly became the first North American representative legislature, organized by the board of members and ambassadors from the large settlements. Virginia was also responsible for the importation of the first black slaves in 1619. These two influential events

helped shape the social and political characteristics of Virginia. The power in the colony fell heavily into the hands of the wealthy settlers, primarily landowners that were producing the tobacco. First time landowners mainly used the free labor scarcity of the labor Servants, and later on they utilized the power of the imported slaves.

Utilizing the rights of representative government the settlers started to dispute their relationships with the British monarchy; showing their resistance by dismissing the governor that was appointed king in 1635. This kingship had been in place since 1625 (West, 2008). King Charles I tried to tame the assembly but failed, and in 1639 he was forced to approve the governor nominated by the Virgin planters. In the 1640s the Virginians were able to expand the powers of the General Assembly due in part to the English Revolution. After the Restoration in the 1660s, the Stuarts in England once again regained power over Virginia, but the settlers demonstrated disobedience to the royal administration during the entire period of the Restoration (Klein, 2004).

William Berkeley, a permanent virgin governor during the Restoration struggled with conflict between himself and the inhabitants of the colony. In 1676, this conflict grew into an armed and dangerous situation. Opponents of Berkeley united around a young deputy of the General Assembly; Nathaniel Bacon. Pressured by the rebels, the Assembly approved the Laws of Bacon; a set of laws that severely limited the power of the governor and expanded the rights of the representative government. Bacon's Rebellion was finally suppressed and many participants were executed, but the rebellion showed that the settlers were eager to fight for their rights and

interests.

The territory called New England was named so by the Protestants. These settlers were heterogeneous, divided into the moderate and democratic direction. In 1629, they received the right from the king to base their settlement in North America (Klein, 2004). In part of the Puritans, Charles I adopted the Congregationalists Charter; allowing the leaders of the colony to be elected by the free settlers. To elect the leaders of the colony, the settlers assembled a meeting that was called the General Meeting. The General Meeting gathered four times a year, during its first gathering it also received the right to expand the ranks of the Freeman, impose taxes, and adopt the laws and regulations that contributed to the good of the colony.

At the same time, a group of the Pilgrims of the Massachusetts Bay Company had made several successful expeditions overseas. From 1630 till 1643, the company has transported about twenty thousand people to Massachusetts. As the governor of the colony, John Winthrop established the basics of its construction and management. Winthrop and his assistants established the theocratic control in the Massachusetts by establishing the Congregational Church and making all settlers join it. All the inhabitants of the colonies had to pay the tax to sustain the Church. Winthrop and Magistrate usurped not only religious but also the economic and political power.

The residents of Massachusetts protested against the dictates of Winthrop and the magistrates. In 1632, the General Meeting of the colony insisted on the appointment of representatives (two from the each village), with the right to give advice to the Governor and magistrates. In 1634, the General Meeting decided that they had the right to impose taxes and distribute the

land without the Governor's participation. In 1641, the General Meeting approved the Code of Laws of Massachusetts. This law gave the right to distribute the land to the local authorities, contained the clauses on criminal law and judicial procedures.

Nevertheless, Massachusetts was not meant to become a stronghold of American freedom. The Congregational Church kept its monopoly and a strong position, and Winthrop became the governor again, and the persecution of dissidents continued. Democratic principles succeed better in the New Plymouth, the other smaller religious settlement of New England.

Works Cited

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