

British north america essay sample



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The statement “ Throughout the colonial period, economic concerns had more to do with the settling of British North America than did religious concerns” is in a way true. The settling of British North America reflected and equal amount of economic and religious concerns. But the colonies that were founded mainly based on religious concerns were also founded with thoughts of making money.

The colonies of New England, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Connecticut were all founded mainly for religious reasons. Plymouth was founded by the Separatist Puritans who wanted to begin their own Church without the interference of the British government. They believed in predestination, in which a soul is born destined for hell or heaven. Once a person shows signs of conversion, in which the person is shown that he/she will go to heaven, they are “ visible saints”. Puritans agree that only visible saints should have Church membership but in England everyone could have Church membership so the Puritans came to the Americas to set up a Church where only visible saints could have membership. The Massachusetts Bay colony was set up by non-Separatist Puritans and they came also to set up their own Church because the changes in the way the Church in England was run was too slow for them. The way their government and schools were set up reflected their religious reasons.

The government was to enforce God’s commandments and every child was taught the Lord’s words along with the alphabet. Harvard was established to train local boys for the ministry. Maryland was established to provide shelter for Roman Catholics by Lord Baltimore, a prominent Catholic. To this end they passed the Act of Toleration to protect the Catholics in Maryland even

though Jews were still persecuted. Pennsylvania was founded by William Penn mainly to shelter the much persecuted Quakers of whom Penn was a member of. He allowed freedom of all worship but under pressure from London was forced to prohibit Catholics and Jews from worshipping in public. Rhode Island was founded by Roger Williams for all who were persecuted by the Puritans in Massachusetts Bay Colony. He also guaranteed freedom of religion. Connecticut was founded by Reverent Thomas Hooker and a group of Puritans. Governor Winthrop of Massachusetts Bay Colony wanted his colony to be a model religious society of the world.

The colonies of Virginia, New York, North and South Carolina, and Georgia were all founded with economic concerns in mind. Virginia was founded for the sole reason of finding gold, failing in that, the colonists planted and exported tobacco. New York was founded by Holland and taken over by the British but was founded mainly for trading. North Carolina's founders hoped to raise and export foodstuffs to the sugar plantations in Barbados while South Carolina made money by exporting Indian slaves and rice. Georgia was founded by James Oglethorpe mainly to provide a buffer between Spain and the British colonies.

No colony was founded, except for New York, Rhode Island, and Virginia, with only either economic concerns or religious concerns in mind. The Puritans believed that God made his children prosperous so they developed their fish, fur, trading, lumber, and shipbuilding industries. Maryland grew and exported tobacco. Pennsylvania was also based on trading and shipbuilding along with many skilled craftsmen. Connecticut was founded for the rich river valley around the Connecticut River. The colonies of Virginia, New York,
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North and South Carolina, and Georgia all had some degree of religious freedom, albeit in different and varying degrees.