

Religious freedom and economic opportunities

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Religious freedom and economic opportunities in the U. S.

are tightly connected with one another. As the country was founded by the groups who sought freedom of worship and strived for new economic horizons, these two aspects have been vital from the foundation of the nation. A short survey of the English history shows that the sixteenth century was a relatively peaceful time, when the country was rapidly developing into a dominating European power. At the same time, it was an era when religious groups, especially Puritans, in England wanted to express their religious, economic, and political beliefs and in large groups moved to America in order to set a new world order that would coincide with their principles. Going Back to the Origins What can be seen in the first place is that the economic development of England provided an unprecedented development and expansion of the Empire. The country was gaining a momentum in its economic movement and soon turned into a leading world power, holding its position almost until the 1940s.

With the growth of the national economy and international trade, the country needed new markets and more resources, which were not available on the British Isles. Therefore, further development of newly gained lands was seen as a perspective way to increase the economic might. That was one of the reasons that pushed English people and other nations to explore new lands and their vast resources, thus causing large masses of population to move westward. Another reason that led to migratin of people to America was their desire to have freedom of worship and their willingness to establish the new world order that would not contradict the value system they had. In this way, some groups of English Puritans who believed that reform of the Church of <https://assignbuster.com/religious-freedom-and-economic-opportunities/>

England was impossible, separated from it and founded their own congregations. Those groups of Puritans were called Separatists.

Later, in 1620 they moved to North America and founded Plymouth Colony. Other groups of Puritans founded several settlements in their new homeland, in Virginia, and along the New England coast, especially in Massachusetts Bay and Connecticut. Maryland was established in the 1630s to provide religious liberty for Catholics. William Penn was the one to found Pennsylvania as a place for freedom for Quakers. At first life in the new lands was difficult. Diseases made a permanent problem.

Typhoid and dysentery were caused by the use of unsanitary water. The location of Jamestown, for instance, was near swamps, which made the threat of illnesses greater. Another problem that colonists encountered was difficulty with feeding themselves. Growing food in the new environment was different than the one at home and they relied heavily on Indians to provide them with corn and other crops. American Indians also contributed to the difficulties that the first colonists had.

They had a different concept of land ownership, believing that land was communal property and belonged to the whole community. Their way of thinking directly opposed the European concept of private property which, naturally, led to numerous conflicts. All these reasons plus the above listed religious beliefs shaped the life of the first settlers in North America. The government of colonies, though imposed by the British Crown, still allowed local self-government. Thus, the English inhabitants of Jamestown were granted the right to form a legislative assembly in 1619.

The Assembly was the first legislative body in North America and served as the origin of the present day national Congress. The state of Massachusetts effectively combined the Church and the State in establishing a theocratic society. It allowed implementing Christian principles by which most of the local population lived then. William Penn made a ' holy experiment' in Pennsylvania, attempting to establish religious toleration, which allowed practice of nonconformist churches. The Puritans organized their government according to the principles taken from the Bible. They instituted constitutional monarchy in England and believed in government by contract, which contributed to the development of American democratic principles.

Conclusion As seen from the history of North America, economic development of England led to mass migration of population to the newly found lands. The westward movement often tied together those who sought religious freedom and economic prosperity, which led to foundation of modern day principles of freedom of worship and free-market society.