

Colonists' Reasons for Coming to the Americas

For each of the primary sources below, write a short paragraph describing why they are coming to the Americas. Use at least one quote from the source to back up your claims.

Introduction

During the early 1500s, the English tended to think of North America as a base for piracy and harassment of the Spanish. But by the end of the century, the English began to think more seriously about North America as a place to colonize.

English promoters claimed that New World colonization offered England many advantages. Not only would it serve as a defense against Catholic Spain, but it would supply England with raw materials and provide a market for finished products. America would also provide a place to send the English poor and ensure that they would contribute to the nation's wealth. Finally, some English saw America as a place to create a new and better society that would be free from European problems.

Richard Hakluyt, "Discourse of Western Planting" (1584)

A particuler discourse concerninge the greate necessitie and manifolde comodities that are like to growe to this Realme of Englande...

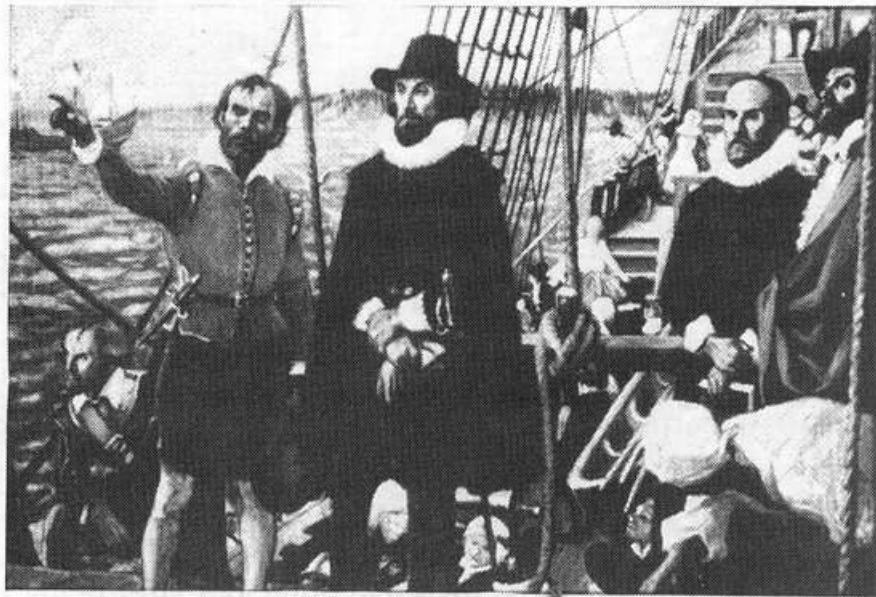
- 1. That this westerne discoverie will be greatly for the enlargement of the gospell of Christe whereunto the Princes of the reformed religion are chiefly bounde...*
- 2. That all other englishe Trades are growen beggerly or dangerous, especially in all the kinge of Spaine his Domynions, where our men are dryven to flinge their Bibles and prayer Bokes into the sea, and to forswear and renounce their religion and conscience and consequently theyr obedience to her Majestie.*

Sebastian Brandt, "Life in Early Virginia" (1622)

And touching the business that I came hither is nothing yet performed, by reason of my sickness and weakness I was not able to travel up and down the hills and dales of these countries but do now intend every day to walk up and downe the hills for good Mineralls here is both golde silver and copper to be had... It may please [you] to send me two little runletts of wine and vinegar some spice and sugar to comfort us here in our sickness... And whatsoever this all costeth I will not only with my most humble service but also with some good Tobacco, Beaver, and Otterskins and other commodities here to be had recompence [you] for the same.

John Winthrop, "City upon a Hill" (1630)

Wee must be knitt together in this worke as one man, wee must entertaine each other in brotherly Affeccion... wee shall finde that the God of Israell is among us, when tenn of us shall be able to resist a thousand of our enemies, when hee shall make us a prayse and glory... for wee must Consider that wee shall be as a Citty upon a Hill, the eies of all people are uppon us; soe that if wee shall deale falsely with our god in this worke wee have undertaken and soe cause him to withdrawe his present help from us... Therefore lett us choose life, that wee, and our Seede, may live; by obeyeing his voice... for hee is our life, and our prosperity.



Governor Winthrop desired to make New England "as a city upon a hill."



This 1670 painting shows enslaved Africans working in the tobacco sheds on a colonial tobacco plantation.

