

America was a newly discovered land that attracted many European immigrants in the 1600s. A majority of these immigrants came from England. Many reasons contributed to this sudden increase of immigrants to the American colonies. Many Europeans were looking for better social, political, and economic opportunities, and they felt and hoped that America was their dreamland.

One of the reasons why people left England was for religious freedom. The King of England had changed England's religion to Anglican. Therefore, the people were forced to be Anglican. Many people did not want to change their religion, so they headed for America, hoping that they could have religious freedom. Once over in America, people took control. In the New England Colonies, the religion was primarily Puritan. The Puritans were a religious group with a lot of power in the Massachusetts Bay colony. However, some people did not like how the governor, John Winthrop, and other officials had so much power. So a Puritan named Thomas Hooker took 100 other Puritans and moved to Connecticut where they set up the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut. This limited the governor's power and let all men who were property owners vote. Quakers and Catholics settled in the Middle Colonies. Quakers were Protestant reformers who settled in Pennsylvania. A man named William Penn had an idea of a "holy experiment." He wanted it to be a model of peace and religious freedom for Christian living. Religion was not as important in the Middle Colonies as in the other regions. In the Southern Colonies, a man named Lord Baltimore set up the colony of Maryland. He believed that Catholics could practice their religion freely. The Act of Toleration was later created that stated that all Christians could practice their religion freely in Maryland. This did not apply for non-Christians groups such as Jews.

People also came to the English colonies for better economic opportunity. However, once here, people had to supply and ship materials to England at a low price and then England sent the finished products back to the colonies at a high price. This system was called mercantilism. The New England Colonies had poor soil for farming, plenty of forests, harsh winters, and cool summers. Due to this geographic makeup, people who settled in the New England colonies could not become large scale farmers, but rather became hunters, lumberjacks, fishermen, rum producers, and fishermen in order to make money (document 3). The Middle Colonies offered fertile land due to the Hudson & Delaware river valleys. There was a long growing season and mild winters. People living there could become farmers and fishermen. The Middle Colonies grew so much grain that they soon became known as the "Breadbasket Colonies (document 3)." In the Southern Colonies, there was warm weather, a long growing season, and rich and fertile land. These conditions allowed for farmers to grow a wide variety of products (document 3). Slaves were used on plantations and did a great deal of work (document 4). Indentured servants were also used to do various amounts of work. Indentured servants were people who gave up their freedom for 4-7 years to a person living in the colonies who paid their passage to America. These indentured servants had more opportunity in America than slaves did because once they served their 4-7 years, there were free. Slaves, on the other hand, would never be freed.

A final reason why people came over to the American colonies was to participate in government. In England, only rich people could participate in government. In the New England Colonies, there were all different rules about government. In Massachusetts, only members of the Puritan church were allowed to vote for members of the assembly and governor. In Connecticut, all men who were property owners, even those who did not belong to the Puritan church, were allowed to vote. The Middle & Southern Colonies had forms of representative government, which allowed them to choose members of colonial assemblies to represent them.

In conclusion, there was some opportunity available in the colonies, depending on which region a person settled in. If you were a Puritan living in New England, then you had more opportunity than other people. In the Middle Colonies if you were a Quaker or Catholic you had some opportunity, but religion was not a large factor in determining how much opportunity you had. In the Southern Colonies, if you were not a slave, but rather a land owner, you had a decent amount of opportunity available to you. People left England for social, economic, and political opportunity in the colonies, and that is exactly what they got.