

## **The Massachusetts Bay Colony**

In 1629, a group of Puritans joined other people in England to form the New England Company. The same year, the King granted the company a charter. This allowed them to settle in the region called “New England.” The first group of Puritans sailed to New England that year. They began a settlement named “Salem” on Massachusetts Bay.

In 1630, John Winthrop brought a second and much larger group of Puritans from England to settle in the same area. The group included nearly one thousand colonists traveling on eleven ships. He decided Salem was not the perfect place and went to a nearby area called Shawmut, which he renamed Boston after his hometown in England.

Just like in Plymouth, the first year was very difficult and about 200 settlers died. Another 200 returned to England in the spring of 1631. Things improved and during the next 20 years more than 20,000 people settled in the colony. They were mostly Puritans.

The Puritans built many new villages, many were near Boston. Life in these villages was centered around the Puritan church which had strict rules. In the beginning, Puritan settlers got along fairly well with the Native Americans of the area. However, as the Puritans began to spread out in the region, conflicts with Native Americans increased.

The region supported many different economic activities. Although the soil was rocky, some people were still able to grow crops on small farms. Other people cut lumber and used it to build houses and ships. Fishing was also important in the colony.

The colony leaders enforced strict Puritan ways of life and laws. People who did not follow Puritan ways were told to leave the colony. As a result of this, new colonies were founded in the region.