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Gilder Lehrman Document Project

Colonial America

Background:

The Virginia Company of London was chartered on April 10, 1606 with the express purpose of settling Virginia with a permanent settlement. In 1607 the Virginia Company (also known as the London Company) landed 104 settlers at Jamestown, Virginia.

The Massachusetts Bay Company was established in 1628 with trade and profit as its main goal, but with the majority of stockholders being Puritan, the company's purpose quickly became religious as well. The Massachusetts Bay Colony was founded in 1630 with the arrival of 1000 Puritan settlers in Salem, Massachusetts.



The Seal of the Virginia Company.



Seal of the Massachusetts Bay Company

Questions:

1. Look at the two seals. What initial similarities and differences can you identify?
2. Both seals have Latin wording. What do you think the seals say? Why do you think that?
3. According to their seals, which colony was more closely tied to British rule? Do the histories of the colonies back up your thesis?
4. Why would the seal of Massachusetts have a picture of a Native American? What does this tell you about what the English expected to find in Massachusetts? What about in Virginia?
5. Did the two colonies live up to the expectations expressed in their seals? What makes you think that?

Sources: Seal of the Massachusetts Bay Company

www.wwnorton.com/nto/17century/topic_4/illustrations/immabayseal.htm

<http://www.infoplease.com/ce6/history/A0832127.html>

<http://members.aol.com/ntgen/hrtg/mass.html>

Sources: Seal of the Virginia Company of London

<http://www.nps.gov/colo/Jthanout/VACompany.html>

<http://www.wikipedia.com>