

Summary: Life in New England

Using the Sea

Most colonists in New England grew just enough crops to feed their families. The rocky coast had good harbors. The thick forests provided wood to build ships. Boston became the center for the shipbuilding industry. The fishing industry grew rapidly in the 1600s. Cod and whales were key resources. By the 1700s, whaling was an important industry.

Merchants shipped exports of fish and lumber to Europe, the West Indies, and Africa. They traded for imports of tea, spices, and manufactured goods. These shipping routes were called the triangular trade. The slave trade was part of the triangular trade. Merchants forced captured people from Africa to travel the Middle Passage from Africa to the West Indies. They were packed in crowded ships. Many died on the way. During the 1600s and 1700s, hundreds of thousands of Africans were forced to work as slaves in the colonies.

Home and Community Life

Most New England families lived in small houses with one main room. They cooked on the fireplace and slept on mattresses on the floor. Colonial homes were like busy workshops. Almost everything people wore, ate, or used was made by hand at home. Men and boys worked the farm, cared for animals, and fixed buildings. Women and girls cooked and preserved food. They made soap, candles, and the family's clothing. They also helped at planting and harvest time.

Some Puritans taught their children to read the Bible at home. Many New England towns had schools. In the early 1700s, colonists no longer had strong religious beliefs. In the 1730s, new ministers convinced people to return to religion. This movement was called the Great Awakening. It caused people to join new churches and to see religion in new ways.

Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

industry *noun*, all the businesses that make one kind of product or provide one kind of service

export *noun*, a product sent to another country and sold

import *noun*, a product brought into one country from another country

Middle Passage *noun*, the voyage from Africa to the West Indies

slave trade *noun*, the business of buying and selling human beings

After You Read

REVIEW **What was triangular trade?** Highlight three sentences that tell what the merchants traded in the triangular trade.

REVIEW **How did boys and girls help their families?** Draw a box around the sentence that tells what work the boys did. Underline the sentences that tell what work the girls did.

REVIEW **Why did many New England colonists return to religion in the 1730s?** Circle the name given to the renewed interest in religion.