

Fort Raleigh

National Historic Site

National Park Service
Department of the Interior



England Comes to America

British colonization of Roanoke Island

Under the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, England would finally gain an interest in the New World in an attempt to keep up with Spain and other European powers who had long been exploring and settling the area. This lesson explains why the 1580s were set up for this exploration, and why Roanoke Island was the final destination.

Objective

Students will:

- a) Understand the causes and effects of Elizabethan Expansion in to the New World
- b) Explain how the first attempt at English Colonization contributed to the eventual development of North Carolina
- c) Explain how Roanoke Island played a key role in this expansion
- d) Describe why 1580's Europe was ready for a new explorations
- e) Explain how location and place have presented opportunities for the movement of people North Carolina

Grade Level: Eight Grade

Grade Subjects: History,
Social Studies

Duration: 45 minutes

Group Size: Up to 36

Standards:

National Standard for History:
Era 2: Standard 1

North Carolina State Standards
8.H.1.1, 8.H.1.2, 8.H.3.1, 8.G.1.1, 8.E.1.1

Further Lesson Plans/Activities:

<http://www.nps.gov/fora/forteachers/>

Materials for students

- Maps illustrating the New World pre- and post-Elizabethan Expansion (attached)

Assessment

Students will be able to:

1. Describe 2 reasons why England chose the 1580s for its first attempt at setting up a new colony at Roanoke
2. Describe 2 reasons why America attracted European countries to attempt to colonize it
3. Describe 3 reason why Roanoke was the first place England set up a new colony

Resources

<http://faculty.history.wisc.edu/sommer-ville/361/361-19.htm>

<http://www.nps.gov/fora/forteachers/piracy-and-privateering-with-elizabethan-maritime-expansion.htm>

<http://www.nps.gov/fora/forteachers/the-first-english-colony.htm>

http://www.princeton.edu/~achaney/tmve/wiki100k/docs/Elizabethan_era.html

Student Reading

The Start of Elizabethan Expansion

Elizabethan Expansion is a period of time beginning in the 1580's in which England, under the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, began to expand its borders by exploring and taking over territories in the New World (What is now the United States). At the beginning of this venture, England presented not even the smallest threat in the way of landholdings overseas. Spain, France, and Portugal had quickly established colonies in North and South America, England had nothing. By 1600, Queen Elizabeth's England was the dominate player on both land and sea.

Why did England suddenly feel the need to expand?

By the 1580's the mood Europe had changed significantly, especially between Spain and England. The Catholic royalty of King Philip II (Spain) and the Protestant royalty of Queen Elizabeth I (England) did not always see eye to eye and were, in fact, enemies in many ways.

Needless to say, England did not take it well when Spain rose to become a super power. The main reason for this rise? By 1584, Spain had acquired a lot of lands in the Americas; large portions of South America, Latin America, and even Florida. Their conquerors and explorers were taking over large areas of land that were rich in silver, gold, copper, spices, and other valuable commodities, all of which was being sent back to Spain.

The country was becoming richer and richer. France and Portugal were in on the race as well, it seemed England was the only power left out of the race. It was because of this that Queen Elizabeth I finally became convinced that perhaps a settlement in the New World would not be such a bad idea. After all, anything Spain could do England could surely do better; if a colony in the New World was making Spain rich, it would surely do the same for England.

The Queen's advisor, Walter Raleigh, was very influential in persuading her that a settlement would only benefit England. He proposed that England should sail to the New World and establish a privateering base so as to loot and plunder Spanish treasure ships.

What is privateering? Piracy with a license!

Role of Roanoke Island Settlements

Roanoke Island would play a very important role in Elizabeth Expansion. It was here that Sir Walter Raleigh, with the blessing of Queen Elizabeth, attempted to establish the first English Colony in the New World. Ultimately, three voyages would sail here; the first in 1584, which was a discovery venture, and two more in 1585 and 1587, both of which were settlements. Unfortunately, neither of these attempts at building a settlement would be very successful—the 1585 settlement would abandon the area and head back to England while the 1587 settlement would vanish—but, had it not been for them, further settlements by England may not have been attempted or successful.







