



ENGLAND IN THE NEW WORLD

When Elizabeth I became queen in the middle of the 16th century, England launched a program of commercial and naval expansion. It also began to challenge Spain's supremacy in Europe, the Far East and the new world.

In 1588 King Philip II of Spain sent a mighty fleet, or Armada, to conquer England. In a decisive battle, the small English ships destroyed many of Spanish ships. With the defeat of the *Spanish Armada*, England gained control of the seas and began to build a worldwide empire.

Reasons for England's interest in America:

At first, England, like the other nations of Europe, sent explorers to the New World to seek a passage to the East Indies. As its economy grew, England became more interested in founding overseas colonies.

The New World attracted (1) landless and poverty-stricken people who sought to better their living conditions, (2) those who were deprived of their political or religious freedom at home, and (3) adventurers who hoped to acquire riches in the colonies.

The English Empire in America:

As a result of its explorations, England claimed a large part of North America. English settlers immigrated to America in large numbers and established thriving colonies along the Atlantic seaboard.