

MASSACHUSETTS DEVELOPMENT

I. Massachusetts Religious Vision

A. The colony, John Winthrop said, would be "A city upon a hill," shining for the world to see. Massachusetts was to be a moral example for the world.

B. What you get here then, especially in the early years, is two ideas.

1. An inward turn –worry for personal morality and salvation.
2. An outward turn – a concern for the appearance of the Holy Experiment.
3. The Puritans were not too worried about converting the Amerindians.

C. Whereas in colonial Virginia you might begin your approach to the colonial culture by looking at the company's efforts, or the government - in colonial Massachusetts you should look first to the Puritan Religion.

D. Puritan Theology: The Covenants of Salvation

1. At the time that God created Adam, man's salvation depended on his own actions. God pledged eternal happiness to Adam and his posterity in return for man's absolute obedience to the will of God. The Puritans labeled this commitment the Covenant of Works.

2. In the Fall, man broke the covenant and lost his opportunity to merit salvation. The consequences of his sin could only be reversed by divine action. God provided that release in what the Puritans referred to as the Covenant of Redemption: the agreement whereby the Father compacted with the Son to provide the salvation of some men and women through Christ's sacrifice

3. This sacrificial atonement for the sins of mankind made possible individual redemption through the Covenant of Grace, whereby the elect might receive saving grace through the sponsorship and protection of the Spirit in return for their faith.

4. The Puritan emphasis on the covenant arose out of the concern of the ministers to explain the process of salvation to their congregations. Predestination was scary, and in a sense the covenant idea gave the individual some power. God opened the Covenant of Grace of his own wishes to a few elected persons. In return, they could enter the covenant with him by leading a life of true faith. But that faith involved more than mere intellectual consent to doctrine. It involved a total change in the believer's nature and behavior.

5. Look at the Antinomian Controversy to understand the Covenant of Grace.

a. Anne Hutchinson carried to logical extremes the Puritan doctrine of predestination.

b. She claimed that a holy life was no sure sign of salvation and that the truly saved need not bother to obey the law of either God or man.

c. This assertion, known as antinomianism, was high heresy. If a man or woman need not obey the law, then order would be destroyed.

d. Hutchinson was brought to trial in 1638.

e. She defended herself well, until she eventually boasted that she had come by her beliefs through a direct revelation from God. This was even higher heresy. No one talked to God directly.

f. The Puritan magistrates banished her. With her family, she set out on foot for Rhode Island. She finally moved to New York, where she and all but one of her household were killed by Indians.

g. John Winthrop saw "God's hand" in her death.

h. How does this help us understand the Covenant of Grace.

1) We can understand the who intricate argument behind the Covenant of Grace with the statement: "Though God's grace do all, yet we must give our consent."

2) Antinomians expected God's grace to do all, but the Covenant theology held to both grace and consent, to the decree of God and the full responsibility of man, to assurance in spite of sin and morality in spite of assurance. (Perry Miller *The New England Mind, The Seventeenth Century*, 389)

6. Be sure you understand: the Covenant of Grace was opened by God alone. He was supreme. There was no way to know why he opened the covenant. But he remained a mystery - it alone was understandable, and only because God made it so.

E. Puritanism in practice in colonial New England

"Through 'covenants' binding signers to God and to each other, New England towns attempted to suffuse legal corporations with spiritual obligations that might seal existing demographic, familial, and social ties. As they established towns 'in the fear and reverence of our Almighty God,' settlers variously promised to resolve disputes 'according to that most perfect rule, the foundation whereof is everlasting love' (Dedham, 1637), to secure a minister 'with whom we propose to join in church covenant to walk in all the ways of Christ' (Springfield, 1636), to establish principles for land use and allocation (Dedham, Springfield, and most other covenanted communities), and to 'receive only such unto us as may be probably of one heart with us'(Dedham again)"(Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith*, 59).

1. The first task was to establish the church, the heart of which was the church covenant.

2. A congregation generally started with a small group of pious candidates who examined one another and who were examined by the members of the community to assure everyone that they were pious men of faith.

3. Then, they would covenant together -often written - and out of their compact create a church.

4. Therefore each society was an autonomous unit, and no bishops and archbishops, no synods and assemblies, had any power, either from the Bible or from nature, to dictate to an independent and holy congregation.

a. In 1648, the "congregational" structure of the church that was adopted was codified in a formal statement, the Cambridge Platform.

5. The members, from whom the church originated, perpetuated it by receiving into the fellowship only those whom they judged to be within the Covenant of Grace

- a. a perspective member must make a profession of faith
- b. a perspective member must tell of the "experience" that he or she had that indicated their membership in the elect
- c. a perspective member must be or become baptized

6. Participation in the church covenant must throughout be limited to those who, appraised by the rule of "rational charity," appear authentic saints

- a. Baptism of children was limited to the children of the elect
- b. Full membership required:
 - 1) baptism
 - 2) conversion experience
 - 3) sacrament of communion (only given to those who had explained their conversion experience)

7. The members of the church, being the source of church power, elected ministers and officers, appropriated funds and determined all policies by suffrage. (*Above information of the Church Covenant from Perry Miller, The New England Mind, The Seventeenth Century, 435; the material on actual practices is from David Hackett Fischer's Albion's Seed*).

Final Comments:

- A. Landscape Sacralization
- B. Church membership:
 - 1. Dedham, 79% men were members in 1650; 80% children baptized pre-1660
 - 2. Boston, 1635, over half town's families represented by formal membership of either mother or father
 - 3. This was real work: Focus in church not on ritual but on Sermon, from 45 minutes to 2 hours. Many congregants kept notes for later study.

8. *The Church itself:*

- a. *The church, called the meetinghouse, was the central building in each town.*
- b. *The church building itself was plain both outside and inside*
- c. *The outside was usually a four sided structure with a turret on top. They were plain unpainted buildings*
- d. *The inside was a lecture room. There was no alter, only a table, with a steep stairway or ladder to a high pulpit which dominated the room.*
- e. *Men were seated on one side of an aisle and women on the other. All ordered by age, wealth, and reputation.*

f. There were no ornaments, no paint, no curtains, no pictures, no lights, no heat, nothing to distract from the spoken word.

9. The Church Service

a. At nine in the morning on the Lord's days, the town was summoned by the sound of a bell, the rasping of a conch shell, or a drum. The congregation arrived in orderly family groups, husbands and wives walking together, with children behind.

b. After the townsfolk entered the meetinghouse and took their seats, the minister and his family made their entrance. He would usually wear a black cape and skullcap. The entire congregation would rise.

c. Ritual of purification: those who had committed various sins were compelled to rise and "take shame upon themselves. Sometimes they dressed in rags and smeared streaks of dirt upon their faces to deepen their humiliation.

d. Sermon: Church-going New Englanders heard two sermons every Sunday, on in the morning and one in the afternoon. Each sermon would last two hours or longer.

e. Sermon style: "text-and-context" sermon. It would begin with a powerful and usually puzzling scrap of Scripture which was relentlessly analyzed and ramified in a prolonged discussion called the "finding out"

f. The Congregation would sit on the edge of their benches through these sermons.

g. Prayer: In New England there was no kneeling, no bowing of heads, nor closing of eyes. Puritans prayed on their feet, standing upright, looking God in the eye. The prayer was usually a composition of the minister delivered at great length

II. Massachusetts Government

A. Provincial government

1. Soon after arrival, (1631) it was determined that all freemen who were church members could vote in provincial elections

a. Unchurched men remained vote-less in provincial elections, as did women.

b. On this basis about two-fifths of adult males enjoyed the franchise in provincial affairs, a far larger proportion than in contemporary England.

2. They would choose the governor (who must be on the Board of Assistants)

3. They would annually elect the Board of Assistants (which would advise the governor and act as a kind of upper house, although it met with the General Court)

4. In addition, each town in Massachusetts could send two deputies to represent their interests at the quarterly meetings of the General Court (a representative body, which consisted of the deputies from the towns, the Board of Assistants, and the Governor).

5. Powers of legislation rested in the meeting of the General Court - deputies and assistants. Assistants could veto any law by majority of themselves.

6. In 1644, because of a disagreement between deputies and assistants, the two houses were separated

7. The provincial government was not a democracy. Governor Winthrop feared and distrusted the "commons" as the "meaner sort" and thought that democracy was the "meanest and worst" of all forms of government. "If the people be governors," asked one Puritan clergyman, "who shall be governed?"

B. Town governments

1. All male property holders, and in some cases other residents as well, enjoyed the right to publicly discussing local issues, and of voting on them by a majority-rule show of hands.

2. In fact, though, Consensus was more important than majority rule. Often if the leaders of the Church did not approve of a law or measure, it would not go into effect.

C. Church and State Relationship

1. The church and state regard themselves, in John Davenport's words, as "coordinate states, in the same place reaching forth to help mutually each other, for the welfare of both according to God."

2. The state backed up the church's spiritual decrees, and the church the state's civil laws.

3. The state saw to it that the church was supported by local taxation; it passed laws to protect ministers against insults; and it enforced compulsory attendance at worship.

4. The church condemned political radicals; it denied the people the right of revolution on the ground that this flouted one of God's institutions.

5. State and church cooperated to excommunicate and banish heretics, political and religious. The relationship was a partnership between equals in which members of the elect dominated in both. (Colonial Experience, 139-140)

D. The Question Remains, Then: To what degree was Massachusetts a Democracy

1. Example of Roger Williams

a. Williams was Salem minister, who had traveled around New England trying for a while to find a home

b. He was an extreme Separatist, who hounded his fellow clergymen to break with the Church of England.

c. He also challenged the legality of the Bay Colony's charter, which he condemned for expropriating the land from the Indians without fair compensation.

d. He also denied the authority of civil government to regulate religious behavior.

1) He said that the church was the only institution that had the power to regulate religious offense, the first four of the ten commandments.

2) By having the church tied closely to the state the church was corrupted

e. In 1635, the Bay Colony authorities found Williams guilty of disseminating "newe & dangerous opinions" and ordered him banished.

f. He was permitted to remain several months longer because of illness, but he kept up his criticisms. The outraged magistrates, fearing that he might organize a rival colony of malcontents, made plans to exile him to England.

g. Williams fled to the Rhode Island area in 1636.

h. At Providence, Williams built a Baptist church.

i. He established complete freedom of religion, even for Jews and Catholics.

j. He demanded no oaths regarding one's religious beliefs, no compulsory attendance at worship, no taxes to support a state church.

k. Rhode Islanders exercised simple manhood suffrage from the start, though later a property qualification was added.

l. Rhode Island became strongly individualistic and stubbornly independent.

m. Begun as a squatter colony in 1636 without legal standing, it finally established rights to the soil when it secured a charter from Parliament in 1644.

2. So, in a sense we see that Massachusetts was not a place of religious toleration, nor was it a place where dissent was permitted. Consensus was hoped for and usually in the early period it was dictated by the Church fathers.

III. Massachusetts Puritans Expands into New Colonies

A. New England did not grow simply by the movement of dissidents from Massachusetts. In fact many who left Massachusetts were Puritans and sought to expand the godly errand in the wilderness.

B. Connecticut

1. An energetic group of Boston Puritans, led by the Reverend Thomas Hooker, moved into the Hartford area in 1635-6.

2. Three years later, in 1639, the settlers of the new Connecticut River colony drafted in open meeting the Fundamental Orders. It was in effect a modern constitution, which established a regime democratically controlled by the "substantial" citizens.

3. In 1662, the crown granted a charter to Connecticut

C. New Hampshire

1. New Hampshire sprang from the fishing and trading activities along its narrow coast.

2. It was absorbed in 1641 by Massachusetts Bay, under a strained interpretation of the Massachusetts charter.
3. Charles II, annoyed by this display of greed, arbitrarily separated New Hampshire from Massachusetts in 1679 and made it a royal colony.

IV. Economic/Amerindian Affairs: "That Wilderness Should Turn a Mart"

A. Preface: The Indian Wars

1. The spread of English settlements led to clashes with the Indians, who were particularly weak in New England.
2. Disease came with the Pilgrims and Puritans
3. In no position to resist the English incursion, the local Wampanoag Indians at first befriended the settlers. Cultural accommodation was facilitated by Squanto, a Wampanoag who had learned English from a ship's captain who had kidnapped him some years earlier.
4. The Wampanoag chieftain Massasoit signed a treaty with the Plymouth Pilgrims in 1621 and helped them celebrate the first Thanksgiving after the autumn harvests that same year.
5. As more English settlers arrived and pushed inland into the Connecticut River valley, confrontations between Indians and whites ruptured these peaceful relations.
6. Pequot War (1637)
 - a. Hostilities exploded in 1637 between the English settlers and the powerful Pequot tribe. Besieging a Pequot village, English militiamen and their Narragansett Indian allies set fire to the Indian wigwams and shot the fleeing survivors.
 - b. The slaughter wrote a brutal finish to the Pequot War, virtually annihilated the Pequot tribe, and brought four decades of uneasy peace between Puritans and Indians.
7. The Indians' only hope for resisting English encroachment lay in intertribal unity-- a pan-Indian alliance against the swiftly spreading English settlements.
8. King Philip's War (1675)
 - a. In 1675 Massasoit's son, Metacom, called King Philip by the English, forged an alliance and mounted a series of coordinated assaults on English villages throughout New England.
 - b. Frontier settlements were especially hard hit, and refugees fell back toward Boston.
 - c. When the war ended in 1676, fifty-two Puritan towns had been attacked, and twelve destroyed entirely. Hundreds of colonists and many more Indians lay dead.

d. Metacom's wife and son were sold into slavery; he himself was captured, beheaded, and drawn and quartered, and his head was carried on a pike back to Plymouth, where it was displayed for years.

9. King Philip's War represented the lasting defeat of New England's Indians. Drastically reduced in numbers, dispirited, and disbanded, they never again seriously threatened the New England colonists.

B. "That Wilderness Should Turn a Mart"

1. The colonies of New England all had economies similar to that in Massachusetts.

2. For much of the first decade, the subsistence farmers of New England depended heavily on the substantial wealth early migrants brought with them, including lumber, grain, and cattle.

3. The end of the Great Migration was economically devastating. By the early 1640s, it was painfully obvious how underdeveloped the New England economy was, lacking a major staple export or any sort of manufacturing.

4. New England's first involvement in the Atlantic marketplace began with the fur trade. For over a decade, the fur trade helped New Englanders deal with the most crucial flaws in their economy. For a short time, the European demand provided ample benefits to the traders. However, by the 1660s, New Englanders had destroyed the population of beaver and other fur-bearing animals throughout the area and even far into the hinterland.

5. Fishing was a second major industry. Initially, the colonists plied their trade fairly close to shore, working a series of smaller banks within the Gulf of Maine and catching healthy supplies of cod, haddock, hake, and mackerel. The onset of the English Civil War disrupted the West Country monopoly on the larger banks, and after 1641, New Englanders switched from their small thirty-foot shallops to larger ketches and moved out onto the Grand Banks to the east of Newfoundland. But by the time of the Restoration, the region completely controlled its own fisheries. Merchants traded the fish to Spain, Portugal, and various Atlantic islands, as well as the West Indies. Permanent towns replaced small fishing villages. Fishing also created substantial demand for new ships, laying the basis for an industry crucial to New England's economic future.

6. The timber industry, finally, remained an important component of the New England economy throughout the seventeenth century. The English faced constant shortages of wood. When the colonists landed in New England, they were overwhelmed by the abundance of the forests and used every possible method to rapidly cut all accessible timber. The town sawmill quickly became an important community enterprise, turning out clapboards, staves, shingles, and other products. Merchants seeking investments continually looked to forest areas. White pines from northern forests became a staple of the English mast trade, and timber products comprised a major component of the West Indian trade.

7. None of these efforts was sufficient to establish true economic independence, and during the 1640s and 1650s, the Massachusetts government tried to expand trade and economic activity.

8. It was trade that brought New England its economic salvation.

a. By 1640, shipbuilding and oceangoing trade were already the leading enterprises in Boston, Charlestown, and Salem, establishing a solid foundation for further growth and a fundamental reorientation of the colony's economic life.

b. Cotton, sugar, and indigo came from the West Indies; wine from the Canaries and Madeira; oil, soap, wines, raisins, lemons, fruits, and salt from France, Spain, and Portugal; and clothing and household goods from England.

c. In exchange, New Englanders sent fish, and foodstuffs to Spain, Madeira, and the Canaries; fish, provisions, lumber, barrel staves, shingles, horses, and other wood products to the West Indies; and foodstuffs to Newfoundland.

d. By the 1650s, New England captains were also extensively involved in the coastal trade, often stopping in the Chesapeake.

e. The vast bulk of this trade was conducted out of Massachusetts ports.

1) Plymouth, particularly after the decline of its fur trade, had little overseas trade

2) Connecticut exported its produce through Boston.

3) Rhode Island, finally, was inhabited mostly by subsistence farmers throughout the seventeenth century.

9. In this economic system, which was so different from that of Virginia, slavery did exist. However, the area had fewer slaves than any other colony in British North America (information on slavery in north from Dufour, *Colonial America*, 293-295).

a. There were only 1000 blacks in New England in 1680

b. In 1775, there were only 14,000 blacks (2% of overall population)

c. However, the small number of slaves were critical in the development of local economies.

d. Many urban slaves

1) 1/3 of Massachusetts slaves in Boston

2) 1/2 of Rhode Island slaves in New Port

e. Most slaves however did small farm work. Lived by themselves or with one or two other slaves. In the house with their master.

f. Slave codes much less harsh than those in Virginia.

V. Second-half seventeenth century, Puritanism Mutates: Halfway Covenant, Declension and Jeremiad, and Witch Trials

A. First problem: children, church membership, and the halfway covenant

1. By mid-seventeenth century, the New England churches faced a crisis that arose from the failure of the second and third generations to duplicate the spiritual experiences of the founders and to come forward into membership on the basis of an act of saving grace.

2. The founders' children had been baptized in the church on the basis of their parents profession and the likelihood of their own ultimate conversion.
3. Full membership awaited the children's own personal "calling."
4. But that promise in many cases was not fulfilled.
5. Should, then, the children of these baptized but unconverted members of the church also be baptized.
6. Agonizing question.
 - a. If yes, then the church as a body of converted Christians would be destroyed.
 - b. If no, then as conversions became few and fewer, the church would grow apart from society and become a mere sect, without the ground for social control which was so fundamental a part of Puritan life.
7. The solution came when the ministers met in 1657 and their solution was confirmed by a synod of 1662.
8. By the arrangement devised then, which became known as the halfway covenant, unregenerate members could transmit membership in the church to their children, but only a halfway membership.
9. Such children would be baptized, but not offered the sacrament of communion, nor would they be entitled to vote as members of the church.
10. As halfway members, they would be required to make a public pledge to obey the rulings of the church and to bring their children up as proper Christians.
11. Still, they were members, if only partial, and the distinction between them and the full members who sat with them in church week after week was thin, and grew thinner as the years passed.

B. Declension and Jeremiad

1. The crisis over church membership was only one expression of a pervasive and overriding sense of doom that plagued New Englanders during the last few decades of the century.
2. Puritanism in England had disappeared with the Restoration, and the Royal Commission of 1664 had called into doubt the very safety of the New England mission itself.
3. Baptists and Quakers challenged the religious foundations of New England theology and the Puritan's sense of controlled social order and civilized behavior.
4. Disasters seemed to come with every dawn: severe droughts in 1662 and 1666; wheat crops ravaged by mildew and caterpillars in 1664, 1665, and 1668; fires and a smallpox epidemic in 1666.
5. Most important, late seventeenth-century Puritans gave their first-generation ancestors a special place in their pantheon of religious heroes. Fleeing persecution and battling against an unforgiving universe, these men and women had succeeded in creating a social and religious utopia - or so the legend went.

6. Inevitably, the descendants of these giants believed that they could not live up to such achievements. In church membership, in the gradual decay of traditional communal villages, and in British interference with colonial government, New England was, in truth, a far different place than it had been thirty years earlier.

7. Many among both the ministers and the laity, clinging to those early years as an unattainable ideal, viewed the results as a decline, a fall from grace and from the heights of perfection achieved by their fathers. They could only interpret such change as corruption, a sign that New England was becoming much like the rest of the world. God had singled them out for special attention and for a special mission, as He had done for Israel, and they had failed Him miserably. The jeremiad emerged as New England's fearful recognition of its seemingly inevitable doom.

8. Like all Puritan sermons, jeremiads began with a quotation from Scripture. In this case, it was generally from Isaiah or Jeremiah, the Old Testament prophets of doom. The minister then followed with a series of condemnations and concluded with a prophetic vision of the future and an explanation of the gap between the ideal to be achieved and the reality of the present. Failure to achieve the ideal threatened eternal, not just worldly, disaster. If the Puritans failed to live up to their end of God's covenant, they - and New England - were damned.

C. Witch trials

1. In seventeenth-century New England, as in Europe, people accepted witchcraft as a true, ever-present reflection of a hidden supernatural world.

a. Even before the Salem witch trials 103 New Englanders were accused of being witches, though only 15 were executed.

b. Overall between 1620 and 1724, 322 New Englanders were accused of witchcraft, 259 were women. Thirty-six were executed, of which 29 were women. (David Hackett Fischer gives the figure of 344 witches accused in colonial New England, with 36 executed; he says that these events happened in New England more frequently than in any other colony in British North America. More than 95% of all accusations and 90% of all executions took place in NE. DHF, *Albion's Seed*, 126)

2. Six things needed to have a witch hunt:

a. The belief in the supernatural, and its activity in this world

1) People in the seventeenth century lived in a intellectual world much different from that we inhabit.

2) The world seemed more "wonderful" - meaning that there were many occurrences that could not be explained. Wonders - disease, healing, wind patterns, storms, comets: these types of things were simply unexplainable in the seventeenth century.

3) The most prevalent idea of the supernatural in Massachusetts was the idea of Providence. Puritans linked their faith in the Almighty to their understanding of the world.

4) They searched constantly for clues to God's purposes in the world.

5) They called these signs, God's remarkables, and many kept books of these signs.

6) So, there was really no conception of what we would call an accident. There were no random events in Puritan thinking. Everything was supposed to happen for a reason. This reason was not explained through science, but through the supernatural.

7) So, our conception of modern science - in which everything seems to have a logical explanation and progression - was totally alien to seventeenth century man or woman.

8) Galileo (1564-1642)

a) In January 1610, Galileo first used his new 30 power telescope to look into the heavens. Galileo saw mountains and craters on the moon. He saw that the Galaxy, our Milky Way, was "nothing else but a mass of innumerable stars planted together in clusters." In addition, Galileo discovered the four largest moons of Jupiter. Immediately, he published his findings in a book entitled *The Starry Messenger*.

b) But, Galileo was no hero. In 1633, he was brought before the Inquisition and forced to live the rest of his life under house arrest.

c) Why? Galileo had questioned a very old way of thinking. He had attempted to enter a world that was not to be penetrated. And, he was punished.

9) What goes on in Massachusetts in the seventeenth century is based on this conception of the world. That there are spirits at work in the world all the time - but, we don't see them most of the time.

b. The belief in magic

1) Belief that supernatural powers could be claimed by some people.

2) That the world extra-human powers could be manipulated by people within that very world.

c. The idea of a witch.

1) In African context, a witch did NOT have to be evil--In European context, a witch was evil.

2) Usually a woman.

a) European witches used magical skills to cause harm.

b) Witches brewed herbs for evil purposes.

c) *Maleficium*=Use of magic for harmful aims.

d) Witch was always associated with the Devil.

d. Particular Christian Idea of Witchcraft.

1) Witch's power comes from a pact with Satan.

2) Exchanged her soul for evil powers.

3) Witches worship Devil in groups ("A Coven").

a) Sacrifice, murder a part of worship.

b) Debauchery, lust.

c) Parody of Christian services.

4) Idea that witches worked with other witches was absolutely essential.

a) Capturing one witch would lead nowhere.

b) However, if witches are communal, capture of one witch could lead to capture of others.

e. Development of judicial procedures to deal with deviants

1) Use of church questioners

2) These men must rely not on the medieval trial by ordeal, where God proved crime - He would not let an innocent man die – but on questions and answers

3) BUT witchcraft is carried out in secrecy and it is a manipulation of super-human powers that is hard to explain and prove

a) Judges had to rely upon confessions.

b) No eyewitnesses, no witches.

c) Had to get the confessions somehow ...

f. The Use of Torture to get confessions.

1) Torture a supplement to the inquisitorial methods.

2) By the 16th century, everything in place for a witch hunt.

3) Would have been no great witch hunt without torture.

4) When one admitted to witchcraft, you had to name the names of other witches.

5) Idea was that witches did not act alone.

6) The witch hunt fed itself.

3. These six factors were present, but they still don't explain why Massachusetts was so hard hit by witchcraft accusations and executions. So, how can we explain it.

a. Most people accused of witchcraft were women or deviants - the Quakers, the Antinomians, Baptists – or both.

b. Based on that fact, you have to reassess the Puritan stress on consensus and conformity

c. The deviants obviously threatened this conformity but the women who were accused did as well.

1) These women were usually over forty, whose family lives were in varying ways anomalous: they stood to inherit, did inherit, or were denied their inheritance larger proportions than women of families with male heirs.

2) These conditions often led to conflicts between relatives within the community, especially if the woman defended her rights.

d. All this being said, we still are not at the heart of the problem, which I think is two fold:

1) The social circumstances of the late sixteenth century caused great tension:

- a) King Philip's War (1675)
- b) Establishment of the Anglican Church in Massachusetts (1679)
- c) Loss of the Charter and the Dominion of New England (1686-89)

2) Of greater significance, however, was the complex Puritan conception of women:

a) The belief that women were evil existed implicitly at the core of Puritan culture.

The Medieval view was that women were weak, more sensual, more sinful, ever susceptible (as Eve had been) - there were frequent medieval writings supporting this; b) The Puritans internalized this medieval view but did not express it forthright because they had embraced post-Reformation views of good, obedient women as the helpmates of men (but the older view was still there implicitly!)

c) If a woman was obedient and subservient, then she fit into the Puritan view of hierarchy - Protestant ministers wrote tracts praising the good wife (John Cotton- A Help Meet, 1699; Cotton Mather-Ornaments for the Daughters of Zion, 1692) - the wife was in a covenanted relationship with the man, who was head of the family as Christ was head of the Church

d) Yet despite the new view of women as help-meet, the old view still existed implicitly that women were weak, seductive, and very capable of undermining the social hierarchy (just as Eve had)

e) Female submission did not come easily; in Mather's Wonders of the Invisible World (1692) the author spoke of the witches as proud, discontented, malicious, etc.

f) Women could be a great support or the greatest agent of the devil, depending on whether or not they accepted their position in society as the helpmates and the servants of men; women who were suspected of not fitting this model were accused of witchcraft, for witches undermined the hierarchical and cohesive elements of society

VII. Conclusions:

A. The second half of the seventeenth century proved tough for Massachusetts. The settlers found themselves confronting disturbing questions about their own identities, frightened by serious threats from the Indians, embittered by internal factionalism, and challenged by the British government who took their charter in 1684.

B. In each case, however, the result helped define the social systems and political beliefs that the Puritans and their descendants would carry into the next century.

C. Puritans remained the dominant force in New England until the American Revolution.