

MASSACHUSETTS SETTLEMENT

I. The Virginia Company of Plymouth fails

- A. Like the Virginia Company of London, the Virginia Company of Plymouth tried to settle in the New World in 1607.
- B. They set up a settlement on a rocky spit of Maine coast at the mouth of the Kennebec River. Fort St. George was built there and 44 settlers were left to man the post in the winter of 1607-08.
- C. The attempt was a miserable failure (see pg 88 in Hawke, *The Colonial Experience*)
- D. In 1609, the Virginia Company of London invited the Plymouth members to join in with them and many accepted the offer.

II. The Council of New England

- A. Captain John Smith – the man who led Jamestown between 1608 and 1609 – had much to do with the move back to Northern Virginia (an area he soon named New England).
- B. Smith had passed the years 1609 to 1614 in England - wasted years he believed.
 - 1. In 1614 two London merchants hired him to hunt whales off the coast of Newfoundland.
 - 2. He didn't find whales, but brought back a shipload of fish and new ideas about the northeastern coast of America.
- C. In 1616, Smith published *A Description of New England*, a pamphlet and map that became a best seller and led to the founding of the Council for New England.
- D. In 1620, members of the old Plymouth Company – Sir Ferdinando Gorges, Sir Francis Popham, and Raliegth Gilbert – secured another charter from the Crown that created the Council for New England, and in this guise the old company kept a hold on the New England area.

III. The Stage is Being Set in 1620s

- A. The stage was set by 1620 for two movements to the Northeastern Coast of North America.
- B. The Pilgrims (Puritan Separatists) would first move to Plymouth in 1620 – not under the Council for New England – but under approval from the Virginia Company of London (the Pilgrims settled outside the London Company's grant at Cape Cod and were squatters until 1691, when the colony was merged with Massachusetts).
- C. The Puritans would start their move to Massachusetts in 1630 under rights provided first by the Council of New England and then by the King.

IV. Puritanism and the Old World

A. Although Henry VIII, Edward VI's Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Cranmer, and Elizabeth I had all moved the English into the Protestant camp during the sixteenth century, many people in England still saw problems with the Anglican Church.

B. With the Elizabethan Settlement of 1559, the Queen of England had sought a middle road between Catholics and Protestants. The Church under Elizabeth was Protestant in doctrine but retained much of the ceremony and structure of Catholicism.

C. The Puritans sought to purge the liturgy (rites of the Church service) of its "popish remnants," and thus purify the English church.

D. In their struggle to purify the Anglican Church, the Puritans were drawing upon another strand of the Protestant Reformation.

1. Three strands of the Reformation

- a. Martin Luther and German Reformation begun in 1517 at Wittenburg
- b. English Reformation begun by Henry VIII in 1534
- c. John Calvin begun with *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1536)

2. It was the third strand upon which the Puritans were drawing: Calvinism

E. Three main tenets of Calvinism

1. Absolute sovereignty of God.

- a. Omnipotent: All powerful God.
- b. Omniscient: All knowing God.
- c. Omnipresent: All seeing God.
- d. For Calvin, the entire universe is utterly dependent on the will of the almighty, who created all things for his greater glory.

Calvin demanded that his students "contemplate, with steady, unblinking resolution, the absolute, incomprehensible, and transcendent sovereignty of God; he required men to stare fixedly and without relief into the very center of the blazing sun of glory. God is not to be understood but to be adored. This supreme and awful essence can never be delineated in such a way that He seems even momentarily to take on any shape, contour, or feature recognizable in the terms of human discourse, nor may His activities be subjected to the laws of human reason or natural plausibility" (Perry Miller, "The Marrow of Puritan Divinity" from *Errand into the Wilderness*, 51).

God cannot be approached directly; man cannot stand face to face with Him, "for in doing so, what do we else but draw neere to God, as the stubble or the waxe should draw neere to the fire? . . . He is a consuming fire to the sonnes of men, if they come to him immediately" (Perry Miller, "The Marrow of Puritan Divinity" from *Errand into the Wilderness*, 52 – the quote is from John Preston's book *The New Covenant, or the Saints Portion* (London 1629) pg, 503).

2. Total depravity of man in contrast to God.

a. Man – through Adam –has fallen from grace.

1) "Puritans differed on how generations after Adam came to bear the guilt of original sin – some adopted the Augustinian theory that it was a product of inheritance, while others saw Adam as the representative man in whose guilt and punishment all men shared"(Bremer, *The Puritan Experiment*, 20).

b. Man will always do wrong.

1) Although they disagreed on Adams role, all Puritans "agreed in their assessment of the effects of original sin: Physically: suffering, illness, and death became part of the human condition. Spiritually: all of man's faculties were disoriented and his soul corrupted"(Bremer, *The Puritan Experiment*, 20).

c. Man too weak to ever merit salvation: Salvation could not be earned.

1) "*All men deserve damnation* – this was a central belief of the Puritan, confirmed by his observation of his fellows and by his awareness of the darker impulses of his own nature"(Bremer, *The Puritan Experiment*, 20).

3. However, God – for reasons of his own which cannot be known – has predestined some men and women for eternal salvation (the rest will be damned). Salvation is a gift of God's grace to undeserving man.

G. What is it that Calvinists want to do: Return to the early Church before Catholicism and Anglicanism. Calvinists called their church the Reform church.

H. What were the repercussions of these tenets and this drive?

1. Puritans reject 5 of the 7 Catholic sacraments that were also (in a slightly different form) retained by the Anglican Church in England:

a. What are sacraments? Sacraments are liturgical actions (rites) of the Christian Church, believed to have been instituted by Christ to communicate God's grace or power through material objects. They are the visible signs of God's grace, and they take place at key points in each person's life.

b. What are the sacraments of the Catholic and Anglican churches?

1) Baptism - a rite and public display of one's acceptance of God's grace

2) Marriage - a rite of union between man, woman, and God

3) Penance - a rite of atonement to God for wrongdoing

4) Mass (Communion) - where the miracle of transubstantiation occurs for believers, and they come into intimate union with Christ

5) Confirmation - As the Catholic Church developed, infants were baptized so that they might have salvation should they die early in life. Confirmation (or learning the word of God) became necessary for the completion of baptismal

grace. For "by the sacrament of Confirmation, [the baptized] are more perfectly bound to the Church and to God.

6) Ordination - rite by which an ordinary man is made a priest

7) Extreme unction - last rites at death

c. Through these rights believers feel that they gain understanding of and access to the saving work of Christ.

d. Which sacraments did the Calvinists reject and why?

1) They rejected all but baptism and communion (transubstantiation did not occur)

2) They argued that there was not evidence to support the other sacraments in the Bible, nor did they believe these sacraments had been a part of the early church.

2. opposed the vestments, the surplice and the outdoor dress of the clergy

3. objected to signing with the cross – not in the Bible

4. opposed addressing interrogatories to the infant in baptism (Puritans did practice infant baptism)

5. opposed baptism by midwives

6. opposed kneeling at the communion and the use of wafer bread

7. opposed the giving of the ring in marriage

8. opposed observance of saints' days

9. opposed instruments in the church

I. Some English Calvinists want to purify the Anglican Church of these "popish remnants" from within – called simply Puritans – other Calvinists want to separated entirely from the Anglican Church – called Separatists.

V. Plymouth and the Pilgrims

A. A small group of Puritan Separatists set up the second permanent English settlement in North America, and first in New England: Plymouth Plantation.

B. The Separatists were originally from the small town of Scrooby, in East Anglia, but they had suffered persecution and gone into exile in Holland for their refusal to observe the practices of the established church.

C. Led by William Bradford, this group of thirty-five believing "saints," with sixty-seven others, left England for America in September 1620 on board the ship Mayflower.

D. To govern their settlement, they subscribed to a covenant or agreement that set down a code of civil laws, known as the **Mayflower Compact**.

E. 102 settlers disembarked at Plymouth Rock to begin their settlement on December 21, 1620.

F. Only 44 survived the first winter, but the colony prospered in the following years with an economy based on fur, fish, and lumber.

G. Plymouth Plantation remained small, but its example led other Puritans to attempt similar settlements that would prosper.

H. Plymouth was self-governing under the Mayflower Compact until 1691, when King William III placed the Plymouth settlement under the governorship of the new royal colony of Massachusetts.

VI. The Massachusetts Charter of 1629

A. The Indians had had New England largely to themselves until the Pilgrims broke "the ice for others." By 1628, fish-drying and fur buying depots dotted the coast, and drew interest from England.

B. In early 1628 a group of Puritan merchants formed the New England Company and took out a patent from the Council for New England that conveyed to them the land roughly between the Merrimac and Charles Rivers.

C. The New England Company outfitted a shipload of some forty settlers led by **John Endecott** and departed in June 1628 for Salem (a small settlement set up as an outpost in 1626).

E. While New England Company settlers built up Salem, Puritan leaders at home converted their patent into a royal charter and the New England Company into the incorporated **Massachusetts Bay Company**.

F. The charter was approved on March 4, 1629. It confirmed the original land grant and in addition gave the company all rights of government over any colony it created.

G. In the charter, there was no provision that the charter and company headquarters must remain in England.

1. It was assumed both would; there was no precedent for anything else, nor, it seems, was there any plan afoot in the beginning to break with the past.

2. The original plan was to have the company remain in England and to avoid the London Company's early mistakes by letting settlers work out things with little interference from home.

3. However, Charles I had dissolved Parliament two weeks before the Bay Company got its charter, leaving him and his favorite bishop, William Laud, free to harass Puritans without restraint.

4. And so, by the summer of 1629 events had convinced many company members that if they were to worship as they wished, they must emigrate to America. Not only would they go themselves, but they would take the company with them and merge it in New England with the colonial government.

5. On August 29 1629 the **Cambridge Agreement** was worked out, whereby all responsibility for the company's government was given to those who would emigrate.

VII. Massachusetts is settled

A. John Winthrop was chosen by the Massachusetts Bay Company leaders to head the new venture, and plans went ahead for the move to America. Essentially, from this point until his death, Winthrop acted as the chairman of the Massachusetts Bay Corporation's board of directors (called assistants), which governed the company's affairs subject to meetings (General Court) of the stockholders (freemen).

B. In March 1630 a fleet of eleven ships led by the Arbella, left for New England with some seven hundred passengers

C. The fleet's purpose differed from that of the first Jamestown voyage. Then, the goal had been to build a settlement that would promote trade. The hope for profit had not been discarded from the new enterprise altogether, but it had been subordinated to another goal – settling a permanent new society for beleaguered Puritans.

D. So, these settlers looked very different from those who had gone to Jamestown.

1. First, they came in whole families, not as single men. They wanted to settle in the new world.

2. Second, most of them were moving to America for religious reasons. Religion gave a unity of purpose and strength to the Puritan venture absent in the Virginia enterprise.

3. These people were of similar social and economic rank in England.

a. Few of the migrants were gentlemen, and even these came from minor gentry families

b. Yeomen, who constituted 15% of the English population, made up only about 2% of the population migrating to New England.

c. Laborers, the poor, and the illiterate, all common in England, were less so in New England - they made up less than 25%

d. About 20% of the colonists had worked in the textile trade, usually at the low end of things

e. 10% or so, were woodworkers

f. More than 50 % were artisans or had practiced some sort of craft

g. Of course, all of these people would become jacks-of-all-trades and farmers in the New World, but they approached the New World in the same way.

E. When the fleet arrived in June 1630, John Endecott met them at Salem with housing prepared and fresh food on hand.

F. Within a few weeks the main settlement had been moved to the new center, Boston.

G. The Puritans' first winter was no different than experienced by most North American settlers in the early part of the century.

1. Two hundred died in the first winter
2. One hundred more went home to England

H. John Winthrop, the leader of the colony, refused to move south, however. He provided critical leadership during this period. He gave of his own resources, sent men to buy corn from the Indians, and established a successful farm on the Mystic River as an example for other settlers.

I. His choice not to move south proved to be a good choice: the absence of Indians and the presence of Pilgrims, who sold cattle and food and gave advice when asked, helped to carry the colony over rough spots.

J. By the end of the summer in 1631, some two thousand Puritans had arrived in Massachusetts Bay.

K. But this early movement was just a trickle that would soon open into a flood.

1. Two weeks after Charles I had granted the Massachusetts Bay Company a charter he had dismissed Parliament.
2. Between 1629 and 1640 Charles ruled without Parliament: 11 years of tyranny
3. Without Parliament, Charles has a freer hand trying to make Puritans conform.
4. Charles I sanctioned the anti-Puritan persecutions of the reactionary Bishop of London (1628) then Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud
5. With mounting pressure, Puritans feel that now might be the time to leave England.
6. So, between 1630 and 1640, 80,000 people left England in what is known as the GREAT MIGRATION. 14,000 of those immigrants came to Massachusetts to help set up the new Puritan Commonwealth.