

New England Colonies in the Seventeenth Century

I. Protestant Reformation and the rise of Puritanism

- A. 1517, **Martin Luther** began break from Catholic church; birth of Protestantism
1. Luther declared the Bible alone was the source of God's word
 2. Faith alone would determine salvation; he denounced authority of the Pope
 3. Protestantism vs. Catholicism came to dominate European politics well into the next century.

B. **John Calvin** elaborated on Luther's ideas and founded **Calvinism** in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1536)

1. God was all powerful and all-good.
2. Humans, due to original sin, were weak and wicked.
3. **Predestination**
 - a. God was all-knowing and knew beforehand who was going to heaven or hell.
-- The "elect" were those chosen by God to have eternal salvation
 - b. "Good works" (such as following the sacraments of the Catholic Church) did not determine salvation.
 - c. However, one could not act immoral since no one knew their status before God
 - d. A conversion experience (an intense identifiable personal experience with God) was seen to be a sign from God that one had been chosen.
-- "visible saints": After conversion, people expected to lead "sanctified" lives as a model for the community.

C. **Church of England** and the Puritans

1. King Henry VIII broke ties with Roman Catholic church in 1530's and became head of the newly formed **Church of England** or **Anglican Church**.
-- The pope had refused to grant him a divorce; Henry remarried afterwards.
2. Puritans were Protestants seeking to reform the Anglican Church by removing its Catholic elements and excluding people who were not committed.
3. Separatists: extreme group of Puritans who wanted to break from the Anglican Church altogether— later called Pilgrims.
4. James I concerned that Separatists challenged his role as leader of the Church and threatened to force them out of England.

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D. Stuart Line of Monarchs: Backdrop to 17th century colonial history

- James I (r. 1603-1625)
- Charles I (r. 1625-1642)
- 1642-1649 -- English Civil War
- Interregnum under Oliver Cromwell (1649-1658)
- Restoration: Charles II (1660-1685)
- James I (r. 1685-1688)
- "Glorious Revolution" (1688): William & Mary; Bill of Rights (1689)

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II. The Pilgrims

A. First wave of Separatists

1. Separatists left Britain for Holland for freedom to practice Calvinism.
 - a. Led by the Rev. **John Robinson**
 - b. Later, became unhappy by the "Dutchification" of their children.
 - c. Sought opportunity to practice their religion as Englishmen without interference
2. Secured rights with Virginia Company to settle within its jurisdiction in Virginia
 - a. Pilgrims agreed to work for 7 years in return for the support of the joint stock company which was comprised of non-separatist investors.
 - b. Profits to be shared among settlers & investors after 7 years.
3. Mayflower landed off New England coast with 102 persons
 - a. Fewer than half were Separatists
 - b. Some historians suggest Pilgrims "hijacked" the ship and gained consent of non-separatists by issuing the *Mayflower Compact*.
4. Plymouth Bay chosen as settlement site
 - a. Plymouth had been an Amerindian community that had been ravaged by a great plague just a few years earlier.
 - b. Plymouth was outside jurisdiction of Virginia Company
 - c. Settlers thus became squatters: no legal right to land and no recognized gov't (thus, never gained charter from the crown)
5. Mayflower Compact (not a constitution but an agreement)
 - a. Purpose: To legitimize Pilgrims' settlement outside Virginia by creating a secular document recognizing James I as their sovereign and creating a body of all the settlers with power to devise laws and elect leaders.
 - Because Plymouth Colony never possessed a charter, it was later merged with Massachusetts Bay Colony
 - b. Agreement provided for majority rule among settlers (excluding servants and seamen)—became an important seed of democracy.

- c. Adult male settlers assembled to make laws and conduct open-discussion town meetings.
6. Despite terrible first winter where over ½ the people died, no one left Plymouth Plantation.
7. **Thanksgiving** -- Autumn, 1621
 - a. An English-speaking Amerindian, **Squanto**, helped Pilgrims: demonstrated corn cultivation, where to fish, and introduced them to **Massasoit**, leader of the Wampanoags.
 - b. An alliance formed by Pilgrims & Wampanoags for mutual protection against other Amerindian tribes.
 - c. By fall of 1621, 20 acres of Amerindian corn provided food for survival.
 - d. Pilgrims adopted Amerindians' traditional custom of giving thanks at the time of harvest, believing their survival as God's will; lasted 3 days and became an annual event.
 - e. Peace lasted 41 years until Massasoit's death in 1662.

B. Success of the Pilgrims

1. Developed economy of fur trade, fishing, and lumber.
2. Religion remained paramount in the community
3. William Bradford: prominent leader; elected Governor 30 times
-- To encourage farming, he distributed land among the settlers.
4. Miles Standish: military leader who was hired to accompany the Pilgrims.
 - a. Led so many expeditions against Amerindians whom he distrusted that he was scolded by John Robinson
 - b. Despite Puritan attacks, Massasoit honored treaty until his death in 1661.

C. 1691, the small Plymouth colony of 7,000 people merged with the large Massachusetts Bay Colony.

III. The **Massachusetts Bay Colony** (founded in 1629)

- A. Why did Puritans want to come to America?
 1. Charles I dismissed Parliament in 1629 and sanctioned anti-Puritan persecution.
 - a. **Archbishop Laud** opposed any separation from the Church of England.
 - b. Hitherto, moderate Puritans had gathered support in Parliament for reforms
 - c. King refused to guarantee power of Parliament or basic rights for people.

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B. MBC founded in 1629 by non-Separatist Puritans out of fear for their faith and England's future.

1. Cambridge Agreement: signed in England; turned the corporate charter into a government that served as MBC's constitution for many years.
2. Puritans now out of easy reach of royal authority & archbishop

C. **The "Great Migration"** (1630's)

1. By 1631, 2,000 colonists had arrived in Boston and had settled a number of towns around it as well.
2. Turmoil in England resulted in 15,000 more immigrants coming to New England (60,000 others scattered throughout North America & West Indies).
3. English Civil War (1642-1649) ended the Great Migration
 - a. Puritans remained in England to fight the Royalist forces.
 - b. Puritans in England led by Oliver Cromwell took control of gov't between 1642 & 1660.
 - c. Charles I beheaded in 1649

D. John Winthrop - Governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony

1. Covenant Theology: Winthrop believed Puritans had a covenant with God to lead new religious experiment in New World
 - Wrote "**We shall build a city upon a hill**" in *A Model of Christian Charity* as he was sailing to Massachusetts Bay
2. His strong leadership helped the colony to succeed.

E. Massachusetts became biggest and most influential of New England colonies.

- Economy: fishing, shipbuilding, fur trade, lumbering; some dairy farming, and small farming of wheat & corn

IV. Religion and politics in Massachusetts Bay Colony

A. Governing open to all free adult males (2/5 of population)

belonging to Puritan congregations;

1. Percentage of eligible officeholders was more than in England.
2. Eventually, Puritan churches grew collectively into the **Congregational Church**
3. Non-religious men and all women could not vote
4. Townhall meetings emerged as a staple of democracy
 - a. Town governments allowed all male property holders and at times other residents to vote and publicly discuss issues.
 - b. Votes conducted by majority-rule (show of hands).

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B. Purpose of government: enforce God's laws (covenant theology)

1. Provincial gov't under Governor Winthrop was not a democracy
2. Only Puritans -- the "visible saints" -- could be freemen; only freemen could vote
-- Hated democracy and distrusted non-Puritan common people.
3. Congregational church was "established": Non-church members as well as believers required to pay taxes to the gov't-supported church.
4. Religious dissenters were punished
-- New England became the least tolerant regarding religion

C. Church leadership

1. Influenced admission to church membership by conducting public interrogations of people claiming to have experienced conversion.
2. **John Cotton** devoted to defending gov't's duty to enforce religious rules yet advocated a civil government.
3. Clergymen were not allowed to hold political office
 - a. Congregation could hire and fire ministers and set salaries.
 - b. In effect, a form of separation of church and state.
 - c. Puritans in England had learned their lesson when they suffered at the hands of the "political" Anglican clergy in England.
4. **Cambridge Platform (1648):** 4 Puritan colonies--MBC, Plymouth, Connecticut & New Haven -- organized a congregational form of church gov't
-- Significance: Congregational church became more uniform throughout New England.

D. Representative legislative assembly formed in 1634 and after 1642 assembly met separately as a lower house and was most influential part of gov't.

E. Religious dissenters in the MBC.

1. **Quakers**, who believed in an inner light and not in theology, flouted the authority of the Puritan clergy and were persecuted.
2. **Anne Hutchinson:** believed in **antinomianism**
 - a. Accordingly, the "elect" didn't need to obey God's or man's law because they were predestined for salvation.
 - b. She held prayer meetings at home to discuss John Cotton's sermons with other women; this was taboo for a non-clergy member to do.
 - c. Clergy accused her of heresy and brought her to trial in 1638.
 - i. She claimed direct revelation from God, even a higher heresy.
 - ii. She was banished from colony; set out for Rhode Island
 - iii. Her trial may have been political since some who supported Anne politically opposed the present leadership of the colony

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3. Roger Williams

- a. Extreme Separatist who challenged legality of Plymouth and MBC charters because land belonged to Amerindians and was not the king's land to grant.
 - Claimed colony took land from Amerindians without fair compensation
- b. **"liberty of conscience"**
 - i. Williams denied authority of civil gov't to regulate religious behavior.
 - Stated gov't could only punish civil crimes while the church alone had responsibility for religious discipline.
 - Stated that no man should be forced to go to church.
 - In effect, challenged the basis of the Massachusetts Bay government.
 - ii. Used "wall of separation" metaphor for church and state separation.
 - Jefferson would later use this metaphor to disestablish religion in Virginia which later influenced "No Establishment" clause of the Constitution.
- c. General Court banished him from colony in October, 1635 and Williams fled in winter of 1636 to Narragansett Bay; sheltered by Amerindian friends.
- d. He purchased lands from Amerindians and founded the community of Providence, accepting all settlers regardless of their beliefs.

F. The decline of Puritanism

1. First generation Puritans began losing their religious zeal as time went on.
 - a. Large population influx dispersed Puritan population onto outlying farms away from control of church and neighbors.
 - b. After the wave of dissention in the 1630s and 1640s (e.g. Hutchinson and Williams) conversions decreased dramatically.
 - Children of non-converted members could not be baptized.
 - c. The **jeremiad**, taken from the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah, was used by preachers to scold parishioners into being more committed to their faith.
 - d. Conversions continued to decrease as 2nd generation Puritans had trouble getting their conversions authenticated by the church, thus preventing their children from being baptized.
2. "**Half-Way Covenant**", 1662: sought to attract more members by giving partial membership to the unconverted (who had been baptized as children).
 - Children of Half-Way members were allowed to be baptized.

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3. Eventually, Puritan churches baptized anyone
 - a. Distinction between the "elect" and other members of society subsided.
 - b. Strict religious purity was sacrificed for wider religious participation.
 - Women began making up a larger % of congregations.
4. **Salem Witch Trials**, 1692: Symbolized the decline of Puritan clergy
 - a. Massachusetts suffered political, religious, and military upheaval that led to widespread paranoia and unrest.
 - Many Europeans and colonists in 16th and 17th centuries believed the devil worked through witches in the real world.
 - b. First accusations began when young girls, after listening to voodoo tales from a black servant, began behaving oddly.
 - i. Witch hunt resulted in a reign of terror after certain older women were accused of being witches
 - ii. The young female accusers were from the poor western part of the community and accused the more prosperous people in the eastern part.
 - c. After witch trials, 20 people were executed
 - d. **Cotton Mather**, one of most prominent clergymen in Massachusetts, tacitly supported the witch trials, thus weakening the prestige of the clergy.

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V. Completing the New England Colonies

A. **Rhode Island** (1644)

1. Williams built Baptist church at Providence (1st Baptist church in America?)
 - a. Complete freedom of religion, even for Jews, Catholics and Quakers.
 - b. No oaths required regarding one's religious beliefs
 - c. No compulsory attendance at worship
 - d. No taxes to support a state church
2. Provided simple manhood suffrage in the colony from the outset
 - Opposed to special privilege of any sort
3. Rhode Island saw immigration dissenters from Bay Colony which led to most individualistic and independent population (along with North Carolina).
4. Given charter from Parliament in 1644; squatters now had rights to land

B. Connecticut (founded in 1636)

1. May 1636, group of Boston Puritans led by **Rev. Thomas Hooker** moved into the Connecticut River valley area and founded the town of Hartford.
 - a. Three valley towns of Hartford, Windsor, and Wethersfield established Connecticut colony.
 - b. Hooker believed MBC gov't was too arbitrary and oppressive.
 - c. His congregation also wanted more lands that the MBC was unwilling to grant.
2. New Haven founded in 1638
 - a. Founded by Puritans wanting stricter and closer church-gov't alliance than Massachusetts (in contrast to Hooker's ideas)
 - b. When the colony harbored two judges who condemned Charles I to death, Charles II sought revenge by granting colonial charter to Connecticut which merged New Haven with more democratic settlements in Connecticut Valley
3. **Fundamental Orders** drafted in 1639 by new Connecticut River colony
 - a. First modern constitution in American history
 - b. Established a democracy controlled by wealthy citizens
 - i. Gov't should be based on consent of the people.
 - ii. Patterned after Massachusetts' gov't.
 - c. Foundation for Connecticut's colonial charter and later, its state constitution.

C. Maine absorbed by MBC in 1677 after purchase from the heirs of its founders
-- Remained part of Massachusetts for nearly 150 years until Compromise of 1820.

D. New Hampshire (1679): had been absorbed in 1641 by Massachusetts Bay Colony

1. Primarily fishing and trading economy
2. 1679, Charles II arbitrarily separated NH from MBC after being annoyed with MBC's apparent greed in land acquisition. NH became royal colony.

VI. New England Confederation (1643) -- MBC, Plymouth, Connecticut & New Haven

A. Pequot War (1636-1637)

1. Despite Puritan victory over Amerindians, New England colonies realized collective security was necessary for future defense.
2. Relations between Puritans & Pequots strained in years preceding the war in southern Connecticut and Rhode Island as Puritans wanted Amerindians to move

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3. Connecticut towns sent 90 men who opted to attack a smaller village of non-combatants where 400 Indian men, women and children were slain
4. By summer's end, most remaining Pequots either captured, sold as slaves to West Indies, or fled for shelter to their former enemies.
5. Puritans used Biblical passages to justify extermination of the Pequots.

B. In response to Pequot War, New England Confederation founded in 1643.

1. Purpose: defense against foes (e.g. Indians, French, and Dutch).
2. Significance: First milestone on road to colonial unity.
3. English Civil War in 1640s left colonies to fend for themselves.
4. Organization
 - a. Exclusively Puritan (Maine & Rhode island not allowed)
 - b. Helped to solve intercolonial problems (e.g. runaway servants and criminals)

C. King Philip's War (1675)

1. New England Confederation put to the test during war with Indian chieftain **King Philip (Metacom)** -- Wampanoag Chief, son of Massasoit
2. 52 of 90 Puritan towns attacked; burning or other damage ensued; 13 destroyed
-- Indians copied the Puritan attacks on noncombatants in the Pequot War.
3. Colonists victorious; many Indians sold into slavery in Bermuda
-- Metacom executed and his head was cut-off and displayed for 20 years.
4. Impact of war:
 - a. Bloodiest ever fought on New England soil.
 - b. Native Americans effectively removed from MBC, Connecticut, and Rhode Island
 - c. Success of New England Confederation can be seen perhaps as the beginning of American identity as separate from Britain (as Britain did not help the colonists in the war)
 - d. New England's success caught the attention of the British Crown that sought to cash in on the region's success
-- Massachusetts' charter revoked a few years later

VII. Dominion of New England

A. Charles II clamps down on New England Confederation

1. Relative autonomy among the colonists ran disturbed Charles, royalists, and Church of England.
 - Puritan hopes of purifying the English Church were destroyed
2. MBC charter revoked in 1684 in response to its resisting royal orders

B. Dominion of New England (1686)

1. **Mercantilism:** colonies existed for the benefit of the mother country: wealth, prosperity, and self-sufficiency.
2. 1685, Lords of Trade created Dominion of New England Goal to unite all colonies from Nova Scotia to the Delaware River under one gov't
3. Purpose of DNE:
 - a. Enforce Navigation laws created to protect mercantilist system
 - Trade with non-British colonies & allies forbidden
 - b. Bolstered colonial defense against Indians, Dutch, and French.
4. 1686, James II appointed **Sir Edmund Andros** to lead the DNE to oversee all of New England and later New York and East and West Jersey
 - a. Colonists despised his autocracy and allegiance to Anglican Church
 - b. Town meetings forbidden; all land titles revoked.
 - c. Heavy restrictions on the courts, press, and schools
 - d. Taxed the people without consent of their representatives
 - e. Enforced unpopular Navigation Laws and suppressed smuggling
 - Smuggling became common and even honorable

C. England's "**Glorious Revolution**" triggered "First American Revolution"

1. Catholic James II dethroned in England and replaced by his daughter Mary and her Dutch-born Protestant husband William III (William of Orange).
 - Parliament created a constitutional monarchy: forbade the king from levying taxes or ruling without its consent.
2. News of James II's removal prompted Boston leaders to arrest Andros and ship him back to England.
3. Unrest spread from New England to the Carolinas
4. DNE collapsed and enforcement of Navigation Laws was disrupted.

D. Post-Glorious Revolution New England

1. 1691, Massachusetts made a royal colony with a new charter & royal governor.
2. Tighter administrative control by king over the colonies resulted.

VIII. New England Life and Contributions to the American Character

A. Impact of Geography

1. Lack of good soil forged the Puritan characteristic of frugality and hard work.
2. Trade was cornerstone of region's economy: fishing and shipbuilding
3. Lumbering, shipping, and fir trade also became important due to abundant forests and harbors.
4. Less ethnic diversity; immigrants not eager to settle in soil deprived region.

B. **Puritan contribution to American character**

1. Democracy (within the Congregational church) via town meetings and voting rights to church members (starting in 1631)
 - a. Led to democracy in political gov't ("Body of Liberties" in 1641 may have been world's first bill of rights).
 - b. **Townhall meetings** where freemen met together and each man voted was democracy in its purest form.
 - c. New England villagers regularly met to elect officials, appoint schoolmasters and attend to civic issues (e.g. road repair)
2. **Perfectionism**
 - a. Puritans sought to create a perfect society based on God's laws
 - i. Argued against slavery on moral grounds
 - ii. Ideas lay the foundation for later reform movements: abolition of slavery, women's rights, education, prohibition, prison reform, etc.
 - b. Protestant work ethic: those who were faithful and worked hard and succeeded were seen favorably by God.

C. Education was a major feature of New England society

1. **Harvard College** founded in 1636 to train the clergy; first college in the colonies.
-- Virginians did not found a college until 1693 (William & Mary College)
2. **Massachusetts School of Law** (1642 & 1647)
 - a. Towns with more than 50 families required to provide elementary education to enable children to read the Bible.
 - b. New England became most literate section of the country.
-- Majority of adults knew how to read and write

- D. Small villages and farms formed basis for the tightly knit society
 - 1. Necessary to provide security from bordering Indians, French and Dutch.
 - 2. After 1640s, outsiders generally not welcome in villages
- E. Extremely strict and conservative lifestyle

IX. New England Family

- A. New England's climate less deadly than in southern Colonies
 - 1. Cooler weather and clean water = less disease
 - 2. Added 10 years to life spans compared to England; life expectancy was 70 yrs
- B. Puritans tended to migrate as families rather than as individuals
- C. Families had many children.
- D. Strong family stability produced healthy adults and strong social structure.

Main Ideas:

- 1. What political and religious circumstances in England led to the formation and development of New England?
 - Persecution of Puritans in England resulted in the migration of Pilgrims and Puritans in the 1620s
 - English Civil War significantly reduced migration to New England.
 - English Civil War preoccupied English gov't and left the colonies to fend for themselves (e.g., New England Confederation).
- 2. How did religion play a role in the development of the New England colonies?
 - Pilgrims came for religious freedom in 1620
 - Puritans came starting in 1629 to "build a city on a hill"; Covenant Theology
 - Rhode Island founded by a religious dissenter, Roger Williams
 - Connecticut River colonies founded by Puritan communities
 - Protestant work ethic resulted in a diverse and successful economy
 - Puritan clergy had much power until the late 17th century.
 - Education important so that people could read the Bible; high literacy rate
 - Creation of tightly-knit communities

3. How did New England differ socially, economically and politically from the southern colonies?
 - Socially: emphasis on Puritanism (little religious toleration), education, strong family and community ties
 - Economically: diverse economy -- trade, fishing, shipbuilding, shipping, fur trade, some dairy farming, some corn and wheat farming; relatively small numbers of slaves
 - Politically: church members could vote, not as aristocratic, strong communities
4. How did Puritanism in New England lead towards democracy?
 - Townhall meetings
 - Church members could vote
5. Trace the decline in the prestige of the Puritan clergy in 17th century New England:
 - Jeremiad
 - Halfway Covenant (1662)
 - Dominion of New England (1680s)
 - Salem Witch Trials (1692)
 - By 1700, Puritan church became the Congregational Church that was open to all comers.

Terms to Know

Protestant Reformation	Cambridge Platform
Martin Luther	Quakers
John Calvin	Anne Hutchinson
Calvinism	antinomianism
predestination	Roger Williams
the "elect"	"liberty of conscience"
"visible saints"	jeremiad
Church of England	Half-way Covenant
Puritans	Salem Witch Trials
Separatists	Cotton Mather
Pilgrims	Rhode Island
John Robinson	Connecticut
<i>Mayflower</i>	Thomas Hooker
Plymouth Bay	<i>Fundamental Orders</i>
<i>Mayflower Compact</i>	Pequot War
Wampanoags	New England Confederation
Thanksgiving	King Philip's War
Squanto	Metacom
Massasoit	Dominion of New England
Massachusetts Bay Colony	Charles II
Archbishop Laud	mercantilism
"Great Migration"	Navigation Laws
John Winthrop	"Glorious Revolution"
covenant theology	"First American Revolution"
<i>A Model of Christian Charity</i>	Sir Edmund Andros
Congregational Church	perfectionism
townhall meetings	Harvard College
"established"	Massachusetts School of Law
John Cotton	

Essay Questions

Note: This sub-unit is a high probability area for the AP exam. In the past 10 years, 5 questions have come wholly or in part from the material in this chapter. Below are some questions that will help you study the topics that have appeared on previous exams.

1. Analyze the role of religion in the development of the New England colonies
2. Compare and contrast the New England colonies and the Southern colonies politically, economically and socially.
3. What was the role of geography in the development of the New England colonies?
4. Analyze the relationship between the New England colonies and Amerindians

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