

New England & Puritanism

- ❖ **Puritans** – a faction within Church of England
 - Wanted to “purify” the church of Catholic rituals & hierarchy
 - Believed these to be beyond what is sanctioned in the Bible
 - Stressed Calvinist **predestination** doctrine (the “elect”)
 - **Congregationalist** – self-governing & beyond authority of bishops
 - Most wanted to reform the church and state from within
 - **Some wanted to separate entirely from the C of E - Pilgrims**
 - Migrated to Holland (1609) seeking religious tolerance
 - ◆ Did not want to lose their English identity
 - ◆ Chose to sail to America w/ permission of VA. Co
 - ◆ **The Mayflower reached Plymouth in 1620**
 - North of VA. Co territory & beyond jurisdiction
 - ◆ 35 believing “saints” and 67 others - came as families
 - **Mayflower Compact** – a code of civil laws
 - Self-government
 - **Plymouth Colony led by William Bradford**
 - ◆ Poorly prepared for harsh winter – ½ died first winter
 - ◆ Friendly Indians (e.g. Squanto) taught them to fish & farm
 - Colony never attracted many settlers – eventually absorbed into Massachusetts (1691)
 - **Puritan led Massachusetts Bay Company given royal charter in 1629**
 - 700 initial colonists **under the leadership of John Winthrop**
 - Beginning of the **Great Puritan Migration (1629-40)**
 - ◆ **People fleeing religious & political troubles in England**
 - Sought both religious freedom and business opportunities
 - ◆ Winthrop’s sermon – “**A model of Christian Charity**”
 - Colony would be “**a city on the hill**” – Godly example to England - convince English to become a nation of “Saints”
 - Saints express Puritan faith through public conversion
 - Mass Bay better funded & equipped than Plymouth – quickly prospered – main towns were Boston, Cambridge & Salem
 - Boston becomes the colonial capital & hub of settlement
 - **Puritan work ethic – work is a divine calling**
 - Not succeeding in one’s calling a sign of ill-favor by God
 - Wealth seen as a gift from God & a sign of being elect
 - ◆ Puritans immersed themselves in work & avoided anything that would “distract” them from their religion
 - ◆ **Result – wealthy & industrious communities**
 - **Church and state intimately linked in Mass Bay**

- Bay settled as several towns or congregations – usually self-governing with leaders chosen only by full members of church
 - Had to be a saint to be a full member
 - Meeting House was the civil and religious gathering place
 - ◆ **Town meetings the vital unit of local administration**
 - **Mass. General Court** – colonial legislature composed of an elected House of Deputies and a council appointed by Gov.
 - ◆ Each town sent delegates to the Mass General Court
- **Puritans enacted laws that supported Puritanism**
 - **1647 Old Deluder Law** – Towns would provide education
 - ◆ Believed ignorance was Satan’s way of weakening godliness
 - **Puritanism the official church of the colony**
 - ◆ Residents taxed to support the church
 - ◆ Required universal church attendance
 - ◆ Non-Puritan religious beliefs not tolerated – usually severely punished
 - Order & conformity was key
 - “Responsibility for fellow men” resulted in lack of privacy & intolerance toward dissenters
 - **Reverend Roger Williams advocated church-state separation & Indian land rights**
 - Opposed compulsory church attendance & feared that involvement in govt would corrupt the saints
 - **Banished in 1636 as a subversive – Williams forms Rhode Is. w/ his followers**
 - **R.I. colony practiced religious toleration**
 - **Anne Hutchinson** – cast doubt on authority of clergy
 - Faith alone could achieve salvation
 - **Opposed strict Puritan laws**
 - Followers known as **Antinomians**
 - **AH tried for heresy in Mass. Gen Court – banished 1638 – went to R.I.**
 - **Others left Mass. to start other colonies & escape rigid Puritan restrictions**
 - 1636 - **Thomas Hooker** led followers to **Hartford, CT** in search of better land & less restrictive govt.
 - **Fundamental Orders of Connecticut (1639)**
 - ◆ **1st written constitution in America**
 - ◆ Outlining rights of citizens – power in hands of freemen – community over individual