


The Puritans



Why would a large number of English people leave their country and homes for a destination far across the Atlantic Ocean?

From 1630 to 1641, approximately 13,000 Puritans left England for New England – WHY?

A “Purified” Church

- ◆ The Puritans sought to purify the Church of England from within.
 - ◆ They believed the Anglican Church of England had become too garish and idolatrous in its worship.
 - ◆ They wanted to get back to the basics of Calvinism.
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Puritanism

- ◆ A version of Calvinism
- ◆ Asserts the basic sinfulness of humankind; but also declares that God has determined that some will be saved despite their sins
- ◆ Thus, the experience of conversion, in which the soul is touched by the Holy Spirit, is an indication that one is of the elect

Puritanism

- ◆ Puritanism was a way of life (theocracy)
- ◆ Puritan spiritual life stressed self-discipline & introspection
- ◆ Puritans saw their lives as a “divine mission”: God gave them the New World for they were his chosen people

The Bible


- ◆ Puritans believed *The Bible* to be the supreme authority on earth
- ◆ They used *The Bible* to justify their occupation of the land and their use of force against Native Americans

Basic Tenets of Puritanism

- ◆ **Judgmental God** (rewards good/punishes evil)
- ◆ **Predestination/Election** (salvation or damnation was predetermined by God)
- ◆ **Original Sin** (humans are innately sinful, tainted by the sins of Adam & Eve; good can be accomplished only through hard work & self-discipline)
- ◆ **Providence**
- ◆ **God's Grace**

Basic Tenets of Puritanism

Grace

- ◆ The Puritans saw grace as a gift from a kind and loving God; human beings were unworthy to receive salvation because of their depraved natures.
 - ◆ Repentance, like personal salvation, depended on the Grace of God.
 - ◆ Only select individuals could experience this miracle of God's love.
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Am I One of the Elect?

- ◆ Puritans examined themselves & their lives constantly looking for evidence of their election
- ◆ Guilt & remorse were signs of God's grace
- ◆ Thrift, industry, hard work were viewed as signs of God's grace
- ◆ Business success was a sign of God's grace

Hard Work & Self-Discipline

- ◆ To the Puritans, a person by nature was wholly sinful and could achieve good only by severe and unremitting discipline.
- ◆ Hard work was considered a religious duty and emphasis was laid on constant self-examination and self-discipline.


Hard Work & Self-Discipline

- ◆ Although profanation of the Sabbath day, blasphemy, fornication, drunkenness, playing games of chance, and participation in theatrical performances were penal offenses, the severity of the code of behavior of the early Puritans is often exaggerated.

Puritans & Education

- ◆ Puritans were highly literate people
- ◆ Education was highly valued as a way to fight atheism and to instill in children the value of hard work


Puritans & Education

- ◆ They held the writing of history in high regard
 - ◆ They wrote narratives, journals, biographies, hymns, sermons
 - ◆ Almost all writing was religiously based
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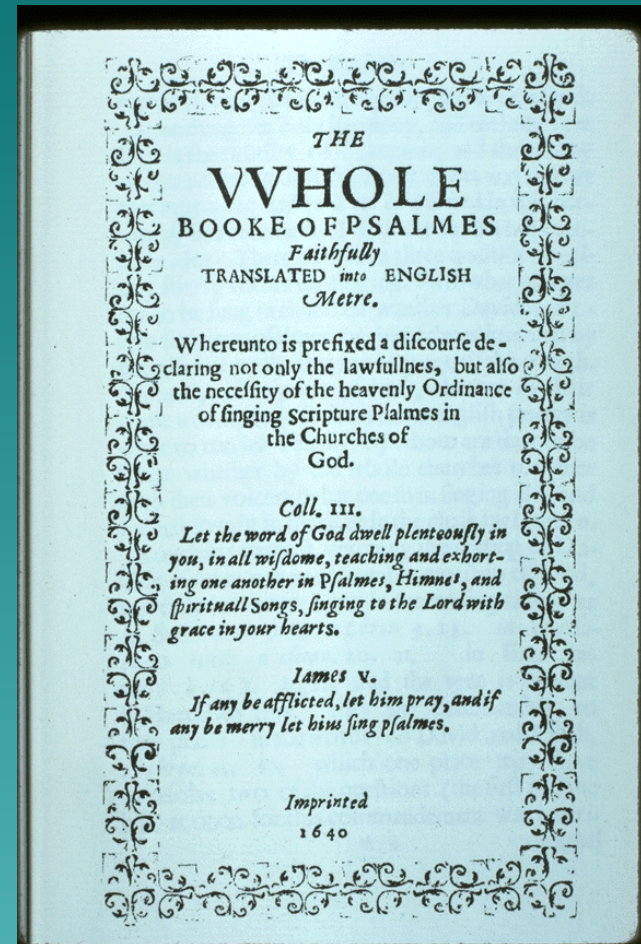
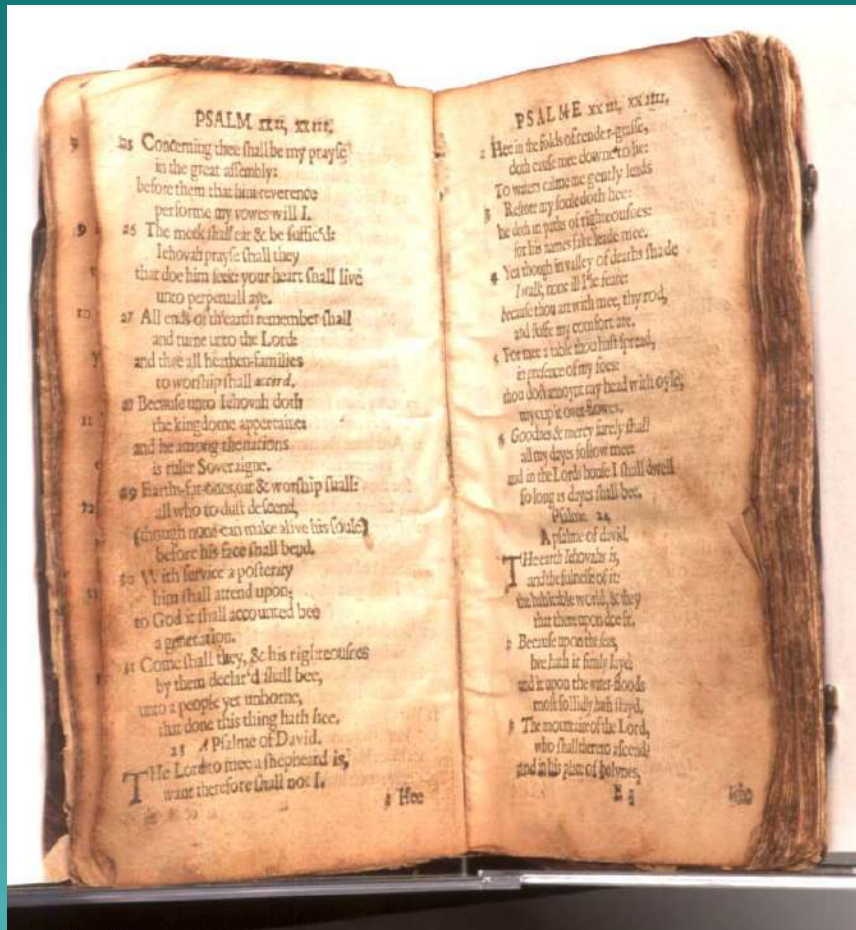
- ◆ 1636: The Puritans founded Harvard, the first college in America



Puritan Firsts

- ◆ 1638: the first printing press was brought to the colonies
 - ◆ *The Bay Psalm Book* (1640): the first published book in the colonies
 - ◆ “The Day of Doom” (1662): popular poem in the colonies (about the end of the world/the Apocalypse)
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The Bay Psalm Book




Dissenters

- ◆ Reformers like **Anne Hutchinson** were excommunicated from the church and driven out of the community.
- ◆ **Roger Williams** was banished from the MBC in 1635 for challenging the strict religious code and the government's right to confiscate Native American land without compensation.
- ◆ He founded the colony of Providence in 1636.
- ◆ Quakers and other dissenters received very harsh punishments, including execution, for their beliefs.

Other Colonies

- ◆ 1632: Lord Baltimore establishes the colony of Maryland as a haven for persecuted Roman Catholics
 - ◆ 1636: Colonists leave Puritan Massachusetts to seek religious freedom in Connecticut (Thomas Hooker) and Rhode Island (Roger Williams)
 - ◆ 1682: Quaker William Penn's Pennsylvania becomes a model of religious and political tolerance
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Puritans are People Too!

- ◆ The Puritans honored material success; wealth was considered to be the reward of a virtuous life.
 - ◆ They valued family life, community, service, art and literature.
 - ◆ Puritans were known to drink beer and other alcoholic beverages on occasion.
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Puritan Influence on America

- ◆ After the 17th century the Puritans as a political entity largely disappeared, but Puritan attitudes and ethics continued to exert an influence on American society.

Puritan Influence on America

- ◆ They made a virtue of qualities that made for economic success—**self-reliance, frugality, self-discipline, industry**—and through them influenced modern social and economic life.
- ◆ Their **concern for education** was important in the development of the United States, and the idea of congregational democratic church government was carried into the political life of the state as a source of modern democracy