The New England Colonies in the 17th Century

- Pilgrims arrive in Plymouth (1620)
- Puritans found Massachusetts Bay (1636)
- Harvard College founded (1636)
- Rhode Island founded (1644)
- King Philip’s War (1644)
- Salem Witch Trials (1692)
The New England Colonies

Theme #1:

Seventeenth-century New England was characterized by a homogeneous society that revolved largely around Puritanism and its stern ideal of perfectionism. The New England colonies contained a healthy population with long life spans, a strong family structure, tightly-knit towns and congregations, and a diversity of economic activities.
What political and religious circumstances in England led to the formation and development of New England?
I. Protestant Reformation (1517)
   A. Martin Luther: breaks with Catholic church
B. John Calvin: *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1536)

1. Elaborated on Luther’s ideas
2. God was all-powerful, all-knowing, all-good
3. Humans were weak and wicked due to original sin
4. Predestination

a. “The elect”

b. “visible saints” – conversion experience

c. Refuted “Good works” philosophy of the Catholic Church
C. Church of England

1. **King Henry VIII** broke with the Roman Catholic Church in 1534 -- Leader of the **Church of England** (Anglican Church)

2. **Puritans**: sought to reform the church

3. **Separatists** (later, Pilgrims) sought to leave the Anglican Church permanently

4. King James I was threatened by the Separatist challenge and persecuted them
II. Pilgrims

A. First wave of Separatists
2. Separatists later left Holland for America in 1620
3. *Mayflower*, 1620
4. Plymouth Bay
The Rev. John Robinson and others aboard the Mayflower
“Having undertaken, for the Glory of God, ... and honor of our King and Country, a voyage to plant the first colony in the Northern parts of Virginia, ...covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil body politic; for our better ordering, and preservation... and by virtue hereof to enact, constitute, and frame, such just and equal laws, ordinances, acts, constitutions, and offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general good of the colony; unto which we promise all due submission and obedience.”
Mayflower Compact

• What did the signers promise?
• What do you believe the impact of the Compact was upon early colonial America?
B. Relations with Amerindians

1. Squanto

2. Wampanoag (Pokanokets) led by Chief Massasoit, helped Pilgrims to survive

Massasoit and Pilgrims sign a peace treaty
3. The First Thanksgiving, 1621
A Wampanoag dwelling
C. Success of the Pilgrims
   1. Fur trade, fishing and lumber
   2. William Bradford
D. 1691, merged with Massachusetts Bay Colony
Plimoth Plantation
The pulpit in the church at Plimoth Plantation
Map of Colonial New England
III. Massachusetts Bay Commonwealth

A. Why did Puritans leave England?
   -- Fled tyranny of Charles I & Archbishop Laud

B. MBC founded in 1629 by non-Separatist Puritans
   -- Royal charter served as the MBC constitution for many years

C. The Great Migration (1630s)
   a. Over 15,000 Puritans arrived in New England
   b. Ended due to English Civil War
D. Governor John Winthrop
1. Covenant theology

“We shall build a city on a hill.”

-- Model of Christian Charity, 1630
E. MBC became largest and most influential colony in New England

-- Protestant work ethic
How did Puritanism in New England lean towards democracy?
IV. Religion and Politics in the MBC

A. Governing open to all free adult males
   1. Congregational Church (based on Calvinism)
   2. Male Voting rights (1631)
   3. Townhall meetings (mostly property owners, majority rule)
B. Purpose of government: enforce Gods laws!

1. Gov’t under Winthrop was not a democracy (only visible saints were free men and thus could vote)

2. Congregational Church was “established” (all paid taxes)

3. Religious dissenters were often punished

(NE became the least tolerant!)
In Puritan Massachusetts, religious nonconformists suffered this fate—and much worse.
C. Church leadership (experienced conversion)

1. **John Cotton** (defends govt’s duty to enforce religion but advocated a civil government)

2. Clergy barred from formal political office: (sep. of church and state!)

3. **Cambridge Platform (1648)**-MBC, Plymouth New Haven (more uniform)

D. Representative assembly formed in 1634
E. Early dissension in the MBC

1. Quakers (persecuted)

2. Anne Hutchinson

• antinomianism (declared that faith alone, not obedience to religious law is necessary for salvation)

• Banished and set out to R. I.
Question: Why might Roger Williams and other exiles desire religious freedom?

1. Complete religious freedom develops, in part, because leaders have the desire to protect their philosophy from the state

2. Guarantee of freedom written into charter

3. Almost complete white male suffrage (mentioned before)

4. Other colonies refer to R.I. as Rogues Island – that sewer

5. Hutchinson later killed in an Indian attack in New York 
   (John Winthrop said it was divine retribution for her false teachings)
The Trial of Anne Hutchinson

“You have stepped out of your place, you have rather been a husband than a wife, and a preacher than a hearer. You have been a naughty woman.”
3. Roger Williams
   a. “liberty of conscience”
   b. “Wall of separation” (Jefferson! And no establishment clause)
   c. Rhode Island
      • Denied authority of civil govt. to regulate religious behavior
      • No man should be forced to go to church
Why the decline in power of the Puritan Clergy in the late 17th?
F. The decline of Puritanism

1. Loss of religious zeal and spread of population

2. Response:

   a. **Jeremiad**- had to be more committed, children of non-converted members could not be baptized.

   b. **Half-way Covenant (1662)**- partial membership to those who were baptized as children.

   c. Open membership by 1700

3. **Salem Witch Trials (1692)**

   Cotton Mather-supported trials
Salem Witch Trials, 1692
Salem Witch Trials

• Many believed devil worked with witches in the real world
• 1\textsuperscript{st} accusation when young girls listen to tales of voodoo from a black servant, began behaving oddly
• Older women became targets
• Young accusers were poor from the west, accused the wealthy from the east.
• 20 people executed.
V. Completing the New England Colonies

A. Rhode Island: Founded by Roger Williams, 1636

1. Founded first Baptist church in America
   a. Freedom of religion
   b. No compulsory worship
   c. No taxes to support state church

2. Simple manhood suffrage

3. Charter colony: Given charter from Parliament in 1644
B. Connecticut River Colony (1636)

1. Thomas Hooker

2. Fundamental Orders (1639)

-- Significance
C. Maine absorbed by Massachusetts Bay in 1677

D. New Hampshire separated from MBC in 1679
VI. New England Confederation (1643): MBC, Plymouth, Connecticut River settlements, & New Haven

A. Pequot War, 1636

-- Results: Pequots were destroyed
B. Colonies were left to fend for themselves during English Civil War

-- 1st milestone on the road to colonial unity
C. King Philip’s War, 1675

1. Metacom, Wampanoag chief, attacked MBC towns after being provoked by settlers.

   -- New England Confederation put to the test
2. Bloodiest war ever fought on New England soil
Wampanoags attack a Puritan settlement
3. Results: Native Americans were defeated and effectively removed from much of MBC, CT & RI.

The death of King Philip at the hands of two Massachusetts colonists.
VII. Dominion of New England (1686) and the “Glorious Revolution”

A. The crown clamped down on MBC

B. Dominion of New England

1. Purposes: mercantilism
   a. Enforce Navigation Laws
   b. Provide defense for colonies

2. Sir Edmund Andros

C. “Glorious Revolution” (1688)

1. Inspired “1st American Revolution”
2. Andros was removed
D. Post-Glorious Revolution New England

1. 1691, MBC made a royal colony -- Loss of charter colony status

2. Tighter administrative control by the crown over British America
VIII. New England Life and Contributions to the American character

A. Geography & Economy

1. Rocky soil: few cash crops
   --Subsistence farming common

2. Diverse economy: fishing, shipbuilding, lumbering, shipping, fur, dairy
3. Less ethnic diversity
B. Puritan contribution to American character

1. Seeds of democracy
   a. Townhall meetings
   b. Voting rights to church members, 1631

2. Perfectibility of society ("perfectionism")
   a. Covenant theology & Protestant work ethic
   b. Inspired later reforms: abolition movement, women’s rights, education, prohibition

3. Protestant work ethic
C. Education

1. Purpose: train the clergy

2. Harvard College (1636)
3. Massachusetts School of Law, 1647

a. Towns with 50 or more families required to provide public education

b. Resulted in a highly literate population
IX. New England Family

A. High life expectancy
B. Family migration
C. High natural reproduction
D. Strong family stability

A Puritan Wedding Procession