



# Puritan New England

## MAIN IDEA

English Puritans came to North America, beginning in 1620.

## WHY IT MATTERS NOW

The United States continues to use an expanded form of representative government begun by the Puritans.

## Terms & Names

- Puritans
- John Winthrop
- Separatist
- Plymouth Colony
- Massachusetts Bay Colony
- Roger Williams
- Anne Hutchinson
- Pequot War
- Metacom
- King Philip's War

In 1628, at age 16, a young English woman named Anne Dudley married Simon Bradstreet, who, like herself, was one of a group of **Puritans**, church members who wanted to “purify” or reform the Church of England. Simon, Anne, and her parents left England with other Puritans who hoped to create a “holy” community in New England. There Anne became America’s first English-speaking poet, whose poems would provide future generations with a glimpse of Puritan life and values. When her house burned to the ground on a July night in 1666, Anne composed a poem to express her sorrow and her resolve to remain strong.

### A PERSONAL VOICE ANNE BRADSTREET

“Then, coming out, beheld a space  
The flame consume my dwelling place.  
And when I could no longer look,  
I blest His name that gave and took.”

—from “Here Follows Some Verses upon the  
Burning of Our House (July 10th, 1666)”

Anne Dudley Bradstreet’s book of poetry, *The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung Up in America*, is regarded as one of the first important works of American literature.

## Puritans Create a “New England”

When Anne Bradstreet and her family boarded the *Arbella*, the flagship of the Puritan expedition to America, the English settlement at Jamestown was still struggling to survive. Unlike the profit-minded colonists at Jamestown, however, the Puritans emigrated in order to create a model new society—what **John Winthrop**, their first governor, called a “City upon a Hill.”



▲ This picture of Anne Bradstreet is from a window in St. Botolph’s Church, Lincolnshire, England.



◀ Puritans cherished their Bibles, passing them down as family treasures from one generation to the next. This Bible belonged to Governor William Bradford of the Plymouth Colony.

**PURITANS AND PILGRIMS** Puritanism had its origins in the English Reformation. After King Henry VIII (1491–1547) broke with Roman Catholicism in the 1530s, his daughter, Elizabeth I (1533–1603) formed the Anglican church, or the Church of England. Although the Anglican church was free of Catholic control, some church members felt that it had kept too much of the Catholic ritual and tradition. These people were called Puritans because they wanted to purify the Anglican church by eliminating all traces of Roman Catholicism. Puritans embraced the idea that every worshipper should experience God directly through faith, prayer, and study of the Bible. Puritans held ministers in respect as a source of religious and moral instruction, but they objected to the authority of Anglican bishops.

Some Puritans felt they should remain in the Church of England and reform it from within. Other Puritans did not think that was possible, so they formed independent congregations with their own ministers. These **Separatists**, known today as the Pilgrims, fled from England to escape persecution, first to Holland and eventually to America. In 1620, this small group of families founded the **Plymouth Colony**, the second permanent English colony in North America. **A**

**THE MASSACHUSETTS BAY COMPANY** Meanwhile, other English Puritans in the 1620s who were discouraged about Anglican reform also turned their thoughts toward New England. Like the Separatists, they too felt the burden of increasing religious persecution, political repression, and dismal economic conditions. John Winthrop wrote to his wife in 1629, “[the Lord will] provide a shelter and a hiding place for us.” Winthrop and others believed that this refuge would be in America.

In 1629, Winthrop and some of his well-connected friends obtained a royal charter for a joint-stock enterprise, the Massachusetts Bay Company. Winthrop and the other colonists transferred both the charter and the company’s headquarters to New England. This strategy meant that when the Puritans migrated, they took with them the authority for an independent government. **B**

In September 1630, Winthrop and the other colonists aboard the *Arbella* established the **Massachusetts Bay Colony**. The port town of Boston became their capital. Soon other towns were founded to accommodate the large number of settlers flocking to join the colony. In the first year of the colony’s settlement, 17 ships (including the *Arbella*) arrived with about 1,000 English men, women, and children—Puritan and non-Puritan. The migration was greater in size and more thorough in planning than all pre-

## HISTORICAL SPOTLIGHT

John Donson  
William Brewster  
John Winthrop  
Thomas Cuyler  
Matthew Weston  
John Doane  
Niles Standish  
Francis Jackson  
John Bradford  
Conrad Southworth  
William Bradford  
C. B. Southworth

### THE MAYFLOWER COMPACT

Although the Pilgrims aimed for Virginia, their ship, the *Mayflower*, strayed far off course to Cape Cod. The Pilgrims knew that New England lay too far north for their colonial charter to be valid. They were also afraid that non-Pilgrim passengers would challenge their authority. Before departing the ship, the Pilgrim men signed a compact, or agreement, in which they created a civil government and pledged loyalty to the king. Some of their signatures are reproduced above.

The Mayflower Compact stated that the purpose of their government in America would be to frame “just and equal laws . . . for the general good of the colony.” Laws approved by the majority would be binding on Pilgrims and non-Pilgrims alike. The document became a landmark of American democratic government.

### MAIN IDEA

#### Contrasting

**A** How were the Separatists different from other Puritans?

### MAIN IDEA

#### Analyzing Motives

**B** Why did the Puritans leave England?



vious expeditions to North America. Eventually, Plymouth Colony was incorporated into the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

**“CITY UPON A HILL”** In a sermon delivered before the *Arbella* landed, Winthrop expressed the sense of mission that bound the Puritans together.

### A PERSONAL VOICE JOHN WINTHROP

**“We must be knit together in this work; . . . we must uphold [each other] . . . in all meekness, gentleness, patience and liberality [generosity]. We must delight in each other, make others’ conditions our own, rejoice together, mourn together, labor and suffer together. . . .**

**So shall we keep the unity of the spirit, in the bond of peace. . . . Ten of us will be able to resist a thousand of our enemies. For we must consider that we [in New England] shall be as a City upon a Hill, the eyes of all people are on us.”**

—“A Model of Christian Charity”

Winthrop’s vision, however, did not stem from a belief in either social equality or political democracy. Explained Winthrop in his shipboard sermon, God had decreed that “some must be rich, some poor, some high and eminent in power and dignity, others mean [common] and in subjugation.”

Although Puritans made no effort to create a democracy, political power was spread more broadly than in England. The Massachusetts Bay Company extended the right to vote to not only stockholders but to all adult males who belonged to the Puritan church, roughly 40 percent of the colony’s men. This was a large electorate by the standards of Europe in the 1630s. These “freemen,” as they were called, voted annually for members of a lawmaking body called the General Court, which in turn chose the governor.

**CHURCH AND STATE** As this system of self-government evolved, so did the close relationship between the government and the Puritan church. Civic officials were members of the Puritan church who believed that they were God’s “elect,” or chosen, and had a duty to carry out God’s will. Puritan laws criminalized

#### MAIN IDEA

#### Analyzing Issues

**C** Who could vote in the Massachusetts Bay Colony?

## History Through

## Art

### PURITAN HEADSTONES

Puritans forbade images in their churches but they permitted them in their cemeteries. The images on a headstone were meant not just to memorialize the dead but to remind both young and old that life was brief and should be lived according to the Puritan virtues of piety and hard work.

**Central to virtually every Puritan headstone was the image of the winged skull. The skull itself was meant to symbolize the physical reality of death. The wings represented the soul and the possibility of immortality.**

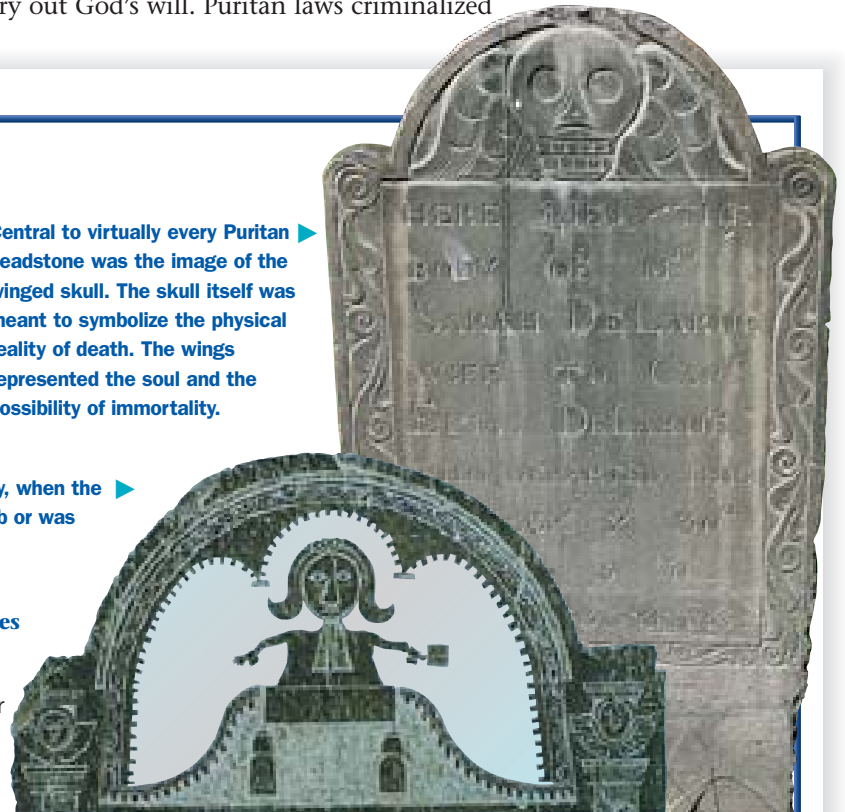
**The winged skull motif persisted into the 18th century, when the winged skull was either modified to resemble a cherub or was replaced with a carved portrait of the deceased.**

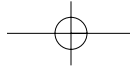
#### SKILLBUILDER Interpreting Visual Sources

1. What kind of emotions does the image of the winged skull elicit?
2. How do Puritan headstones compare with other memorials you have seen?



SEE SKILLBUILDER HANDBOOK, PAGE R23.





such sins as drunkenness, swearing, theft, and idleness. “No person . . . shall spend his time idly or unprofitably,” decreed the General Court in 1633, “under pain of such punishment as the court shall think meet [appropriate] to inflict.”

**IMPORTANCE OF THE FAMILY** Unlike settlers in Virginia, Puritans generally crossed the Atlantic as families rather than as single men or women. “Without family care,” declared one minister, “the labor of Magistrates and Ministers . . . is likely to be in great measure unsuccessful.” Puritans kept a watchful eye on the actions of husbands, wives, and children, and the community stepped in when necessary. If parents failed to nip disobedience in the bud, they might find their children placed in more “God-fearing” homes. If a husband and wife quarreled too much, a court might intervene as a form of marriage counseling. If they still bickered, one or both might end up in the stocks or the pillory.

### Vocabulary

**stocks, pillory:** devices in which an offender was shackled and held on public display as a form of punishment

## Dissent in the Puritan Community

Division soon threatened Massachusetts Bay. Two dissenters, Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson, challenged the social order upon which the colony was founded.

**THE FOUNDING OF PROVIDENCE** “Forced religion stinks in the nostrils of God,” declared **Roger Williams** in a sermon to his Salem congregation. Williams, an extreme Separatist, expressed two controversial views. First, he declared that the English settlers had no rightful claim to the land unless they purchased it from Native Americans. He called the royal charter that granted the lands a “National Sinne” and demanded that it be revised to reflect Native American claims. Second, Williams declared that government officials had no business punishing settlers for their religious beliefs. He felt every person should be free to worship according to his or her conscience.

The outraged General Court ordered Williams to be arrested and returned to England. Before this order was carried out, Williams fled Massachusetts. In January 1636, he headed southward to the headwaters of Narragansett Bay. There he negotiated with the local Narragansett tribe for land to set up a new colony, which he called Providence. In Providence, later the capital of Rhode Island, Williams guaranteed separation of church and state and religious freedom. **D**

### MAIN IDEA

### Contrasting

**D** What two principles did Providence guarantee that Massachusetts Bay did not?



**ANNE HUTCHINSON BANISHED** Puritan leaders soon banished another dissenter, **Anne Hutchinson**. To strict Puritans, she posed an even greater threat than Williams. In Bible readings at her home, Hutchinson taught that “the Holy Spirit illumines [enlightens] the heart of every true believer.” In other words, worshippers needed neither the church nor its ministers to interpret the Bible for them.

Puritan leaders banished Hutchinson from the colony in 1638. Along with a band of followers, she and her family trudged to Rhode Island. After the death of her husband in 1642, Hutchinson moved with her younger children to the colony of New Netherland (now New York), where the Dutch also practiced religious toleration. The following year, she died in a war fought between the Dutch and Native Americans.

◀ This statue of Anne Hutchinson stands in Boston, Massachusetts. Ironically, she was banished from Massachusetts for leading religious discussions.





## Native Americans Resist Colonial Expansion

While Williams and his followers were settling Rhode Island, thousands of other white settlers fanned out to western Massachusetts and to new colonies in New Hampshire and Connecticut. However, as Native Americans saw their lands claimed and cleared for farming, they recognized that the rapid spread of the settlers meant an end to their way of life.

**DISPUTES OVER LAND** Disputes between the Puritans and Native Americans arose over land use. For every acre a colonial farmer needed to support life, a Native American needed twenty for hunting, fishing, and agriculture. To Native Americans, no one owned the land—it was there for everyone to use. Native Americans saw land treaties with Europeans as agreements in which they received gifts, such as blankets, guns, iron tools, or ornaments, in return for which they agreed to share the land for a limited time. Europeans, however, saw the treaties as a one-time deal in which Native Americans permanently sold their land to new owners. **E**

### MAIN IDEA

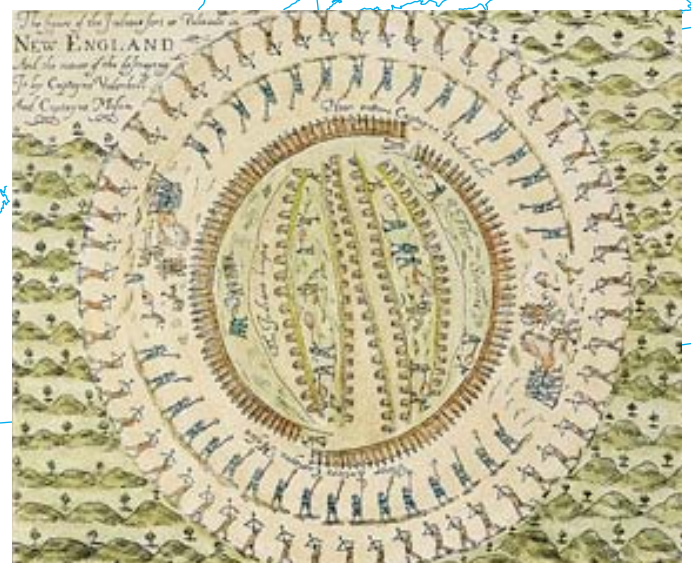
#### Analyzing Issues

**E** How did Native Americans view land treaties?

**THE PEQUOT WAR** The first major conflict arose in Connecticut in 1637, when the Pequot nation decided to take a stand against the colonists. The colonists formed an alliance with the Narragansett, old enemies of the Pequot. The result of the **Pequot War** was the near destruction of the Pequot nation. The end came in May 1637, when about 90 English colonists and hundreds of their Native American allies surrounded a Pequot fort on the Mystic River. After setting the fort on fire, the colonists shot Pequot men, women, and children as they tried to escape or surrender. The massacre was so awful that the Narragansett pleaded,



### New England Colonies to 1675



This British engraving shows the Pequot fort near Stonington, Connecticut. The fort was destroyed in 1637.

#### GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER

- 1. Place** What was the earliest major European settlement in the New England colonies?
- 2. Human-Environment Interaction** What characteristics of Boston made it a good place for a settlement?



"This is evil, this is evil, too furious, too many killed." The colonists ignored them, until all but a few out of about 500–600 people in the fort had died. Later, the Narraganset leader Miantonomo declared in a speech to the Montauk tribe,

### A PERSONAL VOICE MIANTONOMO

"These English have gotten our land, they with scythes cut down grass, and with axes fell the trees; their cows and horses eat the grass, and their hogs spoil our clam banks, and we shall all be starved. . . .

For so are we all Indians as the English are, and say brother to one another; so must we be one as they are, otherwise we shall be all gone shortly."

—quoted in *Changes in the Land*

**KING PHILIP'S WAR** Deprived of their land and livelihood, many Native Americans had to toil for the English to earn a living. They also had to obey Puritan laws such as no hunting or fishing on Sunday, the Sabbath day. Wampanoag chief **Metacom**, whom the English called King Philip, bristled under these restrictions. In a last-ditch effort to wipe out the invaders, he organized his tribe and several others into an alliance.

The eruption of **King Philip's War** in the spring of 1675 startled the Puritans with its intensity. Using hit-and-run tactics, Native Americans attacked and burned outlying settlements throughout New England. For over a year, the two sides waged a war of mutual brutality and destruction. Finally, food shortages, disease, and heavy casualties wore down the Native Americans' resistance, and they gradually surrendered or fled.

Wampanoag casualties included Metacom, the victim of a bullet fired by a Native American ally of the English. To commemorate their victory, the Puritans exhibited Metacom's head at Plymouth for 20 years. With his defeat, Native American power in southeastern New England was gone forever.

Still, the English paid a high price for their victory. All told, about one-tenth of the colonial men of military age in New England were killed in King Philip's War, a higher proportion of the total population than would be killed in either the American Revolution or the Civil War of the 1860s.



## ASSESSMENT

### 1. TERMS & NAMES For each term or name, write a sentence explaining its significance.

- Puritans
- John Winthrop
- Separatist
- Plymouth Colony
- Massachusetts Bay Colony
- Roger Williams
- Anne Hutchinson
- Pequot War
- Metacom
- King Philip's War

### MAIN IDEA

#### 2. TAKING NOTES

Identify the effects of each of the causes listed in the chart below.

Cause	Effect
Persecution of Puritans in England	
Puritan belief in hard work	
Roger Williams's dissenting beliefs	
Rapid colonial expansion in New England	
Defeat of King Philip	

### CRITICAL THINKING

#### 3. DRAWING CONCLUSIONS

Why do you think Puritan leaders viewed Anne Hutchinson as a threat to their society? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

**Think About:**

- Puritan beliefs
- characteristics of Puritan society
- Hutchinson's teachings

#### 4. ANALYZING EFFECTS

What were the immediate effects of King Philip's War for Native Americans and for the settlers?

#### 5. DEVELOPING HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Imagine you have been called upon to negotiate between the New England colonists and Native Americans. What would you tell each side about the other to help them overcome their misunderstandings?

**Think About:**

- their views on land and religion
- the Pequot War and King Philip's War