

THE GREAT AWAKENING – Brief Historical Overview

From the late 1730s to the 1760s a great wave of religious enthusiasm swept over large parts of Britain's North American colonies. This outburst of religious fervor, known as the Great Awakening, set the precedent for what became a recurrent and distinctive feature of American religious life: revivalism.

As far back as the 1720s Theodore Frelinghuysen, influenced by German Pietism, led a renewal of religious enthusiasm among New Jersey congregants of the Dutch Reformed church. About the same time, William and Gilbert Tennent spurred a similar revival among New Jersey Presbyterians. And in 1734 Jonathan Edwards began preaching a powerful but gloomy message of revival to Congregationalists in the Connecticut River valley.

These isolated sparks of religious enthusiasm caught fire when George Whitefield, an English associate of John Wesley, arrived in Georgia in 1738. During his fifteen-month tour of the colonies, Whitefield preached in Charleston, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston. Employing a highly emotional speaking style, Whitefield made audiences shed tears of despair and joy. Thousands flocked to his sermons. His impact was enormous, his method and style widely imitated.

After initially welcoming Whitefield and his fellow revivalists, many clergymen began having second thoughts. Trained in theological seminaries and attached to churches and parishes, they perceived itinerant revivalists—many of whom had no theological training and did not depend on written texts for their sermons—as unorthodox, disruptive to regular churchgoing, and threats to clerical authority. As a result, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and other denominations split into "Old Light" and "New Light" factions, and new sects like the Baptists and Methodists gained many adherents. Such schisms reinforced the divisions in American society between established elites and newer arrivals, town and country, debtors and creditors, and the growing tensions engendered by the spread of the market economy.

Revivalists themselves differed in emphasis, some dwelling on the consequences of eternal damnation, others on the observable effects of sinfulness; some on personal salvation, others on the collective transformation that would occur as a result of the events that would culminate in the Second Coming of Jesus. But the core of revivalism was belief in the sinfulness and helplessness of humankind and the possibility of redemption. To cleanse oneself of sin, to avoid eternal damnation and win eternal salvation, one had to surrender to God's will, to identify completely with Jesus Christ. This decision had to be accompanied by an emotionally wrenching conversion. Such conversion experiences were elicited by itinerant preachers in traveling revivals, called camp meetings, under tents or in open fields or often in churches provided (sometimes grudgingly) by regular clergy.

The Great Awakening extended the reach and scope of religion to the poor, to blacks who had been spurned by the established sects, to people in newly settled areas, and to women who were attracted to the new style of preaching. From the initial wave of fervor in the 1740s, religious enthusiasm ebbed and flowed in the colonies, finally peaking in Virginia in the 1760s. But the disruptions surrounding the Revolution to a large extent displaced religious obsessions in the mind of the public. Revivalism never completely disappeared, however. It would surface again in the nineteenth century in a Second Great Awakening.

http://college.hmco.com/history/readerscomp/rcah/html/ah_038300_greatawakeni.htm

The Enlightenment

Although the intellectual movement called "The Enlightenment" is usually associated with the 18th century, its roots in fact go back much further. But before we explore those roots, we need to define the term. This is one of those rare historical movements which in fact named itself. Certain thinkers and writers, primarily in London and Paris, believed that they were more enlightened than their compatriots and set out to enlighten them.

They believed that human reason could be used to combat ignorance, superstition, and tyranny and to build a better world. Their principal targets were religion (embodied in France in the Catholic Church) and the domination of society by a hereditary aristocracy.

The Enlightenment in America

Meanwhile, across the Atlantic, many of the intellectual leaders of the American colonies were drawn to the Enlightenment. The colonies may have been founded by leaders of various dogmatic religious persuasions, but when it became necessary to unite against England, it was apparent that no one of them could prevail over the others, and that the most desirable course was to agree to disagree. Nothing more powerfully impelled the movement toward the separation of church and state than the realization that no one church could dominate this new state.

Many of the most distinguished leaders of the American revolution-- Jefferson, Washington, Franklin, Paine--were powerfully influenced by English and--to a lesser extent--French Enlightenment thought. The God who underwrites the concept of equality in the Declaration of Independence is the same deist God Rousseau worshipped, not that venerated in the traditional churches which still supported and defended monarchies all over Europe. Jefferson and Franklin both spent time in France--a natural ally because it was a traditional enemy of England--absorbing the influence of the French Enlightenment. The language of natural law, of inherent freedoms, of self-determination which seeped so deeply into the American grain was the language of the Enlightenment, though often coated with a light glaze of traditional religion, what has been called our "civil religion." This is one reason that Americans should study the Enlightenment. It is in their bones. It has defined part of what they have dreamed of, what they aim to become. Separated geographically from most of the aristocrats against whom they were rebelling, their revolution was to be far less corrosive--and at first less influential--than that in France.

The English Colonies in North America: Short Summary

Areas Colonized

In general, the English colonized the Eastern seaboard of the present day United States in a hodgepodge fashion. English colonization was undertaken for variety of motives. Most initial colonies were founded by Joint Stock Companies like the Virginia Company (companies whose goal was to return a profit for investors) who believed that like the Spanish had proved, there were vast riches to be had in the New World. Others were founded by groups of religious dissenters who were persecuted by British kings. These religious dissenters included such groups as the Puritans (Massachusetts), Quakers (Pennsylvania) and Catholics (Maryland).

Goals and settlers

The English had many goals in establishing New World colonies. First of all, they wanted to compete with Spain for commercial dominance and resources. Secondly, many colonies were established for profit and the stockholders put enormous pressure on colonists to turn a profit. Thirdly, many colonies were established to help settlers escape religious persecution. Many of these settlers did not establish "freedom" of religion (i.e. the Puritans), but did seek to create religious utopias where their sects could worship freely.

However, in all of these pursuits there was one commonality – the pursuit of agriculture. All English colonies pursued agriculture of different types for different purposes. Religious settlers wished to establish permanent settlements and thus learned to grow New World crops from Natives and brought other Old World crops with them. Commercial settlers grew food crops to eat, but also started growing tobacco, rice, sugar and other cash crops for export. This pattern of settlement led to the English rapidly colonizing the East Coast of North America, as many groups had motivation to move – religious minorities, those seeking profits, and those wanting land, for the English enclosure movement had recently begun to close in communal land that peasants used to farm in many English towns. Thus, English colonists migrated as families and settled in areas permanently. Despite celebrated stories like Pocahontas marrying John Rolfe, there was very little intermarriage between the English and Natives and it was considered a social taboo.

Colonial Administration

English colonies had a surprising amount of freedom and self-government. The English crown did not get directly involved with the governance of most English colonies until the 1700's, when they attempted to bring their colonial possessions under a more unified framework of control. Many colonies, such as Pennsylvania, Virginia and Massachusetts had direct or elected assemblies that made laws that governed the colony. The first such elected assembly was the VA House of Burgesses. Religious

toleration and freedom was also common in many areas. Pennsylvania had religious toleration (despite the fact that only Quakers could own land and vote), Maryland under Lord Baltimore had toleration of both Catholics and Protestant Christians and Rhode Island served as a religious haven for those persecuted by the Puritans in Massachusetts.

Colonial Economy

The English colonies had very diverse economies. They ranged from a mixed economy of commerce (i.e. lumber, whale oil, rum, sugar) and agriculture in the New England colonies, to a heavily agricultural economy in the Middle Colonies based on the growing and export of cereal crops (i.e. wheat, corn, barley) to a Southern economy based on the growing of cash crops (i.e. sugar, tobacco, indigo) on large plantations by forced labor (often African slaves). However, all economies were heavily dependent on agriculture.

Native Interactions

The English colonies had extremely poor relationships with Native Americans. Due to their desire to establish permanent agricultural settlements, they viewed the Natives as nothing more than competition for land and resources. Many wars resulted from the English desire to clear the land of Natives. From the Powhatan Wars in VA to the Pequot Wars in Massachusetts, Natives were targeted for various purposes to move them off the land so that whites could possess and farm it. Due to the large number of European women, English men did also not marry Native women, thus there was little to no intermixing of Native and English culture, as was practiced in Spanish colonies (or even French colonies).

1705 Virginia slave codes

The status of blacks in Virginia slowly changed over the last half of the 17th century. The black indentured servant, with his hope of freedom, was increasingly being replaced by the black slave.

In 1705, the Virginia General Assembly removed any lingering uncertainty about this terrible transformation; it made a declaration that would seal the fate of African Americans for generations to come...

"All servants imported and brought into the Country...who were not Christians in their native Country...shall be accounted and be slaves. All Negro, mulatto and Indian slaves within this dominion...shall be held to be real estate. If any slave resist his master...correcting such slave, and shall happen to be killed in such correction...the master shall be free of all punishment...as if such accident never happened."

The code, which would also serve as a model for other colonies, went even further. The law imposed harsh physical punishments, since enslaved persons who did not own property could not be required to pay fines. It stated that slaves needed written permission to leave their plantation, that slaves found guilty of murder or rape would be hanged, that for robbing or any other major offence, the slave would receive sixty lashes and be placed in stocks, where his or her ears would be cut off, and that for minor offences, such as associating with whites, slaves would be whipped, branded, or maimed.

For the 17th century slave in Virginia, disputes with a master could be brought before a court for judgement. With the slave codes of 1705, this no longer was the case. A slave owner who sought to break the most rebellious of slaves could now do so, knowing any punishment he inflicted, including death, would not result in even the slightest reprimand.

MAKERS OF AMERICA



From African to African-American

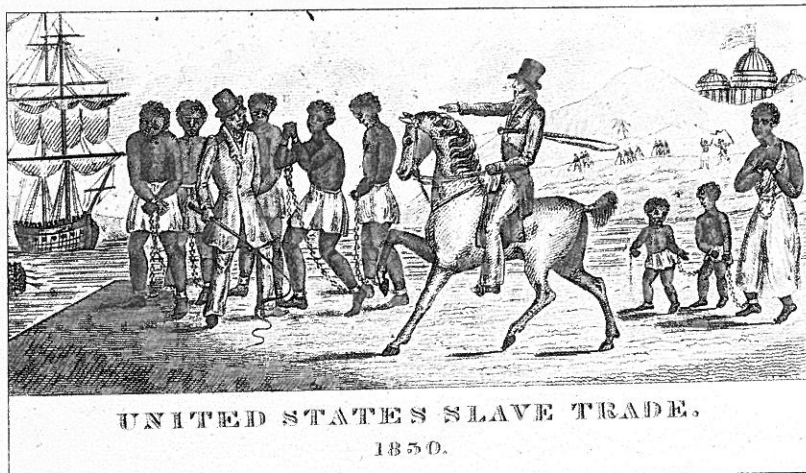
Dragged in chains from West African shores, the first African-Americans struggled to preserve their diverse heritages from the ravages of slavery. Their children, the first generation of American-born slaves, melded these various African traditions—Guinean, Ibo, Yoruba, Angolan—into a distinctive African-American culture. Their achievement sustained them during the cruelties of enslavement and has endured to enrich American life to this day.

With the arrival of the first Africans in the seventeenth century, a cornucopia of African traditions poured into the New World: handicrafts and skills in numerous trades; a plethora of languages, musics, and cuisines; even rice-planting techniques that

conquered the inhospitable soil of South Carolina. It was North America's rice paddies, tilled by experienced West Africans, that introduced rice into the English diet and furnished so many English tables with the sticky staple.

These first American slaves were mostly males. Upon arrival they were sent off to small isolated farms, where social contact with other Africans, especially women, was an unheard-of luxury. Yet their legal status was at first uncertain. A few slaves were able to buy their freedom in the seventeenth century. Onè, Anthony Johnson of Northampton County, Virginia, actually became a slaveholder himself.

But by the beginning of the eighteenth century, a settled slave society was emerging in the southern colonies. Laws tightened; slave traders stepped up their deliveries of human cargo; large plantations formed. Most significantly, a new generation of



(above) Africans Destined for Slavery The engraving from 1830 is an example of antislavery propaganda in the pre-Civil War era. It shows hapless Africans being brought ashore in America under the whips of slave traders and, ironically, under the figurative shadow of the national Capitol. (right) A Royal African Company Account Log of Slaves Imported to the West Indies, 1698–1708 Note the rapid expansion of the slave trade as the eighteenth century opened.

An Account of the Number of Negroes delivered in to the Islands of Barbados, Jamaica, and Antego, from the Year 1698 to 1708, from the Lists now Opened, taken from the Accounts sent from the respective Governors of those Islands to the Lords Commissioners of Trade, whereby it appears the African Trade is carried on four times more free it being laid Open, than it was under an Exclusive Company.

Between what Years deliver'd.	N ^o . of Negroes deliver'd into Barbados.	Number deliver'd into Jamaica.	Number deliver'd into Antego.
Between the 8 April, 1698	3436		
To 4 April 1699	3080		
To 5 ditto 1701	4311		
To 10 ditto 1702	9213		
To 31 Mar. 1703	4661		
To 5 April 1704	1376		
To ad. ditto 1705	3319		
To 5 ditto 1706	1875		
To 12 May 1707	3720		
To 29 April 1708	1018		
Between 29 Sept. - 1698 and 29 Decemb. - 1699	1275		
Between 7 April - 1699 and 28 March 1700	5766		
From 28 Mar. to 3 Apr. 1701	6068		
3 Apr. 1701. to 30 ditto 1702	8505		
30 ditto 1702 to 18 ditto 1703	2238		
18 ditto 1703 to 18 ditto 1704	2711		
18 ditto 1704 to 24 ditto 1705	3421		
24 ditto 1705 to 27 ditto 1706	6462		
27 ditto 1706 to 22 ditto 1707	2122		
22 ditto 1707 to 16 ditto 1708	6633		
To June 1708	187		
June 1698		18	
June 1699		212	
June 1700		364	
Between 24 April - 1701 and 30 March 1702		2395	
To April 1703		1679	
To Nov. 1704		1551	
To 1705		269	
To 1706		530	
To 1707		114	
	35409	44176	7123

Besides which there are 7 Separate Ships named in the foregoing List for *ditto*, but not the Number of Negroes, so we may well compute them at 1200 more, which arriv'd between 1699 and 1700.



(left) **Yarrow Mamout**, by Charles Willson Peale, 1819 When Peale painted this portrait, Mamout was over 100 years old. A devout Muslim brought to Maryland as a slave, he eventually bought his freedom and settled in Georgetown.

(right) **The Emergence of an African-American Culture** In this scene from the mid-nineteenth century, African-Americans play musical instruments of European derivation, like the fiddle, as well as instruments of African origin, like the bones and banjo—a vivid illustration of the blending of the two cultures in the crucible of the New World.

American-born slaves joined their forebears at labor in the fields. By 1740 large groups of slaves lived together on sprawling plantations, the American-born outnumbered the African-born, and the importation of African slaves slowed.

Forging a common culture and finding a psychological weapon with which to resist their masters and preserve their dignity were daunting challenges for American-born slaves. Plantation life was beastly, an endless cycle of miserable toil in the field or foundry from sunup to sundown. Female slaves were forced to perform double duty. After a day's backbreaking work, women were expected to sit up for hours spinning, weaving, or sewing to clothe themselves and their families. Enslaved women also lived in constant fear of sexual exploitation by conscienceless masters.

Yet eventually a vibrant slave culture began to flower. And precisely because of the diversity of African peoples represented in America, the culture that emerged was a uniquely New World creation. It derived from no single African model and incorporated many Western elements, though often with significant modifications.

Slave religion illustrates this pattern. Cut off from their native African religions, most slaves became Christians, but fused elements of African and Western traditions and drew their own conclusions from Scripture. White Christians might point to Christ's teachings of humility and obedience to encourage slaves to "stay in their place"; but black Christians emphasized God's role in freeing the Hebrews from

slavery and saw Jesus as the Messiah who would deliver them from bondage. They also often retained an African definition of heaven as a place where they would be reunited with their ancestors.

At their Sunday and evening-time prayer meetings, slaves also patched African remnants onto conventional Christian ritual. Black Methodists, for example, ingeniously evaded the traditional Methodist ban on dancing as sinful: three or four people would stand still in a ring, clapping hands and beating time with their feet (but never crossing their legs, thus not officially "dancing"), while others walked around the ring, singing in unison. This "ringshouting" derived from African practices; modern American dances, including the Charleston, in turn derived from this African-American hybrid.

Christian slaves also often used outwardly religious songs as encoded messages about escape or rebellion. "Good News, the Chariot's Comin" might sound like an innocent hymn about divine deliverance, but it could also announce the arrival of a guide to lead fugitives safely to the North. Similarly, "Wade in the Water" taught fleeing slaves one way of covering their trail. The "Negro spirituals" that took shape as a distinctive form of American music thus had their origins in *both* Christianity and slavery.

Indeed, much American music was born in the slave quarters from African importations. Jazz, with its meandering improvisations and complex syncopations and rhythms, constitutes the most famous example. But this rich cultural harvest came at the cost of generations of human agony.

Jonathan Edwards, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" (1741)

...This that you have heard is the case of every one of you that are out of Christ. That world of misery, that lake of burning brimstone, is extended abroad under you. There is the dreadful pit of the glowing flames of the wrath of God; there is hell's wide gaping mouth open; and you have nothing to stand upon, nor any thing to take hold of; there is nothing between you and hell but the air; 'tis only the power and mere pleasure of God that holds you up.

You probably are not sensible of this; you find you are kept out of hell, but don't see the hand of God in it, but look at other things, as the good state of your bodily constitution, your care of your own life, and the means you use for your own preservation. But indeed these things are nothing; if God should withdraw his hand, they would avail no more to keep you from falling, than the thin air to hold up a person that is suspended in it.

Your wickedness makes you as it were heavy as lead, and to tend downwards with great weight and pressure towards hell; and, if God should let you go, you would immediately sink, and swiftly descend and plunge into the bottomless gulf; and your healthy constitution, and your own care and prudence, and best contrivance, and all your righteousness, would have no more influence to uphold you and keep you out of hell, than a spider's web would have to stop a falling rock....

The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked. His wrath towards you burns like fire; he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else but to be cast into the fire. He is of purer eyes than to bear you in his sight; you are ten thousand times as abominable in his eyes as the most hateful, venomous serpent is in ours. You have offended him infinitely more than ever a stubborn rebel did his prince, and yet 'tis nothing but his hand that holds you from falling into the fire every moment....

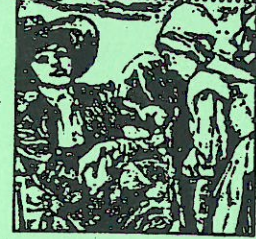
O sinner! Consider the fearful danger you are in! 'Tis a great furnace of wrath, a wide and bottomless pit, full of fire and of wrath that you are held over in the hand of that God whose wrath is provoked and incensed as much against you as against many of the damned in hell. You hang by a slender thread, with the flames of Divine wrath flashing about it, and ready every moment to singe it and burn it asunder....

It would be dreadful to suffer this fierceness and wrath of Almighty God one moment; but you must suffer it to all eternity. There will be no end to this exquisite, horrible, misery....

How dreadful is the state of those that are daily and hourly in danger of this great wrath and infinite misery! But this is the dismal case of every soul in this congregation that has not been born again, however moral and strict, sober and religious, they may otherwise be. Oh! that you would consider it, whether you be young or old!

1660

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS



The Silencing of Mary Dyer

The early colonists in Massachusetts Bay managed to escape religious oppression in England only to be confronted by a new brand of tyranny: a church whose leaders governed both their public and private lives. In the 17th century, the Puritan Church was the law, and anyone who dissented from its orders was punished without mercy.

Like the other principles enshrined in our Bill of Rights, the separation of religion from government was not easily won. For Mary Dyer, it was an idea worth dying for.



MARY DYER LEFT ENGLAND in 1635 an outlaw — a Puritan whose religious faith was declared illegal by the national Church of England. Rather than change her religion, she, along with many others, chose to leave her home and start a new life on the strange and distant shore of Massachusetts Bay. It was the kind of choice Mary would face again and again, and her decision each time would be the same. Her faith came first — even if it meant her death.

So much about life in the young Bay Colony was unknown and fearsome. Half of the first 700 colonists died of scurvy within the first two years. Crude heating in wooden buildings caused frequent fires. Men took their guns to church with them in case of Indian attack. Members of the colony relied on each other's labor and loyalty simply to survive. They found courage in their common faith and depended on the Church to keep that faith in focus.

The hardships of her new life only made



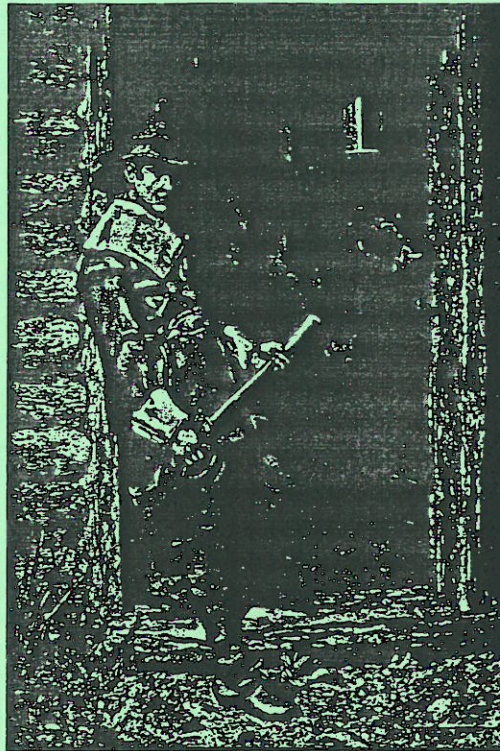
DOCUMENT

The Curse and of the Quakers

The General
Liberes of the
Massachusetts
issued in 1671 an
anti-Quaker pro

Whereas there is a pernicious Sect, commonly called Quakers, whose Actions tend to undermine the Authority of Civil Government, and to destroy the Order of the Churches, and they have not been deterred from their impetuous Attempts to undermine our Peace, and hasten our Ruine.

For prevention thereof, This Court doth Order and Enact, that every person or persons of the cursed Sect of the Quakers, that are an Inhabitant or Inhabitants within this Jurisdiction, shall come before the next Magistrate, and shall commit the said person or persons to close Prison, there to remain, without Baile until the next Court of Assistants, where they shall have a legal trial, and being convicted to be of the Sect of the Quakers, shall be sentenced to Banishment, upon pain of Death.



Mary's faith stronger. As she sought a deeper understanding of God's plan for her, she came to believe that God spoke to every person, including herself, through the urgings of his or her conscience. It was this belief — that all people had free access to God's truth — that led Mary and her husband, William, to doubt some of their church's teachings.

The Puritan Church governed all aspects of life in the colony. Church leaders dictated what people could wear and how they should behave, both in public and inside the home. The Old Testament was the foundation of civil law. Anyone convicted of violating one of the Ten Commandments was punished by hanging. Anyone who questioned the official faith was treated as a criminal. Women in Massachusetts were not even allowed to discuss a sermon, much less voice their own ideas about religion. Mary and William soon recognized in their own church and government the same intolerant spirit that had driven them out of England.

For as long as she could, Mary maintained an uneasy silence, in keeping with church rules. And then she heard another woman speak.

The women of the Dyers' neighborhood — in what is now downtown Boston

— gathered regularly to share certain chores, such as weaving and soap-making and gardening. And to share their thoughts. The neighbor Mary Dyer grew closest to was Anne Hutchinson. To the astonishment of her peers, Anne openly opposed the rigid authority of the church leaders. She believed that no church had the authority to govern a society. In her view, God spoke to everyone, male and female, and gave each individual the ability to discern right from wrong. Hearing Anne say these things out loud filled Mary with both relief and excitement, as if her own mind had suddenly been freed from a cage.

Anne Hutchinson organized a weekly religious meeting, which Mary Dyer faithfully attended. The swelling crowd soon included members of the clergy and the local government. Anne's eloquence and her knowledge of the Bible impressed everyone who heard her. Her popularity continued to grow until John Winthrop himself set out to stop her.

A respected Puritan minister, Winthrop was elected the Colony's first governor in 1631 and eventually served 12 annual terms in the position. In 1637, after his



own congregation turned to Hutchinson for spiritual guidance, Winthrop brought charges of slander against her in the general court. Many of her followers abruptly turned away from her. At the trial, she was banished from the colony. Knowing that the same thing could happen to her, Mary Dyer stepped to the front of the courtroom to take her friend's hand. For Mary, there was no choice. She had risked her

life before for the right to practice her faith, and she would do it again.

The new ideas that Anne and Mary and their friends had been spreading didn't just make Gov. Winthrop angry — they made him afraid. Amid so much physical uncertainty, Winthrop believed that a united spirit among the colonists was essential for their common survival. He feared that a loosening of Church control would endanger not only the colony's welfare but also its charter from the King. Division and controversy were the Devil's business. When word came that Anne Hutchinson and her family had been killed by Indians on Long Island, Winthrop proclaimed it the work of the Lord.

In Anne's absence, Mary vowed to continue the struggle that her friend had begun, no matter what the consequences. She followed her conscience in defying the law and speaking out about her own convictions. Everyone, she said, had the right to believe and practice religion as he or she saw fit. William Dyer tried to work within the government to get the laws on religion changed. In response to their efforts, a court banished Mary and William from the Bay Colony in 1638. They moved to Rhode Island and helped to found the settlement of Newport, where their six children were born.

Thanks to the leadership of Roger Williams, the colony's founder, residents of Rhode Island enjoyed a religious freedom that did not exist in Massachusetts. Still, even in this liberal atmosphere, Mary Dyer felt that something was missing: the voices of women. Rhode Island's independent churches were still run exclusively by men. Like her friend Anne Hutchinson, Mary viewed the separation of Church and State as a principle worth dying for, and one whose benefits should encompass all people.

On a trip to England around 1650, Mary met George Fox, the founder of the Quakers. Fox shared Mary's belief that the Puritans

Women in Massachusetts were not even allowed to discuss a sermon, much less voice their own ideas about religion.

Opposite page, above.

Fear of Indian raids prompted the Puritans to post guards during church services.

Left, above and below.

The "scourging," or public whipping, of Quakers was a common practice in Massachusetts Bay.



DOCUMENT

"Their Own Judgments and Consciences"

In its royal charter of 1663, the Rhode Island Colony became the first government in history to guarantee religious freedom to every citizen.

No person within the said colony, at any time hereafter shall be any wise molested, punished, disquieted, or called in question, for any difference in opinion in matters of religion.

All and every person and persons may, from time to time, and at all times hereafter, freely and fully have and enjoy his and their own judgments and consciences, in matters of religious concernments, throughout the tract of land hereafter mentioned.

hadn't gone far enough in reforming Christianity. They had rejected the rituals and other remnants of Catholicism that they saw in the Church of England, but they had left all authority in the hands of a few. Like Mary Dyer, George Fox believed that God's revelation was freely available to every individual. He made his way from town to town, encouraging men and women to preach.

Mary followed where her spiritual path was leading her. She became a Quaker and stayed away in England for seven years.

During this time, John Endecott, the new governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, was having his own trouble with people like Mary Dyer. Quakers had recently begun coming over from England to spread their radical ideas. They walked into Puritan church services and denounced the preachers. They told people to listen for the voice of God inside them. To Gov. Endecott and his fellow churchmen, this was not just heresy — it was blasphemy.

The Quakers also defied the law. They didn't approve of war, so they refused to serve in the militia. It was against their belief to take oaths. On the street, Quaker men declined to tip their hats to the magistrates and other government officials. They said they only saw fit to bare their heads when they prayed.

To the Puritan leaders, such open defiance of authority indicated a desire and intention to tear down the government. Gov. Endecott authorized a law requiring that all Quakers be banished from the Colony, all Quaker books burned, and any Quaker arriving from England placed in jail.

Mary Dyer hadn't heard about the law when she decided to return to America, but as her ship sailed into Boston Harbor in 1656, she knew that life as she remembered it would never be the same. She and William still loved each other, but they had been apart a long time. The older children were grown now. And the sense of purpose that she had found on her journey was stronger than anything she'd ever felt before.

Captains of vessels sailing from England were required to put a 'Q' beside

the names of all Quakers on their passenger lists. This made it easy for authorities to arrest unwanted arrivals. (A later law set a steep fine for even transporting them.) Mary Dyer was taken to prison as soon as she stepped ashore. William didn't know his wife was back in the colonies until several months later when a messenger delivered a note asking him to come and get her. William brought her back to Rhode Island.

While Mary stayed in Newport with her family, the situation in Boston kept getting worse. As the Quakers became more defiant, Gov. Endecott instituted harsher laws. Now any man who declared himself a

IN CONTEXT

Witch Hunting

Puritan intolerance reached a frenzied extreme in 1692. In May of that year, the daughters of a Puritan minister in Salem Village, Mass., began behaving in wild and unpredictable ways. One of them tried to burn herself in the fireplace. Rev. Samuel Parris soon learned that his household slave, a West Indian woman named Tituba, had been telling the girls stories of voodoo and witchcraft from her native islands.

First the Parris sisters claimed that they were possessed by the Devil themselves. Then they accused Tituba and three other Salem Village women of witchcraft. The charges caused a sensation, and within a few months a kind of "witch fever" had spread across eastern Massachusetts.

Civil authorities, with the support of Puritan ministers, appointed three judges to a special court for trying the accused witches. Witnesses were permitted to offer "spectral evidence," or descriptions of foul deeds they had seen performed by spirits. The list of suspects at one point included the wife of Gov. William Phips. As a result of the witch trials, 13 women and six men were hanged. One man was sentenced to death by "pressing" with heavy weights. Three women died in jail, along with an

Quaker would have an ear cut off. If he refused either to leave the colony or to abandon Quakerism, he lost the other ear. Women received whippings for their first two offenses. The crime of blasphemy could get a person's forehead branded with the letter 'B.' Puritan officials pierced the tongues of some Quakers with hot irons to prevent them from speaking out any more.

Not even these extreme measures seemed to work. Quakers from the other colonies kept coming to support their brethren. Mary Dyer walked all the way up from Newport to visit kindred spirits in jail.



unnamed infant belonging to one of the women who was executed.

The suffering brought on by the witch hysteria eventually turned public opinion against the trials. Families of the victims called for the colonial legislature to restore their loved one's reputations and to withdraw the orders that had denied their civil rights. Such a bill, also authorizing damage payments, was passed in 1711.

The Salem witch trials demonstrated that in an environment of widespread suspicion and intolerance, it only takes a spark to cause a wildfire. The memory of that episode is



evident today in the phrase "witch hunt," which has come to mean any investigation that plays on a community's fear of unpopular ideas.

The most famous modern "witch hunt" was the crusade launched by U.S. Sen. Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin in 1950 to rid the government of individuals he con-

sidered to be traitors. McCarthy offered no evidence for his claim that he had identified 205 communists in the State Department. But the prominence of his own office caused many Americans to believe him.

McCarthy's unfounded accusations of treason ruined hundreds of careers and made him, for a time, one of the most powerful figures in government. None of the charges was ever proved. His targets also included any individuals in civil service suspected of being homosexuals.

In 1954, after McCarthy was unable to get one of his

assistants excused from the draft, he retaliated by "investigating" the military. Television broadcasts of the Army-McCarthy hearings exposed the Senator's cruel and unethical tactics to the public. Later that year, the Senate formally condemned McCarthy's conduct.

Above. The first time Mary Dyer was led to the gallows, she saw her two companions hanged.

Left. Puritan authorities arrest an old woman on charges of witchcraft.

Gov. Endecott saw no way around it: He announced that any Quaker entering Massachusetts Bay Colony would be put to death.

On her third venture to Boston, in 1659, Mary Dyer and two friends, Marmaduke Stephenson and William Robinson, were arrested and tried for their religious beliefs. They were given two days to leave the commonwealth, or else face the gallows. Mary went to Newport for a short time but returned and was seized.

Mary's son William traveled to Boston and convinced Gov. Endecott to withdraw her death sentence. Mary had already climbed the steps to the gallows when young William appeared on horseback. "Reprieve! Reprieve!" he shouted.

Although the Governor had granted Mary amnesty, she was ordered to stand with the rope around her neck, her feet and hands still tied, while her two companions were executed.

The fire of her convictions now burned

even stronger in Mary's mind. She lived in the freedom and comfort of Rhode Island for a year but was not content. She decided to return to Boston, prepared to accept the consequences. She was promptly arrested and jailed.

Gov. Endecott came to visit Mary in prison. He tried to talk her into giving up her religion. Instead, she wrote letters to government officials insisting that they were the ones who ought to change.

Mary's hanging was scheduled for June 1, 1660, on Boston Common. This village green was a mile's walk from the prison. Fearing that Mary would preach to the crowds along the way, the Governor stationed all his troops — about 200 men — on horseback up and down the street. He ordered the militia drummers to drown out anyone who tried to speak.

The crowds broke through. People had come from all over the district to witness the spectacle. "Don't go!" they called out. "Go

Below. Mary Quakers departed the Massachusetts Bay Colony to seek religious freedom.



back to Rhode Island. Go back and live!" The drums got louder.

Mary's guards escorted her across the Common to an elm tree next to Frog Pond. Standing there was Pastor Wilson, who had baptized her first child many years earlier. He begged her to save herself, to give up the ideas that had brought her to death's door.

She calmly refused, adding that she looked forward to life beyond the grave.

She climbed the ladder. Pastor Wilson loaned the hangman his handkerchief to cover her face. Mary Dyer did not protest her fate.

She remained silent as the ladder was pulled out from under her.

The crowd stood a long time without stirring.

"She hangs like a flag," someone said.

After he had removed the ladder, Edward Wanton, the hangman, walked over and vomited into Frog Pond. He went home and told his mother he had quit his job.

"I have met the most beautiful woman in the world," he said, "And now I'm going to become a Quaker." ♦

AT ISSUE

No Place to Pray

Many people have come to America seeking religious freedom. The Puritans did so, then promptly placed restrictions on religious practice in their own colony. Quaker Mary Dyer and others objected and paid with their lives. Eventually, as our nation of immigrants became more diverse, dozens of faiths found their place in the American patchwork.

Even though the Bill of Rights guaranteed freedom of religion, a number of groups have suffered persecution for their beliefs. Many Native Americans, for example, were forced to abandon their traditional religions, and only recently have some tribes won the right to follow the old ways. The religion commonly known as Mormonism originated in the United States, but its followers faced violence and exile

before they found a home where they could live in peace.

Jews, Catholics, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, evangelical Christians — almost every religious group has experienced some form of intolerance. And yet, systematic persecution of religious groups in American history is relatively rare. One group who became victims of organized intolerance were the Hutterites.

In the 1870s, a group of German Christians known as Hutterites began immigrating into the northern Great Plains. For more than 300 years, the Hutterites had endured intolerance in Europe.

Now they hoped to establish their agricultural "colonies" on the open prairie and live in peace.

Neighboring farmers quickly became suspicious of the newcomers. At that time, it was not so unusual that the Hutterites spoke

German or wore plain clothes. But the fact that they lived communally — rejecting the idea of private property — was another matter. And so was their disregard for the outside world.

That world erupted in war in 1914, and the U.S. entered the conflict three years later. The Hutterites numbered nearly 2,000, spread among 17 colonies in South Dakota and two in Montana. As pacifists, the Hutterites had no use for the Liberty Bonds their neighbors were buying to support the U.S. Army. As these same neighbors sent sons off to fight the German Kaiser's troops, the Hutterites refused.

In the name of patriotism, farmers vandalized Hutterite buildings and raided the colonies' herds. Ordinances were passed to limit the use of German on the telephone and in schools and other assemblies. Some young

Hutterite men were arrested for evading the draft. A court sentenced three brothers in the Hofer family to 20 years in the federal prison at Alcatraz, in San Francisco Bay. They were later moved to Fort Leavenworth, Kan. John and Michael Hofer died there as a result of physical abuse. Before sending the bodies back to South Dakota for burial, prison officials dressed one of the brothers in a military uniform.

South Dakota conducted an investigation of the Hutterites during this period. The State Council of Defence called the Hutterite communal organization "un-American" and recommended dissolving the colonies. Courts declared that the colonies were not religious bodies but corporations operating for economic gain. The application of corporate property laws forced most of the Hutterites to leave for Canada.

2. Captain John Underhill Justifies the Attack on Mystic Village, in the Pequot War (1637), 1638

Having imbarqued our soldiers, wee weighed ankor at *Seabrooke* Fort, and set sayle for the *Narraganset Bay*, deluding the *Pequeats* thereby, for they expected us to fall into *Pequeat* River; but crossing their expectation, bred in them a securitie: wee landed our men in the *Narraganset Bay*, and marched over land above two dayes journey before wee came to *Pequeat*; quartering the last nights march within

From John Underhill. *News from America* (London: 1638; New York, 1971), 36–41, 42–43.

two miles of the place, wee set forth about one of the clocke in the morning, having sufficient intelligence that they knew nothing of our comming: Drawing neere to the Fort yeelded up our selves to God, and intreated his assistance in so waightie an enterprize. We set on our march to surround the Fort, Captaine *John Mason*, approaching to the West end, where it had an entrance to passe into it, my selfe marching to the Southside, surrounding the Fort, placing the *Indians*, for wee had about three hundred of them without, side of our souldiers in a ring battalia, giving a volley of shotte upon the Fort, so remarkable it appeared to us, as wee could not but admire at the providence of God in it, that souldiers so unexpert in the use of their armes, should give so compleat a volley, as though the finger of God had touched both match and flint: which volley being given at breake of day, and themselves fast asleepe for the most part, bred in them such a terrour, that they brake forth into a most dolefull cry, so as if God had not fitted the hearts of men for the service, it would have bred in them a commiseration towards them: but every man being bereaved of pittie fell upon the worke without compassion, considering the bloud they had shed of our native Countrey-men, and how barbarously they had dealt with them, and slaine first and last about thirty persons. Having given fire, wee approached neere to the entrance which they had stopped full, with armes of trees, or brakes: my selfe approaching to the entrance found the worke too heavie for mee, to draw out all those which were strongly forced in. We gave order to one Master *Hedge*, and some other souldiers to pull out those brakes, having this done, and laid them betweene me and the entrance, and without order themselves, proceeded first on the South end of the Fort: but remarkable it was to many of us; men that runne before they are sent, most commonly have an ill reward. Worthy Reader, let mee intreate you to have a more charitable opinion of me (though unworthy to be better thought of) then is reported in the other Booke [John Mason's account]; you may remember there is a passage unjustly laid upon mee, that when wee should come to the entrance, I should put forth this question: Shall wee enter: others should answer again; What came we hither for else? It is well knowne to many; it was never my practice in time of my command, when we are in garrison, much to consult with a private souldier, or to aske his advise in point of Warre, much lesse in a matter of so great a moment as that was, which experience had often taught mee, was not a time to put forth such a question, and therefore pardon him that hath given the wrong information: having our swords in our right hand, our Carbins or Muskets in our left hand, we approched the Fort. Master *Hedge* being shot thorow both armes, and more wounded; though it bee not commendable for a man to make mention of any thing that might tend to his owne honour; yet because I would have the providence of God observed, and his Name magnified, as well for my selfe as others, I dare not omit, but let the world know, that deliverance was given to us that command, as well as to private souldiers. Captaine *Mason* and my selfe entring into the *Wigwams*, hee was shot, and received many Arrows against his head-peece, God preserved him from any wounds my selfe received a shotte in the left hippe, through a sufficient *Buffe* coate, that if I had not beene supplied with such a garment, the Arrow would have pierced through me; another I received betweene necke and shoulders, hanging in the linnen of my Head-peece, others of our souldiers were shot some through the shoulders, some in the face, some in the head, some in the legs: Captaine *Mason* and my selfe losing each of us a man, and

had neere twentie wounded: most couragiously these *Pequeats* behaved themselves: but seeing the Fort was to hotte for us, wee devised a way how wee might save our selves and prejudice them, Captaine *Mason* entring into a Wigwam, brought out a fire-brand, after hee had wounded many in the house, then hee set fire on the West-side where he entred, my selfe set fire on the South end with a traine of Powder, the fires of both meeting in the center of the Fort blazed most terribly, and burnt all in the space of halfe an houre; many couragious fellowes were unwilling to come out, and fought most desperately through the Palisadoes, so as they were scorched and burnt with the very flame, and were deprived of their armes, in regard the fire burnt their very bowstrings, and so perished valiantly: mercy they did deserve for their valour, could we have had opportunitie to have bestowed it; many were burnt in the Fort, both men, women, and children, others forced out, and came in troopes to the *Indians*, twentie, and thirtie at a time, which our souldiers received and entertained with the point of the sword; downe fell men, women, and children, those that scaped us, fell into the hands of the *Indians*, that were in the reere of us; it is reported by themselves, that there were about foure hundred soules in this Fort, and not above five of them escaped out of our hands. Great and dolefull was the bloody sight to the view of young souldiers that never had beene in Warre, to see so many soules lie gasping on the ground so thicke in some places, that you could hardly passe along. It may bee demanded, Why should you be so furious (as some have said) should not Christians have more mercy and compassion: But I would referre you to *Davids* warre, when a people is growne to such a height of bloud, and sinne against God and man, and all confederates in the action, there hee hath no respect to persons, but harrowes them, and sawes them, and puts them to the sword, and the most terriblest death that may bee: sometimes the Scripture declareth women and children must perish with their parents; sometime the case alters: but we will not dispute it now. We had sufficient light from the word of God for our proceedings.

Having ended this service, wee drew our forces together to battalia, being ordered, the *Pequeats* came upon us with their prime men, and let flye at us, my selfe fell on scarce with twelve or fourteene men to encounter with them; but they finding our bullets to outreach their arrowes, forced themselves often to retreat: when we saw wee could have no advantage against them in the open field, wee requested our *Indians* for to entertaine fight with them, our end was that we might see the nature of the *Indian* warre: which they granted us and fell out; the *Pequeats*, *Narragansets*, and *Mohigeners* changing a few arrows together after such a manner, as I dare boldly affirme, they might fight seven yeares and not kill seven men: they came not neere one another, but shot remote, and not point blanke, as wee often doe with our bullets, but at rovers, and then they gaze up in the skie to see where the Arrow falls, and not until it is fallen doe they shoot againe, this fight is more for pastime, then to conquer and subdue enemies. . . .

. . . Our *Indians* came to us, and much rejoiced at our victories, and greatly admired the manner of *English* mens fight: but cried *mach it, mach it*; that is, it is naught, it is naught, because it is too furious, and slaies too many men. Having received their desires, they freely promised, and gave up themselves to march along with us, wherever we would goe.