

Pilgrims and Puritans in 17th Century New England

By Robert Jennings Heinsohn, PhD.

The history of Pilgrims and Puritans in 17th century New England reflects events in the reformation of English politics and religion. Summarizing the time-line of the English Reformation is the easiest way to show how these groups evolved in both England and America.

Monarchs

King James I of England and VI of Scotland; Henry, Prince of Wales; Anne of Denmark

Henry VIII (1491-1547, throne 1509) established the Protestant, Church of England 1534 with monarch as head of both church and state

Edward VI (1537-1553, throne 1547) died age 16

Mary Tudor, "Bloody Mary" (1516-1558, throne 1553) failed to restore Catholicism

Elizabeth I (1533-1603, throne 1558) made England a world power, strengthened the Church of England

James I (James VI, Scotland son of Mary Queen of Scots) (1566-1625, throne 1603) repressed efforts of Catholics and Puritans to reform the Church of England

Charles I (1600-1649, throne 1625) "personal rule" antagonized Puritan Parliament, beheaded

Cromwell & Puritan Parliament (1649-1660) English Civil War, Parliament strengthened

Charles II (1636-1685, throne 1660) restored relations between Anglicans and Calvinists



Definitions

Calvin, John (1509-1564)

- salvation of the faithful predestined by God's grace irrespective of their behavior, knowledge, righteousness or good works
- church must be faithful to scripture; rejected scholastic errors, papal heresies and idolatrous worship
- ministers ordained by pastors; minister, elders and deacons selected by congregation

Church of England – church governance dictated by bishops, contained people of Calvinist persuasion and Anglicans preferring ceremony and ritual

Puritans – determined Calvinist reformers working to "purify" Church of England so as to be consistent with Calvinist principles, began during the reign of Henry VIII (1509-1547)

Separatists – Puritans denied the authority of bishops and wanted total separation from the Church of England, began during the reigns of Elizabeth I (1558-1603) and James I (1603-1625)

Pilgrims – Separatists who fled to Holland (1607/8) and sailed on Mayflower in 1620

Massachusetts Bay Puritans – immigrated to Massachusetts during the reign of Charles I (1625-1649) and encouraged by a Puritan Parliament (1649-1660); Puritans never sought separation from the Church of England

Quakers – independent reformers practicing austere Protestantism; their missionaries and followers were repressed by the Puritans in the Bay Colony

CHURCH OF ENGLAND

The Gutenberg Bible of the New York Public Library.

Gutenberg's printed bible, Luther's dispute with the Catholic Church, and Calvin's theology initiated reform of Christendom that spread through



Europe and England. In 1534 Henry VIII removed England from the Holy Roman Empire because the Catholic monarchs of Spain and France thwarted his desire to expand England's influence, and because they influenced the Pope to deny an annulment of Henry's marriage to Catherine of Aragon. Henry created the *Church of England* with himself as its head and forged a theology in the middle ground between Catholicism and Calvinism. Parliament was persuaded to support Henry and not Rome.

Under the guidance of his political adviser Cardinal Wolsey, Henry dissolved Catholic monasteries, confiscated their property and distributed it to English gentry in return for their support. Beginning in 1535 Henry distributed bibles written in English to every parish and encouraged their use by all Englishmen. He expanded the navy to achieve dominance of the seas at the beginning of the age of discovery. In 1549 Archbishop Cranmer constructed the Book of Common Prayer prescribing the Anglican liturgy retaining major parts of the traditional Catholic liturgy, and it was accepted by Parliament. Catholic priests and laymen resented Henry's purge of the Church of Rome and resisted adopting the Book of Common Prayer. On the other hand, Protestant reformers believed the newly formed Church of England had not separated itself sufficiently from the Church of Rome and advocated additional reform. As sovereign of both church and state, efforts to revive Catholicism and attempts to reform the Church of England were interpreted by Henry as challenges to his authority. In some cases, such acts were punished as treason, including imprisonment and public execution.

The Church of England was authoritarian and royalist, and referred to as *an Episcopacy*. It was a "top-down" organization in which the monarch as head chose the Archbishop who in turn chose lower-order bishops, who in turn selected the ministers for individual parishes. Church governance was subject to the authority of bishops, deans, etc. of the region in which the parishes were located.

Following the death of Henry VIII, his young son Edward VI continued his fathers' plans, but challenge by Catholics continued. Following his death at the age of 16, his Catholic half-sister Mary ("Bloody Mary") assumed the throne. She wished to marry the Catholic, Phillip II of Spain and undertook a series of drastic actions to restore England to the Church of Rome. Her reign produced a war but was unsuccessful in restoring Catholicism.

PURITANS

Puritans were determined Calvinist reformers who insisted the Church of England should be organized along lines consistent with scripture, without regard to custom, tradition or practices considered to be heretical to scripture. Puritans believed that God drew men's souls to salvation. It was heresy to believe that there was anything individuals could do by good works or reason to lay hold of this "covenant of grace". Religious services should consist of Bible readings, pastor's preaching the gospel, and extemporaneous prayers new to each service. Except for the sacraments of baptism and communion, reformers wanted services stripped of vestments, prayer books, creeds, rituals, alters, crucifixes, candles, organs, incense, stained glass windows, etc. Furthermore, each congregation should select their minister, elders and deacons, who are accountable to the congregation. Non-Conforming Anglicans interested in purifying the religious beliefs and practices in the Church of England were called "Puritans", a term of derision reflecting hostility to the Church of England. With time, reformers adopted the term as an expression reflecting the sincerity of their convictions.

Queen Elizabeth I, c. 1565-1570.

In 1558, Elizabeth I, a determined Protestant, became queen at the age of 25. From the start, she was preoccupied resisting efforts of Catholic monarchs in France, Spain and Scotland to undermine her authority. She thwarted Jesuit assassination plots; executed Catholic Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots in 1587 and defeated the Spanish Armada in 1588. She was less concerned by Puritans and even appointed a few Puritans as advisors. She ended her reign with England in command of the seas, a world power in commerce. After several decades of use, St. Johns Fort in Newfoundland was recognized as an English settlement in 1583. In 1585 Sir Walter Raleigh's fleet of 7 vessels carried 89 men and 20-30 women and children to Roanoke Island, NC. When the fleet returned in 1587 the settlement was abandoned and only the word, CROATAN, carved in a tree suggesting their fate.



Growing numbers of Puritans entered Parliament but Puritan lords and gentry were unsuccessful in convincing Elizabeth to abandon the Episcopacy. Puritan members of Parliament were called the *Presbyterian Party* and those in Parliament who supported Elizabeth were called the *Episcopal Party*. Several congregations of Puritans unable to reform religious practices in the Church of England and angered by corruption, bribery and nepotism practiced by bishops, deans, etc., announced their desire to separate themselves from the Church of England and were allowed to immigrate to Holland.

Francis Johnson immigrated to Amsterdam with his congregation from London and established the, *Brethren of the Separation of the First English Church at Amsterdam*. The congregation of 300 became known as the *Ancient Brethren*.

Thomas White was the minister of a congregation from southwestern England and immigrated to Holland in (ca) 1595 to join the *Ancient Brethren*

Over time, Puritans became the dominant constituency in Parliament and influenced civic life in England for many decades. For convenience, the Puritans could be divided as follows:

- (a) Presbyterian – representational parish governance, but espoused an orthodoxy and organization accountable to a central authority
- (b) Congregational – representational church governance but espousing orthodoxy, that was not accountable to a central authority
- (c) Separatists – congregation guided by individual conscience and totally independent of the Church of England or any central authority.

James I, painting attributed to John de Critz, c. 1620

Upon the death of childless Elizabeth in 1603, James IV of Scotland, a distant cousin, assumed the English throne and was named James I of England. James promised to preserve the Church of England, but he detested Calvinism and took steps to repress strident Puritan clergy. James believed he was above the law and had absolute authority in both church and state. Radical Catholics attempted to blow up Parliament ("gunpowder plot", 1606) during its opening day ceremonies when James was in attendance and James adopted a series of harsh penalties against Catholics. On the other side of religious criticism, Separatists quoting Corinthians II, challenged the authority of the bishops of the Church of England and began conducting religious services secretly. James claimed these actions defied his authority and subjected Separatists to fines, confiscation of property, imprisonment and in some cases execution. Separatists were prohibited from leaving England without the king's permission. From Lincolnshire (Northeast England), Separatist congregations of Richard Clyfton in Babsworth, John Smyth in Gainsborough, and John Robinson in Scrooby were imprisoned in 1607 when they attempted to travel to Holland without permission. By surreptitious means these congregations fled to Amsterdam in 1608. After several aborted attempts, the Scrooby congregation of Separatists fled to Holland to join the Clyfton congregation of Separatists. Because of arcane internal squabbles among the Amsterdam Separatists, John Robinson and a portion of Clyftons congregation broke away and were allowed by the Dutch authorities to move to Leiden.



Wealthy Englishmen engaged in commerce, law, trading, manufacture, organized joint stock holding trading companies and were granted permission (patent) by James I to establish trading settlements in North America. The companies had to recruit settlers, provide capital and supplies for settlers to travel to North America and begin settlements to engage in activities to produce goods for trade controlled by the trading companies. The settlers were subject to the authority of a Governor General living in each colony who was appointed by trading company's governing council in England. The settlers enjoyed the liberties and rights as British subjects but were forbidden to draft orders and laws contrary to the laws of England. With assurance the settlers would support the Church of England and draft no laws contrary to English law, James granted a patent in 1606 to a group of entrepreneurs, called the Virginia Company, to establish settlements in the Chesapeake Bay region of North America. The governors and ruling councils of the settlements were controlled by the directors of the company in London. Several attempts were made to establish settlements in North America, some succeed and some were abandoned, e.g. Elizabeth Island, Vineyard Bay MA (1602), Jamestown VA (1607), St. George's Fort, mouth of Kennebec River MA (1607-08), Bermuda (1609), Monahigon Island, MA (1619), and the Barbados (1624). Settlers, council members and governors general in Jamestown were royalists, loyal to the king and the Church of England. Unfortunately they brought with them harsh attitudes toward the native people of North America. In addition, many of these colonies were composed only of men whose goal was monetary gain, treated the native people harshly and behaved in an undisciplined unruly, sometimes riotous behavior manner that undermined the ability of the colony to function effectively and achieve the financial goals of the governing councils in England. Jamestown was a major endeavor of the Virginia Company. Ships carrying supplies and settlers recruited from all parts of England were sent on a regularly basis. Jamestown settlers signed on with the Virginia Company for financial gain. The settlers treated the Indians harshly, confiscated their corn and settled permanently wherever they choose. Indians and settlers fought each other on and off for decades. Since the settlers were recruited from different parts of England, they did not have the internal cohesion and religious verve of the Puritans.



John Smith, played by Dennis Farmer, claims the beach for England during a re-enactment ceremony of the 400th anniversary landing at Jamestown.

In May 1607, 68 men landed on Jamestown Island, in the James River 60 miles from the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay. Unfortunately the settlement was constructed on a swampy peninsular on the James River exposing settlers to disease. During some seasons of the year the river water was unhealthy to drink. Within weeks Algonquian Indians attacked and a fort was built. Sporadic attacks by Indians on settlers, and vice versa, continued for several decades. The settlers were a collection of English gentlemen, craftsman and laborers. During the winter of 1608, 71 men arrived from England but a fire in their warehouse destroyed nearly all their food and supplies. By the summer of 1608, only 38 men remained but in October 55 men, two women and 8 Dutchman to manufacture glass arrived. In August 1609, 200-300 men, women and children arrived after having been shipwrecked in Bermuda. During the winter, 1609-1610, the "starving time", food supplies were exhausted that nearly 80% of the settlers died from disease and starvation. By June 1610 the remaining 60 survivors planned to abandon the settlement, when luckily, new supplies arrived from England. Conditions improved and the settlement grew. By 1616 the 269 men plus their families lived in Jamestown and made the settlement a profitable exporter of high-grade tobacco to England. In 1619, the Virginia Company in England asked the settlers to establish a two-part legislature. One part was composed of the appointed Governor General and his council and the other part was composed of spokesman from the Jamestown plantations. Jamestown was the first representative assembly in North America. Virginia became a crown colony in 1624.

PILGRIMS

The Pilgrims explore their new land.

Separatists who fled to Holland and later traveled to North America are now called "Pilgrims". Aside from its literal meaning, the phrase "Pilgrims" was not used by the Separatists! William Bradford, quoting Hebrews, xi:13,...*that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth...*used the phrase to characterize their departure from Leiden in 1620. Even then, the phrase had no currency until 1669 when writers began calling the *Mayflower* company, the "Pilgrim Fathers". [In this essay, the phrase Separatist and Pilgrim will be used interchangeably.]

The Dutch in Leiden were tolerant and allowed the Separatists to worship as they pleased. However, the Pilgrims were excluded from certain occupations, membership in trade guilds, owning land but were allowed to participate in low-paying parts of Leiden's principal industry, textile trades, e.g. spinning, weaving, carding, combing, dyeing, tailoring and manufacture of felt, corduroy, etc. In

1616/17 the congregation began negotiations with the Virginia Company to begin a colony in North America. The Leiden congregation feared loosing their English heritage through intermarriage and assimilation in Dutch society. The Pilgrims also feared being recruited to fight in an impending war between Holland and Spain. James I eventually granted them permission to establish a colony in North America and to practice their religion as they pleased provided they did not antagonize the Church of England. Needing additional colonists, the Leiden Pilgrims ("Saints") accepted Separatist families from England ("Strangers") to sail with them to North America. These later individuals had not shared the years of communal experience living in Leiden and in time, several "Strangers" proved to be sources of dissention after landing in North America.

Pilgrims aboard the *Mayflower* and *Speedwell* sailed from Southampton on August 23, 1620. Twice the ships returned to port because the *Speedwell* was unseaworthy owing to being overloaded. A portion of the Pilgrim company remained in England, planning to sail to North America the next year and the remaining 102 passengers and crew finally sailed from Plymouth, England aboard the *Mayflower* on September 6, 1620.

Their original destination was Manhattan Island (northern Virginia territory) but navigational difficulties and their late arrival in Cape Cod Harbor on November 11, 1620 resulted in them selecting a site in a former Indian village, *Patuxet*, Captain John Smith had mapped in a 1616 expedition to North America. On December 11, 1620 the Pilgrims landed and began building dwellings for a permanent settlement they called New Plymouth. Except for William Brewster, the son of the baliff for the Duke of York who attended Cambridge and served in Elizabeth's court in Holland, the Pilgrims were men without formal education, or political or economic connections. They and their families had been yeoman and artisans in Northeast England and textile workers in Leiden. The Pilgrim congregation traveled to North America as members of a joint stock trading company financed by London merchants with the goal of fishing for profit. Unfortunately, the Pilgrims had no experience or success in fishing. They were successful however growing corn to trade with Indians for furs that were sent to England to reimburse their London backers. One half of the 102 Pilgrims aboard the *Mayflower* perished during their first year in Plymouth. Skillful diplomacy of Governor Bradford and *Massasoit*, chief of the *Wampanoag* Indians secured a treaty of peace that lasted for decades. While in Leiden the Pilgrims adopted religious practices used in the Dutch Reformed Church. Secondly they appreciated the tolerance shown them by Dutch society; they absorbed it and practiced it with the neighboring Wampanoag Indians. The Indians needed protection from neighboring tribes and the Pilgrims needed the Indians to show them how to survive in the wilderness. Without this lasting peace, the Pilgrim colony would never have survived.



James I died in 1625 and his son, Charles I, became King. Like his father, Charles believed he had absolute authority and was above the law. Charles favored *Arminian* beliefs in the Anglican Church that man could achieve faith and win salvation by good works, reason and will power. These high-church Anglican beliefs were heretical to Calvinism and the Puritans felt betrayed. Puritans loathed dictatorial bishops and high-church liturgy, inept appointed clergy and other practices contradictory to Calvinism. Beginning under the reign of James, Parliament began to take the lead in civic and foreign affairs and Charles encountered increasing difficulty dealing with Parliament. He tried to enforce prerogatives he believed the monarch possessed. However, Parliament considered these efforts intrusions in their domain. Conditions worsened and in 1629 Charles dismissed Parliament and began an era of "Personal Rule". Between 1630 and 1640 relationships between Parliament and Charles changed from antagonistic to hostile.

To many members in Parliament, Charles was a despot, but reluctantly they maintained their allegiance to the Church of England. In 1635 Charles levied a "ship's money tax" on all counties in England, where heretofore the tax applied only to the maritime counties. Parliament took the view that only Parliament could levy taxes. William Lourd, Archbishop of Canterbury, enforced laws compelling everyone to attend church. Puritans objected. Lourd demanded that Scotland use the English Prayer book rather than their preferred prayer book by John Knox. In 1639 Charles was confronted with Scotland seeking independence. Charles requested money from Parliament for an expected war with Spain and to support of the French Huguenots. After 11 years of "Personal Rule", Charles recalled Parliament to support war with Scotland that had invaded England. The Puritan Parliament claimed that only Parliament could summon the army to fight. In 1642 Charles ordered the arrest of 4 members of Parliament who challenged his authority. Mobs rioted in London and Charles and his Queen fled London. Parliament asked Charles to surrender sovereignty over church and state. He didn't and the English Civil War began. In 1649 Charles was beheaded and English governance passed to a Puritan Parliament that established a "Presbyterian System" with doctrinaire rigidity and discipline. No longer was the king the head of the church but clergy met, formed presbyteries to whom parish ministers owed allegiance. It was a "bottom up" representative system of church governance whereas the former Church of England, or episcopacy was a "top-down" system. Puritans in Parliament engaged in numerous disputes with the army and in 1660 a compromise was reached that resulted with Charles' son, Charles II, asked to return to England and assume the throne.

PURITANS OF THE MASSACHUSETTS COLONY

Puritans on alert

In 1628 the Massachusetts Company trading company under John Endicott was granted permission to establish a settlement in Salem, MA. In 1629 leadership of the company was transferred to John Winthrop, a Puritan and leading London attorney. Before the end of 1630 he and 2000 Puritans aboard 17 ships settled in the area around Boston Bay. The colonists were staunch Puritans from a wide class of English society, e.g. tradesman, craftsman, wealthy country gentlemen, prominent men involved in commerce and industry, and active in civic affairs in England and some who had even served in Parliament. The Massachusetts Colony Puritans professed allegiance to Parliament and the Church of England, which now tolerated Puritan beliefs and practices. Between 1629 and 1640 the Massachusetts colony grew to 4,000 encompassing a wide range of occupations. On the other hand, the Plymouth colony remained relatively static, numbering approximately 300 engaged in farming to supply produce to the Bay colony. During this period, the religious beliefs and practices of the residents of Plymouth and Massachusetts Colonies were essentially the same. Puritans arriving in Plymouth were no longer called Pilgrims and virtually indistinguishable from the Puritans arriving in the Massachusetts Colony.

The tolerance the Pilgrims enjoyed in Leiden between 1607-1620 and that governed their actions with the Wampanoag Indians was not practiced in the Massachusetts Colony. The Bay Colony was governed by Governor General John Winthrop who administered laws passed by the colony's governing body called the General Court, composed of elected members. In the broad sense, the Massachusetts Colony was a Calvinist theocracy. Attendance and financial support of the church were required for all colony members. Ministers, elders and deacons exerted considerable influence over laws passed by the General Court; and in turn, the General Court enforced actions taken by the Puritan churches. Individuals critical of the churches, or espousing beliefs thought to be heretical to Calvinist dogma were punished, e.g. banishment, whipping, branding, ear-lobbing, etc.

In 1635/36 the Puritan congregation of Thomas Hooker in Cambridge, Massachusetts was unhappy with the dictatorial ways of Winthrop's General Court and was granted permission to begin a colony in Hartford, Connecticut. Roger Williams, minister in Plymouth and later Salem preached the total separation of civic and religious affairs. In 1636 he was banished from Salem and established a colony in Providence, Rhode Island. In 1637 Anne Hutchinson advocated separatist beliefs and other non-conforming views held to be heretical to Calvinist dogma and was banished from the Bay Colony. In 1638, the Puritan congregation of John



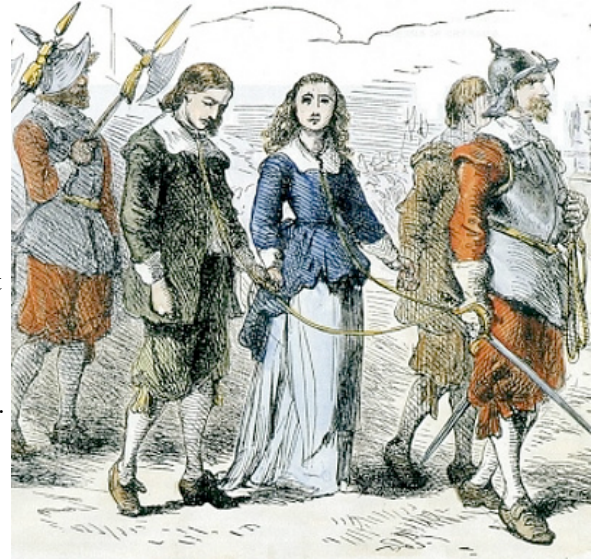
Davenport in Cambridge, Massachusetts was displeased with Winthrop's dictatorial ways and bought land from the Indians to begin the settlement, New Haven, Connecticut.

Peace between the Pilgrims and the Wampanoag Indians that began in 1620 survived for many decades owing to the skillful diplomacy of Bradford and Massasoit. Relations between with the Pequot Indians in Eastern Connecticut and the Puritans were not peaceful. Following several scattered Pequot attacks on settlers, the General Courts of the Plymouth and Massachusetts Colonies conducted retaliatory attacks in 1637 that annihilated the Pequot Indian Nation by killing its people and dispersing those that remained. Later in 1674/5, relationships between the Narragansett Indian nation in Southeastern Massachusetts and the Puritan settlers erupted in hostilities, called the King Phillip's War, which destroyed the Indian nation and dispersed its people.

SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

Quakers being led to execution in Massachusetts Bay Colony, 1600s.

The Society of Friends was founded in England by George Fox who disapproved of Christians who did not live up to scripture. His teaching attracted strict Calvinist Puritans. Fundamental to Quaker belief was, (a) immediacy of Christ's teaching, (b) irrelevance of special buildings, ordained ministers and (c) avoidance of doctrine, oaths, dogma, and liturgy. Quakers met in silence and spoke when they believed the divine urged them to speak, i.e. "Out of everything and expectant silence, God's light uses any worshiper as minister". Quakers favored "the mind to become a blank sheet" and receive divine impressions and direction because of the worthlessness of human reason. Members of the society were called seekers, ranters and quakers because of the behavior of some members during their religious services. Originally the term was one of derision but over time the phrase Quakers was accepted by its members, much like the reformists had accepted the phrase "Puritan" decades earlier.



By 1652 the religious movement, "Quakerism", had begun. Quakers often disrupted Puritan religious services and refused to remove their hats when it was the custom to do so. In 1655 Cromwell directed magistrates to punish Quakers who "made unchristian disturbances" in Puritan services. In 1662 the Quaker Act punished extreme dissenters. Between 1667 and 1669 a regular system of Quaker governance evolved. In 1689 an act of Parliament ended the persecution of Quakers.

Between 1655 and 1662, sixty Quaker missionaries arrived in the Plymouth and Massachusetts colonies. They attracted many converts. The Quakers were to the Puritans in Massachusetts what the Separatists had been to the Anglicans in England decades earlier, except that now the Puritans were on the receiving end of the attack. Quakers disrupted Puritan religious services and criticized Puritan colonial officials with such scathing vehemence that colonial authorities believed they had to take harsh action to maintain their authority. In 1657/8 the Plymouth General Court banished Quakers from Plymouth but allowed them to form communities on Cape Cod and along the southern Massachusetts coast. The General Court in the Massachusetts colony was less tolerant. Quakers were banished and if they returned, as several did and were punished severely. Between 1659 and 1661 four were hung publicly. In 1661 the Test Act, prevented Quakers and nonconforming Puritans in the Massachusetts Colony from serving in public office. Thus Quakers gravitated to business and commerce. Over time, Quaker meetings were established throughout North America: New England 1661, MD 1672, Philadelphia 1681, NY 1695, VA 1696 and NC 1698

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Puritans, Pilgrims and Quakers are the names given to groups of reforming Protestants embracing varying forms of Calvinism that emerged at different periods during the English Reformation. Over time Puritans evolved into three groups, each desiring representational governance:

- (a) espousing an orthodoxy and organization accountable to a central authority
- (b) an orthodoxy and organization not accountability to a central authority
- (c) independents wanting a total separation from any governmental authority

Pilgrims were Calvinist separatists who suffered repression under James I, fled to Holland in 1607/8 as political exiles and immigrated to North America aboard the *Mayflower* in 1620. For the most part, Pilgrims were farm families who found employment as textile workers in Holland. After 1630, Puritans immigrated to the Massachusetts Colony with the encouragement of Parliament. Pilgrims and Massachusetts Colony Puritans shared the same Calvinist beliefs. However, the Pilgrims embraced tolerance shown them by the Dutch (1607-1620) that proved successful in living with the Indians (1620-1640). On the other hand, the Massachusetts Colony Puritans were staunch Puritans conditioned by Parliament's conflict with Charles I (1630-1640). Quakers were separatist men and

women holding austere Calvinist beliefs believed to be authentic to scripture. After 1655 Quaker missionaries immigrated to North America, attracted a considerable following and established communities throughout all the English colonies in North America.

Pilgrims embraced a covenant that sustained them during their exile in Holland and the early difficult years in Plymouth. The writing of the Pilgrim leaders suggests that they were thoughtful, generous and warm people. The Puritan men in the Massachusetts colony were cosmopolitan men of commerce emerging during the decades political tumult of the Puritan revolution. The writing of the Puritan leaders suggests that they were militant, severe and doctrinaire. Certainly the Salem witch trials (1692-94) reveals the absurdity of their doctrinaire behavior.

Why do Pilgrims occupy such an enduring part in the American imagination? Jamestown was larger and settled earlier than Plymouth, and its settlers suffered physical conditions as grim as the Pilgrims experienced. The answer is that the Jamestown settlers were quite different than the Pilgrims, and the political conditions under which Jamestown was settled were quite different than for Plymouth.

The Pilgrims were men, women and children who subscribed to a covenant in which they agreed to abide by doctrines of religious faith and to govern themselves as a political community. The covenant sustained the families as religious separatists in England who were persecuted for their religious beliefs and after fleeing England, sustained them as exiles in Holland for nearly two decades. The covenant sustained the families during the frightening voyage of the *Mayflower* and the first horrific year in Plymouth when half of them died. After landing in Plymouth their covenant was expressed as the *Mayflower Compact* that is the foundation to representational government in America.

"...combine our selves together in 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 meete and convenient for the general good of the Colony, unto which we promise all due submission and obedience."

The Pilgrims found solace in Holland from the tolerant Dutch who allowed them to practice their religion as they wished and to pursue productive lives in the textile trades. Tolerance shown Pilgrims in Holland was absorbed by them and influenced their relationship with the neighboring Wampanoag Indians in Massachusetts. The Pilgrims negotiated a peace with the Wampanoag that satisfied the needs of both communities. Both parties accommodated each other from time to time to preserve a peace that lasted over forty years.

The Pilgrims ought to be remembered because they laid the foundation of representational government and because they demonstrated that tolerance and accommodation were sustainable policies for peace. Their story needs retelling so that it remains a national memory and a part of our national identity.

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