The Puritans Come to Massachusetts Bay

Talk About It

- What was the Great Migration? (the period between 1630 and 1640, when about 20,000 settlers came from England to New England)
- How were the Puritan congregations different from the Church of England? (They were self-governing; each congregation chose its own minister; they were not governed by a king and bishops.)
- Causes and Effects How did John Winthrop affect voting rights in Massachusetts Bay? (He allowed “freemen” to vote—freemen being all male church members, not just investors.)

The First Thanksgiving

The event that has come to be called the “First Thanksgiving” was not celebrated by the Pilgrims as a religious holiday, but rather as a harvest festival with good food and games. It is not certain that the Pilgrims ate turkey at this celebration—some historians believe eel and lobster were more likely foods. Also on the menu were foods such as duck, roast goose, venison (deer), and clams. Side dishes included corn bread, leeks, and wild plums for dessert.

Teach

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A reenactment of preparation for a Thanksgiving feast. Why would the Pilgrims need Native Americans’ help in order to survive?

Answer: They would not have had time to plant and harvest crops.

A reenactment of preparation for a Thanksgiving feast. Why would the Pilgrims need Native Americans’ help in order to survive?

Answer: The Pilgrims disagreed with the Church of England; King James persecuted them, so they fled England and eventually settled in America.

More About . . .

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The New England Way The Puritans set up their ideal society—a religious “commonwealth” of tightly-knit communities. Instead of a church governed by bishops and king, they created self-governing congregations. A congregation is a group of people who belong to the same church. Because Puritan congregations were self-governing, their churches came to be called “Congregationalist.” This Congregationalist way of organizing churches became known as “the New England Way.”

Each congregation chose its minister and set up its own town. The town’s most important building was the meetinghouse, where religious services were held. Everyone had to attend these services. The meetinghouse was also used for town meetings, a form of self-government.

Puritan values helped the colonists organize their society and overcome the hardships of colonial life. Puritan colonists valued:

• **hard work** as a way of honoring God. The Puritan work ethic contributed to the colony’s rapid growth and success.

• **education**. Because the Puritans wanted everyone to be able to read the Bible, laws required that all children learn to read.

• **representative government**. Puritans brought their traditions of town meetings and local self-government with them to America. Democratic rights were quickly expanded. The colony’s charter allowed only “freemen” or investors to vote. But when the colonists arrived in America, Winthrop, the colony’s first governor, changed the definition of “freeman” to mean any male church member. Although this covered only a limited number of people, it was a major step in expanding voting rights.

**SUMMARIZE** Describe the kind of society the Puritans hoped to create.

Massachusetts Bay “Seeds” New England

**KEY QUESTION** Why did some colonists leave Massachusetts?

The Puritans worked hard to create an orderly society and felt threatened by those who questioned their ways. But dissenters within their ranks soon began challenging Puritan leaders. Disagreements within Massachusetts forced many to leave and found other colonies. In this way, Massachusetts became a “seed colony” out of which other New England colonies grew.

**INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES**

**CONNECT to Math**

Mayflower Distance Calculations

Remind students that the voyage of the *Mayflower* was not an easy one. Tell students that the *Mayflower* set sail from Plymouth, England, on September 16, 1620, and landed at Cape Cod, Massachusetts, on November 21, 1620 (about 2,738 nautical miles). Ask students to calculate the number of days the voyage lasted (66 days) and how many miles per day the ship sailed (about 41). Have students compare responses.

**Unit 2 Resource Book**

• Interdisciplinary Projects, pp. 39–40

**CONNECT to Language Arts**

Puritan Rules and Values Essay

Have each student write a brief essay on Puritan rules and values discussed in this section. Essays should include a description of the rules and values and a discussion of why the Puritans followed them.

**Unit 2 Resource Book**

• American Literature, pp. 48–50

**New England Colonies 1630**

**Connect Geography & History**

**CONNECT TO TODAY** Have students refer to a map of New England today to locate towns and areas pertinent to this section.

**ANSWERS**

1. **Place** about 40 miles

2. **Make Inferences** It was the home of the Puritans, the dominant population in New England. These people were determined to set up a successful, prosperous society.

**Teach**

Massachusetts Bay “Seeds” New England

**Talk About It**

• Why do you think the Puritans felt so threatened by those who challenged them? (Possible Answers: They believed they were creating a godly society and that anyone who challenged them was challenging God; they had a disciplined, authoritarian society that did not allow for dissent.)

• What specific belief did Anne Hutchinson have that challenged Puritan authority? (She believed that many of the Puritan clergy were not among the “elect.”)

• **Causes and Effects** How did Massachusetts become a “seed colony” for New England? (Dissenters were forced to leave the Massachusetts colony and found other colonies.)