

Terms to Know

Terms from the Old Text

The Elect:

The elect were Puritans who had been predetermined by God to be saved. The idea of the elect came from European Calvinists around the mid-1500s, but this idea spread to the American colonies as well. The process to becoming a member of the elect, also known as a saint, was a very difficult one. To become a member of the elect, one had to go through the *conversion experience* and then *sanctification*. Only saints were able to join Puritan congregations, vote, and take communion.

William Penn and the Quakers:

William Penn was an English proprietor who was given a grant of land from King Charles II in the late 1600s. When developing his colony, Pennsylvania, Penn wanted to launch a “holy experiment” based on the teachings of a radical Protestant named George Fox, and also wanted to give people more religious freedom. He sailed to his colony with a number of settlers who were mostly Quakers like himself. Quakers had faced persecution in England, prompting to move their entire families to the religion-tolerant colony, which resulted in a high birthrate. Penn designed the capital, Philadelphia, in a grid-like formation to prevent future problems with the layout. Pennsylvania had a strong executive branch and a limited legislative branch, and many Quakers held positions in government. This is important because Pennsylvania became an ideal colony and very successful, in part from the ideals that Penn expressed for his colony. Also, Philadelphia became a major port later on and helped the American economy and trade.

John Calvin:

John Calvin was a reformer from France in the mid-1500s, during the Protestant Reformation. Calvin wrote a book called the *Institutes of Christian Religion*, which attacked Roman Catholicism. He also established a powerful reformed group in Geneva, Switzerland, and the cornerstone of his theology was that God had all-encompassing power and knowledge. Calvin also believed in the theology of predestination, which stated that God predetermined the fate of every individual. John Calvin was important because he became the father of a new Protestant faith, known as Calvinism. His beliefs and teachings would later inspire other reformers as well.

Separatists:

Separatists were Protestants from Scrooby, England, who were very critical of the Church of England due to the fact that it had, according to them, retained too many elements of Roman Catholicism. They wanted to either completely destroy or separate themselves from the church, eventually choosing the latter option. In the early 1600s, Separatists began moving to Holland to escape persecution in England. However, they began to fear that Dutch culture was influencing their children too much. They sailed to America in order to be separate from England but still have control over their children. This is important because Separatists eventually signed the Mayflower Compact and founded Plymouth. Also, Separatists feasted with natives after a successful year of growing and harvesting, giving Americans the first Thanksgiving celebration.

Mayflower Compact:

The Mayflower Compact was a contract signed aboard the ship known as the *Mayflower* in 1620 by Separatists originally from England. When the ship landed in Plymouth, off-course and out of Virginia territory, they had no authority controlling them. Because of this, the Mayflower Compact was signed, forming a government based on consent of the people. The compact itself was a social contract that acknowledged the settlers' loyalty to King James I, and also stated that everyone would agree to the rules of the settlement for the sake of their survival. This is important because the Mayflower Compact was the first written framework of government on American soil.

Joint-Stock Companies:

The joint-stock company was a new form of business organization that started in England in the mid-1500s and later spread across Europe. In these companies, wealthy men would invest money and receive a percentage of the total profit. Since the English crown rarely spent money on colonies they believed might fail, colonies were funded by joint-stock companies throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Colonists, who were business employees, would then travel to the newly funded colonies and the stockholders regulated their behavior. Joint-stock companies are important because they help set up more colonies, such as Jamestown. Without joint-stock companies, fewer colonies would have been set up and less people would have settled in America. Also, joint-stock companies themselves led to more modern-day corporations.

Maryland's Act for Religious Toleration:

The Act for Religious Toleration was a law drafted by Lord Baltimore in the mid-1600s. Before the law, there was tension in Maryland between Catholics and Protestants, and it led to them arguing about the use of the city's chapel. The law reinforced legal rights of the Catholics and also allowed religious groups to practice their religion without being persecuted. This was the first law that affirmed the liberty of worship. However, it was revoked a few years after being created. This law is important because some believe that it inspired laws later on guaranteeing freedom of religion.

Indentured Servants:

Indentured servants were English immigrants who travelled to the American colonies in hope of finding work. Many of them came over between the mid-1600s and the early 1700s. In exchange for free passage, servants worked unpaid for a master for around seven years, unless they acquired debt. After paying off their debts, servants were freed and able to start their own families. Indentured servants were vital in the colonies especially because farmers needed laborers to work their fields. Indentured servants are important because they allowed for more crops to be grown, helping their masters make a larger profit and also helping the economy of the colony.

Roger Williams:

Roger Williams was an English Protestant theologian in the mid-1600s. He stirred controversy in Massachusetts and soon became a very popular and respected. He believed that church and state should be separate, and because of this idea he was seen as a threat and banished. He went on to found the colony of Rhode Island, and it became a safe place for people suffering from religious persecution. Williams is also known for founding the first Baptist Church in America. He is important because he was one of the first to propose religious freedom and the separation of church and state, and also for his work with the Native Americans. Not only did he promote equality for religions and start a colony, he also was one of the first abolitionists.

Half-Way Covenant:

The Half-Way Covenant was formed in the mid-1600s by a convention of clergy and laity members in New England. Many second-generation Puritans did not want to go through the hard process of becoming a member of the elect, and because of this, their kids were not able to be baptized. This was a problem, so an agreement was made. The Half-Way Covenant permitted children of baptized Puritans, elect or not, to be baptized as well. These half-way members, however, were not allowed to take communion or allowed to vote. This is important because with the creation of the Half-Way Covenant, the number of saints began to decline. It also signaled the end of the New England Way.

Bacon's Rebellion:

Bacon's Rebellion took place in Virginia in the late 1600s. At this time, tensions between natives and settlers began to rise due to the natives' struggle against their declining population while the settlers took more land. Resentments against the governor, William Berkeley, shifted to the natives when the governor's fur trade monopoly profited from the help of natives. Violence ensued, which the governor proposed to stop by constructing a costly chain of forts to protect the colonists. Many poor farmers disliked this costly option, so Nathaniel Bacon, a councilman, was elected to lead a group of men on an Indian slaughter. Berkeley eventually tried to call Bacon back, resulting in the rebels burning Jamestown and forcing Berkeley to flee. This is important because it was the first rebellion of the American colonies, it resulted in the burning of Jamestown, and many natives were captured and forced into slavery during this time.

House of Burgesses:

The House of Burgesses first met in the early 1600s in Jamestown, Virginia. There were 22 members, usually 6 royally appointed councilors, and one governor (who was at first appointed by the colony and later by the British crown). The House of Burgesses met and made laws for the colony, although its power was restricted once England took more control. In the mid-1600s, the House of Burgesses was divided, with the governor and twelve advisors making up the Governor's Council. The House of Burgesses was important because it was the first legislature in the colonies and would set an example for future government in the colonies.

John Winthrop:

While on the ship the *Arabella* during the voyage to the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1630, John Winthrop gave a sermon known as "A Model of Christian Charity". He described the city as a utopia and this sermon is known for using the term "City Upon a Hill" to describe the colony and the founding of America. In his sermon, Winthrop explained that the differences in people allowed for God to be honored in different ways and that the rich and poor needed to help one another out. He also explained that a common need among the colonists was necessary and brought the community together. Having such a godly community, he hoped, would shame England into repenting and fixing itself. This revival of piety would lead to an entire nation of saints. This is important because the Puritans started out different than other colonies, since they believed that self-restraint should stop merchants from taking advantage of buyers and they hoped to turn their religious idealism into a community.