

Exploring American History

David H. Montgomery



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Exploring American History

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Written by David H. Montgomery
Revised and Updated Version by Michael J. McHugh and Lars Johnson
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Contributions by Jeff Dennison
Copyediting by Diane C. Olson
Layout and editing by Edward J. Shewan
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Introduction

This textbook seeks to present accurately those facts and principles in the lives of some of the chief founders and builders of America that would be of interest and value to students pursuing the study of our nation's great heritage. The dramatic, personal aspects of these great men appeal powerfully to students, leading them to see the past as a living present, and to think the thoughts and experience the feelings of people who now live only in their words and deeds. Accordingly, the events of American history described in this text are made to center around some hero, and will hopefully inspire each student to search further into the details of the various personalities of our nation's history.

The authors have endeavored to bring out the influence of the Christian faith as it relates to the events and people of America's past. Young people in America today must not be sheltered from the knowledge that our nation has a rich Christian heritage.

In the hope that this text will be a blessing to each student who studies its pages, it is respectfully presented to the public.

*Staff of Christian Liberty Press
Arlington Heights, Illinois*

The great comprehensive truths written in letters of living light on every page of our history are these: Human happiness has no perfect security but freedom, freedom none but virtue, virtue none but knowledge; and neither freedom nor virtue has any vigor or immortal hope except in the principles of the Christian faith.

President John Quincy Adams

Chapter 8

Miles Standish (1584–1656)

The English Pilgrims Move to Holland. When the news of Henry Hudson's discovery of the Hudson River reached Holland, many Englishmen were living in the Dutch city of Leyden. These people were mostly farmers who had fled from Scrooby and neighboring villages in the northeast of England. They called themselves Pilgrims, because they were wanderers who were in search of freedom to worship God as the Bible commands. They were known as Separatists because they established a church that was separate from the Church of England, which they believed was corrupt.

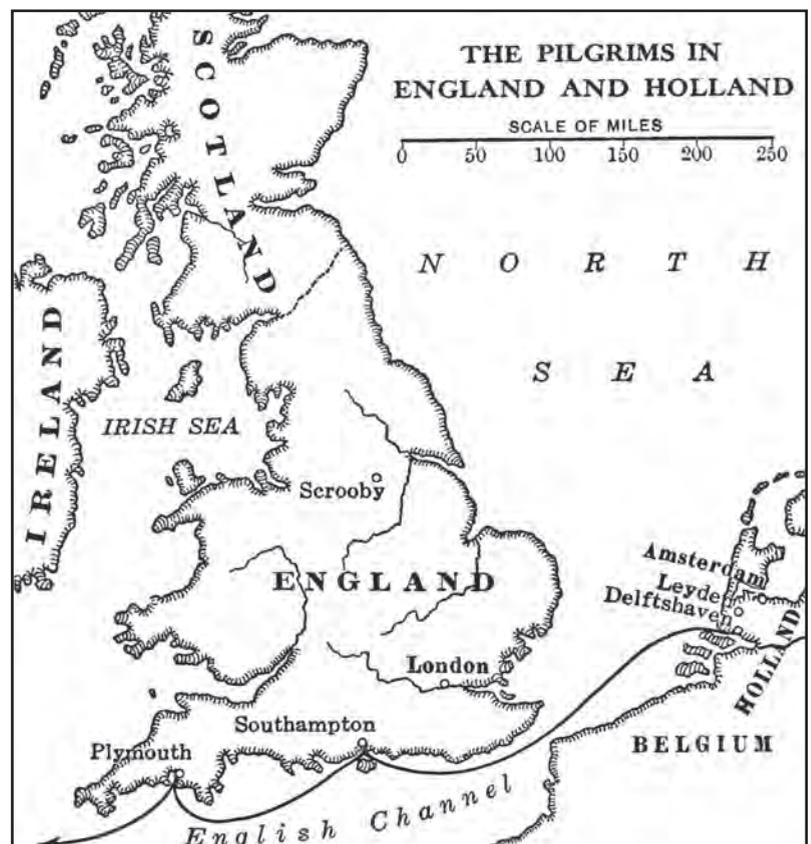
The Pilgrims left England because King James I would not let them hold their church meetings in peace. He thought, as most kings then did, that everybody in his kingdom should belong to the same church and worship God in the same way that he did. He was afraid that if people were allowed to go to whatever church they thought best, it would lead to disputes and quarrels, which would end by breaking his kingdom to pieces. Quite a number of Englishmen, seeing that they could not have religious liberty at home, escaped with their wives and children to Holland, for there the Dutch were willing to let them worship God in the way that the Bible commanded.

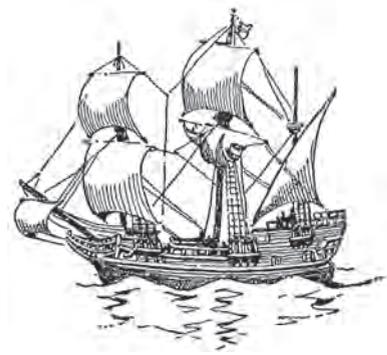
The Pilgrims Settle in America. The Pilgrims were not happy in Holland. They saw that, if they stayed in that country, their children would grow up to be more Dutch than English. They saw, too, that they could not hope to get land in Holland. They resolved, therefore, to go to America, where they could get farms for nothing, and where their children would never forget the English language or the good old English customs and laws. In the wilderness, they could not only enjoy entire religious freedom but also could build up a settlement that would surely be their own.

On September 16, 1620, a company of Pilgrims sailed for England on their way to America. Captain Miles Standish, an English soldier who had fought in Holland, joined them. He did not belong to the Pilgrim church, but he had become a great friend to those who did.



Captain Miles Standish
(1584–1656)





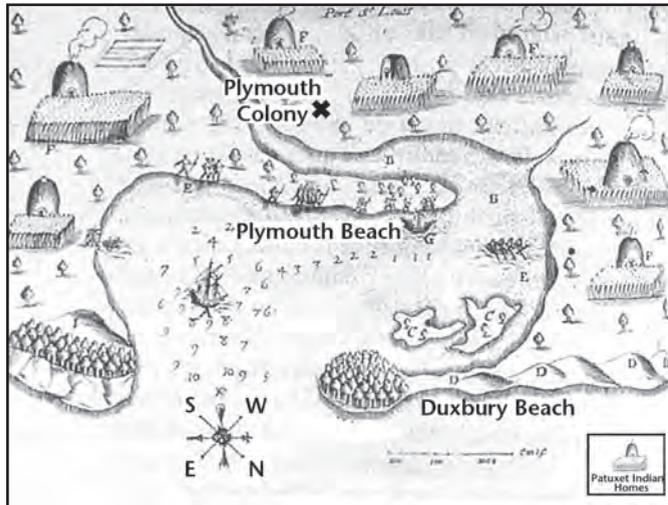
In 1620, the *Mayflower* carried the Pilgrims from Southampton, England, to Plymouth, Massachusetts. It was a harrowing two-month journey.



About a hundred of these people sailed from Plymouth, England, for the New World in the ship *Mayflower*. Many of those who went were children and young people. The Pilgrims had a long, rough passage across the Atlantic Ocean. On November 20, they sighted land. It was Cape Cod, that narrow strip of sand more than sixty miles long, which looks on a map like an arm bent at the elbow.

Finding that it would be difficult to go further, the Pilgrims decided to land and explore the cape; so the *Mayflower* entered Cape Cod Harbor, inside the “half-shut fist” of the harbor, and then came to anchor. Before they landed, the Pilgrims held a meeting in the cabin and prepared a written agreement to establish a government for the settlement. They signed the agreement, called the Mayflower Compact, and then chose John Carver as their first governor. This Compact set forth the main purpose for the new colony, to establish a society that would “glorify God and advance the Christian faith...”

On the first Monday after they had reached the cape, all the women went on shore to wash, and so Monday has been kept as washday in New England ever since. Shortly after that, Captain Miles Standish, with several men, started off to see the country. They found some Indian corn buried in the sand; and a little farther on a young man named William Bradford, who afterward became governor, stepped into an Indian deer trap. It jerked him up by the leg in a way that must have made even the soberest Pilgrim smile.



Samuel de Champlain's 1605 map of Plymouth Harbor, showing the Indian village of Patuxet. The approximate location of Plymouth Colony is also shown.

On clear days the people on board the *Mayflower*—which was anchored in Cape Cod Harbor—could see a blue hill on the mainland in the west, about forty miles away. To that blue hill, Standish and some others determined to go. Taking a sailboat, they started off. A few days later they passed the hill, which the Indians called Manomet, and entered a fine harbor. There, on December 21, 1620, the shortest day in the year, they landed on that famous stone that is now known throughout the world as Plymouth Rock. Until now, December 21 is celebrated as Forefathers' Day in Plymouth, Massachusetts.

Standish, with the others, went back to the *Mayflower* with a good report. They had found just what they wanted. The location could be easily defended, had an excellent harbor where ships from England could come in, included a brook with good drinking water, and was nearly free from trees so that nothing would hinder their planting crops early in the spring. Captain John Smith of Virginia had been there before them, and had named the place Plymouth on his map of New England. The Pilgrims liked the name, and so made up their minds to keep it. Soon the *Mayflower* sailed for Plymouth, and the Pilgrims began to build the log cabins of their little settlement.

During that first winter nearly half the Pilgrims died. Captain Standish showed himself to be as good a nurse as he was a soldier. He, with Governor Carver and their minister, Elder Brewster, cooked, washed, waited on the sick, and did everything that kind hearts and willing hands could do to help their suffering friends. But the men who had begun to build houses had to stop that work to dig graves. When these graves were filled, they were smoothed down flat, so that no prowling Indian should count them and see how few Pilgrims there were left.

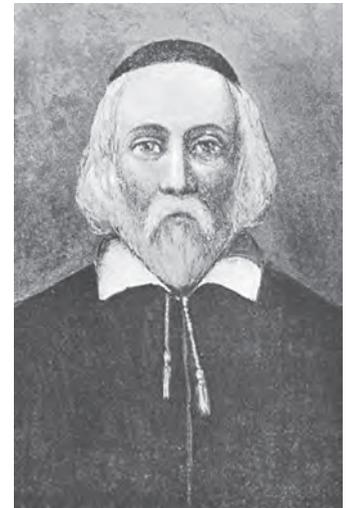
Over the years, many more settlers came to join Plymouth Colony. From approximately fifty survivors after the first winter, Plymouth Colony had grown to about 7,000 people by the early 1690s.

The Pilgrims and the Native Americans. One day in the spring, the Pilgrims were startled at seeing an Indian walk boldly into their little settlement. He cried out in good English, “Welcome! Welcome!” This visitor was named Samoset. Years before he had met some sailors, who taught him several English words.

The next time Samoset came he brought with him another Indian, whose name was Squanto. Squanto was the only one left of the tribe that had once lived at Plymouth. All the rest had died of a dreadful sickness, or plague. He had been stolen by some sailors and carried to England; there he had learned the English language. After his return, he had joined an Indian tribe known as the Wampanoag that lived about thirty miles farther west. The chief of that tribe was named Massasoit, and Squanto said that he was coming soon to visit the Pilgrims. In about an hour, Massasoit, with some sixty warriors, appeared on a hill just outside the settlement. The Indians had painted their faces in their most carefree style—black, red, and yellow. If paint could make them handsome, they were determined to look their best.

Captain Standish, attended by a guard of honor, went out and brought the chief to Governor Carver. Then Massasoit and the governor made a solemn promise or treaty, in which they agreed that the Indians of his tribe and the Pilgrims should live like friends and brothers, doing all they could to help each other. That promise was kept for more than fifty years; it was never broken until long after the two men who made it were in their graves.

When the Pilgrims had their first Thanksgiving feast to thank God for His blessings, they invited Massasoit and his men to come and share it. The Indians brought venison and other good things; there were plenty of wild turkeys roasted; and so they all



This is an artist rendering of Elder William Brewster. No known image of him exists.



“WELCOME! WELCOME!”



Early Days in Plymouth



The First Thanksgiving took place in Plymouth in 1621.

sat down together to a great dinner and had a merry time in the wilderness.

Squanto was of great help to the Pilgrims. He showed them how to catch eels, where to go fishing, when to plant their corn, and how to put a fish in every hill to make the corn grow faster. After a while, he came to live with the Pilgrims. Squanto liked them so much that, just before he died, he begged Governor Bradford to pray that he might go to the Pilgrim's heaven.

West of where Massasoit lived, the Narragansett tribe controlled the region around Narragansett Bay, in what is now Rhode Island. The chief of the Narragansetts was named Canonicus, and he was no friend to Massasoit or to the Pilgrims. Canonicus

thought he could frighten the Pilgrim settlers away; so he sent a bundle of sharp, new arrows, tied round with a rattlesnake skin, to Governor Bradford. That meant that he dared the governor and his men to come out and fight. Governor Bradford threw away the arrows, and then filled the snakeskin to the mouth with powder and ball. This was sent back to Canonicus. When he saw it, he was afraid to touch it, for he knew that Miles Standish's bullets could whistle louder and cut deeper than his Indian arrows.

Although the Pilgrims did not believe that Canonicus would attack them, they thought it best to build a very high, strong fence, called a palisade, around the town. They also built a log fort on one of the hills and used the lower part of the fort for a church. Every Sunday all the people, with Captain Standish at the head, marched to their meetinghouse, where a man stood on guard outside. Each Pilgrim carried his gun, and set it down near him. With one ear, he listened sharply to the preacher; with the other, he listened just as sharply for the cry, "Indians! Indians!" But the Indians never came.

A couple of years later, more emigrants came from England and settled about twenty-five miles north of Plymouth, at a place that is now called Weymouth. The Indians in that neighborhood did not like these new settlers, and they made up their minds to come upon them suddenly and murder them.

Governor Bradford sent Captain Standish, with a few men, to see how great the danger was. He found the Indians very bold. One of them came up to him carrying a long knife. He held it up, to show how sharp it was, and then patting it, he said, "By and by, it shall eat, but not speak." Presently



another Indian came up. He was a big fellow, much larger and stronger than Standish. He, too, had a long knife, as keen as a razor. “Ah,” said he to Standish, “so this is the mighty captain the white men have sent to destroy us! He is a little man; let him go and work with the women.”

The captain’s blood was on fire with rage, but he said not a word. His time had not yet come. The next day the Pilgrims and the Indians met in a log cabin. Standish made a sign to one of his men, and he shut the door fast. Then the captain sprang like a tiger at the big warrior who had laughed at him, and snatching his long knife from him, he plunged it into his heart. A hand-to-hand fight followed between the Pilgrims and the Indians. The Pilgrims gained the victory, and carried back the head of the Indian chief in triumph to Plymouth. Captain Standish’s bold action saved both of the English settlements from destruction.

Miles Standish’s Final Years. Standish did more things for the Pilgrims than fight for them: he went to England, bought goods for them, and borrowed money to help them.

He lived to be an old man. At his death he left, among other things, three well-worn Bibles and three good guns. In those days, the men who read the Bible most were those who fought the hardest.

Near Plymouth, there is a high hill called Captain’s Hill. That was where Standish made his home during the last part of his life. A granite monument, over a hundred feet high, stands on top of the hill. On it is a statue of the brave captain looking toward the sea. He was one of the makers of America.

The English Settlement of New England Grows. Ten years after the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth, a large company of English people under the leadership of Governor John Winthrop came to New England. A fleet of eleven ships—including the governor’s ship, the *Arbella*, and a new *Mayflower*—brought about 700 people to establish a new settlement in New England. They were called Puritans; they, too, were seeking that religious freedom which was denied them in the old country.

Governor Winthrop’s company named the place where they settled Boston, in grateful remembrance of the beautiful old city of Boston, England, from which some of the chief emigrants came. The new settlement was called the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Massachusetts was the Indian name for the Blue Hills near Boston. The Plymouth Colony was now often called the Old Colony because it had been settled first. After many years, these two colonies were united, and still later they became the state of Massachusetts.



Captain Miles Standish and his men



In the late 1880s, a granite monument was erected to the memory of Miles Standish on Captain’s Hill in Duxbury, Massachusetts. On top of the 100-foot tower stands a statue of Standish, looking eastward. His right hand, holding the charter of the colony, is extended toward Plymouth, while his left rests upon his sheathed sword.



Governor Winthrop of the Massachusetts Bay Colony

By the time Governor Winthrop arrived, additional English settlements had been made in Massachusetts, Maine, and New Hampshire. Emigrants who came from the Massachusetts Bay Colony later settled Connecticut and Rhode Island. In 1724, the English established their first permanent settlement in Vermont, which was the last territory in New England that the British settled.

When the War for American Independence broke out, the people throughout New England took up arms in defense of their God-given rights. The first bloody battle of the war was shed on the soil of Massachusetts, near Boston.

Summary. The Pilgrims landed at Plymouth, New England, in 1620. One of the chief men who came with them was Captain Miles Standish. Had it not been for his help, the Indians might have destroyed the settlement. In 1630 Governor John Winthrop, with a large company of Puritan emigrants from England, settled Boston. The first battle of the War for American Independence was fought near Boston.

Comprehension Questions

1. Why did some Englishmen in Holland call themselves Pilgrims?
2. Why had they left England?
3. Why did they now wish to go to America?
4. Who was Miles Standish?
5. From what place in England, and in what ship, did the Pilgrims sail?
6. Why did the Pilgrims hold the first Thanksgiving?
7. What did the Pilgrims build to protect them from the Indians?
8. What else did Miles Standish do besides fight?
9. Who was the first governor of the Boston settlement?



Early New England

Chapter 9

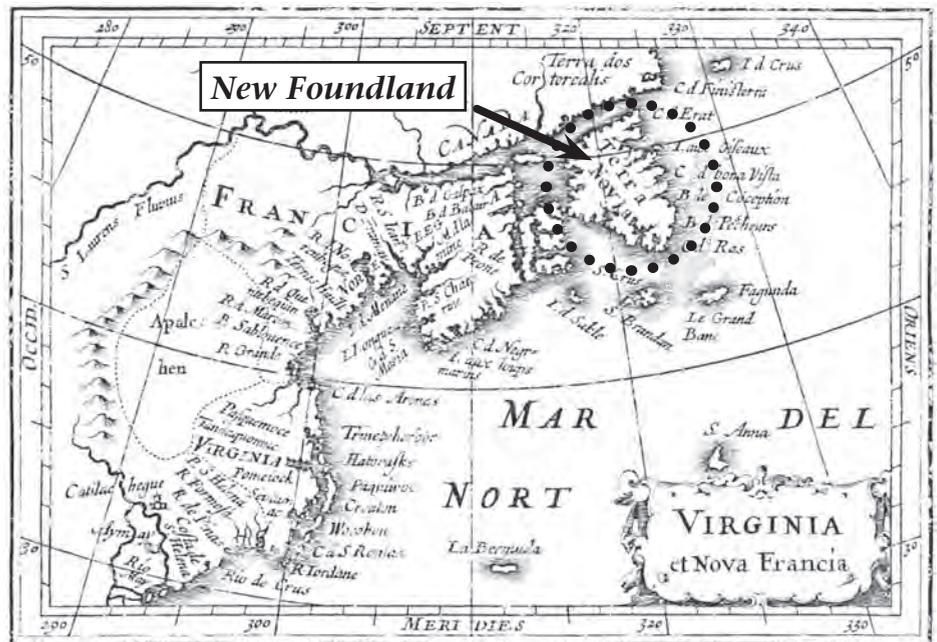
Lord Baltimore (1580–1632)

Lord Baltimore's Settlement in Newfoundland. While Captain Miles Standish was helping build up Plymouth, George Calvert, First Baron of Baltimore, an English nobleman, was trying to make a settlement on the cold, foggy island of Newfoundland.

Lord Baltimore had been brought up a Protestant, but had become a Catholic. At that time, Catholics were treated badly in England. They were ordered by law to attend the Church of England. They did not like that church any better than the Pilgrims did; but if they failed to attend it, they had to take their choice between paying a large sum of money or going to prison.

Lord Baltimore hoped to make a home for himself and for other English Catholics in the wilderness of Newfoundland, where there would be no one to trouble them. The settlers, however, found it difficult to live in Newfoundland because of the cold weather. They had winter a good part of the year, and fog during all of it. They could grow nothing because, as one man said, the soil was either rock or swamp: the rock was as hard as iron; the swamp was so deep that you could not touch bottom with a ten-foot pole. Baltimore ultimately abandoned the effort in 1629.

Newfoundland had great potential for a fishing industry. However, war between England and France at the time made it impossible for Lord Baltimore to establish a fishing settlement in Newfoundland. While visiting the settlement in 1628, he found that he had to use his own ships to protect the fishing fleet from French attacks.



The King of England Gives Lord Baltimore Part of Virginia. King Charles I of England was a good friend to Lord Baltimore; and when the settlement in Newfoundland was given up, he made him a present of a large, three-cornered piece of land in America. This piece was cut out of Virginia, north of the Potomac River.



The king's wife, who was Henriette Marie de Bourbon, was a French Catholic. In her honor, Charles named the country he had given Lord Baltimore Marie Land or Maryland. He could not have chosen a better name because Maryland was to be a shelter for many English people who believed in the same religion that the queen did.

All that Lord Baltimore was to pay for Maryland, with its 12,000 square miles of land and water, was two Indian arrows. These he agreed to send every spring to the royal palace of Windsor Castle, near London. The arrows would be worth nothing whatever to the king, but they were sent as a kind of yearly rent. They showed that, though Lord Baltimore was given the use of Maryland as a great noble, and could do pretty much as he pleased with it, still the king did not surrender all control of it. In Virginia and in New England the king had granted all land to groups of persons, and he had been particular to tell them just what they must or must not do; but he gave Maryland to one man only. More than this, he promised to let Lord Baltimore have his own way in everything, so long as he made no laws in Maryland that were contrary to the laws of England. So, Lord Baltimore had greater privileges than any other holder of land in America at that time.

The New Colony Is Established. Lord Baltimore died before he could get ready to come to America. His eldest son, Cecilius (Cecil) Calvert, then became the next Lord Baltimore. He sent over a number of emigrants; many of them were Catholics, and some were Protestants, but all were to

have equal rights in Maryland. In the spring of 1634, these people landed on a little island near the mouth of the Potomac River. There they cut down a tree and made a large cross; then, kneeling around that cross, they all joined in prayer to God for their safe journey.

A little later, they landed on the shore of the river. There they met some Indians. Under a huge mulberry tree they bargained with the Indians for a place to build a town, and paid for the land in hatchets, knives, and beads.

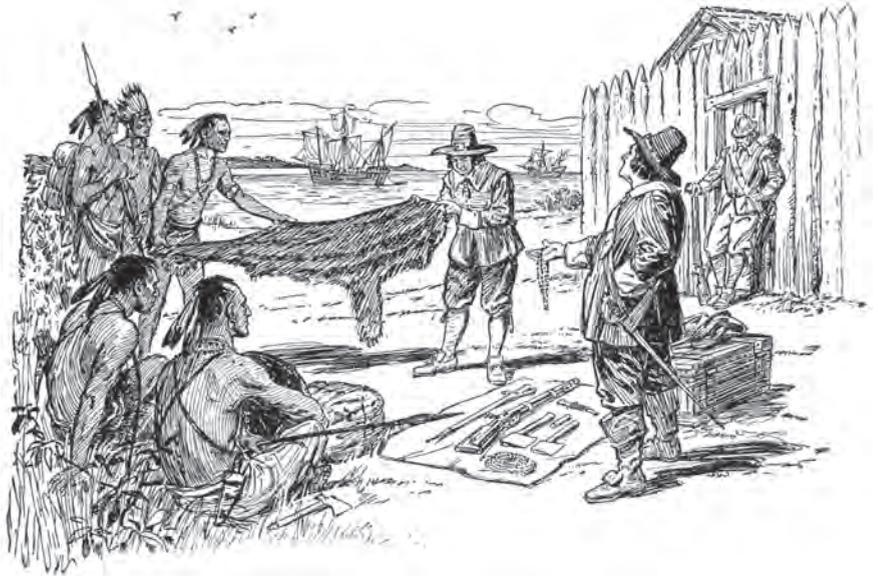
The Indians were greatly amazed at the size of the ship in which the white men came. They thought that it was made like their canoes, and that it was simply the trunk of a tree hollowed out. They wondered where the English could have found a tree big enough to make it.

The emigrants named their settlement St. Mary's. The Indians and the settlers lived and worked together, side by side. The Indians showed the emigrants how to hunt in the forest, and the Indian women taught the



white women how to make corn meal and to bake Johnnycake before the open fire.

The new Lord Baltimore invited people who had been driven out of the other settlements on account of their religion to come and live in Maryland. He gave a hearty welcome to all, whether they thought as he did or not. Thousands of English Catholics came to live in Maryland, as well as many Protestants. Eventually, there were more Protestants than Catholics in Maryland. Nonetheless, Maryland became one of the few places in the world where religious liberty had a home. In 1649,



Saint Mary's Settlement

Maryland passed a religious toleration act, which allowed all Christians to worship God as they thought best. Maryland was different from the other English colonies in America because everyone there, whether Catholic or Protestant, had the right to worship God in his own way.

Maryland Has its Troubles. This happy time of peace did not last long. Maryland had border troubles with the neighboring colonies of Virginia and (later) Pennsylvania. Some of the Virginians were very angry because the king had given Lord Baltimore part of what they thought was their land. They fought with the new settlers and gave them much trouble. The border trouble with Pennsylvania resulted in armed conflicts between Maryland and Pennsylvania in the 1730s. The fighting between Maryland and Pennsylvania ended in 1738, but the border was not settled until the establishment of the Mason-Dixon Line between the two colonies in 1767.

Maryland was also unable to avoid religious conflict. Puritans who had moved to Maryland, many fleeing persecution in Virginia, rebelled against Lord Baltimore's rule of Maryland in 1650. Lord Baltimore had spent a great deal of money in building up the settlement, but his right to the land was taken away from him for a time, and all who dared to defend him were badly treated. He sent an army to Maryland to regain control, but it was defeated. The Puritan government outlawed the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England during much of the time it controlled Maryland. It was not until 1658 that Lord Baltimore regained control of his colony and reenacted the religious toleration law.

Cecil Calvert died in 1675, and his son Charles became the Third Baron of Baltimore. Charles had already lived in Maryland for several years serving as deputy governor for his father, who had actually never lived in Maryland. Charles Calvert became governor and did much to improve the public services and defenses of the colony. However, he also supported life-



The Mason-Dixon Line

The Mason-Dixon Line was surveyed between 1763 and 1767 by Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon, settling border disputes between the colonies of Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, and Virginia (now West Virginia).



In 1688, William III, Prince of Orange, and Mary II became the only joint monarchs in British history.

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time slavery in the colony, repressed the rights of Protestants, and restricted the right to vote within the colony. Lord Baltimore was required to return to England to settle the boundary dispute with Pennsylvania and answer questions about his policy toward Protestants, but, while in England, the Catholic King James II of England was overthrown and new Protestant monarchs William and Mary came to the throne of England. Because the Calvert family was Roman Catholic, its control over Maryland was ended, and Maryland became for a time a royal colony.

Maryland Prospers. In spite of its troubles, Maryland became a successful colony. Its wealth, like that of Virginia, became largely based on the cultivation of tobacco. The reestablishment of religious toleration for different Christian denominations in 1658 encouraged a significant population growth as various groups found Maryland to be a hospitable place to live, work, and practice their faith. By 1660, Maryland's population had risen to only 2,500. However, over the next twenty years, Maryland had grown by another 20,000 people, many of whom were religious refugees from other colonies in America.

The initial settlement of St. Mary's never grew to be much of a place. It was the first capitol of the colony, but it was replaced as the seat of government by Annapolis in 1708. In 1729, not quite a hundred years after the English first landed in Maryland, a new and beautiful city near Chesapeake Bay was begun. It was named Baltimore, in honor of Cecil Calvert, Second Lord Baltimore, who sent out the first emigrants. Baltimore has been an important port city almost since its very beginning and has played an important role in American history.

Charles Calvert never returned to Maryland, but his grandson—also named Charles (the Fifth Baron of Baltimore)—regained control over

Maryland. King George I restored the title to Maryland to the Calvert family after Benedict Calvert (the Fourth Baron of Baltimore) renounced Roman Catholicism and joined the Church of England. Charles governed Maryland directly for a time during the period of border dispute with Pennsylvania, but his son Frederick Calvert (the Sixth Baron of Baltimore) never set foot in Maryland, spending much of his life on the continent of Europe. He was more interested in money from the colony than governing the colony. Frederick was the last Lord Baltimore because he and his wife never had any children. By the time a successor to the Calvert family's title to Maryland was established, Maryland was involved in the war against Great Britain and so was lost to the family.

Summary. King Charles I of England gave Lord Baltimore a part of Virginia and named it Maryland, in honor of his wife, Queen Henriette Marie. A company of emigrants came out to Maryland in 1634. It was the first settlement in America in which people had the liberty to worship God in whatever way they thought right. This religious toleration did much to ensure the success of Maryland.

Comprehension Questions

1. Who was Lord Baltimore, and what did he try to do in the region of Newfoundland?
2. How were Catholics then treated in England?
3. What was Lord Baltimore to pay for Maryland?
4. What wonderful freedom found its home in Maryland?
5. What city was named in honor of the man who sent the first emigrants to Maryland?



Benedict Leonard Calvert
Fourth Baron Baltimore
(1679–1715)

Chapter 10

Roger Williams (1600–1684)



Roger Williams (1600–1684)

During his life, Roger Williams was known as a troublemaker. He really caused problems with the Puritans with whom he lived and served as a preacher for many years. As a result of his difficulties with the Puritans, Williams eventually established the colony of Rhode Island. It was as the leader of that colony that history knows Williams not as a troublemaker but rather as the first effective champion of religious liberty in America.

Williams Gets in Trouble. Shortly after Governor John Winthrop and his company settled Boston, Roger Williams came over from England to join them. His purpose in coming over was to be a missionary to the Indians, but his abilities as a preacher caused many Puritan churches to want him as their pastor. Williams did accept a call to a church in Plymouth and then later to a church in Salem. Williams did not have many problems in Plymouth, but he quickly ran into trouble at the Salem church because of its size and importance. In other words, the Puritans believed that Williams could corrupt too many people in Salem, so they forced him out of the colony altogether.



There were a couple of arguments made by Williams that greatly disturbed the Puritans. First, he argued that the Puritans had no right to the Indian lands because they had not bought the lands from the Indians fairly. He rejected the idea that the king of England owned America because John Cabot had discovered it. And even though he never became a missionary to the Indians like he had planned, Williams established friendships with the Indians in both Plymouth and Salem. He made great effort to learn their language and even wrote a book about the Native American languages. Those friendships served him well later in life when he was kicked out of Massachusetts and the Indians helped him survive.

Many people in Massachusetts were afraid to have Williams preach and write about the Indians the way he did. They believed that if they allowed him to continue speaking out so boldly against the king, the English monarch would take Massachusetts away from them and give it to a new group. In that case, those who had settled there would lose everything.

The other, and more serious, problem the Puritans had with Williams was his belief that the state had no business inter-

fering in church matters. For one thing, Williams believed that Massachusetts should have cut all ties to the Church of England because it was so corrupt that it was no longer a true church. The Puritans were committed to “purifying” the Church of England, not separating from it, even though they basically set up their own independent church in America anyways. But Williams did not stop there. He even dared to challenge the key principles of the colony—state-sponsored religion.

The Puritan founders of the Massachusetts Bay Colony sought to develop a holy community. Williams was uncomfortable with the close relationship between church and state that existed in the colony, however. According to Williams, the colony had no business demanding that its citizens go to church since true faith and religion cannot be forced. If the people were genuinely Christian, he continued, they would not need laws to force them to behave like Christians. In fact, requiring church attendance for all the colony’s members corrupted the church since it brought people in who were not true Christians. Finally, Williams concluded that people had the right to express their own religious opinions without threat of punishment.

Roger Williams Forms a New Colony. The authorities in Boston tried to make the young minister agree to keep silent on these subjects, but he was not the kind of man to keep silent. So the chief men of Boston agreed to expel Williams from the colony. The influential Puritan leader John Winthrop arranged to have Williams’s exit delayed until the spring when the weather was more favorable, but Williams chose to leave immediately.

The story about Williams’s surviving the winter he was exiled is the stuff of which legends are made. At the time, to be exiled or banished from a colony was basically a death sentence. It was considered impossible to survive without the support of a large community. Being banished during one of the most severe winters the Puritans had ever seen made Williams’s survival even more astounding. There were two keys to his remarkable accomplishment. First, he persevered. In other words, despite the lack of roads, shelter, warmth, and adequate supplies, Williams somehow managed to survive.

Second, Williams would have never made it without help from the Indians. The kindness he had shown to the Indians earlier was proven to be worth it. The friendship he established with an Indian chief named Massasoit proved to be especially significant. After Williams managed an eighty-mile hike from Salem to Massasoit’s wigwam near Mount Hope (which is in Rhode Island now), Massasoit welcomed him and allowed Williams to stay with him the remainder of the winter. Williams used the winter to strengthen his friendship with the Indians and to reach out to those he had not yet met. When spring came, Williams was able to use those friendships in his establishing the colony of Rhode Island.

Williams named the first city he founded Providence, believing it was by God’s good will and plan that he was able to survive the winter and plant



Roger Williams Fleeing through the Woods.



a new colony. Assuming that God was on his side, Williams established as law the right of religious freedom. Thus, Providence was the first place in North America where the freedom to worship as one pleased was defined as a human right.

Even though Williams eventually tried to make laws that restrained some people who came to Rhode Island to take advantage of the freedom being offered, Williams had already anticipated the future. In other words, once people got a taste of religious freedom, they didn't want to give it up. Over one hundred years later, the principle that almost caused Williams's death was the same basic principle that many Americans died for in the War for American Independence. Now the principle is enshrined in American law as the first amendment in the United States Constitution.

Summary. Roger Williams's significance is found in his fight to establish religious freedom in America. His commitment to that principle contributed to his being kicked out of Massachusetts. His amazing survival enabled him to establish that principle as law in Rhode Island, the colony he founded. Now it is a principle that many Americans have fought and died for to protect as a basic human right.

Comprehension Questions

1. Why did Roger Williams come to America?
2. Who did Williams think first owned the land in America?
3. What was the most serious problem the Puritans had with Williams?
4. What are two reasons Williams was able to survive his banishment?
5. What right was given to man for the first time in America at Providence?

Chapter 11

King Philip (1639–1676)

Trouble Arises with the Native Americans of New England. When the Indian chief Massasoit died, the people of Plymouth lost one of their best friends. Massasoit left two sons, one named Wamsutta (also called Alexander), who became chief in his father's place, and the other named Metacomet, who was better known as Philip. They both lived near Mount Hope, in Rhode Island.

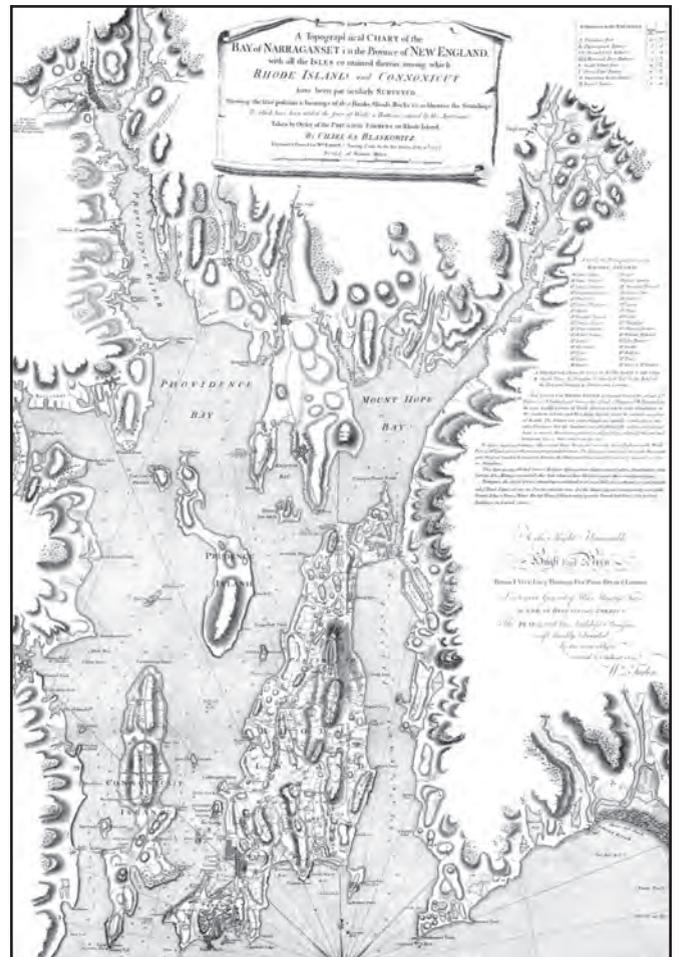
The governor of Plymouth heard that Wamsutta was stirring up the Indians to make war on the settlers, and he ordered the Indian chief to come to him and give an account of his dealings. Wamsutta went, but on his way back he suddenly fell sick, and soon after he reached home he died. His young wife was a woman who was respected by her tribe, and she told them that she felt sure the settlers had poisoned her husband in order to get rid of him. This was not true, but the Indians believed it.

Philip became chief after his brother's death and became known as "King Philip." His palace was a wigwam made of bark. On great occasions, he wore a bright red blanket and a kind of crown made of a broad belt ornamented with shells. King Philip hated the settlers because he believed they had murdered his brother. He also saw the settlers were growing stronger in numbers every year, while the Indians were becoming weaker.

When the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth, Massasoit, Philip's father, held all the country from Cape Cod back to the eastern shores of Narragansett Bay, a strip of land about thirty miles wide. The European settlers bought a small piece of this land. After a while they were able to buy more because the natives wanted the weapons and iron trade goods that the settlers had to offer. The English settlers continued to buy so much land that, in about fifty years, they owned nearly all of what Massasoit's tribe, the Wampanoag, had once owned. The Indians had nothing left but two little pieces of land, which were nearly surrounded by the waters of Narragansett Bay. Here they felt that they were shut up almost like prisoners, and that the settlers watched everything that they did.



King Philip



Map of Narragansett Bay

Praying Indians

In 1646, The General Court of Massachusetts passed the "Act for the Propagation of the Gospel amongst the Indians," which brought this great need to the awareness of the English people. Another factor that aroused interest was the preaching of Reverend John Eliot and other missionaries to the Indian tribes of New England. To raise funds for this cause, the Long Parliament passed an act forming "A Corporation for the Promoting and Propagating the Gospel of Jesus Christ in New England." About £12,000 (or US\$22,000) was raised to be used primarily in the colonies of Massachusetts and New York. Reverend Eliot received some of these funds to establish schools for the Indian believers.

Also in 1646, Reverend Eliot preached his first sermon to the Nonantum Indians in their own language. Christian Indian villages were eventually established along the coast of Massachusetts and some inland locations.



King Philip was a very proud man; in fact, he was as proud as the king of England. He could not bear to see his people losing power. He thought that if the Indians did not rise and drive out the white men, then the white men would surely drive out the Indians. Most of the Indians now had guns and could use them almost as well as the settlers could; so Philip thought that it was best to fight.

Although many Indians now hated the white settlers, this was not true of all. A minister, named John Eliot, had persuaded some of the Indians near Boston to give up their pagan religion and to try to live like peace-loving Christians. These were called "Praying Indians." One of them, John Sassamon, had even helped King Philip as a translator, since he had attended Harvard College and knew English well. He found out that Philip's warriors were grinding their hatchets sharp for war and sent a warning to the governor of the Plymouth Colony, but he was not believed. Soon afterward this "Praying Indian" was found murdered. The settlers accused three of Philip's men of having killed him. They were tried, found guilty by a jury that included both English settlers and Indians, and hanged.

War Begins. Philip's warriors began the war in June of 1675. King Philip started with an alliance of two tribes—his Wampanoag tribe and the Nipmuck tribe of what is now central Massachusetts—but others joined with him over the next few months. Philip's alliance waged war against all of the English colonies in New England. The English had their own Indian allies, who fought with the settlers, including many of the "Praying Indians." The war took place from Connecticut and Rhode Island in the south to Maine in the north, although most fighting occurred in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut.

The fighting began at Swansea, Massachusetts—a Plymouth colony settlement. Some settlers were going home from church, where they had gone to pray that there might be no fighting. As they walked along, talking together, two guns were fired out of the bushes. One of the Pilgrim men fell dead in the road, and another was badly hurt. Indians had fired the shots. This was the way they always fought when they could. They were not cowards; but they did not come out and fight boldly, but would fire from behind trees and rocks. Frequently a settler would be killed without even seeing who shot him.

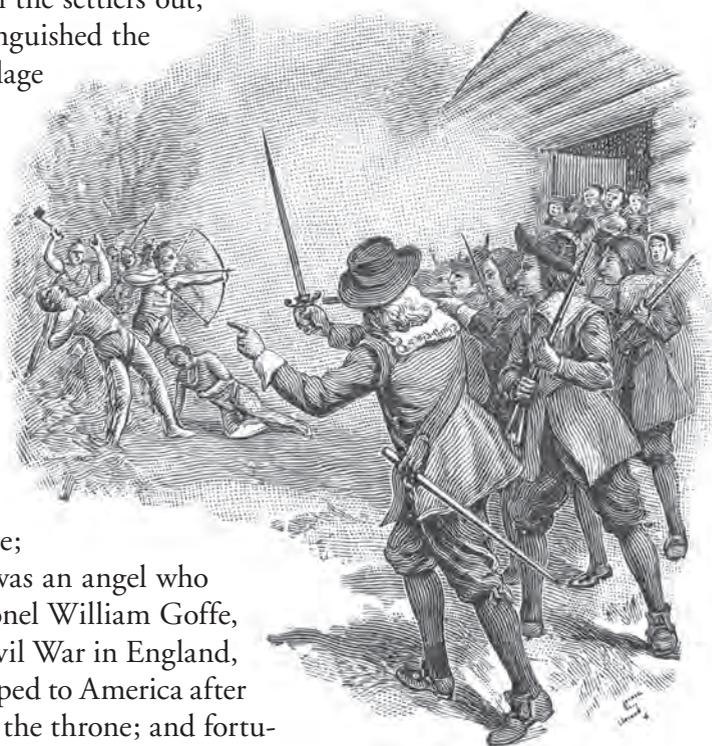
At first, the fighting was mainly in those villages near Plymouth Colony that were nearest Narragansett Bay; then it spread to the valley of the Connecticut River. Deerfield, Springfield, Brookfield, Groton, and many other places in Massachusetts were attacked. The Indians would creep up quietly in the night, burn the houses, carry off the women and children as prisoners if they could, kill the men, and take their scalps home and hang them in their wigwams.

At Brookfield the settlers left their houses and gathered in one strong house for defense. The Indians burned all the houses but that one, and did their best to burn it, too. They shot blazing arrows into the shingles of the roof. When the Indians saw that the shingles had caught, and were beginning to flame up, they danced for joy, and roared like wild bulls. But the men in the house managed to put out the fire on the roof. Then the warriors got a cart, filled it with hay, set it on fire, and pushed it up against the house. This time they thought that they would surely burn the settlers out; but just then a heavy rain shower came up and extinguished the fire. A little later, some soldiers marched into the village and saved the people in the house.

At Hadley, the people were in the meetinghouse when the terrible Indian war-whoop rang through the village. The warriors drove back those who dared to go out against them, and it seemed as though the village would be destroyed. Suddenly, a white-haired old man, sword in hand, appeared among the settlers. No one knew who he was. But he called them to follow him, as a captain calls his men, and they obeyed him. The astonished Indians turned and ran. When all was over, the townspeople looked for their brave leader, but he was gone; they never saw him again. Many thought that he was an angel who had been sent to save them. But the angel was Colonel William Goffe, an Englishman, one of the judges who, after the Civil War in England, had sentenced King Charles I to death. He had escaped to America after King Charles II—the son of King Charles I—took the throne; and fortunately for the people of Hadley, he was hiding in the house of a friend in that village when the Indians attacked.



Indian Attack on a Village



Colonel Goffe Leads the Attack

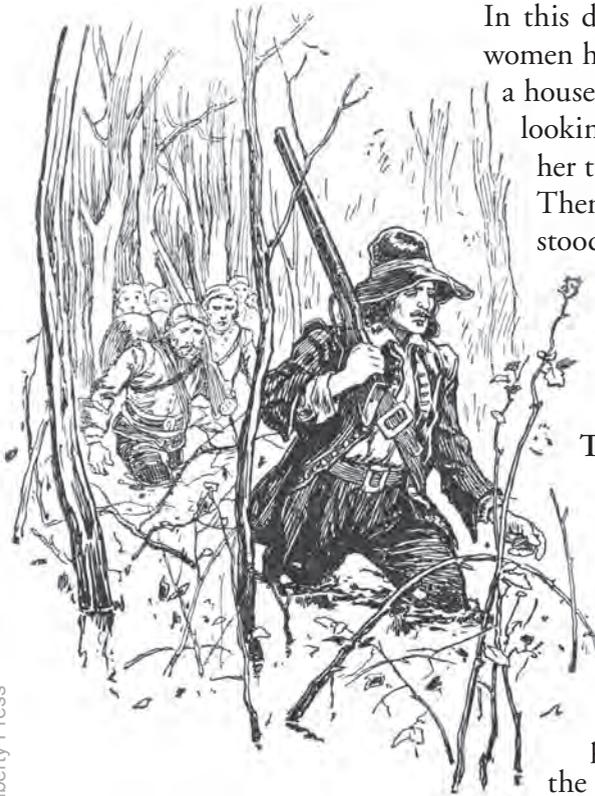
In this dreadful war with the Indians, there were times when even the women had to fight for their lives. In one case, a woman had been left in a house with two young children. She heard a noise at the window and, looking up, saw an Indian trying to raise the curtain. Quickly she put her two little children under two large brass kettles that stood nearby. Then, grabbing a shovelful of red-hot coals from the open fire, she stood ready, and just as the Indian thrust his head into the room, she dashed the coals right into his face and eyes. With a yell of agony, the Indian dropped to the ground as though he had been shot; then he staggered out of the house and ran howling into the woods.

The Great Swamp Fight. During the summer and autumn of 1675 the Narragansett tribe on the west side of Narragansett Bay took no open part in King Philip's War. But the next winter, the settlers found that these Indians were secretly receiving and sheltering the cruel Indians who had been wounded in fighting for their proud chief. For that reason, the settlers determined to raise a large army and attack them. The Indians had gathered in a fort on an island in a swamp. This fort was a very difficult place to reach. It was built from the trunks of trees set upright in the ground. It was so strong that the Indian warriors felt safe.

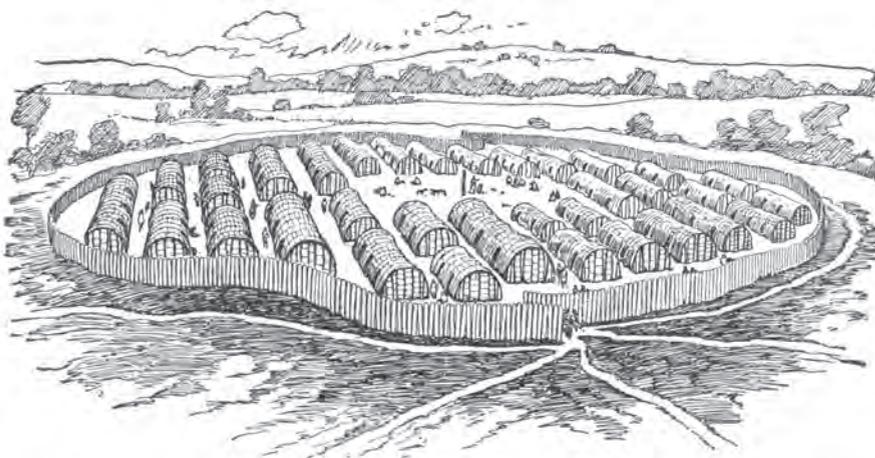
Starting very early in the morning, a large colonial force, including 150 Mohegan Indian allies, was sent to attack the Narragansett fort. The attacking party waded fifteen miles through deep snow. Many of them had their hands and feet badly frozen. One of the chief men in leading the attack was Captain Benjamin Church of Plymouth. He was a very brave soldier and knew all about Indian life and Indian fighting. In the battle, he was struck by two bullets, and so badly wounded that he could not move a step further; but he made one of his men hold him up and shouted to his soldiers to go ahead. The fight was a very hard one, but finally the fort was taken. More than 250 men in the attacking party were killed or wounded; the Indians lost over 600 killed.

After the battle was over, Captain Church begged the men not to burn the wigwams inside the fort, for there were a great number of old men and women and little Indian children in the wigwams. But the men were very angry with the Indians and would not listen to him. They set the wigwams on fire and burned many of these poor people to death.

Not all of the Narragansetts were killed, however. Canonchet, the chief of the tribe, escaped and led the rest



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The Indian Village

of his tribe into an alliance with King Philip against the New England settlers. His warriors participated in several battles against the colonists. However, in April 1676, Canonchet was captured by the Mohegan and turned over to the English settlers. The settlers told him they would spare his life if he would try to make peace. “No,” said he, “we will all fight to the last man rather than become slaves.” He was then told that he must be shot. “I like it well,” said he. “I wish to die before my heart becomes soft, or I say anything unworthy of myself.”

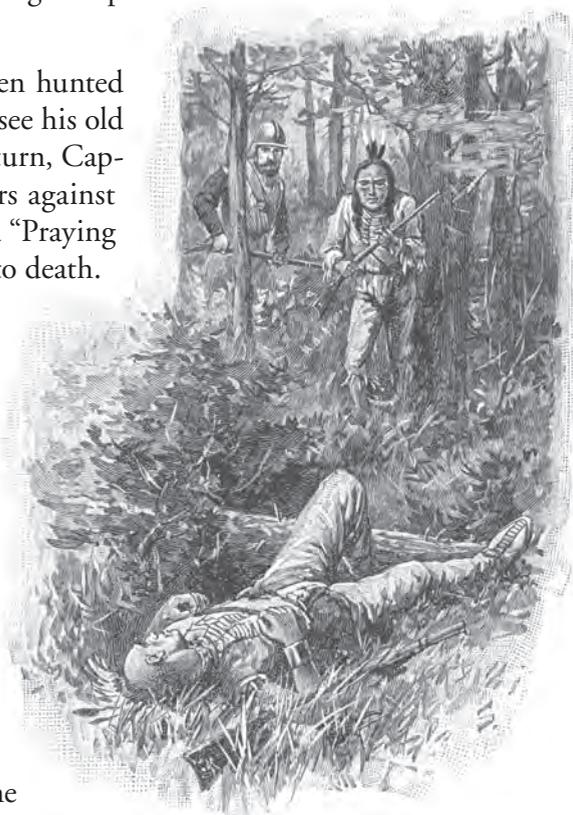
The End of War. At first, King Philip’s Native American alliance was very successful. Several towns in Massachusetts and Rhode Island were abandoned, and several others were fortified against attack. However, by the spring 1676, the war began to turn against King Philip. His supplies began to run low, and he was unable to gain any more allies. The death of Canonchet and defeat of the Narragansetts hurt Philip’s war efforts significantly. Indians from his alliance began to surrender to the colonists.

During the summer of 1676, Captain Church, with many “brisk Bridgewater lads,” chased King Philip and his men, and took many Indian prisoners. Among those taken captive were King Philip’s wife and his little boy. When Philip heard of it he cried out, “My heart breaks; now I am ready to die.” He had good reason for saying so. His stubbornness and pride brought misery and death to his own wife and children. King Philip refused to call an end to a war that never should have started.

Not long after that, King Philip himself was shot. He had been hunted like a wild beast from place to place. At last he had returned to see his old home at Mount Hope once more. Shortly after King Philip’s return, Captain Church led a team of friendly Indians and colonial soldiers against King Philip’s old home. On August 12, 1676, John Alderman, a “Praying Indian” serving with Captain Church, shot the Indian warrior to death.

King Philip’s death virtually brought the war to an end, although occasionally raids continued in Maine into 1677. It had lasted a little over a year, from the early summer of 1675 to the latter part of the summer of 1676. It was one of the bloodiest Indian wars in American history. In that short time, over 600 New England settlers died during the war, and Indians burned thirteen villages to ashes, besides partly burning a great many more. The war cost so much money that many people were made poor by it.

On the other hand, with the defeat of King Philip, Indians never dared to trouble the people of southern New England again. The strength of the Indians in the area was broken forever. Approximately 3,000 Native Americans died during the war. Several hundred were executed or were sold as slaves to Bermuda. The tribes in Philip’s alliance were largely destroyed, and even the tribes who helped the settlers were greatly weakened.



The Death of King Philip

Summary. In 1675, King Philip began a great Indian war against the people of southern New England. His object was to kill off the English settlers and get back the land for the Indians. He did kill a large number, and he destroyed many villages; but in the end the settlers gained the victory. Philip's wife and child were killed and he was shot. The Indians never again attempted to start a war in this part of the country.

Comprehension Questions

1. Who was Wamsutta?
2. Who was "King Philip"?
3. Who were the "Praying Indians"?
4. Tell how a woman drove off an Indian.
5. What happened to King Philip himself?
6. Who won King Philip's War?



Chapter 12

William Penn (1644–1718)



America is a land known for its religious tolerance. While many other countries persecute people that believe in different religious traditions than they do, America actually has laws that protect anyone from being harmed for his or her religious beliefs.

America was not always so tolerant, however. Most early colonies had laws that limited what someone was allowed to believe or what church someone could attend.

Pennsylvania was the one major exception to this rule. Due to his being persecuted in England for his beliefs, William Penn established his colony as one that would celebrate religious freedom.

William Penn's Payment. Basically, William Penn received Pennsylvania because of the fame and fortune of his father, the naval hero Admiral William Penn. King Charles II of England had borrowed a large sum of money from Admiral William Penn in a time of need. The king still owed the debt after the Admiral had died, but he had no cash to settle the debt with the Admiral's son. Penn knew this, so he told His Majesty that if he would give him a piece of wild land in America, he would ask nothing more.

Charles was glad to settle the account so easily, and he gave Penn a great territory north of Maryland and west of the Delaware River. This territory was nearly as large as England. The king named it *Pennsylvania*, a word that means "Penn's Woods." King Charles was not upset at losing the land because it was not thought to be worth much. No one at that time knew that beneath Penn's Woods there were immense amounts of coal and iron that would one day be worth more than all the king's wealth.

The truth is, however, that while Penn helped King Charles out of a tough situation, Charles was also helping him. Penn belonged to a religious society called the Society of Friends. The group is more popularly known as the Quakers. The Quakers believe that God will reveal His will to them if they are peaceful and patient enough to receive it. While the Quakers consider the Bible to be an authority for their lives, they believe the inner light they receive directly from God is more authoritative. That belief, combined with the unusual worship services they had (in which they were



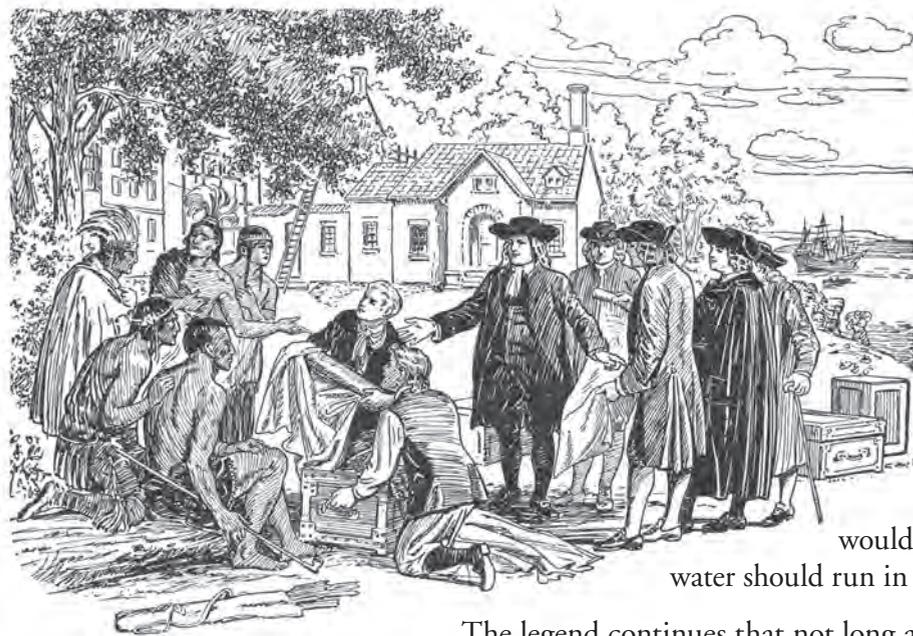


Persecution of Quakers

known to sit in silence for hours until someone received the direct revelation) and their belief in pacifism (or refusal to fight in wars), led to their being persecuted in both Europe and North America. Thus, when Penn was given a free piece of land, he knew exactly what he wanted to do with it.

Penn wanted the land to be a safe haven for his fellow Quakers. Penn later bought the entire state of New Jersey for the same purpose. The Quakers suffered badly in England. They were often whipped and unjustly thrown in prison, where many died from the bad treatment they received. Penn himself had been placed in jail four times because of his religion. Although he was no longer in such danger because of his friendship with the king, he wanted to ensure that the Quakers had a place where they could live and worship in peace.

Penn Becomes Friends with the Indians. Another feature of the Quaker religion that set it apart from other religions was its attempt to befriend and understand others. For example, at a time when only men led churches, Quakers gave women equal power. More famously, however, was the way in which the Quakers treated the Indians. Penn rejected the method of simply taking Pennsylvania from the Indians, even though King Charles thought he owned it. Instead, Penn offered the Indians a fair price for the land, and he established a good relationship with them as a result.



William Penn Makes a Treaty with the Indians

The story goes that when William Penn reached America in 1682, he said, “We intend to sit down lovingly among the Indians.” In the beginning, he held a great meeting with them under a wide-spreading elm that stood in what is now a part of Philadelphia. Here Penn and the Indians made a treaty in which they promised each other that they would live together as friends as long as the water should run in the rivers, or the sun shine in the sky.

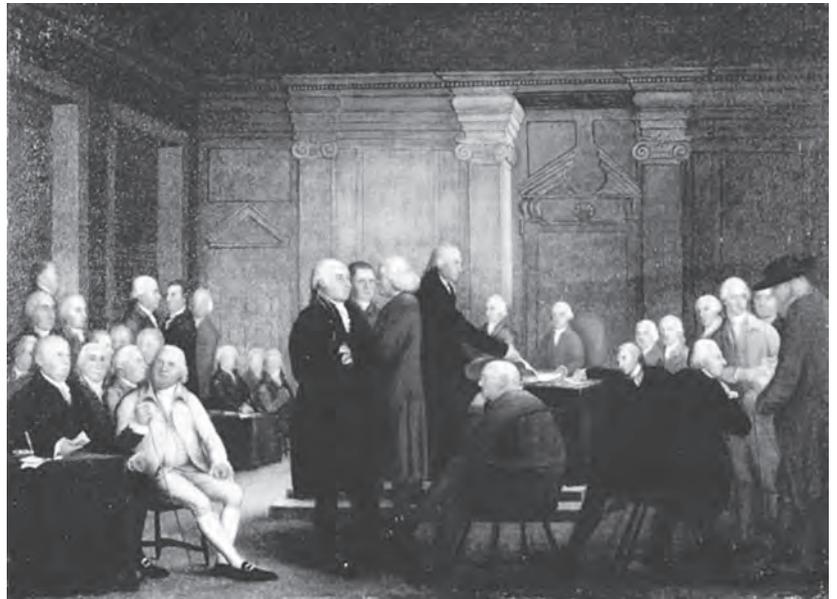
The legend continues that not long after the great meeting under the elm, Penn visited some of the Indians in their wigwams, where they treated him to a meal of roasted acorns. After their feast, some of the young warriors began to run and jump in order to show the Englishman what they could do. Penn used to be quite an athlete himself, and the display inspired him to join in the fun. His ability to keep up with the younger Indians caused them to like him even more.

For sixty years after that treaty was established, the Pennsylvania settlers and the Native Americans were good friends. The Indians said, “The Quakers are honest men; they do no harm; they are welcome to come

here.” Thus, there were no wars with the Indians in Pennsylvania as there had been in New England.

Pennsylvania Grows but Penn Dies Tragically. Pennsylvania grew very quickly. The people were attracted by Penn’s offer of cheap land and the freedom to govern themselves, especially the freedom to worship God as they pleased. Persecuted religious minorities from throughout Europe came to Pennsylvania: French Protestants, Mennonites, Amish, Catholics, Lutherans from German Catholic lands, and Jews.

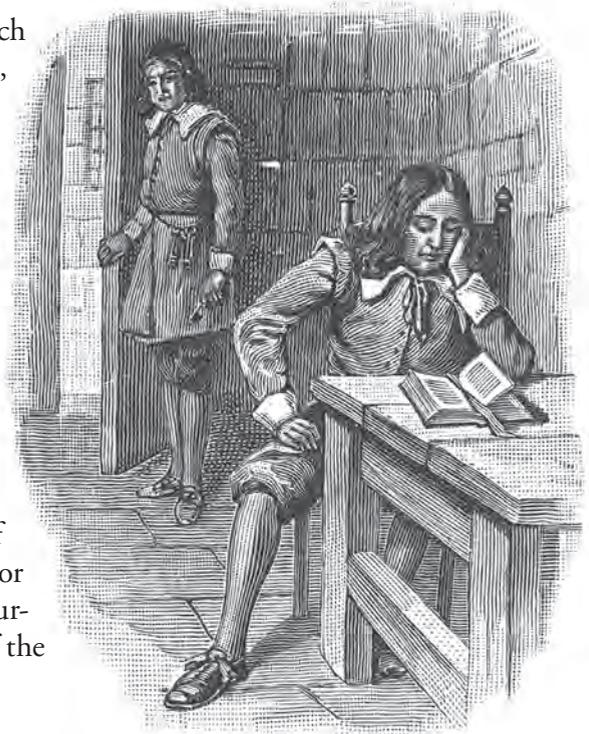
Due to its central location, Philadelphia became one of the most important American cities during the colonial time period. When the War for American Independence began, representatives from all the states gathered there to decide what should be done in response to the British threat. This meeting was called the First Continental Congress, and it was held in the old State House, a building that still stands today. There in 1776, Congress declared the United States of America independent of England.



First Continental Congress

Philadelphia also grew because of Penn’s generosity. He gave much of his own money to ensure that Pennsylvania not just survived, but thrived. Unfortunately, after Penn returned to England, he was wrongly put in prison by an angry former employee. Penn was innocent, and he proved that the man that accused him was nothing more than a thief. Shortly after he was freed, Penn died as a result of his stay in prison. When he died, some Indians from Pennsylvania sent his widow some beautiful furs in remembrance of their “Brother Penn,” as they called him. They said that the furs were “to protect her while she passed through this thorny wilderness without her guide.”

About twenty-five miles west of London, on a country road within sight of the towers of Windsor Castle, there stands a Friends’ meetinghouse, or Quaker church. In the backyard of the meetinghouse, William Penn lies buried. For 100 years or more, there was no mark of any kind to show where he was buried. Now a small stone bearing his name points out the grave of the founder of the great state of Pennsylvania.



William Penn in Prison

Summary. Pennsylvania was a unique colony for many reasons. Because William Penn was a Quaker, and Quakers were persecuted badly in Europe, Pennsylvania was established to be a very tolerant colony. Thus, Pennsylvania drew a wide variety of people from all over Europe, and it became a very important state in the birth of the American nation.

Comprehension Questions

1. To whom did King Charles II owe a large sum of money?
2. How did King Charles pay his debt?
3. What did William Penn want Pennsylvania to be for the Quakers?
4. Why did the Indians not trouble the Quakers?
5. What are two reasons people came to settle in Pennsylvania?

Chapter 13

James Oglethorpe (1696–1785)

James Oglethorpe Makes a New Settlement in Georgia. We have seen that the first real colony or settlement made in America by the English was in Virginia in 1607. By the beginning of 1733, or in about 125 years, eleven more had been made—twelve in all. They stretched along the sea-coast, from the farthest coast of Maine to the northern boundary of Florida, which was then owned by the Spaniards.

The two colonies farthest south were North Carolina and South Carolina. In 1733, James Oglethorpe, a brave English soldier who later became Major-General Oglethorpe, came over to North America to make a new settlement. This new one, which made a total of thirteen colonies, was called Georgia in honor of King George II, who gave a piece of land for it on the seacoast below South Carolina.

Oglethorpe had a friend in England who was cast into prison for debt. There the unfortunate man was so cruelly treated that he became sick and died, leaving his family in great trouble.

James Oglethorpe felt the death of his friend so much that he began to investigate how other poor debtors lived in the London prisons. He soon found that great numbers of them suffered terribly. The prisons were crowded and filthy. The men shut up in them were ragged and dirty; some of them were held with heavy chains; a good many actually died of starvation.

Oglethorpe could not bear to see strong men killed off in this manner. He thought that if the best of them (those who were honest and willing to work) could have the chance to earn their living, they would soon do as well as any men. During his effort to help them, he persuaded the king to give the land of Georgia.

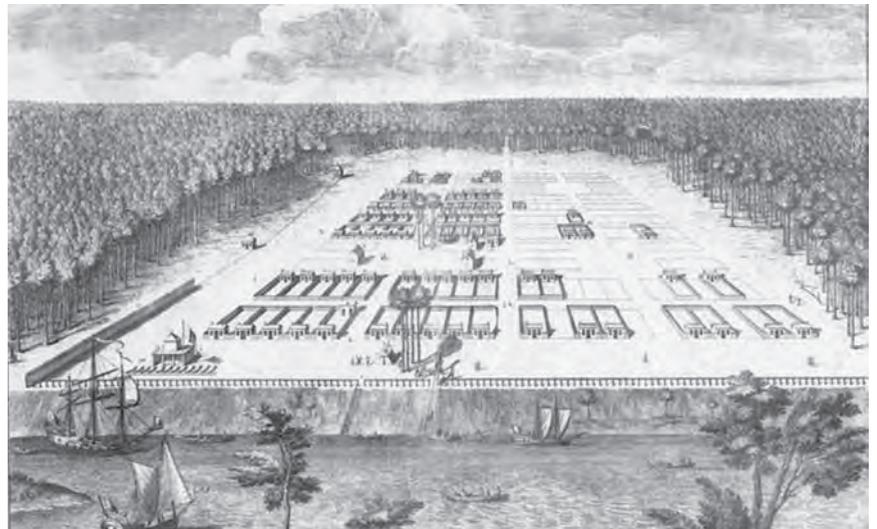
Oglethorpe took thirty-five families to America in 1733. They settled on a bank of the Savannah River, about twenty miles from the sea. Oglethorpe laid out a town with broad, straight, elegant streets and with many small squares or parks. He called the settlement Savannah, from the Indian name of the river on which it stands.

City of Savannah , 1734



General James Oglethorpe

In 1738, George Whitefield, the great Welsh (Calvinistic) Methodist preacher, traveled to Georgia at the request of Oglethorpe and the Wesley brothers; there he preached a series of revival messages to the colonists. When Whitefield returned to America in the fall of 1739, he preached almost every day for several months to large crowds as he traveled throughout the colonies, especially in the New England area. In 1740, he established the Bethesda Home for Boys, which still exists in Savannah, Georgia.





The people of Charleston, South Carolina, were glad to have some English neighbors south of them to help them fight the Spaniards of Florida, who hated the English and wanted to drive them out. They gave the newcomers 100 head of cattle, a group of hogs, and twenty barrels of rice.

The emigrants began to work with a will, cutting down the forest trees, building houses, and planting gardens. There were no lazy people to be seen at Savannah. Even the children found something to do that was helpful.

Nothing disturbed the people but the alligators. They climbed up the bank from the river to see what was happening. But the boys soon taught them not to be too curious. When one monster was found impudently prowling around the town, they thumped him

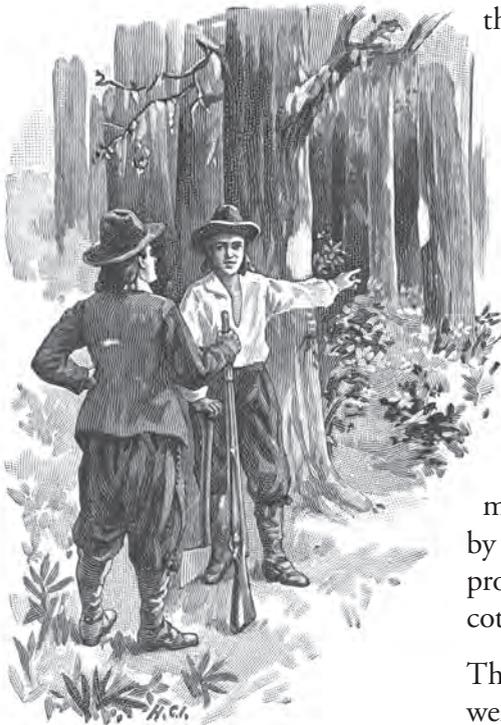
with sticks until they almost beat the life out of him. Soon the alligators decided not to pay any more visits to the settlers.

Georgia Grows. After a time, some German Protestants, who had been cruelly driven out of their native land on account of their religion, came to Georgia. Oglethorpe gave them a hearty welcome. He had bought land from the Indians, and so there was plenty of room for all. The Germans went up the river, and then went back several miles into the woods; there they picked out a place for a town. They called their settlement by the Bible name of Ebenezer, which means "The Lord hath helped us."

There were no roads through the forests, so the new settlers "blazed" the trees; that is, they chopped a piece of bark off, so that they could find their way through the thick woods when they wanted to go to Savannah. Every tree so marked stood like a guidepost; it showed the traveler which way to go until he came in sight of the next one.

The settlers hoped to be able to get large quantities of silk to send to England because the mulberry tree grows wild in Georgia, and its leaves are the favorite food of the silkworm. At first, it seemed as if the plan would be successful, and Oglethorpe took over some Georgia silk as a present to the queen of England. She had a handsome dress made of it for her birthday; it was the first American silk dress ever worn by an English queen. But, after a while it was found that silk could not be produced in Georgia as well as it could in Italy and France, and so in time cotton became the favorite crop.

The people of Georgia did a good work in keeping out the Spaniards, who were trying to take over the country located just north of Florida. Later, like the settlers in North Carolina and South Carolina, they did their full share in helping to make America free from the rule of the king of England. When the War for American Independence began, the king had a



The "Blazed" Trees

lot of powder stored in Savannah. The people broke into the building, rolled out the kegs, and carried them off. Part of the powder they kept for themselves, and part they may have sent to Massachusetts; it is likely that the men who fought at Bunker Hill may have loaded their guns with some of the powder given to them by their friends in Savannah. Therefore, the king got it back, but in a different way than he expected.

In 1765, Oglethorpe was honored with the rank of a senior general. General Oglethorpe spent the closing years of his life in England. He lived to a very old age. Up to the last, he had eyes as bright and keen as a boy's. After the War for Independence was over, the king made a treaty, or agreement, by which he promised to let the United States of America live in peace. General Oglethorpe was able to read that treaty without glasses. He had lived to see the colony of Georgia, which he had settled, become a free and independent state. He died at Cranham Hall, Cranham, England.



In 1739, Oglethorpe was responsible for a number of successful raids on Spanish forts, as well as the siege of St. Augustine (see image above). This was during the War of Jenkins' Ear, which was fought between English Georgia and Spanish Florida. In 1743, Oglethorpe was promoted to the rank of brigadier general. In 1750, he left the colony, which opened the door to slavery being legalized.

Summary. In 1733, General James Oglethorpe brought over some emigrants from England and settled Savannah, Georgia. Georgia was the thirteenth English colony; it was the last one established in North America. General Oglethorpe lived to see it become one of the United States of America.

Comprehension Questions

1. At the beginning of 1733, how many English colonies were there in America?
2. Who was General Oglethorpe?
3. What did General Oglethorpe wish to do for the poor debtors?
4. Did the colony of Georgia raise more cotton or silk?
5. What good work did the people of Georgia do?
6. What event did General Oglethorpe see in his old age?

Chapter 14

George Whitefield (1714–1770)



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When a simple farmer named Nathan Cole heard that George Whitefield was coming to preach in his home town of Middletown, Connecticut, on October 23, 1740, he “dropped [his] tool ... and ran home to [his] wife, telling her to make ready quickly to go on and hear Mr. Whitefield preach.” Mr. Cole and his wife then rode their horse twelve miles as fast as they could to where Whitefield was preaching. There they discovered that just about everyone in the surrounding area had come to hear this famous man preach a sermon.

But why? What had caused everyone to get so excited about a preacher coming to town? And what was it about this Whitefield that had helped create such expectation in this small town in Connecticut? The answer is actually quite simple: In the early 1700s, America was swept up in a series of religious revivals called the Great Awakening, and Whitefield was the most famous revivalist (or preacher) of them all.

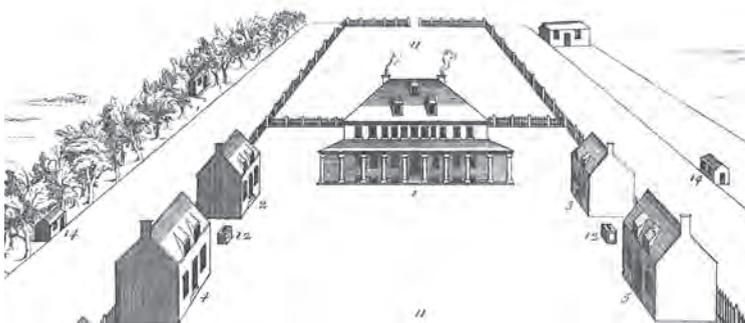
Whitefield’s Role in the Great Awakening. The Great Awakening was the first event that unified the American colonies. It did not matter if you were from Georgia or Maine, you heard about the Great Awakening and, chances are, you were affected by it. In both the big cities and the smallest of towns, revivals (religious meetings marked by a lot of enthusiasm and, Lord willing, a lot of conversions) occurred. The revivals had actually started before Whitefield came to America, but they were mostly local. The citizens of Massachusetts had their experience while the citizens of South Carolina had their own experience as well.

Whitefield changed all of that. He was able to fundamentally change the impact of the Great Awakening because he became America’s first celebrity. Although we usually think of movie stars and sports figures as celebrities today, preachers were very important in America during the eighteenth century. But if you cannot believe that a preacher would be a celebrity, you would be even more amazed knowing a little something about Whitefield. He grew up poor in England. He basically had to beg his way through college. And he was not a good-looking man. Since getting a case of the measles when he was a child, Whitefield was permanently cross-eyed. In fact, people who did not like him often called him “Dr. Squintum.” So despite the odds being stacked against Whitefield, he obviously succeeded.

Whitefield's Success. The key in Whitefield's success was the *way* he preached. Basically, no one in America (or even the world) had ever heard anyone preach the way Whitefield preached. The people were used to having their preachers read the sermons, staying behind the pulpit the entire time. But Whitefield, using skills he gained in his past as an actor, really *delivered* a sermon. For one thing, he preached his sermons *ex tempore*, or, off the top of his head. This freed him to emphasize the dramatic and emotional parts of the message. He would literally act out being born again, and he would often burst into tears. Another gift that Whitefield possessed was an incredible voice. Benjamin Franklin, who eventually became very good friends with Whitefield, estimated that about 30,000 people at a time could hear Whitefield preach. That is amazing considering he did not have a speaker system or anything else to make his voice louder.

Moreover, it was not unusual for thousands of people to go hear Whitefield preach. They did not just go because of Whitefield's revolutionary preaching style. They went because they expected him. Even though Whitefield was the most entertaining preacher they had ever heard, he was also the first preacher to recognize how powerful the press could be in helping publicize his ministry. So Whitefield promoted himself constantly. Newspapers published parts of Whitefield's diary, stories about his successes in various cities and towns, and updates of his schedule. Whitefield was front-page news. He helped sell papers and the papers helped promote Whitefield. It was a perfect "You scratch my back and I'll scratch your back" relationship.

Another factor that played into Whitefield's popularity was the fact that he practiced what he preached. Even though we see a lot of celebrities using their fame to get richer today, Whitefield was not like that at all. On his first trip to America, Whitefield established an orphanage in Georgia and did everything in his power to support it. He took an offering after every sermon he preached, collecting thousands



Bethesda Home for Boys, 1740



An Excerpt from Franklin's Autobiography

In 1739 arrived among us from Ireland the Reverend Mr. Whitefield, who had made himself remarkable there as an itinerant preacher. He was at first permitted to preach in some of our churches; but the clergy, taking a dislike to him, soon refus'd him their pulpits, and he was oblig'd to preach in the fields. The multitudes of all sects and denominations that attended his sermons were enormous, and it was matter of speculation to me, who was one of the number, to observe the extraordinary influence of his oratory on his hearers, and how much they admir'd and respected him.... *It was wonderful to see the change soon made in the manners of our inhabitants. From being thoughtless or indifferent about religion, it seem'd as if all the world were growing religious, so that one could not walk thro' the town in an evening without hearing psalms sung in different families of every street* [italics added]....

Mr. Whitefield, in leaving us, went preaching all the way thro' the colonies to Georgia. The settlement of that province had lately been begun, ... with families of broken shop-keepers and other insolvent debtors, ... taken out of the jails, who ... perished in numbers, leaving many helpless children unprovided for. The sight of their miserable situation inspir'd the benevolent heart of Mr. Whitefield with the idea of building an Orphan House there, in which they might be supported and educated. Returning northward, he preach'd up this charity, and made large collections, for his eloquence had a wonderful power over the hearts and purses of his hearers, of which I myself was an instance....

Benjamin Franklin



A Cartoon Ridiculing George Whitefield's Preaching

of dollars, and then he passed every penny he could on to the orphanage. This simple act of kindness helped his listeners to believe the message he was preaching even more.

Whitefield's Critics. Not everyone was excited about Whitefield's success, however. And just as there are many reasons to explain why Whitefield became popular, there are also many reasons to explain why people did not like him. One of the most basic reasons was simple jealousy. While Whitefield

achieved almost instant national success, many preachers had worked for years with little or no recognition outside their own church. That seemed unfair to them.

Other preachers were not too concerned with how famous Whitefield was, but they were concerned with the preaching style he used. They argued that Whitefield depended too much on the emotional response he created among his listeners. The problem, they believed, was that emotion only lasts a short time. Therefore, once Whitefield left town with all the excitement that came with him, people would go on living the way they had lived before he had come. Whitefield's critics argued that a calm and orderly presentation of biblical truths was the best way to give a sermon since that method actually helped people *learn more* about God. Whitefield's simple response was that true Christians were more like friends of God than students of God.

Finally, the most serious problem some other preachers had with Whitefield was how he ignored the way the church was used to doing things. That is why Whitefield preached outdoors. He wanted to preach to as many people as possible instead of being restricted by the limits a building would place on him. He also wanted to preach to more than one church's people at a time, and his ability to do that would be limited using the traditional method of preaching. He ignored it because, as far as he was concerned, doing what worked was more important than tradition (historical beliefs or customs).

But some preachers were uncomfortable with the way Whitefield redefined their job by ignoring the way it had been done for centuries. They believed they had biblical reasons for leading their churches the way they did. But because Whitefield was so popular, they had to work harder to keep people in their churches. Those preachers realized that either they would have to become more like Whitefield or lose their people to preachers who were



George Whitefield Preaching Outdoors

willing to become more like Whitefield. The result was that some preachers who were more concerned with entertaining their congregations became more popular than those who tried to preach the correct biblical truths. Even today preachers struggle with that same problem.

Whitefield's Impact. The Great Awakening and Whitefield created a lot of controversy in their day, and they are still argued about today. But while everyone cannot agree as to whether they were good for America, everyone does agree that they were very important in American history. One important idea developed during the Great Awakening by Whitefield was the concept of freedom. Whitefield gave many people the idea that following traditions was not necessarily the best way of doing things. In fact, he even argued that traditions were holding the people back from experiencing true religion. A few decades later, most of the people who agreed with Whitefield on that point argued that British traditions were holding them back, and the War for American Independence started as a result. Basically, Whitefield helped prepare the American people to fight the war that would establish them as their own nation. It does not get much more influential than that.

Summary. George Whitefield unified the Great Awakening in America, preaching to multitudes of all sects and denominations in the open air. In spite of being ridiculed, he powerfully delivered his sermons that pointed men's sinful souls to the Savior. Whitefield also practiced what he preached by establishing the Bethesda Home for Boys (1740) in Georgia. He also faced criticism from some who were jealous, others who were concerned with tradition, and those who thought his emotional preaching would not bear lasting fruit. Nevertheless, Whitefield's impact on America was great, encouraging freedom and preparing the people for independence.

In conclusion, the Great Awakening was the first national event in America's history, and it introduced America's first celebrity, George Whitefield. While this revival was a controversial event, and Whitefield was a controversial figure, everyone agrees that both were very important in American history. We owe that to the gifts that God gave George Whitefield and his willingness to use them for God's glory.

Comprehension Questions

1. What is a revival?
2. What job did Whitefield have before becoming a preacher that helped his preaching?
3. Where did Whitefield send all the money he received from the offerings he took after his sermons?
4. Why did Whitefield like to preach outdoors?
5. How did Whitefield help prepare America for the War for American Independence?

From "The Seed of the Woman, and the Seed of the Serpent," a Sermon by George Whitefield

[Genesis 1] Verse 9. "And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Adam, where art thou?"

"The Lord God called unto Adam." (for otherwise Adam would never have called unto the Lord God) and said, "Adam, where art thou? How is it that thou comest not to pay thy devotions as usual?" Christians, remember the Lord keeps an account when you fail coming to worship. Whenever therefore you are tempted to withhold your attendance, let each of you fancy you heard the Lord calling unto you, and saying, "O man, O woman, where art thou? It may be understood in another and better sense; "Adam, where art thou?" What a condition is thy poor soul in? This is the first thing the Lord asks and convinces a sinner of; when he prevents and calls him effectually by his grace; he also calls him by name; for unless God speaks to us in particular, and we know where we are, how poor, how miserable, how blind, how naked, we shall never value the redemption wrought out for us by the death and obedience of the dear Lord Jesus. "Adam, where art thou?"