

# The Protestant Movement and Our English Heritage

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# *Time Line overview*

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- 1517 • Martin Luther publishes *The Ninety-Five Theses*
- 1530 • John Calvin breaks from the Roman Catholic Church
- 1536 • John Calvin publishes his first volume: *Institutes of the Christian Religion*
- 1545 • Catholic Reformation or the Counter Reformation begins with the Church of Rome seeking to gain back followers; lasts until 1563
- 1553 • John Calvin meets John Knox, founder of the Scottish Presbyterians.
- 1554 • John Knox publishes a pamphlet attacking Mary Tudor who returned Catholic faith to England
- 1650 • Population within the colonies of Plymouth Colony, Rhode Island, and New Haven total about 1,500 persons.
- 1652 • Providence Plantation abolishes slavery within its colony

February 1692 / May 1693

- Witch Trials in Salem Village, Ipswich, Andover and Salem Town.

# *The Protestant Movement*

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## **The Protestant Movement began as an act of Reformation.**

- By the 1500's most of the Western Europe was controlled by Church of Rome and Eastern Europe was controlled by Church of Constantinople.
- A division developed regarding ecclesiastical practices by a growing movement of Protestants— or those who protest.
- The Reformation began with **Martin Luther** in Germany who challenged the Roman Church and its practices of selling “indulgences” for the remission of sins. He believed the church did not save humankind from sin, but rather faith in Christ saves humans from sin.
- His followers were called Lutherans; numerous sects began forming, all breaking away from the Roman Church.

# *The Protestant Movement*

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- It can become rather confusing; in Germany alone, the country was divided, with some kingdoms remaining Catholic, and others becoming Protestant. The rulers in each kingdom expected the people to follow the individual king's chosen faith.
- A second leader emerged on the scene who will have major influences on the future emerging American landscape: John Calvin.
- His followers were called Calvinists.
- In his work *Institutes of the Christian Religion* general themes are proposed which form the predestination concept:
  - > God is all powerful.
  - > Humankind is weak, stained with original sin.
  - > Humankind alone cannot save their souls.
  - > God knows in advance who is saved and who is damned.

# *The Protestant Movement*

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- Those elected to be saved must give evidence of their future glory while they are in the material world.
- Protestant groups of the period are:
  - France- Huguenots
  - Scotland- Presbyterians (lead by John Knox)
  - England- Puritans
- The Church of England strengthened under Elizabeth I leadership.
- The divide between Anglicans and Puritans developed due to the fact Puritans wanted to follow a Calvinistic ideology.
- Western Europe from this point divided itself along either Roman Catholicism or one of the sects of Protestantism

# *The Protestant Movement*

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Ultimately, this affected colonization of America in particular due to:

- any religious group opposed to a state-controlled religion could propose relocating to the New World as a means to worship as they saw fit
- Protestantism encouraged business enterprise through a value system upholding a strong work ethic
- Protestantism *did not* view interest loans (money lending) as a sin; Roman Catholicism at this time *did* view money lending as a sin
- Overseas trading companies took advantage of the circumstance in order to help found colonies
- A cold war mentality ensued—a race to populate the New World with Catholics or predominantly with Protestants

# *English Heritage*

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England managed, against the odds, to colonize North America with a steady flow of citizens— due to its newly acquired naval powers over Spain— Western Europe for the most part could only obtain passage into North America through England.

In this manner North America maintained much of the English culture and ideals, trade and commerce, clothing and culinary tastes, language and literature.

Basic cultural literature common between England and America:

- folklore, myth, and superstition
- songs and ballads
- oral stories
- proverbs, sayings
- literary classics

# *English Heritage*

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- Colonial schools were based on the English equivalent

Religions of most Americans are shaped by English sensibilities:

- Catholic
- Anglican
- Puritan
- Quaker
- Calvinism
- Scottish Presbyterianism

The Colonists at first did not encourage the notion of equality between social classes. They did believe, however, in opportunity, of providing an open path for movement within the classes.



# *English Heritage*

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According to T. Harry Williams, Richard Current, and Frank Freidel in their textbook: *A History of the United States: to 1876*, changes in American culture emerged within two generations (24). The authors claim there are three principle reasons for this shifting in attitudes within the collected colonies:

- The second generation of colonists were people who developed an unique attitude of adventure and individualism not akin to European standards.

# *English Heritage*

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- The original English society itself was not transplanted fully to the New World— only a fraction of a populace journeyed over here; typically they were of the same working middle class structures. Furthermore, if you examine the full collection of developing colonies *after* the Puritan migration, these people were not all England-born. From the beginning, America was populated by numerous different cultures from all over Europe.
- Finally, the New World itself presented an unique environment, an atmosphere unlike any European experience could duplicate.