

Puritans and perfect utopian society



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

How does one measure success? Or is success an individual goal contingent on what you have set out to achieve? The Puritans set out with impossible standards of creating a Utopian society with a moral people and solid faith. Their journey would carry them to the new world in hopes of creating a city upon a hill. The colony would be a model for all the world to follow or at least that was the plan according to their leader John Winthrop.

The Puritans were a group of people who didn't exactly want to break ties with the Church of England, but felt strongly that the church needed a complete reformation from within. The Anglican Church, as it was now known in England, still held on to some residual traditions and concepts recognizable from the Catholic faith that had been replaced earlier on. Puritans found themselves set against any and everything that resembled the practice of catholicism. Thus the name the Puritans was given as they set out to purify the church and simplify the faith by preaching the new testament and giving the simple man the knowledge of the bible. Puritans believed in Calvinism or the concept that all mankind was born into sin and that God's grace alone could save you from hell. There was no monetary amount or priest that could get you God's favor. Their adopted ideas of predestination concluded that some were born for Heaven while others were destined for Hell. Man was to never know their fate and could only strive for a successful life pleasing God as a sign of salvation.

In the late 1620's a wealthy group of merchants entered the Cambridge Act as a way for Puritan merchants to buy out their counterparts of the Massachusetts Bay Company , which originally started as a trade venture,

but inadvertently became a religious movement for Puritan society. Shortly thereafter, they set sail for Massachusetts ready to start anew.

Upon arrival the Puritans set out in building their community with their ideals and faith at the forefront. The Puritans established trade with furs, metal work, and agriculture which ultimately gave them success in economic terms. They also differed from other colonies in that whole families emigrated to the new world. They had significant increase in population due to their family views. Puritans like all other settlements encountered natives who had already been ravaged with disease from settlers past. They viewed the natives as inferior savages, but still felt they could be converted and practically insisted it. Puritans held a strong belief and religious intolerance towards anyone who did not convert to their faith. They held the belief that God had given them New England, therefore the land and all who live on it should be pure in faith. Natives found the Puritan's conversion methods and views on land ownership aggressive and this caused a many dispute and eventually led to attacks and wars with the Indians in which the Puritans literally wiped out whole villages including women and children.

A blow to the Puritan movement was the revocation of their charter in the form of the Dominion of New England which consolidated Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, and New Jersey. The new idea of a super colony smothered out the Puritans view of congregationalism and spread Anglican views yet again. After the death of King James II the dominion was dispersed, but the new king and queen, William and Mary, opened the Puritan colonies to outsiders. The new settlers would have freedom of religion and this new freedom would be protected by <https://assignbuster.com/puritans-and-perfect-utopian-society/>

the crown itself. These new developments forced Puritans to share communities with others who did not believe the same and this was the decline of Puritan society from a religious stronghold. The overthrow was considered a victory of sorts for its way of preserving the democracy of legislatures that included elected assemblies, local courts, and laws carried out by local representatives.

The Puritan's journey had its fair share of hardships, and in my opinion would not be considered a success overall. However, they did come in strong and establish quickly and efficiently in comparison with other colonies of the time period. Their lofty dreams of a Utopian society where everyone worked toward the common good and shared the same lifestyle and beliefs was short-lived and never really came to fruition. This is due to the unforeseen circumstances such as the natives and royal interference that broke up their community's religious strongholds before they could create a deep rooted way of life. The new world was a doorway to religious freedom where numerous denominations sought refuge, so to try and enforce such a strict one religion community on a broad size scale was in my opinion an impossible task. In the end the Puritans had to compromise religious domination in order to preserve their freedoms of legislature that ultimately allowed them to worship freely as they saw fit. The New World that they sought refuge and a new start in was not just for them alone, and they must share the land.