

THE MASSACHUSETTS BAY COLONY *and the* GENERAL COURT

THE OBSERVANCE OF THE TERCENTENARY
OF THE MASSACHUSETTS BAY COLONY AND OF THE
GENERAL COURT AND ONE HUNDRED FIFTIETH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE ADOPTION OF THE
CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMON-
WEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS



PRESENTED BY MR. WALSH OF MASSACHUSETTS
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FOREWORD

I believe that many people in the United States, particularly teachers and pupils, will welcome this reprint as a Senate document of some of the selected material published by the Department of Education for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for use in the schools, commemorating the tercentenary of the settlement of Massachusetts Bay Colony. The material for the Massachusetts publication was prepared by a committee of educators under the chairmanship of the State supervisor of secondary education.

No effort has been made to do more than suggest the points in the early colonial history of Massachusetts which should be emphasized. The coming of the Puritans with the charter and the beginning of the General Court in Massachusetts are the two chief historical events in connection with which the celebration of this year is being held.

It is hoped that the concise and interesting history contained in this document may awaken interest in the early life of the colonists of New England and result in developing a taste for reading biographies and historical sketches of the men and events of this thrilling period, which have been published in abundance and will be found in nearly every public library.

The founders of the Massachusetts Bay Colony have taught invaluable lessons to the world in government.

DAVID I. WALSH.

HISTORICAL MATERIAL

THE FIRST SETTLERS ON THE SHORES OF MASSACHUSETTS BAY

IN THE summer of 1605, an English ship sailed into the harbor of Plymouth, England. On board were five North American Indians. The captain of the ship made a present of these savages to Sir Ferdinando Gorges, who was the commander of the fort at Plymouth.

Sir Ferdinando became so interested in the homeland of these Indians that he asked the English king for a grant of land in the New World.

Eighteen years later Sir Ferdinando's son, Robert Gorges, sailed from England to make a settlement on the land which had been given to his father by King James.

In September, 1623, young Gorges landed at what is now Weymouth, Mass. There he found an abandoned blockhouse that had been used as a trading post by an Englishman named Thomas Weston.

Gorges and his companions made this crude home their dwelling and lived there until the spring of 1624. Then he and most of his comrades returned to England. Three young men remained at Weymouth. They were William Morrell, a minister; Samuel Maverick, a young man of wealth; and William Blackstone, a young minister and a graduate of Cambridge University. One year later William Morrell returned to England. Then Samuel Maverick moved to Winnisimmet, or Chelsea, and later to Noddle's Island, or East Boston, and William Blackstone took up his abode across the bay in Shawmut, opposite the mouth of the Charles River. William Blackstone built his house overlooking what is now the northwest corner of the Boston Common, near the union of Spruce and Beacon Streets. Here he lived quietly for the next five years, trading with the Indians, cultivating his garden, and watching the growth of some apple trees which he had brought from England.

About the time that Robert Gorges landed at Weymouth, John White, the minister of a church in Dorchester, England, organized a company of merchants which made a fishing settlement at Cape Ann, Mass. It was not successful and most of the settlers went home. The rest, led by Roger Conant, moved to Naumkeag, or Salem. They were there only a short time when some got discouraged and went to Virginia. So few people were left, that a man named John Woodbury, went back to England to get more settlers. John White also labored to increase the Salem colony.

John White and his congregation belonged to that large body of Englishmen who did not like all the services of the Church of England. They did not want to leave the English church and start a church of their own. Instead they wished to "purify" it or rid it of the ceremonies which they disliked. For this reason, they were called "Puritans."

At this time there were many wealthy Puritan gentlemen who had much influence in the affairs of England. Mr. White saw that these Puritans would soon have little influence either in the English Church or in the English Government.

King Charles and his bishops were introducing into the church more and more of the disliked ceremonies. Then, too, the King and his friends were making very harsh laws, and taxing the people heavily. John White and his associates thought that a strong, secure Puritan retreat should be established in the New World, in case of a Puritan disaster in the Old World.

The success of the Pilgrim Fathers at Plymouth encouraged them to hope for even greater success in a colony founded by Puritans of wealth and wide social influence.

White is the author of pamphlets in which Puritans were urged to leave England and to establish a Puritan Commonwealth in New England.

On the 19th of March, 1628, a tract of land was granted by the Council for New England to an association of six gentlemen, one of whom was John Endicott. This grant extended from 3 miles north of the Merrimac River to 3 miles south of the Charles River and as far west as the Pacific Ocean. In those days the Pacific coast was supposed to be not far west of the Hudson River.

The grantees took the name of "The New England Company." The membership soon increased.

A few days after the grant was obtained, a meeting was held at which Matthew Cradock was chosen governor and Thomas Goffe, deputy governor of the Massachusetts company. Both of these men were rich London merchants whose influence with other men of wealth made them of great importance to the company.

John Endicott was asked to go and reside in New England and act as governor of the colony. In June, 1628, Mr. Endicott, his wife, children, and about 50 settlers sailed for Naumkeag, where they arrived after a voyage of two months and a few days. They did not get along well at first with Roger Conant and the "old planters," but soon an amicable settlement of their difficulties resulted in the renaming of Naumkeag, "Salem," the Hebrew word for "peaceful."

The New England Company in England received a favorable account of the Salem colony from John Endicott; so in February, 1629, preparations were begun for another and a larger migration.

THE GRANTING OF THE CHARTER

On March 4, 1629, the Massachusetts company received a royal charter confirming the grant from the Council for New England. This charter was a written parchment. It created a corporation, under the legal title of the "Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England."

The affairs of the Massachusetts Bay Company were to be managed by a governor, a deputy governor, and council of 18 assistants. These officers were to be elected annually by the members of the company. They were permitted to make whatever laws they liked for the settlers whom they sent to the New World, provided that such laws did not oppose the laws of England.

The charter did not say where the company was to hold its meetings. It did not say that the officers of the company must live in England.

By July, 1629, Mr. Cradock advised the entire company to leave England and sail for the New World. Other members of the company thought it a good plan. By this time they had little hope that they could "purify" the English Church. Then, too, they felt that a colony settled by the members of the company would surely be a success.

At the July meeting, Governor Cradock urged the General Court of the company to give "private and serious" consideration to his proposal. The next meeting of the General Court was held on August 28, 1629.

Two days before this meeting, 12 Puritan gentlemen met at Cambridge University, England, and signed an agreement to lead a migration to New England not later than March, 1630, provided that they could take the charter with them. They were resolved to transfer the whole government and run it themselves so that the King and his bishops could not interfere with Massachusetts as they had with Virginia.

At the next meeting of the company held on October 20, 1629, John Winthrop, one of the signers of the "Cambridge Agreement," was unanimously chosen the governor of the Massachusetts Bay Company. The 12 men who had signed the "Cambridge Agreement" were well educated and influential. Some of them were wealthy.

As we follow them to the New World we will see that their leader, John Winthrop, was well fitted to be the leader of the group of men who hoped to spread Puritan ideals in a New World.

THE DEPARTURE FROM OLD ENGLAND

There were five busy months of preparation for their departure from Old England. Colonists had to be procured, money raised, ships chartered, and provisions gathered. Governor Winthrop planned thoroughly and worked faithfully. His wife and family were at Groton, which was about a two days' journey from London, but so busy was he that he saw them only three times in those five months. It was decided that three of his sons, Henry, Stephen, and Adam, should accompany him to America. His wife, Margaret, and oldest son, John, were to come with his other children later, after the house was sold.

The members of the company planned to sail early in the spring in order to get settled during the summer and before the bleak New England winter set in. They hoped thus to avoid hardships similar to those endured by the Pilgrims who had landed at Plymouth late in the autumn of 1620.

In March, 1630, 11¹ ships were ready to set sail from Cowes near the Isle of Wight. On board was a company of about 800

¹ Winthrop's "Journal."

people. They were divided into four classes. First, there were those who had paid their passage to America. These people were to be given a certain number of acres of land in the New World. In the second class were those people who did not have enough money to pay the full price of their passage. They agreed to do enough work after landing in America to make up for the money that they owed the company. The third class was made up of hired servants or workmen. Skilled workers in the different trades made up the fourth class. They hoped to find plenty to do in the new colony.

Governor Winthrop's vessel was called the *Arbella* in compliment to Lady Arbella Johnson, who was one of its passengers. Others of the *Arbella's* passengers were Sir Richard Saltonstall, William Coddington, Thomas Dudley, deputy governor, Simon Bradstreet and his wife, Anne (Dudley's daughter), a remarkable poetess, and Rev. George Phillips. These names have been perpetuated and we find them in our present day list of Boston's citizens.

Among these ships was the *Mayflower*, that brave little ship which 10 years earlier had brought the Pilgrims to Plymouth. The passengers took their precious charter aboard the *Arbella* at Southampton on March 22, 1630, but unfriendly winds and severe storms kept their ship and three others of the company at anchor until the 8th of April. Then the *Arbella* shot off three guns as a farewell and they sailed out into the broad ocean.

For nine long, dreary weeks they were tossed by waves and buffeted by winds. During the voyage John Winthrop began the writing of his "Journal." It is from this work that we have learned most of what we know about the early days of the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

Whenever the passengers became frightened or discouraged, Governor Winthrop reminded them of the mercy and goodness of God and led them in prayer. They had plenty of games and fun on board and, when they stopped off Nova Scotia to catch codfish, Governor Winthrop caught one 4 feet long.

ARRIVAL IN NEW ENGLAND

On Saturday morning, June 12, the *Arbella* passed through the channel between Baker and Misery Islands, and anchored off what is now Beverly. While most of the people went on shore to feast

on the delicious wild strawberries, Governor Winthrop, Lady Arbella, and the officers of the company were rowed up to Salem where Governor Endicott treated them to venison pie.

At Salem they found about 40 or 50 dwellings. No streets could be seen, but paths led from house to house. The June beauty of New England could not hide the distress among the settlers already living at Salem. Their planting and building had been interrupted by sickness, and now they had scarcely enough bread and corn left for a fortnight. Governor Winthrop immediately dispatched one of the ships back to England for more supplies.

Shortly after the landing at Salem, Lady Arbella Johnson died. On the day after Lady Arbella's burial, the *Talbot*, another of the 11 ships, arrived. On this ship was Governor Winthrop's son Henry, who had accidentally been left behind when the *Arbella* sailed from the Isle of Wight. The day after the *Talbot's* arrival at Salem, Henry Winthrop was drowned while trying to swim across what is now the North River to visit some Indian wigwams.

On the 6th day of July the ship *Success* came into Salem Harbor. Although the colonists were filled with grief because of the deaths of Lady Arbella and Henry Winthrop, they held a service of thanksgiving to God who had brought all their ships safely to the New World.

EARLY DAYS IN BOSTON

The new village of Boston was built in a rocky place where there were many hollows and swamps. It was almost an island, because the neck of land which led from it to the main shore was so narrow that the tide often washed completely over it.

All the dwellings, except possibly the Great House occupied by Governor Winthrop, were made of wood and the roofs thatched with dried marsh grass or with bulrushes. They soon learned to split shingles out of cedar blocks. The governor and chief men of the village set aside a certain portion of the salt marsh where anyone could reap enough to thatch his dwelling, but no more. The first chimneys were made of wood covered with clay. These chimneys were most unsafe. During the first winter there was a fire nearly every week. Fire wardens were appointed to visit every kitchen and look up into the chimneys to see if the plastering of clay had been burned away; so as soon as the settlers could find clay and make bricks, they made brick chimneys.

A law was made obliging every man who owned a thatched house to keep a ladder standing near by, so that it might be easy to get at the thatched roof if the flames fastened upon it.

Many of the settlers brought over glass for the windows. Governor Winthrop thought that the dampness inside the houses caused the sickness at Charlestown; for this reason many of the houses had floors of wood instead of bare ground which had been beaten hard. Some of the doors, too, had iron hinges instead of leather hinges like those seen in Salem. Most of the settlers had brought furniture from their old homes in England. Others, of course, had furniture made here of pine, oak, and ash. There were pewter and copper ware, wooden plates called trenchers, and bowls hewn from maple knots.

The walls of the better houses were plastered inside with plaster made from sea shells.

There were no stores for 150 years.

PURITAN DRESS

The common man wore a band or flat collar with cord and tassels, coat and breeches of leather, and a leather girdle around his waist. Leather boots protected his feet from dust and mud.

The boys dressed exactly like their fathers.

The Massachusetts Bay Colony furnished every common man or servant who came from England to settle here with a complete outfit. This consisted of—

- four pairs of shoes
- four pairs of stockings
- four shirts
- two suits of doublet
- hose of leather lined with oiled skin
- a woolen suit lined with leather
- four bands (collars)
- two handkerchiefs
- one green cotton waistcoat
- two pairs of gloves
- one black felt hat with leather band inside
- one woolen cap and two red knit caps
- one mandilion, or cloak, lined with cotton
- one extra pair of breeches.

Women and girls of the upper class wore fine silks, satins, and broadcloths. Their boots were of soft leather.

Women and girls of the middle class wore dark homespun dresses that fitted closely and nearly touched the ground. When they went out they put on white linen collars and hoods or caps which left only a small part of the face showing.

On Sundays they wore linsey woolsey—a material made of linen and of wool.

EDUCATION

Education was very dear to the hearts of the founders of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Five years after the settlement of Boston a school was set up for boys.

Old Boston records show that at a town meeting held in April, 1635, it was voted that "Philemon Pormort shall be entreated to become schoolmaster for the teaching and nurturing children with us." This was the beginning of the Boston Public Latin School, the oldest educational institution established by the English settlers in New England.

The first lesson which Master Pormort gave the children who could read and write fairly well was from the Latin grammar. The schoolroom was not much like the schoolrooms of to-day—bare walls, rough desks and benches, no pictures or maps, and very few books. A large fireplace at one end of the room kept those boys near it too hot, while those at the other side were very cold. The writing was done with pens called quills. They were made from goose feathers. The ink was often made by mixing tea with a solution of iron.

School began at 7 o'clock in the morning. The master opened by reading several pages of the Bible. Boys studied and recited until 11 o'clock. Then there was a prayer, followed by the noon recess. On all days except Mondays the boys went home to dinner at 10 o'clock, but Mondays they stayed until 12. On that day they were asked questions about the sermons they had heard in church the previous day. After dinner they returned to school at 1 o'clock and remained until 5.

Punishments for misdemeanors were extremely severe. Whispering was a great offense deserving severe penalty. Sometimes whispering sticks were used. These were stout bits of wood from the oak tree. One was put into a child's mouth, as a bit is thrust into the mouth of a horse, then strings attached to the two ends were tied securely back of the neck. Thus the culprit's jaws were stretched wide open for an hour at a time.

At other times corporal punishment with a flapper was inflicted. The flapper was a piece of stout deer hide or thick leather 4 or 5 inches wide and 8 or 10 inches long. There was a hole in the center. On one end of this leather was a stout handle. A boy who disobeyed the rules of the school was forced to lie over one of the benches, part of his clothing having been removed. The flapper was laid on so vigorously that the culprit's flesh "welled up" to fill the hole in the leather part of the flapper. When the punishment was over the victim was actually covered with welts.

Corporal punishment with birch rods cut by the children themselves was common. These were often broken over the backs of the children for such an offense as whispering to borrow a pen. In that day fear was the governing motive in keeping children at their tasks both in school and at home.

The first dame school was opened by Mistress Somerby, a widow from Yarmouth, England. All dame schools, which admitted girls and small boys, were taught by women. The boys were taught to read, spell, write, and do sums, while the girls learned to read and write a little but spent most of the time learning to cook, sew, spin, and weave. Their hours were from 8 to 11. The older girls did not attend in the afternoon but spent that time at home knitting stockings for their fathers and brothers and spinning and weaving flax and wool to make cloth for new clothing. They were never allowed to remain idle.

In 1636 the General Court voted that £400 be set aside for founding an institution of higher learning. The next year it directed that this school should be at Newtowne. A committee was appointed to carry the order into effect. John Winthrop was the chairman of this committee. The purpose of this school was expressed as follows: "That the light of learning might not go out nor the study of God's word perish."

Shortly after this committee was appointed, Rev. John Harvard died, leaving his library and half his estate "to the Public School at Newtowne." The school took the name of its benefactor. This was the origin of Harvard College. It was opened in the fall of 1638, and the first class was graduated in 1642. The name Newtowne was changed to Cambridge.

In 1645 the town of Boston ordered "that fifty pounds should be allowed yearly to a schoolmaster and a house for him to live in

and thirty pounds to an usher." They were to teach reading, writing, and ciphering. Indian children were to be taught gratis. This order was confirmed by the General Court.

In 1647 the General Court decreed that in every township having 50 families or more there must be maintained by public taxes a school for instruction in reading and writing. Every town having 100 families or more must maintain a grammar school, the master of which must be able to instruct youths for admission to the university. This law establishing public schools is believed to be the first legislative enactment of the kind in New England. It originated because the Puritan Fathers realized that knowledge was of great importance to all men. They believed that "ignorance was the stronghold of Satan" and that they were in duty bound to do everything in their power to counteract ignorance.

Massachusetts has nothing wiser or nobler to boast of than this law of 1647—that memorable provision for education which furnished an example to the whole world.

THE STRUGGLE FOR FOOD

Food is necessary for life and success. For the first five years the Massachusetts Bay colonists were not free from fear of famine during the winter months. The store of food brought from England grew smaller and smaller until in the early part of September very little of their provisions was left. There were three reasons for this shortage of food. The colonists had reached the New World too late to do any planting; so they had nothing to harvest. Some of the food brought from Old England had spoiled. Then, many of the settlers had bartered provisions with the Indians in exchange for beaver skins to offer for sale in England.

Governor Winthrop forbade any person to carry food out of the colony. He hired Captain Pierce of the ship *Lion* to hasten to the nearest town in England and bring back as much food as his ship could carry.

Before the end of October, 1631, food was so scarce in Boston that the poorer people had nothing save acorns, clams, and mussels to eat. During the summer the sea seemed actually filled with fish. During the autumn every boat that could be found was sent out fishing, but all the fishermen together could bring in less than 50 pounds of fish a day. This was a very small amount to be distrib-

uted among so many hungry people. The fowls of the forest were hard "to come by," wrote one colonist. They were wilder than in England, and harder to shoot. Most of the corn was bought from the Indians. Roger Clap swapped his puppy dog with an Indian for a peck of corn. A fat pig brought £5 and a goat £3. Meal boiled in salt and water became the diet even of the most well-to-do families.

Then a pinnace, a small boat propelled by oars and sails, manned with five of the strongest men of the colony was sent along the coast to trade with the Narragansett Indians. The men took with them every trinket that could be collected in the colony and returned five days later with 100 bushels of Indian corn. It was equally divided among all, but it lasted only three days.

About the 1st of January, Governor Winthrop appointed a day of prayer. On this day every man, woman, and child in the Bay Colony spent his or her time in praying to the Lord to save them from starvation.

They no longer hoped for the coming of the *Lion* which they felt sure had been destroyed by tempest on the high seas. Imagine their joy when on the 5th of February the *Lion* arrived, laden with wheat, peas, oatmeal, pickled beef, and pork! The entire cargo was paid for by the authorities and divided among all the people.

Then a day of thanksgiving was proclaimed. After eating a hearty breakfast the people assembled for prayer and thanksgiving to the God who had relieved them of the fear of dying from starvation. The *Lion* had not enough food to satisfy their wants until the next year's crops could be gathered, but other ships soon came to Boston with more provisions.

The harvest of 1631 was fairly bountiful but so many new settlers arrived during the autumn that the colony was again cramped for food.

The summer of the third year was cold and wet; so the crop of corn failed almost entirely. Again the people were forced to seek food from the sea or to dig for clams.

The winters of 1631 and 1632 were so cold that the Charles River was frozen from shore to shore. Snow fell nearly every day until the drifts were so high that no one could move about except in the center of the towns.

Another famine was staring these early settlers in the face. In the latter part of the winter of 1632 they sought help from Virginia and succeeded in obtaining a shipload of Indian corn.

NEW KINDS OF FOOD

The Massachusetts settlers learned to eat many new kinds of food, though the bulk of their diet was Indian corn made into johnnycake or Indian pudding, beef, pork, and sea food. Potatoes were not introduced for 50 years and, of course, it was some time before the first apple trees bore fruit.

From their Indian neighbors the Puritan mothers learned how to prepare many new dishes. *Massaump* was corn beaten into small pieces and boiled until it was soft. Then it was eaten hot or cold with milk or butter.

Nookick was made by parching Indian corn in hot ashes and then beating it to a powder.

Yokhegg was a pudding made by boiling corn meal in a mixture of milk and chocolate sweetened to one's taste.

Whitpot was made of oatmeal, milk, sugar, and spice.

A bread made of pumpkins boiled soft and mixed with the meal from the Indian corn was another new kind of food.

They ate eels roasted, fried, or boiled. Sometimes these were stuffed with nutmegs and cloves.

THE COLONIAL SCHOOL DAYS

The people in Massachusetts have always been interested in educating the children. In 1636, only six years after Boston was settled, a sum equal to the colony tax for a year was given to found a college. This later was named "Harvard College." This event is important. It is the first time any group of people in New England gave its own money to found a place for education.

Not only did the parents work for the education of their children, but the colonists ordered that a school be built where there were enough families and children. In 1647 a law was passed in Massachusetts which ordered that every town of 50 families should provide a school where children could be taught to read and write. Every town of 100 families was required to have a grammar school. This would be the same as our high school. These were public schools, but they were not always free. They were supported by the parents in many cases.

Some of the schools were in charge of women teachers and some were cared for by the men. This poem tells you about some of the first schools for little children.

Here are schools of divers sorts
To which our youth daily resorts.
Good women, who do very well
Bring little ones to read and spell,
Which fits them for writing, and then
Here's men to bring them to their pen,
And to instruct and make them quick
In all sorts of arithmetic.

Nowadays we often make rhymes about the things which we are doing in school. This one is about arithmetic in the colonial times.

Multiplication is vexation;
Division is as bad.
The rule of three perplexes me
And fractions drive me mad.

THE SCHOOLMASTER

The teacher of colonial days did many things besides teaching school. He rang the church bell on Sunday, read the Bible in church, and led the singing. Sometimes he read the sermon. He did all the things a sexton does to-day, and often he even swept the church. One teacher named Master Haystop kept school in a little house on the corner of Franklin and Washington Streets. Someone tells about it in this way: "The building was very old—one of the early colonial buildings. The walls were time stained; the door was old, and it led up to an old room on the second floor, where we were taught by a teacher who was also very old. His dress was odd. He wore a tabby velvet coat, the tails of which sometimes stood straight out."

In a book called "Colonial Children" we find these rules about the schoolmaster.

The Schoolmaster shall faithfully attend his school and do his best to benefit his scholars. In this he is to use his best judgment, and not to remain away from school unless necessary.

From the beginning of the first month until the end of the seventh, he shall begin to teach every day at seven of the clock in the morning. For the other five months he shall begin every day at eight of the clock in the morning and end at four in the afternoon.²

² Albert Bushnell Hart. Used by permission of the Macmillan Co., publishers.

One of the men who lived in the early days wrote this story about his life in school:

When I was three years old, I was sent to school to a mistress, where I learned to read with great dispatch; in my fifth year, I was taken away and put to a writing master. In my seventh year I could flourish a tolerable hand, and began my grammar. By the time I was fourteen, I was considerably proficient in the Latin and Greek languages, and was admitted into Harvard College.

THE SCHOOLROOM

The schoolrooms in the early days were very simply furnished. There were no blackboards, maps, or pictures. In the earliest days pencils were not used. The "sum books" or, as we would say, arithmetic notebooks, were written in ink. In the country schools the copy books were made of large-sized paper carefully sewed in the shape of a book. They were ruled by hand. The children used lead plummets instead of pencils. These plummets were made of lead melted and cast into wooden molds. These were cut with a jack-knife and were tied by a string to the ruler. These plummets were usually shaped like a tomahawk and sharpened at the end. Paper was scarce in those days. The children often went to the forest and cut birch bark from the trees. They used this for their number work. Sometimes they wrote whole sets of lessons on the birch bark and kept it for a textbook.

THE FIREPLACE

The schools were heated by huge fireplaces. The logs were furnished by the parents of the children as part of the pay for schooling. Some children, whose parents did not send a share of wood, were made to sit in the coldest part of the room.

THE SCHOOL BOOKS

The first book to be used by the children in America wasn't really a book at all. It was an oblong piece of wood, 4 or 5 inches long and 2 inches wide. It was called a "hornbook." The name came from the material used in making it. On one side was placed a printed piece of paper containing the alphabet, some simple syllables, and the Lord's Prayer. There was only one page. On the other side was printed a picture of the king. Each side was covered by a piece of horn to keep the page from wearing out. Horn is

something like isinglass. Some hornbooks had pictures of huge birds on the back.

The book which was used after the hornbook was the "New England Primer." It was studied by American children for nearly 200 years. If your great-great-grandparents went to school in America you may be sure that they owned a New England Primer. It was a very religious book. Some people called it the "Little Bible of New England."

Then came the Latin grammar. It was an ugly book, and made the studying of Latin seem more difficult. This was followed by an English grammar. Most of the pages in these books were written in rhyme. The children did not have any arithmetic books. Each teacher had a sum book and read the examples to the children. The rhyme about the days in the month, "Thirty days hath September, April, June, and November," etc. This was recited as early as 1633.

CUSTOMS

Customs are sometimes traditional or inherited; sometimes newly set up because of new surroundings and new conditions.

In early Boston every Thursday was "Lecture Day" for the grown folks. This means that about 11.30 in the forenoon all work stopped for the day. As soon as dinner was over the men and women went to the meetinghouse, where they listened to an hour's sermon. A wrongdoer was sometimes sentenced to wear a halter around his neck and stand on the steps of the church for two hours on the forenoon of every lecture day.

Friday was market day. On that day the farmers from outside Boston drove to the market field, located near where the Old State House now stands. Their wagons were loaded with all sorts of products. Later when the first town house was built in 1658, where the Old State House now stands, the market was opened downstairs in that building.

Saturday the Puritans of Boston ate fish instead of meat for dinner. Just before 6 o'clock all work was stopped. After supper the family sat by the fire with a lighted candle on a stand by the side of the father's chair. The father spoke of the good things he had noticed about each of them during the day, corrected any faults he had seen, and then read to them from his Bible. After he had

finished reading the mother and children went upstairs to bed while the father covered the fire for the night. Before 8 o'clock nearly every one in the town was asleep.

Every town had a militia company which drilled once a month, and the companies of each county were organized in regiments. The Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company was the grandest military outfit and was established as early as 1637. All men had to take turns at watch and ward duty at night to guard against surprise by Indians.

Training day was held on Boston Common four times a year. Booths were erected for the sale of ground nuts, packages of nookick, sweet cakes, pumpkin bread spread with maple sirup, and dainties of all kinds imported from England. With a flourish of trumpets and a rolling of drums the Suffolk Regiment came up from Boston Neck and marched into the center of the Common. Then a minister came out from the tent, which had been set up for the use of the governor, and offered prayer. When this prayer was over the soldiers drilled until noon, when they paused to rest and eat dinner served in the open.

The governor, the ministers, college graduates, and gentry were addressed as "Master" and "Mistress." The ordinary man was called "Goodman," and his wife was known as "Goodwife," or "Goody." Servants were called by name without any title, as Mary Green or John White.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF PLYMOUTH AND MASSACHUSETTS BAY COLONIES TO STATE AND NATION

It is a noticeable fact that what we now call Massachusetts grew up around two centers—the Plymouth Colony and the Massachusetts Bay Colony. These two centers were separated by 40 miles of wilderness but were united by a common purpose to establish communities where godly men and women might live the good life without interference by bishops and kings.

Plymouth was settled by plain, practical people. Elder Brewster was the only college graduate.

The Bay Colony had many highly educated people and many people who possessed wealth. There were more college graduates in the Bay Colony in proportion to population than in England itself.

The Pilgrims had separated from the Church of England and set up a church for themselves before leaving England.

The Puritans, who came to the Bay Colony, were members of the Church of England who refused to conform to some of its rules and practices, but they separated after coming here and established the Congregational Church.

In 1640 there were 77 clergymen in the Bay Colony. These men brought the Puritan colony the best learning of the Old World and had a great influence on education, morals, and politics. Many practiced medicine in towns where there were no doctors.

At Plymouth were found quiet, peace, and contentment; at the Bay, a rush of business, and strife arising from difference of opinions.

Plymouth was always small and comparatively poor. It was soon overshadowed and finally annexed by the younger and more prosperous Massachusetts Bay Colony.

The Plymouth Pilgrims are remembered as having pointed the way which was followed by others to far greater achievements.

The Puritans are remembered for their contributions to education and to government. Our Massachusetts public school system had its origin in the law of 1647. This was a true expression of Puritan ideals, that have been perpetuated in the generous educational opportunities which our Commonwealth offers to her children.

Our representative system of government had its beginning in the year 1634, our bicameral system 10 years later, and protection of the rights of the individual was insured in the Body of Liberties issued in 1641. What greater heritage can a people leave than educational opportunity and a good system of government? The events which this tercentenary commemorates are of great significance to every inhabitant of Massachusetts.

THE GENERAL COURT

The General Court of Massachusetts is noteworthy by reason of the fact that it is one of the oldest legislative bodies in the world. In October, 1930, the general court will pass its three-hundredth birthday.

By the stipulation named in the original charter of the Massachusetts Bay Co. in New England, the general court met quarterly; and annually at the Easter session it elected a governor, a deputy governor, and a board of assistants to the number of 18. Six of the latter, with the governor or deputy governor, constituted a quorum, and were required to be present at the sittings of the court.

The general court was composed entirely of freemen. It had the power to add to its membership as well as to pass laws not repugnant to the laws of England. The term "court" signified no more than a general assembly of all freemen. The officers and the membership of this court or assembly corresponded very closely to what we know to-day as the president, vice president, board of directors, and stockholders of a corporation.

On October 19, 1630, the general court, at its first meeting in Massachusetts, admitted 108 freemen, including Conant, Maverick, and Blackstone. By 1648 nearly all those who had been proposed for membership were admitted. It is estimated that by 1684 more than 2,500 freemen were members of the general court.

No one, during the first 17 years of the charter, could be a member of the general court who was not a freeman and also a church member, a qualification that remained substantially in force throughout the period of the first charter, although it was modified in 1647 and 1664.

At least one effect of limiting the general court membership to freemen who were church members was to make it not too unwieldy for practical operation, and at the same time by this restriction to secure as members men of high character.

The religious qualification for membership was always a subject of controversy from the beginning, both in the Colony and in England. For the first 17 years the great body of colonists were without voting privilege, and in that respect they had a right to feel that they were being discriminated against as English citizens.

In 1647, the general court passed an act allowing nonchurch members to take an oath of fidelity to the government, "to be jurymen and to have their vote in the choice of the selectmen for town affairs, assessment of taxes, and other prudentials proper to the selectmen of the several towns, provided, still, that the major part of all companies [of selectmen] be freemen that shall make any valid act." In spite of the expansion of the franchise indicated in this act, in all probability four-fifths of the rightful voting population in the Colony were without the right to vote. This state of affairs remained substantially unchanged down to the American Revolution. In 1775, it was probable that not more than one-third of the men were voters.³

As time went on, the general court developed (1) by enlarging the powers of the freemen so as to elect the assistants and governor; (2) by delegating to the towns the privilege of electing deputies so as to make a meeting or assembly that would be practicable; (3) by creating within the court two separate bodies with legislative powers, known as upper and lower houses, or assistants and deputies, respectively.

The first thought of representation as a means of making the general court function as it ought in such a fast-growing colony came from John Winthrop at a meeting of this body held on May 14, 1634. As a result, a vote was passed making it "lawful for the freemen of each plantation to choose two or three of each town before each general court, to act in the behalf of all the freemen of the plantations, to make and establish laws, grant land, etc., and to deal in all other affairs of the commonwealth, except in the matter of election of magistrates and other officers, wherein each freeman is to give his own voice."

It was the tendency of the deputies to act in concert, and as a result the question came up as to the relative powers of assistants and deputies. The question came sharply to a head in a controversy in the general court between a Mrs. Sherman and a Captaine Keayne over a stray pig. When the vote was taken 2 magistrates and 15 deputies voted for the plaintiff, and 7 magistrates and 8 deputies for the defendant. Then arose the question as to whether

³ Based on Commonwealth History of Massachusetts, by A. B. Hart. State's History Co., Inc., Publishers.

a majority vote of the whole body, considered as a unit, or a majority vote of the magistrates and also of the deputies was necessary to any finding in the case. The deputies believed that the general court acted as a unit; the magistrates believed that each group acted separately and each had a negative vote upon the other. As a result of the forceful and logical argument of Winthrop, it was finally voted on March 3, 1636, that "noe law, order, or sentence shall pass as an act of the Court, without the consent of the greater part of the magistrates on the one part and the greater number of the deputies on the other part."

Another question of great importance was settled a little later in determining the distribution of fundamental powers, namely, that the legislative power is given alike to the magistrates and to the deputies; that consultive or directive power is also given to both bodies; that judicial power, in its ordinary administration, is given to the magistrates, but on questions of appeal, to the general court; and that the magistrates alone could fill any vacancy of the general court and had the power to act in all cases subject to government.⁴

The general court was the supreme tribunal to which an appeal in important causes might be carried. The adjudication of causes was left for a long time to the discretion of the magistrates, as there was no recognition of the binding force of the common law in England. In 1641, the general court adopted one hundred fundamental laws, called the "Body of Liberties."

As a very natural outcome of the recognition of two distinct bodies within the general court, it was voted on March 7, 1644, that they should sit as separate bodies, apart. Any laws passed by the one had to have the approval of the other before they became legal.

This condition has remained to the present time. Each house has a negative vote upon the other. There are, however, two exceptions to this generalization: (1) During the interval between the revocation of the charter, and the setting up of the Province charter, both Dudley, as president of the commission, and Andros, as royal governor, had arbitrary powers; (2) during the period from October 7, 1774, and July 19, 1775, the dates of the assembling of the first and the dissolution of the third and last Provincial Congress, the general court, sat as one body.⁴

⁴ Bishop: The Senate of Massachusetts.

The Province charter called for a meeting of the general court annually on the last Wednesday of May, consisting of the governor, the council of assistants, and deputies. The governor, deputy, and secretary were appointed by the King; the council or assistants by the general court; the deputies by the freeholders having a freehold estate in land to the value of forty shillings yearly, or other estate to the value of at least 40 pounds.⁴

The colonists believed that the original charter of the Massachusetts Bay Company gave distinctly the greater degree of freedom. So it did, except in one respect. It did not provide for liberty of conscience in religious matters. This was granted in the Province charter. The colonists chafed until the Revolution against (1) the removal of their rights to elect the governor, and (2) the demand that all laws passed by the general court be sent to England for approval or disallowance. Furthermore, it should be noted that the assistants were, under the second charter, elected by the general court instead of by the freemen, as under the first charter, thus further removing government from the direct vote of the people.

By an act passed by Parliament early in 1774, to take effect August 1 following, the Province charter was set aside, and the King took upon himself the power of appointing the counsellors, "not to exceed thirty-six nor less than twelve." But no general court ever assembled composed of such counsellors, due to the forceful resistance of the colonists. "The country might have indemnified the East India Company for the loss of tea, might have borne the tax, or, by importunity, obtained its repeal; but on the act designed to take away the right to elect the members of the upper branch, arose the conflict of the American Revolution."⁴

As a result, the general court was dissolved by Governor Gage at Salem, January 17, 1774, and it never sat again under royal authority.

⁴ Bishop: *The Senate of Massachusetts*.

SOME CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE PURITANS TO GOVERNMENT

1. Our present State government has been the product of growth rather than the act of any particular inventive genius of the forefathers, and grew out of the "actual experience gained by generation after generation of English colonists in managing their own political affairs." The germ of this democracy may be found in the rights of the freemen in the charter of the Massachusetts Bay Company in New England.

2. The Puritans prepared the way for democracy by local self-government in the towns, by their sense of public duty, and by establishing popular education in the hope that the people would be intelligent when they came to exercise power.

3. The Massachusetts Bay Colony introduced the practice of: (a) Voting by ballot, used throughout the Nation to-day; (b) filling all principal offices by election; and (c) having elections at frequent or stated intervals. The first record of secret voting in the English colonies was at the general court in Boston, in 1634, when Dudley "chosen by papers" defeated Winthrop for governor.

4. The charter of the Massachusetts Bay Company in New England was drawn so skillfully that it became a model for other colonies, and when it came time to draw up a State constitution many of the thirteen Colonies used it as a pattern. This is especially true of the constitution of Massachusetts, drafted by John Adams in 1779.

5. "A great epoch in the history of social progress was reached when our New England ancestors recognized the support of popular education as a proper function of local government."

6. The Puritans left as an imperishable heritage a sense of faith in God, high ethical standards, and an insistent demand that the leaders shall be men of character as well as ability.

THE PURITAN

Within the character of the Puritan himself there lived two quite different personalities. On the one hand, the Puritan was rigidly and narrowly religious; on the other, a fighter, a politician, and a natural tradesman. Lord Macaulay caught the true spirit of

this sort of human phenomenon, and in his essay on "Milton," he wrote this graphic, and understanding description:

We would speak first of the Puritans, the most remarkable body of men, perhaps, which the world has ever produced. The odious and ridiculous parts of their character lie on the surface. He that runs may read them; nor have there been wanting attentive and malicious observers to point them out.

The Puritans were men whose minds had derived a peculiar character from the daily contemplation of superior beings and eternal interests. Not content with acknowledging, in general terms, an overruling Providence, they habitually ascribed every event to the will of the Great Being for whose power nothing was too vast, for whose inspection nothing was too minute. To know Him, to serve Him, to enjoy Him was with them the greatest end of existence.

The Puritan was made up of two different men, the one all self-abasement, penitence, gratitude, passion, the other proud, calm, inflexible, sagacious. He prostrated himself before his Maker; but he set his foot on the neck of his King. In his devotional retirement he prayed with convulsions, and groans, and tears. He was half maddened by glorious or terrible illusions. But when he took his seat in the council, or girt on his sword for war, these tempestuous workings of the soul had left no perceptible trace behind them. People who saw nothing of the godly but their uncouth visages, and heard nothing from them but their groans and their whining hymns, might laugh at them. But those had little reason to laugh who encountered them in the hall of debate or in the field of battle. These fanatics brought to civil and military affairs a coolness of judgment and immutability of purpose which some writers have thought inconsistent with their religious zeal, but which in fact were the necessary effects of it. The intensity of their feelings on one subject made them tranquil on every other.

When all circumstances are taken into consideration, we do not hesitate to pronounce them a brave, a wise, an honest, and a useful body.

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- Mar. 4, 1629: The charter of the governor and company of Massachusetts Bay in New England granted by Charles I, which passed the seals of Great Britain on that day.
- Apr. 30, 1629: John Endicott chosen Governor of London's Plantation in Massachusetts Bay at Salem, at the first General Court under the charter.
- Aug. 26, 1629: Agreement signed at Cambridge, England, by Sir Richard Saltonstall and 11 others including John Winthrop, by which they agreed to come to Massachusetts with their families if the government and charter were transferred to Massachusetts before the last day of the following September.
- Aug. 29, 1629: The General Court of Massachusetts Bay Company voted to transfer the charter and the government of the company to New England.
- June 12, 1630: Governor Winthrop and his associates arrived in Salem Harbor bringing the charter of the company with them.
- Aug. 23, 1630: The first Court of Assistants held at Charlestown.
- Oct. 19, 1630: The first General Court held in Massachusetts, after transfer of the charter.
- June 16, 1780: Adoption of the State constitution.
- Oct. 25, 1780: The date of the establishment of the Massachusetts State Government under the Constitution of 1780 and of the inauguration of John Hancock as the first governor.

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- ## CANTATAS

