

CHAPTER III

HISTORY OF PURITANISM IN AMERICA

3.1 Native American culture

The America that greeted the first Europeans was, thus, far from an empty wilderness. It is now thought that as many people lived in the Western Hemisphere as in Western Europe at that time about 40 million. Estimates of the number of Native Americans living in what is now the United States at the onset of European colonization range from two to 18 million, with most historians tending toward the lower figure. What is certain is the devastating effect that European disease had on the indigenous population practically from the time of initial contact. Smallpox, in particular, ravaged whole communities and is thought to have been a much more direct cause of the precipitous decline in Indian population in the 1600s than the numerous wars and skirmishes with European settlers (an outline of America history us embassy 3).

Indian customs and culture at the time were extraordinarily diverse, as could be expected, given the expanse of the land and the many different environments to which they had adapted. Some generalizations, however, are possible. Most tribes, particularly in the wooded eastern region and the Midwest, combined aspects of hunting, gathering and the cultivation of maize and other products for their food supplies. In many cases, the women were responsible for farming and the

distribution of food, while the men hunted and participated in war (an outline of America history us embassy 3).

By all accounts, Indian society in North America was closely tied to the land. Identification with nature and the elements was integral to religious beliefs. Indian life was essentially clan-oriented and communal, with children allowed more freedom and tolerance than was the European custom of the day. Although some North American tribes developed a type of hieroglyphics to preserve certain texts, Indian culture was primarily oral, with a high value placed on the recounting of tales and dreams. Clearly, there was a good deal of trade among various groups and strong evidence exists that neighboring tribes maintained extensive and formal relations both friendly and hostile (an outline of America history us embassy 3).

3.2 The first Europeans

The first Europeans to arrive in North America at least the first for whom there is solid evidence were Norse, traveling west from Greenland, where Erik the Red had founded a settlement around the year 985. In 1001 his son Leif is thought to have explored the northeast coast of what is now Canada and spent at least one winter there. While Norse sagas suggest that Viking sailors explored the Atlantic coast of North America down as far as the Bahamas, such claims remain unproven. In 1963, however, the ruins of some Norse houses dating from that era were discovered at L'Anse-aux-Meadows in northern Newfoundland, thus

supporting at least some of the claims the Norse sagas make (an outline of America history us embassy 4).

In 1497, just five years after Christopher Columbus landed in the Caribbean looking for a western route to Asia, a Venetian sailor named John Cabot arrived in Newfoundland on a mission for the British king. Although fairly quickly forgotten, Cabot's journey was later to provide the basis for British claims to North America. It also opened the way to the rich fishing grounds off George's Banks, to which European fishermen, particularly the Portuguese, were soon making regular visits. Columbus, of course, never saw the mainland United States, but the first explorations of the continental United States were launched from the Spanish possessions that he helped establish. The first of these took place in 1513 when a group of men under Juan Ponce de Leon landed on the Florida coast near the present city of St. Augustine. With the conquest of Mexico in 1522, the Spanish further solidified their position in the Western Hemisphere. The ensuing discoveries added to Europe's knowledge of what was now named America after the Italian Amerigo Vespucci, who wrote a widely popular account of his voyages to a New World. By 1529 reliable maps of the Atlantic coastline from Labrador to Tierra del Fuego had been drawn up, although it would take more than another century before hope of discovering a Northwest Passage to Asia would be completely abandoned (an outline of America history us embassy 4).

Among the most significant early Spanish explorations was that of Hernando De Soto, a veteran conquistador who had accompanied Francisco

Pizzaro during the conquest of Peru. Leaving Havana in 1539, De Soto's expedition landed in Florida and ranged through the southeastern United States as far as the Mississippi River in search of riches. Another Spaniard, Francisco Coronado, set out from Mexico in 1540 in search of the mythical Seven Cities of Cibola. Coronado's travels took him to the Grand Canyon and Kansas, but failed to reveal the gold or treasure his men sought. However, Coronado's party did leave the peoples of the region a remarkable, if unintended gift: enough horses escaped from his party to transform life on the Great Plains. Within a few generations, the Plains Indians had become masters of horsemanship, greatly expanding the range and scope of their activities (an outline of America history us embassy 4).

While the Spanish were pushing up from the south, the northern portion of the present day United States was slowly being revealed through the journeys of men such as Giovanni da Verrazano. A Florentine who sailed for the French, Verrazano made landfall in North Carolina in 1524, then sailed north along the Atlantic coast past what is now New York harbor. A decade later, the Frenchman Jacques Cartier set sail with the hope like the other Europeans before him of finding a sea passage to Asia. Cartier's expeditions along the St. Lawrence River laid the foundations for the French claims to North America, which were to last until 1763 (an outline of America history us embassy 4).

Following the collapse of their first Quebec colony in the 1540s, French Huguenots attempted to settle the northern coast of Florida two decades later. The

Spanish, viewing the French as a threat to their trade route along the Gulf Stream, destroyed the colony in 1565. Ironically, the leader of the Spanish forces, Pedro Menendez, would soon establish a town not far away St. Augustine. It was the first permanent European settlement in what would become the United States (an outline of America history us embassy 4).

The great wealth which poured into Spain from the colonies in Mexico, the Caribbean and Peru provoked great interest on the part of the other European powers. With time, emerging maritime nations such as England, drawn in part by Francis Drake's successful raids on Spanish treasure ships, began to take interest in the New World. In 1578 Humphrey Gilbert, the author of a treatise on the search for the Northwest Passage, received a patent from Queen Elizabeth to colonize the heathen and barbarous lands in the New World which other European nations had not yet claimed. It would be five years before his efforts could begin. When he was lost at sea, his half-brother, Walter Raleigh, took up the mission (an outline of America history us embassy 4).

In 1585 Raleigh established the first British colony in North America, on Roanoke Island off the coast of North Carolina. It was later abandoned, and a second effort two years later also proved a failure. It would be 20 years before the British would try again. This time at Jamestown in 1607 the colony would succeed, and North America would enter a new era (an outline of America history us embassy 4).

3.3 Puritanism story

Based on Encyclopedia Americana explanation puritanism was entirely English in its origins, yet the movement achieved its greatest influence in America. Here the Puritans were able to carry out their program without interference and with less disagreement among themselves. The 17th century colonies in New England represent the fullest development of the movement.

Since when political crisis led to civil war in the era of Prince Charles I (1625-1649) puritans took control of the English government. Meanwhile, Puritan emigrants had colonized New England (Encyclopedia Americana 28).

Puritanism has belief and practice. A type of person like the Puritan, the purist who rejects the compromises of everyday life, has often appeared within the church. As their belief and practice, they were disrupters, they were constantly criticized in England and America (Encyclopedia Americana 28).

Dealing with Thomas Fuller statement, the odious name of puritan's was first applied in 1564 to those who resisted the attempt of the bishops in that year to enforce uniformity in ritual and in the use of vestments (Hastings 507).

New England got its name from Captain John Smith who explored its coast and published a descriptive account, including a map (Current, et al 16). The voyage that he did was occurred in 1606, a beginning expedition through New Land. Then, on 1602 a few pilgrims did a voyage to Plymouth and settled there,

but as they stayed there, part of them suffered and died because of climate, weather and nature's condition and there were only seven left.

Under Bradford's leadership, the first settlers were trying harder when they faced lots of obstacles from many sides including from the Indians. Early life was hard, and the severe winters brought death to many homes, although there were no such bloody massacres as in Virginia, there was always Indian menace (Barc and Lefler 36).

After getting a peace, the Puritan then built the colony based on their idealistic which had been shaped when they stayed in England. In that colony, the state which they wanted to build is by creating a state in which they could apply their theology and belief as free as possible as its consequence, there were lots of prohibitions during the Puritan lived in there. Obviously, during their existence in that colony, most of them were really conservative, stern and closed to accept everything that because they did not want to make the same fault and deviate Christian norms like what they has experienced in their motherland, motherland means in England. The faith which they assumed had been deviate by other members of England church was style-ritual and liturgy which did not make a sense to be accepted. A religion which was supposed to elevate and hold Bible was as the source of truth of God, but in reality, the Book of Common Prayer was the source of guidance.

Led by John Winthrop, the Puritan assumed they were the chosen whom were more deserved to conduct everything than the Indian. Moreover, when the

Governor of Massachusetts exclaim to all Puritans that the purposes which they brought to the New Land were the good one made the Puritans looked down on Indian people because for them, the Indian people were people who were savage and wild. Winthrop said to them “For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill, the eyes of all people are upon us” (Canby and Gross 87).

In the meantime, the condition of the colonies in America were in development sphere, meanwhile the condition of England was in uncertain situation on which in that condition, there were lots of expedition or voyage through the New Land. So that the total population in every colony increased time after time and enforced the government of Puritan to be aware of the new comers.

As the result of increasing population, the government in Massachusetts behooved a fierce decision for all member that colony. That fierce decision was consisted of warnings dealing with belief or faith. On the other word, that there was no any faith except the Christian that elevated Bible and Calvin ideas as ideology on conducting social life.

From the story above, it can be said that puritan society is continuously dominated by Calvinism and Puritanism in which both of them have shaped the personality of and life of Puritan people including culture for centuries.