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THE EXODUS OF THE JOSEPH HULL COMPANY

A. REFORMATION ENGLAND:

In 1517, Martin Luther began to consolidate the consciousness of a swelling dissatisfaction with the Catholic Church leading to his excommunication in 1520. In 1530, he spelled out his protestant theology in the Augsburg Confession, after already having translated biblical scripture into vernacular german by 1525.

In 1534, Henry VIII, seeking to break from the political harness of the continental Catholic church, reconfirmed himself as the head of the Church of England, the Protector of the Faith, through the Act of Supremacy. In 1539, he took the initiative to eliminate the Catholic church's power base in England and to enrich himself and his allies by seizing church lands.

Earlier in the decade, William Tyndale (1494-1536), an englishman, translated selected scriptures into his native language. Tyndale was a protestant ideologue who preached the belief that England was a 'special nation' bound to God by a covenant (like ancient Israel), the adherence to which would bring prosperity, while its rejection would ultimately bring about ruin. Tyndale, and those like minded, were not simply a challenge to the Church of Rome, but to the intellectual and institutional hierarchy of Tudor England. While Henry VIII embraced the concept of a separate church, he did not abandon many fundamental tenants of its progenitor. Tyndale was forced into exile and later executed in Belgium as a heretic.

Henry VIII died in 1547, a year after Martin Luther. He was succeeded by his sickly son, Edward VI (1547-1553), who was hailed by Archbishop Thomas Crammer as England's Josiah (a 7th Century BC Judean king who cleansed his kingdom by enforcing the Deuteronomic Code). English protestants moved to solidify their separation from Rome. The Book of Common Prayer (1549) became the sole authorized liturgy for the Church of England. But in 1553 the tide turned.

After a brief period of confusion, Mary (Henry VIII's daughter by his first wife Catherine of Aragon) was crowned queen. She was an ardent Catholic, who married King Phillip II of Spain, restored Catholicism and carried out an inquisition with limited success.

In 1558, Mary died without issue and was therefore succeeded by her half-sister Elizabeth I (Henry VIII's daughter through his marriage to Anne Boleyn). Elizabeth I was hailed by radical protestants as God's anointed servant who would redeem England by restoring the true faith through a purge of popish idolatry.

However, they were to be disappointed. Elizabeth avoided establishing a presbyterian style church, such as that ascending in Scotland to the dismay of her cousin Mary, and reaffirmed her authority as "Supreme Governor" of the Church of England through her own Act of Supremacy and Act of Uniformity. The Book of Common Prayer was reaffirmed the supreme liturgy. In 1563, the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England were defined by the Convocations of Canterbury and York. In 1566, Elizabeth, through Matthew Parker, published the

Advertisements, establishing a uniformity of clerical dress thereby curbing any apparent legitimacy of maverick preachers.

Meanwhile, in France, John Calvin (1509-1564) had rapidly ascended to the upper reaches of radical protestant theology, primarily through his publication of Institutes of the Christian Religion (1536) and Instruction in Faith (1537). Calvin eventually settled in Geneva, where he organized a theocratic government. Many English protestants fled to Calvin's church in Geneva during the reign of Mary. English protestants continued to emigrate to Geneva and/or correspond with Calvinist's and other protestant sects on the continent during the reign of Elizabeth.

In 1561, the Church of Geneva adopted the Ecclesiastical Ordinances and established a disciplined hierarchical structure of: 1) Teaching Doctors, who studied the scriptures with an emphasis on early greek and hebrew texts; 2) Preaching Pastors, who proclaimed the studiously revealed "true" interpretation to the laity; 3) Disciplining Elders, who enforced church laws regarding behavior; and 4) Administrative Deacons, who managed social obligations, such as charities.

Back in England, Thomas Cartwright of Cambridge proposed that England adopt a presbyterian form of church government. In 1578, the Second Book of Discipline was published as the *puritan* program to replace the Church of England's episcopal hierarchy with a presbyterian structure.

Puritanism has become a label for a broad spectrum of English protestants during the Elizabethan and Stuart periods. But puritans should be distinguished from separatists and/or non-conformists in that they were fundamentally loyal to the Church of England both as a political institution and ideological fountainhead, but sought to *purify* it from what they understood to be remnants of pagan idolatry inherited from the Roman Catholic Church. Separatists, who disavowed any hierarchical structure between the members of an individual congregation and their vision of the divine, also asserted themselves towards the end of the 16th Century.

In the late 16th Century, the main point of puritan contention with the hierarchical church was the emphasis on preaching over liturgy or sacraments. The puritan/separatist emphasis on personal revelation and studious discussion and interpretation of scripture was an intellectual catalyst, bringing puritans and separatists tremendous influence within the colleges at Oxford and Cambridge.

Tracks were published and sold with increasing resistance on the part of the Church of England and the monarchy. In the 1580's and 1590's separatist track publishers and teachers, such as John Greenwood, Henry Barrow and John Penry were hanged as dissidents.

At the same time, Elizabeth had become a living icon embodying English national identity for both church and state to the growing merchant class. Tyndale's religious concept of a 'special nation' became equally potent as a secular paradigm. Predestination and the concept of a new covenant would eventually evolve into manifest destiny and the white man's burden.

When Elizabeth died in 1603 she left James VI of Scotland as her heir. Puritan and separatists saw an opportunity for reform with his ascendancy. James had signed the Negative Confession in 1581 favoring the puritan position. It was believed he would support the establishment of a presbyterian style church due to his familiarity and support of the same while King of Scotland.

In 1603, the reformers presented newly crowned James I, King of England, with the Millenary Petition which set forth puritan grievances. But at the Hampton Court Conference of 1604, James refused to reorganize the Church of England along puritan lines and dismissed the idea with the famous phrase, "No Bishop, No King".

In that same year, 1604, James enacted the Constitution and Cannons against non-conformist practices. Repression continued. Some separatists fled England. The most famous example of these religious refugees were the separatists from Scrooby, near Doncaster, Nottinghamshire who fled in 1607 to Holland and later became the pilgrims of the Mayflower. Some puritans reduced their exposure and minimally conformed. Some were deprived of civil and academic positions. Some went into hiding within England.

Puritan efforts to satisfy their spiritual needs (and extend their influence) through sermons within the services of the Church of England and enforcement of the sabbath restrictions on work and revelry, became a point of contention with the crown. In 1618, James I published the Book of Sports which specifically stated what activities were permitted by the Church of England on Sundays. The traditional Sunday afternoon revelry of dance, music, sports and drinking had been under increasing attack by puritan ministers, zealots, and the growing agricultural and urban middle class since at least the late 16th Century. Local secular blue laws were introduced to effect community religious policy not supported by the Church which had a vested interest in supporting the revelry and church ales as both a means of cultivating people within church activities and as a source of income for funding parish projects.

Another area of contention was the communion ritual. Since the reformation, many parish congregations in England considered communion to be the Lord's Supper, a meal for the congregation, not requiring a sacrifice before an altar (i.e. consecration of the host) with its resonance of pagan idolatry. Therefore, many congregations removed the catholic altar from their churches and replaced it with a bare portable table in the center of the nave or lengthwise in the chancel. The communion rail was also removed and the congregation partook at the table.

During the reign of Charles I (1624-1648) repression was increased, particularly during the 'personal reign' of the 1630's, and it was ordered that the Book of Sports be read in every English church on Sunday. Communion tables were returned to the east wall at the back of the chancel, thereby simultaneously replacing and reconfirming the attitude towards communion as well as the altar. Preaching was heavily regulated and the Book of Common Prayer was officially reemphasized throughout the early reign of Charles I (1624-1641) after which parliament asserted its authority under a swelling puritan movement.

B. REFORMATION IN SOMERSET:

In 1566, Scottish workmen building Longleat House for Sir John Thynne were permitted to build a small meeting house for their worship at Horningsham which still stands as the oldest non-conformist church in England. This small beginning was, supposedly, the source of direct presbyterian influence that inspired the formation of congregationalist or separatist churches in West Wiltshire, East Somerset and Dorset.⁽⁴⁹⁾

Francis Johnson, pastor of an exiled separatist church in Amsterdam (1593-1608) referred in his writings to "a church professing the same faith with us" in the west of England. Records of marriages in Amsterdam of English couples (a large number of them being members of exiled separatist congregations) show seventeen names of which are associated with places in Somerset, including an Edward Williams of Barrington.⁽⁵⁰⁾

The puritan and separatist tendency in the southwest of England may be an aspect of the distinct ethnic and historical character of the region. From dialect to the celtic and arthurian legends, the ancient cultural zone of the Salisbury Plain, and the relatively stable transition during the period of enclosure due to a long established and entrenched distribution of land, the southwest had an independent tendency which provided the stage for religious confrontation in the early 17th Century.

The following are the bishops for Barrington (i.e., Somerset's diocese of Bath & Wells during the early 17th Century):⁽⁵¹⁾

John Still 1593-1607
???????????? 1608-1615
Arthur Lake 1616-1625
William Laud 1626-1628
Leonard Mawe 1628-1629
Walter Curill 1629-1632
William Pierce 1632-1642

In the 1620's Bishop Lake preached a sermon at St. Cuthbert's, Wells when certain persons were put to penance for attending conventicles at which a woman preached. Usually penance was performed in one's own parish or in the parish where the offense occurred. The woman preacher was possibly Dorothea Hazard (1595?-1675) who was a separatist living in Bristol (approximately twenty miles from Wells, forty miles from Barrington). She later became a baptist with the Broadmead Baptist Church. Whoever the woman preacher was she predated Anne Hutchinson's (1591-1643) preaching in the Massachusetts Bay Colony by ten to fifteen years.⁽⁵²⁾

In August 1626 William Laud became the Bishop of Bath & Wells. He was an ardent anti-separatist, who later became Charles I's equally zealous Archbishop of Canterbury. He was a mentor of the Diocese's subsequent Bishop, William Pierce (also spelled Piers).

Immediately upon taking office in November 1632, Pierce made a survey of the separatist/non-conformist threat in the Southwest and Somerset. His focus was upon conflict with the puritans concerning sunday revels. Seventy-two parish clergymen testified to him in favor of the revels for the "civilizing and harmonizing" of the public. He stated that the "preciser" sort do not like the revels because they occur on the sabbath. Pierce wrote that if the customary games were discontinued, the people would sit around on Sunday afternoons and simply drink, talk of matters of church or state, or else go to the conventicles. Local magistrates protested against renewed debauchery, but Charles I would not relent and ordered that all ministers read from the previously mentioned Book of Sports under the pain of suspension.⁽⁵³⁾

The second point of conflict was in respect to preaching, which naturally undermined the Church hierarchy and the authority vested in the established liturgy.

Since the beginning of the English reformation many clergymen had simply read from the Book of Common Prayer without venturing to expound upon its meaning. This rote reading of a stately official text, particularly against the backdrop of repressed religious undercurrents, was further alienating to parishioners with a distinct local culture and dialect. For religious instruction people turned to lectures given by traveling preachers. Capable ministers organized programs where they would speak in turn at a town market on market day. Sometimes, a venue would be established for several ministers to meet before a gathering of people. One would then preach and afterwards the sermon would be opened to criticism. After evening meal discussions, between family members and friends, regarding some point of divinity were also common.⁽⁵⁴⁾

Pierce sought to suppress such activity. He forbade preaching on Sunday afternoons and suspended a minister by the name of Cornish for preaching on a Sunday evening. He suspended and dismissed ministers for preaching in their own parishes and/or town markets such as the Reverend Devenish of Bridgwater (about twelve miles northwest of Barrington). It was also forbidden to attend such sermons or to talk about them afterwards.⁽⁵⁵⁾

The unauthorized preaching was in direct conflict with the church ales and revels. As part of his campaign to resuscitate the revels, Pierce condemned the minister of Beer-Crocombe (four miles west of Barrington) for having two sermons on the day of a parish revel in that such activity was a hindrance to the revel.⁽⁵⁶⁾ A Thomas Erford was questioned as a delinquent for preaching at Montacute (three miles east of Barrington) on the day of the revel from Joel 2:12:

"Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning."

in that the sermon and the text were said to be "scandalous" to the revel.⁽⁵⁷⁾ Erford was speaking to 17th Century Englishmen as if they were 6th Century B.C. Judeans, applying the covenant of the ancient Israelites to the people of Britain.

Pierce's actions were in immediate conflict with the Lord Chief Justice of Somerset, Sir Thomas Richardson who on March 19, 1633 issued one of a series of orders to eliminate wakes and revels in his county. Richardson's order suspended all revels, as well as church and other public ales. He had issued such orders previously in 1594 and 1596.⁽⁵⁸⁾

In October 1633 Charles I published his own version of the Book of Sports.⁽⁵⁹⁾ In November or December, Richardson submitted a petition to the King urging a suspension of the church ales. Sir George Speke, Justice for South Petherton Hundred, and head of the family who leased land in Barrington to the Bicknells, signed the petition along with twenty-four other Somerset notables.⁽⁶⁰⁾

To circumvent Pierce's injunctions, some ministers began to catechize on the established liturgy as part of Sunday services, wherein they expounded upon the question and answer section of the Prayer Book Catechism between two brief 'spontaneous' prayers. This practice was fervently condemned by Pierce as

catechizing sermonwise, and he forbid any expounding on religious concepts beyond the wording provided in the Book of Common Prayer.⁽⁶¹⁾

For disobeying the will of Bishop Pierce, a Mr. Barret of Barwick (near Yeovil, eight miles east of Barrington) was compelled to do penance. A church warden at Bridgwater, Mr. Humphrey Blake, was also compelled to do penance for failing to expose the activities of the previously mentioned Reverend Devenish.⁽⁶²⁾

A third area of controversy was with respect to communion. As previously mentioned, the form of communion offered by the Catholic Church was seen as a sacrament tainted by pagan ritual in that the eucharist was presented before an icon bedecked altar in a manner reminiscent of a sacrificial offering. But the iconoclastic protestants of the english reformation considered it to be the Lord's Supper, a communal meal for the congregation. Throughout England, altars were removed from the churches and destroyed. A plain portable table was set up in a convenient position, often within the nave, lengthwise in the chancel, or created out of planks across pews, which in no way resembled the removed altar.⁽⁶³⁾

As early as 1634, Pierce sought to restore uniformity to the churches on this issue. He felt that the tables were often subjected to irreverent acts, such as being leaned on by members of the parish during conversation, or used to hold cloaks and hats during services. That year, he ordered James Wheeler and John Frye, church wardens of Beckington (thirty-five miles north-east of Barrington) to remove the communion table from its current position, place it against the east wall at the head of the chancel (i.e., the place in the sanctuary previously occupied by the altar) and to erect a rail around it. They refused citing the Rubric of the 82nd Canon and Elizabeth's injunctions. They were excommunicated on October 6, 1634. Appeals were made immediately.⁽⁶⁴⁾

Pierce noted in a letter to the Dean of Arches on January 28, 1635/36 that of the 469 churches and chapels in Bath & Wells Diocese, 140 had complied with his order concerning the communion table issue. However, he feared that if the disobedience of Wheeler and Fry went unpunished, those who had complied would return to their prior practices, while others would refuse to submit to his authority on the matter.⁽⁶⁵⁾

The two men were excommunicated for a year, then jailed for several months. They were released only after making humiliating submissions and undergoing forced penance at Beckington (on June 25th), Frome (on July 2nd) and Bath Abbey (on July 9th) in 1637.⁽⁶⁶⁾

It was during this tumultuous period economic upheaval and religious strife that Zachary Bicknell and his family joined the Reverend Joseph Hull's Company and emigrated to the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

C. THE REVEREND JOSEPH HULL:

The Reverend Joseph Hull was born at Crewkerne, Somerset (six miles southeast of Barrington) in 1594 to Thomas Hull and Joanna Peson Hull.⁽⁶⁷⁾ In 1614 he graduated from St. Mary Hall, Oxford.⁽⁶⁸⁾ In 1619 he was ordained by the Bishop of Exeter, serving during the next three years as the teacher, curate and minister of

Colyton, Devonshire.⁽⁶⁹⁾ In 1621 he was appointed Rector for North Leigh, Devonshire (eighteen miles southwest of Barrington) where he served until 1632.⁽⁷⁰⁾ His sermons were popular and he appears to have been associated with several other popular preachers of the region.

In the 1620's and 1630's there were a number of non-conformist curates who offered a "cure of the soul" under license, but whom later resorted to itinerant preaching due to conflict with the official church. These gadding ministers or preachers did not receive set payment for their independent services and with the pressure mounting from the Church of England chose to leave the country rather than continue such a precarious and combative lifestyle.⁽⁷¹⁾ Hull seems to have somewhat straddled this roll.

The first record of Hull's conflict with the Church of England is with respect to his association with the Reverend John Wareham. Hull had graduated from St. Mary Hall, Oxford in 1614, the same year as Wareham. Wareham (and perhaps Hull as well) received his Master of Divinity in 1618.⁽⁷²⁾

In 1626, Wareham was offered the ministry at Sandford, Dorset, but declined, stating that he preferred to remain as the lecturer at Crewkerne, Somerset. Such a refusal to serve was exceptional.⁽⁷³⁾

On November 13, 1627 Wareham was accused of stating that certain church practices were undesirable. He was also charged with failure to read authorized prayers before his congregation.⁽⁷⁴⁾ That same year, he admitted repeating sermons in his home on Sunday evenings to members of his immediate family and other parishioners. Although he was ordered to cease such activity by Dr. Duck, Chancellor to William Laud the Bishop of Bath & Wells, he claimed the sermons were only for family devotion and perhaps the few persons who dropped by on occasion. He was suspended from his parish and left the diocese to settle at St. Sidwell's in Exeter.⁽⁷⁵⁾

In September 1629, Wareham accompanied by Hull and another cleric, John Cox, returned to Crewkerne. Apparently, Wareham sought to make a farewell sermon before leaving for New England. As a result, the wardens of Crewkerne parish were cited for allowing all three to preach without a license and failing to register Wareham, Hull and Cox in the parish's Book of Strange Preachers. Wareham was again expelled from the diocese on November 28, 1629.⁽⁷⁶⁾ In March 1630, he was reordained at Plymouth prior to emigrating with his congregation to the settlement at Hull, Massachusetts.⁽⁷⁷⁾

I found no record of what action, if any, was taken against Joseph Hull for the Crewkerne affair. However, he resigned his rectorship at North Leigh in 1632. The next year, he became the officiating curate (assistant to the parish priest or temporary replacement due to suspension or incapacity) at Broadway, Somerset.⁽⁷⁸⁾ Broadway is located approximately half way between Bickenhall and Barrington (three miles from each) and was part of Pierce's diocese. The Bicknell's undoubtedly became familiar with Hull, and had probably heard him preach, at least by this time.

In 1634, during his tenure as Broadway's curate, Hull attended a visitation at Chard (four miles south of Broadway). In January 1635, he was prosecuted for preaching at Broadway without a license. That same month he also allegedly preached at the

ancient town of Glastonbury (approximately twenty miles north of Broadway), where he allegedly is quoted as saying that judgment hung over the land and that first it would fall on the clergy and then the laity.⁽⁷⁹⁾ He failed to respond to the court's citation and on February 17, 1635 was expelled from the Church of England.⁽⁸⁰⁾

Hull had probably already gathered at least part of his company of emigrants, which included the Bicknells, the Lovells (probably related to Zachary's wife, Agnis Lovell), and Richard Porter (whose yet to be born daughter, Mary, would wed Zachary's son John) and was preparing, or prepared, to leave for New England when he was cited for illegal preaching in January 1635.

The Hull Company's ship left Weymouth about March 20, 1635. A list of passengers, entitled "Bound for New England", was compiled by John Porter, a Deputy Clerk to Edward Thoroughgood.⁽⁸¹⁾ The voyage took forty-six days. The ship landed at Boston on May 6, 1635.⁽⁸²⁾ On July 8, 1635, Hull's congregation was granted the right to settle at Wessagusset, south east of Boston. A short while later, the settlement's name was changed to Weymouth by Hull's congregation after their port of departure in England.⁽⁸³⁾

Although Hull was a man of "exceptional ability", he was apparently dismissed from his parish once his "liberal views were known".⁽⁸⁴⁾ He then moved successively to Hingham (a few miles east of Weymouth) where he served as commissioner and deputy in 1638, then Barnstable and Yarmouth (on the Cape Cod Peninsula).⁽⁸⁵⁾ He apparently desired to bridge the gap between Anglicans, Puritans and Separatists.⁽⁸⁶⁾ His views lead to conflict with Governor John Winthrop, and eventually resulted in his expulsion from the colony.⁽⁸⁷⁾

The fact that Hull, an "excommunicated" and "very contentious" person, was "entertained" as minister of Accominticus (later known as York), Maine was one of the reasons Winthrop gave for denying admission of several northern settlements into the confederation of the four New England colonies in 1643. The people of these settlements around the Gulf of Maine were generally conformists to the Church of England. In contrast to their dour cousins of Massachusetts, they encouraged public merriment, maypoles, morris dances, wassails, drinking in general, and unaustere dress.⁽⁸⁸⁾

Hull was said by one account to have settled in Accominticus prior to 1640, and to have made occasional visits to the Isles of Shoals (off the New Hampshire coast)⁽⁸⁹⁾ to administer sacraments at Smuttynose Island.⁽⁹⁰⁾ Another account states that he actually served on the islands first, then accepted the ministry of Accominticus later, on October 16, 1643, thereafter occasionally returning to the islands.⁽⁹¹⁾ Regardless of the chronology of his service, he apparently cultivated a number of devotees both on the Isle of Shoals and the Maine-New Hampshire mainland between 1640 and 1645.

Hull left his ministry at Accominticus and returned to England in 1645. In 1648 he became vicar of Launceston, Cornwall.⁽⁹²⁾ In April 1656 he became the rector of St. Buryan in Cornwall.⁽⁹³⁾ With the Restoration of 1660, and the New Act of Conformity passed in May 1662, he was ejected from his parish and returned to New England.⁽⁹⁴⁾ In 1662, he became minister at Oyster River (now Durham), New

Hampshire. He died on November 18, 1665 at the age of seventy on the Isles of Shoals,⁽⁹⁵⁾ apparently having returned to serve his final days as the local minister.

D. THE MASSACHUSETTS BAY COLONY:

On August 26, 1629, the Cambridge Agreement was signed by a number of England's puritan stockholders in the Massachusetts Bay Company, who pledged to emigrate to New England, if government of the colony were permitted to be transferred to and based there. With the approval of Charles I, the Company agreed to a transfer of the charter, shifting control of the company to the signers of the agreement. The charter permitted the Company to settle between the Charles and Merrimack Rivers. As requested, the normal requirement to hold business meetings in England was omitted from the charter.

John Winthrop was appointed governor. In 1630, a small flotilla of ships and approximately one thousand settlers arrived in Boston. The "great migration" of puritans to North America began, and would continue for the rest of the decade.

In 1640, the puritan revolution in England began in earnest. In 1649, Charles I was beheaded at Whitehall, Westminster.

The Massachusetts Bay Colony was originally organized as a compromise between presbyterianism and separatism. With the ascendancy of the Long Parliament in England, a new working relationship was established between the church and state through the Cambridge Platform. Fearing potential interference from Parliament, if they did not align themselves more closely with changes occurring in England, the four colonies jointly adopted the Cambridge Platform in 1648. Through the Platform the colonies adopted a congregational form of church government and mirrored this structure in the civil government. However, the right to vote remained the sole privilege of the 'elect of God'.

The Protectorship of Oliver Cromwell came to England along with the execution of Charles I in 1649. But in 1658, Cromwell died and by 1660 the Stuarts were restored to the English throne in the person of Charles II. Over the next five years a watershed was achieved against puritanism.

On May 19, 1662, the New Act of Conformity was passed by a Cavalier parliament. It required that many clergymen be screened and reordained, that they unconditionally consent to the Book of Common Prayer, take an oath of canonical obedience, and renounce the Solemn League and Covenant. In the subsequent purge about two thousand clergymen, including the Reverend Joseph Hull, were dismissed from their parishes.

That same year the Corporation Act eliminated puritan magistrates. In 1664, the Conventicle Act set forth that any person, over the age of sixteen years, who attended any religious meeting not conducted according to the Book of Common Prayer, would be punished. And in 1665, the Five Mile Act prohibited any ejected minister from living within five miles of any town or place where he had served.

In Massachusetts, the Half Way Covenant opened colonial government to the non-elect. It permitted second generation colonists and immigrants to participate in government provided that they were moral, baptized, and orthodox persons.

In 1684, Charles II annulled the Massachusetts Bay Colony's charter. He died shortly thereafter and was succeeded by his son James II who, as a catholic, revitalized the alliance between the episcopal and non-conformist factions in England. James II was deposed in the Glorious Revolution of 1688. He was replaced by the protestant William (son of William, Prince of Orange) and Mary, the daughter of James II.

In 1689, parliament passed the Act of Toleration which opened England to religious diversity while retaining the Established Church of England.

In 1691, William and Mary imposed royal governorship upon the New England colonies. In the following year, 1692, the Salem Witch Trials and the ongoing King William's War marked a secular crisis and social realignment in colonial Massachusetts, thereby closing a major chapter in colonial and protestant history.

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