

0. LIFE IN PURITAN MASSACHUSETTS - Story Preface

1. LIFE IN PURITAN MASSACHUSETTS

- 2. ROGER WILLIAMS IS BANISHED
- 3. THE TRIAL OF ANNE HUTCHINSON
- 4. ANNE'S FRIEND STANDS BY HER
- 5. WHO ARE THE QUAKERS?
- 6. MARY DYER BECOMES A QUAKER
- 7. HARSH LAWS TARGET QUAKERS
- 8. MARY'S PROTESTS GET HER KILLED
- 9. RELATED LINKS ABOUT MARY DYER

Choices were few in the Puritans' world. Massachusetts Bay Colony, in the 17th century, was not a bastion of freedom and equality. Women were barely second-class citizens. As this picture shows, even their dress was proscribed.

Although the Puritans had fled England in search of religious freedom, conformity was the only accepted way of life in Boston on the day Mary Dyer died. Tolerance of other religious view points was non-existent. Puritan leaders were unwilling to grant others what they had achieved for themselves.

To understand why Mary Dyer was the first woman executed in America (for practicing her personal religious beliefs), we need to look closer at Puritan society. On what authority did the leaders hang this woman? Didn't the law protect rights of people in the Colony?

The General Laws and Liberties of the Massachusetts Colony were extremely restrictive. The long list of "crimes" for which citizens could be put to death is stunning, even for the 17th century.

Puritan leaders who did not conform were also subject to banishment from the Colony. Roger Williams, a Puritan leader from Salem, did not approve of the way the early Americans took land from the Indians. He most especially disagreed with the rampant religious intolerance.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/LIFE-IN-PURITAN-MASSACHUSETTS-Execution-at-Boston-Common>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/LIFE-IN-PURITAN-MASSACHUSETTS-Execution-at-Boston-Common>

Media Stream



Massachusetts Bay Colony

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Dress in the Massachusetts Bay Colony

Image online, courtesy U.S. National Archives.

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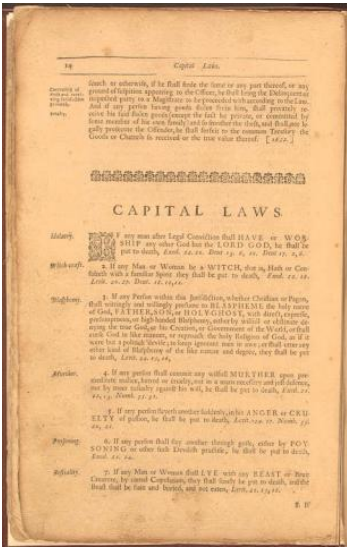
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Mary Dyer

Image online, courtesy Library of Congress.

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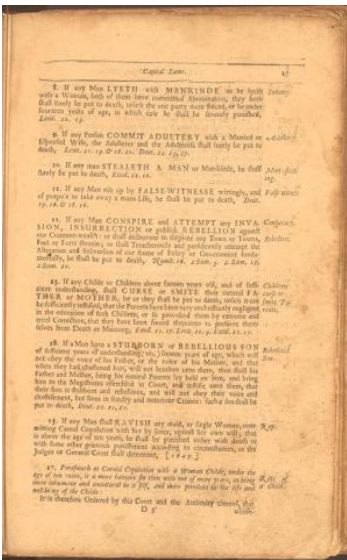


Laws and Liberties of the Massachusetts Bay Colony

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Crimes of the Massachusetts Bay Colony

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Roger Williams

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Map Depicting Salem

Image online, courtesy the salemsound.org website.

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