

0. HARSH LAWS TARGET QUAKERS - Story Preface

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But these laws weren't strict enough for John Endicott, who had become governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. He wanted a stiff penalty (death) for Quakers who kept returning to the colony after they had been banished. When the laws were passed, they were progressively harsh.

The first offense for a Quaker was relatively mild: He (or she) would be whipped, jailed and banished. If caught again, the Quaker's head would be put in a stock where an ear, nailed to a board, would be cut off. A third offense required the other ear to be loped off. The punishment for a fourth offense was immediate death.

The stage was now set for a serious confrontation with Anne Hutchinson's friend, Mary Dyer. This outspoken woman disapproved of these "wicked laws." She wanted the Puritan leaders to abandon them.

Soon after her return from England, and her banishment from Massachusetts, Dyer returned to Boston with two Friends, William Robinson and Marmaduke Stevenson. Their purpose was to protest the harsh, anti-Quaker laws. They were caught, and tried, but nothing except banishment came of it.

One month later, the three banished Friends returned to Boston and were tried again. This time they were sentenced to death.

Before they were brought to the Boston Common, where the noose was placed around their necks, Mary Dyer wrote a remonstrance from her jail cell:

Was ever the like laws heard of among a people that profess Christ come in the flesh? And have you no other weapons but such laws to fight against spiritual wickedness withal, as you call it? Woe is me for you! Of whom take ye counsel? Search with the light of Christ in you, and it will show you of whom, as it had done with me and many more...

Before the rope was tight around his neck on the 27th of October, 1659, Marmaduke Stevenson said:

We suffer not as evil-doers but for conscience' sake.

Robinson said,

I die for Christ

just before he took his last breath on the same day.

While the rope was tightly fastened around her neck, Mary's husband begged for her life, and she was freed. It didn't take her long to return to Boston, however, as she continued to oppose the harsh laws.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/HARSH-LAWS-TARGET-QUAKERS-Execution-at-Boston-Common)

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Governor John Endicott

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Execution at Boston Commons

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Hangman's Rope

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