

**Many of the British North American colonies that eventually formed the United States of America were settled in the seventeenth century by men and women, who, in the face of European persecution, refused to compromise passionately held religious convictions and fled Europe. The New England colonies, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Maryland were conceived and established "as plantations of religion." Some settlers who arrived in these areas came for secular motives--"to catch fish" as one New Englander put it--but the great majority left Europe to worship God in the way they believed to be correct. They enthusiastically supported the efforts of their leaders to create "a city on a hill" or a "holy experiment," whose success would prove that God's plan for his churches could be successfully realized in the American wilderness. Even colonies like Virginia, which were planned as commercial ventures, were led by entrepreneurs who considered themselves "militant Protestants" and who worked diligently to promote the prosperity of the church.**

### **European Persecution**

**The religious persecution that drove settlers from Europe to the British North American colonies sprang from the conviction, held by Protestants and Catholics alike, that uniformity of religion must exist in any given society. This conviction rested on the belief that there was one true religion and that it was the duty of the civil authorities to impose it, forcibly if necessary, in the interest of saving the souls of all citizens. Nonconformists could expect no mercy and might be executed as heretics. The dominance of the concept, denounced by Roger Williams as "inforced uniformity of religion," meant majority religious groups who controlled political power punished dissenters in their midst. In some areas, Catholics persecuted Protestants, in others Protestants persecuted Catholics, and in still others, Catholics and Protestants persecuted wayward coreligionists. Although England renounced religious persecution in 1689, it persisted on the European continent. Religious persecution, as observers in every century have commented, is often bloody and implacable and is remembered and resented for generations.**

### **Execution of Mennonites**

**This engraving depicts the execution of David van der Leyen and Levina Ghyselins, described variously as Dutch Anabaptists or Mennonites, by Catholic authorities in Ghent in 1554. Strangled and burned, van der Leyen was finally dispatched with an iron fork. Bracht's Martyr's Mirror is considered by modern Mennonites as second only in importance to the Bible in**

**perpetuating their faith.**

### **A Jesuit Disemboweled**

**Jesuits like John Ogilvie (Ogilby) (1580-1615) were under constant surveillance and threat from the Protestant governments of England and Scotland. Ogilvie was sentenced to death by a Glasgow court and hanged and mutilated on March 10, 1615**

### **The Expulsion of the Salzbergers**

**On October 31, 1731, the Catholic ruler of Salzburg, Austria, Archbishop Leopold von Firmian, issued an edict expelling as many as 20,000 Lutherans from his principality. Many propertyless Lutherans, given only eight days to leave their homes, froze to death as they drifted through the winter seeking sanctuary. The wealthier ones who were allowed three months to dispose of their property fared better. Some of these Salzbergers reached London, from whence they sailed to Georgia. Others found new homes in the Netherlands and East Prussia.**

### **A Pair of Salzbergers, Fleeing Their Homes**

**These religious refugees flee Salzburg carrying with them religious volumes. The man has under one arm a copy of the Augsburg Confession; under the other is a theological work by Johann Arndt (1555-1621). The woman is carrying the Bible. The legend between them says: "We are driven into exile for the Gospel's sake; we leave our homeland and are now in God's hands." At the top is a scriptural verse, Matthew 24:20. "but pray that your flight does not occur in the winter or on the Sabbath."**

### **Persecution of Huguenots by Catholics**

**The slaughter of Huguenots (French Protestants) by Catholics at Sens, Burgundy in 1562 occurred at the beginning of more than thirty years of religious strife between French Protestants and Catholics. These wars produced numerous atrocities. The worst was the notorious St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre in Paris, August 24, 1572. Thousands of Huguenots were butchered by Roman Catholic mobs. Although an accommodation between the two sides was sealed in 1598 by the Edict of Nantes, religious privileges of Huguenots eroded during the seventeenth century and were extinguished in 1685 by the revocation of the Edict. Perhaps as many as 400,000 French Protestants emigrated to various parts of the world, including the British North American colonies.**

### **Persecution of Catholics by Huguenots**

***In the areas of France they controlled, Huguenots at least matched the harshness of the persecutions of their Catholic opponents. Atrocities A, B, and C, depictions that are possibly exaggerated for use as propaganda, are located by the author in St. Macaire, Gascony. In scene A, a priest is disemboweled, his entrails wound up on a stick until they are torn out. In illustration B a priest is buried alive, and in C Catholic children are hacked to pieces. Scene D, alleged to have occurred in the village of Mans, was "too loathsome" for one nineteenth-century commentator to translate from the French. It shows a priest whose genitalia were cut off and grilled. Forced to eat his roasted private parts, the priest was then dissected by his torturers so they can observe him digesting his meal.***

### **Drowning of Protestants**

***Shown here is a depiction of the murder by Irish Catholics of approximately one hundred Protestants from Loughgall Parish, County Armagh, at the bridge over the River Bann near Portadown, Ulster. This atrocity occurred at the beginning of the Irish Rebellion of 1641. Having held the Protestants as prisoners and tortured them, the Catholics drove them "like hogs" to the bridge, where they were stripped naked and forced into the water below at swords point. Survivors of the plunge were shot.***

### **Persecution of Jesuits in England**

***In the image on the left is Brian Cansfield (1581-1643), a Jesuit priest seized while at prayer by English Protestant authorities in Yorkshire. Cansfield was beaten and imprisoned under harsh conditions. He died on August 3, 1643, from the effects of his ordeal. At the right is another Jesuit priest, Ralph Corbington (Corby) (ca. 1599-1644), who was hanged by the English government in London, September 17, 1644, for professing his faith.***

### **Martyrdom of John Rogers**

***The execution in 1555 of John Rogers (1500-1555) is portrayed here in the 9th edition of the famous Protestant martyrology, Fox's Book of Martyrs. Rogers was a Catholic priest who converted to Protestantism in the 1530s under the influence of William Tyndale and assisted in the publication of Tyndale's English translations of the Bible. Burned alive at Smithfield on February 4, 1555, Rogers became the "first Protestant martyr" executed by England's Catholic Queen Mary. He was charged***

**with heresy, including denial of the real presence of Christ in the sacrament of communion.**

### **John Rogers Portrayed in New England**

**Two centuries after John Rogers's execution, his ordeal, with depictions of his wife and ten children added to increase the pathos, became a staple of The New England Primer. The Primer supplemented the picture of Rogers' immolation with a long, versified speech, said to be the dying martyr's advice to his children, which urged them to "Keep always God before your Eyes" and to "Abhor the arrant Whore of Rome, and all her Blasphemies." This recommendation, read by generations of young New Englanders, doubtless helped to fuel the anti-Catholic prejudice that flourished in that region well into the nineteenth century.**

### **Crossing the Ocean to Keep the Faith: The Puritans**

**Puritans were English Protestants who wished to reform and purify the Church of England of what they considered to be unacceptable residues of Roman Catholicism. In the 1620s leaders of the English state and church grew increasingly unsympathetic to Puritan demands. They insisted that the Puritans conform to religious practices that they abhorred, removing their ministers from office and threatening them with "extirpation from the earth" if they did not fall in line. Zealous Puritan laymen received savage punishments. For example, in 1630 a man was sentenced to life imprisonment, had his property confiscated, his nose slit, an ear cut off, and his forehead branded "S.S." (sower of sedition).**

**Beginning in 1630 as many as 20,000 Puritans emigrated to America from England to gain the liberty to worship God as they chose. Most settled in New England, but some went as far as the West Indies. Theologically, the Puritans were "non-separating Congregationalists." Unlike the Pilgrims, who came to Massachusetts in 1620, the Puritans believed that the Church of England was a true church, though in need of major reforms. Every New England Congregational church was considered an independent entity, beholden to no hierarchy. The membership was composed, at least initially, of men and women who had undergone a conversion experience and could prove it to other members. Puritan leaders hoped (futilely, as it turned out) that, once their experiment was successful, England would imitate it by instituting a church order modeled after the New England**

**Way.**

### **Richard Mather**

**Richard Mather (1596-1669), minister at Dorchester, Massachusetts, 1636-1669, was a principal spokesman for and defender of the Congregational form of church government in New England. In 1648, he drafted the Cambridge Platform, the definitive description of the Congregational system. Mather's son, Increase (1639-1723), and grandson, Cotton (1663-1728), were leaders of New England Congregationalism in their generations.**

### **Cotton Mather**

**Cotton Mather (1663-1728), the best-known New England Puritan divine of his generation, was a controversial figure in his own time and remains so among scholars today. A formidable intellect and a prodigious writer, Mather published some 450 books and pamphlets. He was at the center of all of the major political, theological, and scientific controversies of his era. Mather has been accused, unfairly, of instigating the Salem witchcraft trials.**

### **The Bible Commonwealths**

**The New England colonies have often been called "Bible Commonwealths" because they sought the guidance of the scriptures in regulating all aspects of the lives of their citizens. Scripture was cited as authority for many criminal statutes. Shown here are the two Bibles used in seventeenth-century New England and a seventeenth-century law code from Massachusetts that cites scripture.**

### **The Geneva Bible**

**The Geneva Bible was published in English in Geneva in 1560 by English reformers who fled to the continent to escape persecutions by Queen Mary. Their leader was William Whittingham, who married a sister of John Calvin. The Geneva Bible was used by the Pilgrims and Puritans in New England until it was gradually replaced by the King James Bible. According to one twentieth-century scholar, "between 1560 . . . and 1630 no fewer than about two hundred editions of the Geneva Bible, either as a whole or of the New Testament separately, appeared. It was the Bible of Shakespeare and John Bunyan and Cromwell's Army and the Pilgrim Fathers."**

### **The King James Bible**

***The first edition of the King James Bible, also called the "Authorized Version," was composed by a committee of English scholars between 1607 and 1611. The first copy of the King James Bible known to have been brought into the colonies was carried by John Winthrop to Massachusetts in 1630. Gradually the King James Bible supplanted the Geneva Bible and achieved such a monopoly of the affections of the English-speaking peoples that a scholar in 1936 complained that many "seemed to think that the King James Version is the original Bible which God handed down out of heaven, all done up in English by the Lord himself."***

### ***Seventeenth-Century Laws of Massachusetts***

***Criminal laws in the early New England colonies were based on the scriptures, especially the Old Testament. Many civil laws and procedures were modeled after the English common law.***

### ***The Bay Psalm Book***

***The first book published in British North America, what has become known as the Bay Psalm Book, was the work of Richard Mather and two other ministers who transformed the Psalms into verse so they could be sung in the Massachusetts churches. Shown here is one of the eleven surviving copies.***

### ***Eliot's Algonquin Language Bible***

***Obedient to the New Testament command to preach the Gospel to all nations, ministers in all of the first British North American colonies strove to convert the local native populations to Christianity, often with only modest results. One of the most successful proselytizers was John Eliot (1604-1690), Congregational minister at Roxbury, Massachusetts. His translation of the Bible into the Algonquin Indian language is seen here. At one time Eliot ministered to eleven hundred "Praying Indians," organized into fourteen New England-style towns.***

### ***Persecution in America***

***Although they were victims of religious persecution in Europe, the Puritans supported the Old World theory that sanctioned, the need for uniformity of religion in the state. Once in control in New England, they sought to break "the very neck of Schism and vile opinions." The "business" of the first settlers, a Puritan minister recalled in 1681, "was not Toleration, but [they] were professed enemies of it." Puritans expelled dissenters from their colonies, a fate that in 1636 befell Roger Williams and in 1638***



***Anne Hutchinson, America's first major female religious leader. Those who defied the Puritans by persistently returning to their jurisdictions risked capital punishment, a penalty imposed on four Quakers between 1659 and 1661. Reflecting on the seventeenth century's intolerance, Thomas Jefferson was unwilling to concede to Virginians any moral superiority to the Puritans. Beginning in 1659 Virginia enacted anti-Quaker laws, including the death penalty for refractory Quakers. Jefferson surmised that "if no capital execution took place here, as did in New England, it was not owing to the moderation of the church or the spirit of the legislature."***

### ***The Bloody Tenent of Persecution***

***Expelled from Massachusetts in the dead of winter in 1636, former Puritan leader Roger Williams (1603-1683) issued an impassioned plea for freedom of conscience. He wrote, "God requireth, not a uniformity of Religion to be enacted and enforced in any civil state; which enforced uniformity (sooner or later) is the greatest occasion of civil Warre, ravishing of conscience, persecution of Christ Jesus in his servants, and of hypocrisy and destruction of millions of souls." Williams later founded Rhode Island on the principle of religious freedom. He welcomed people of every shade of religious belief, even some regarded as dangerously misguided, for nothing could change his view that "forced worship stinks in God's nostrils."***

### ***Execution of Quakers***

***Mary Dyer (d. 1660) first ran afoul of Massachusetts authorities for supporting theological dissenter Anne Hutchinson. As a result, Dyer and her family were forced to move to Rhode Island in 1638. Converted to Quakerism in England in the 1650s, Dyer returned to New England and was three times arrested and banished from Massachusetts for spreading Quaker principles. Returning to Massachusetts a fourth time, she was hanged on June 1, 1660.***

### ***Intolerance in Virginia***

***In his Notes on the State of Virginia, Thomas Jefferson reflected on the religious intolerance in seventeenth-century Virginia, specifically on the anti-Quaker laws passed by the Virginia Assembly from 1659 onward. Jefferson believed that it was no more than a historical accident that Quakers had not been physically punished or even executed in Virginia as they had been in Massachusetts.***

### **Jews Find a Refuge in America**

**For some decades Jews had flourished in Dutch-held areas of Brazil, but a Portuguese conquest of the area in 1654 confronted them with the prospect of the introduction of the Inquisition, which had already burned a Brazilian Jew at the stake in 1647. A shipload of twenty-three Jewish refugees from Dutch Brazil arrived in New Amsterdam (soon to become New York) in 1654. By the next year, this small community had established religious services in the city. By 1658 Jews had arrived in Newport, Rhode Island, also seeking religious liberty. Small numbers of Jews continued to come to the British North American colonies, settling mainly in the seaport towns. By the time of the Declaration of Independence, Jewish settlers had established several thriving synagogues.**

### **Touro Synagogue**

**Designed by Peter Harrison, constructed in 1762, and dedicated in 1763, Touro Synagogue is considered an architectural masterpiece. It is the sole surviving synagogue built in colonial America.**

### **Torah Breastplate**

**A breastplate is an ornamental covering for the Torah, designed in imitation of the breastplate worn by the High Priest, as described in the book of Exodus. Breastplates, similar to the one seen here, were used in colonial synagogues.**

### **Matza Board**

**During the colonial period, this board was used at Touro Synagogue to prepare the dough for Matzoh (unleavened bread) used in the Passover season.**

### **The Quakers**

**The Quakers (or Religious Society of Friends) formed in England in 1652 around a charismatic leader, George Fox (1624-1691). Many scholars today consider Quakers as radical Puritans because the Quakers carried to extremes many Puritan convictions. They stretched the sober deportment of the Puritans into a glorification of "plainness." Theologically, they expanded the Puritan concept of a church of individuals regenerated by the Holy Spirit to the idea of the indwelling of the Spirit or the "Light of Christ" in every person. Such teaching struck many of the Quakers' contemporaries as dangerous heresy. Quakers were severely persecuted in England for daring**



**to deviate so far from orthodox Christianity. By 1680, 10,000 Quakers had been imprisoned in England, and 243 had died of torture and mistreatment in the King's jails. This reign of terror impelled Friends to seek refuge in New Jersey in the 1670s, where they soon became well entrenched. In 1681, when Quaker leader William Penn (1644-1718) parlayed a debt owed by Charles II to his father into a charter for the province of Pennsylvania, many more Quakers were prepared to grasp the opportunity to live in a land where they might worship freely. By 1685 as many as 8,000 Quakers had come to Pennsylvania. Although the Quakers may have resembled the Puritans in some religious beliefs and practices, they differed with them over the necessity of compelling religious uniformity in society.**

### **William Penn**

**A youthful William Penn (1644-1718) portrayed in armor suggests that at this point in his career he may have been considering following his father into a military profession. Soon after this portrait was made, Penn became a member of the Society of Friends, one of whose fundamental tenets was the renunciation of force.**

### **Penn's Frame of Government**

**In his famous charter of religious liberty, William Penn pledged that all citizens who believed in "One Almighty and eternal God . . . shall in no ways be molested or prejudiced for their Religious Persuasion or Practice in matters of Faith and Worship, nor shall they be compelled at any time to frequent or maintain any Religious Worship, Place or Ministry whatever." Pennsylvania became a reference point a century later for Americans opposing plans for government-supported religion. "Witness the state of Pennsylvania," a group of Virginians urged its House of Delegates in 1785, "wherein no such [religious] Establishment hath taken place; their Government stands firm and which of the neighboring States has Members of brighter Morals and more upright Characters."**

### **Quaker Meeting**

**This undated image depicts a feature of Quaker religious practice that made early Friends so repugnant to other denominations: their insistence on equality for women, including the right--in defiance of the apostle Paul's injunctions--to speak in Meeting for Worship and to preach the Gospel.**

### **Quaker Book of Discipline**

***This collection of "advice" on the behavior of American Quakers was a compilation of guidelines covering every aspect of Quaker life. This advice was periodically issued between 1682 and 1763 by the highest institutional authority in American Quakerism, the Yearly Meeting. This compilation appears to have been made by the Meeting itself for distribution to local Quaker meetings throughout America. Its purpose was to establish "Decency and comely Order in all our Meetings of Worship, & Plainness in the particular Members of our Society." Though often ascribed to the Puritans (who liked bright colors and, in moderation, the good things of life), "plainness" was a Quaker ideal.***

### ***The Pennsylvania Germans***

***The first group of Germans to settle in Pennsylvania arrived in Philadelphia in 1683 from Krefeld, Germany, and included Mennonites and possibly some Dutch Quakers. During the early years of German emigration to Pennsylvania, most of the emigrants were members of small sects that shared Quaker principles--Mennonites, Dunkers, Schwenkfelders, Moravians, and some German Baptist groups--and were fleeing religious persecution. Penn and his agents encouraged German and European emigration to Pennsylvania by circulating promotional literature touting the economic advantages of Pennsylvania as well as the religious liberty available there. The appearance in Pennsylvania of so many different religious groups made the province resemble "an asylum for banished sects." Beginning in the 1720s significantly larger numbers of German Lutherans and German Reformed arrived in Pennsylvania. Many were motivated by economic considerations.***

### ***Baptismal Certificate***

***This certificate features characteristic Pennsylvania German motifs.***

### ***The Narrow Gate***

***This Pennsylvania German illustration depicts a familiar 19th-century evangelical motif of the narrow gate to Heaven and the broad and seductive road to Hell, where the devil and his minions await the self-satisfied sinner.***

### ***Footwashing***

***Many of the German sects that emigrated to Pennsylvania brought with them "primitive" Christian practices such as foot***

**washing, seen here being practiced by the women of the Moravian Brethren.**

### **Roman Catholics in Maryland**

**Although the Stuart kings of England did not hate the Roman Catholic Church, most of their subjects did, causing Catholics to be harassed and persecuted in England throughout the seventeenth century. Driven by "the sacred duty of finding a refuge for his Roman Catholic brethren," George Calvert (1580-1632) obtained a charter from Charles I in 1632 for the territory between Pennsylvania and Virginia. This Maryland charter offered no guidelines on religion, although it was assumed that Catholics would not be molested in the new colony. In 1634 two ships, the Ark and the Dove brought the first settlers to Maryland. Aboard were approximately two hundred people. Among the passengers were two Catholic priests who had been forced to board surreptitiously to escape the reach of English anti-Catholic laws. Upon landing in Maryland the Catholics, led spiritually by the Jesuits, were transported by a profound reverence, similar to that experienced by John Winthrop and the Puritans when they set foot in New England. Catholic fortunes fluctuated in Maryland during the rest of the seventeenth century, as they became an increasingly smaller minority of the population. After the Glorious Revolution of 1689 in England, the Church of England was legally established in the colony and English penal laws, which deprived Catholics of the right to vote, hold office, or worship publicly, were enforced. Until the American Revolution, Catholics in Maryland were dissenters in their own country, living at times under a state of siege, but keeping loyal to their convictions, a faithful remnant, awaiting better times.**

### **Father Andrew White**

**The "Apostle to Maryland," Father Andrew White (1579-1656), described the celebration of the first mass upon the arrival of the Ark and the Dove, "We celebrated mass for the first time . . . . This had never been done before in this part of the world. After we had completed the sacrifice, we took upon our shoulders a great cross that we had hewn out of a tree, and advancing to the appointed place . . . we erected a trophy to Christ the Savior, humbly reciting, on our bended knees, the Litanies of the sacred Cross, with great emotion." This is the only known seventeenth-century image of Father White. The palm trees depicted in the background reveal the artist's ignorance of conditions in Maryland.**

### ***Piscataway Prayers***

***Like some of their Protestant counterparts in the colonies, the Jesuits in Maryland assumed the responsibility of converting the native population to Christianity. They were quite successful, owing to men like Father White, a skilled linguist, who translated spiritual exercises into the Piscataway language.***

### ***Communion Ostensorium***

***An ostensorium also called a monstrance, is used at Catholic communion services to display the consecrated Host. Markings on the base indicate that it was commissioned by George Thompson (fl. 1658-1663), first Clerk of Court of Charles County, Maryland, or by one of his descendants.***

### ***Maryland Act Concerning Religion***

***In 1649, Catholics in the Maryland Assembly passed an act stipulating that no Trinitarian Christian "shall from henceforth be any ways troubled, molested, or discountenanced, for, or in respect of his or her religion nor the free exercise thereof within this Province." Though this act was not as inclusive as similar ones in Rhode Island and Pennsylvania, which brought theists within their purview, it was another in a series of progressive measures taken by early American colonists to emancipate themselves from the European belief in enforced religious uniformity.***

### ***Cecil Calvert***

***In this fanciful recreation Cecil Calvert, the second Lord Baltimore, is showing his 1649 Act Concerning Religion to the ancient Spartan lawgiver, Lycurgus. Here Calvert is depicted in a long line of civil libertarians, running from the ninth-century Saxon king, Alfred, on Calvert's left through William Penn, in the broad-brimmed hat, to Benjamin Franklin, viewing the proceedings from Heaven in his familiar fur hat.***

### ***Catholic Church at St. Mary's City, Maryland***

***These artist's recreations of the first free-standing Roman Catholic Church in British North America are based on extensive historical and archaeological research, conducted by the staff of Historic St. Mary's City. The church was probably built in 1667 at St. Mary's City, Maryland's seventeenth-century capital.***

### ***Catholic Religious Medals***

***These religious medals, worn by seventeenth-century Catholic colonists in Maryland, bespeak a society spiritually administered by the Jesuits. Excavated at St. Mary's City, they represent, from left to right: St. Ignatius Loyola (on the reverse, St. Francis Xavier); "the Five saints," all canonized in 1620: St. Teresa of Avila, St. Isidore the Husbandman, and St. Philip Neri on one side, St. Ignatius Loyola and St. Francis Xavier on the other; a sacred site at Zaragosa, Spain, where the faithful believed that the Virgin appeared to the apostle St. James the Greater upon a pillar of jasper; and St. Ignatius Loyola and St. Francis Xavier side by side.***

### ***Virgin Mary at St. Mary's City***

***This white clay fragment of a statue of the Virgin Mary was discovered at St. Mary's City at the site of the home of Garret Van Sweringen, a Dutch Roman Catholic who settled in Maryland in the 1660s.***

### ***Virginia***

***Virginia was settled by businessmen--operating through a joint-stock company, the Virginia Company of London--who wanted to get rich. They also wanted the Church to flourish in their colony and kept it well supplied with ministers. Some early governors sent by the Virginia Company acted in the spirit of the crusaders. Sir Thomas Dale (d. 1619) considered himself engaged in "religious warfare" and expected no reward "but from him on whose vineyard I labor whose church with a greedy appetite I desire to erect." During Dale's tenure, religion was spread at the point of the sword. Everyone was required to attend church and be catechized by a minister. Those who refused could be executed or sent to the galleys. When a popular assembly, the House of Burgesses, was established in 1619, it enacted religious laws that "were a match for anything to be found in the Puritan societies." Unlike the colonies to the north, where the Church of England was regarded with suspicion throughout the colonial period, Virginia was a bastion of Anglicanism. Her House of Burgesses passed a law in 1632 requiring that there be a "uniformity throughout this colony both in substance and circumstance to the canons and constitution of the Church of England." The church in Virginia faced problems unlike those confronted in other colonies--such as enormous parishes, some sixty miles long, and the inability to ordain ministers locally--but it continued to command the loyalty and affection of the colonists. In 1656, a prospective minister was advised that he "would find an assisting, an embracing, a comforting people" in the colony. At the end of the seventeenth century the church in***

**Virginia, according to a recent authority, was prospering; it was "active and growing" and was "well attended by the young and old alike."**

### **The Book of Common Prayer**

**The Book of Common Prayer, which contains the liturgy used by the Church of England, was compiled during the reign of Edward VI (1547-1553) and revised under Queen Elizabeth I. The prayer book, used in Virginia church services, was published in all shapes and sizes. Here is a page from the large 1662 edition and the same page as it appears in a 1730 shorthand edition, with the order slightly altered. The creator of the shorthand system, James Weston, advised his readers that he had omitted the "Forms of Matrimony . . . at the Desire of the Subscribers, that the Price might be less."**

### **Official Instructions on Religion**

**This manuscript is an eighteenth-century copy of the original Virginia Company records, owned by Thomas Jefferson and sold to the Library of Congress as part of Jefferson's library in 1815. The document illustrates the Virginia Company's concern for the health of the church. It orders the settlers to offer generous financial assistance "to the intent that godly learned & painful Ministers may be placed there for the service of Almighty God & for the spiritual benefit and comfort of the people."**

### **Baptism of Pocahontas**

**Like the other seventeenth-century British colonies, Virginia aspired to convert the native populations. The Virginia Company's instructions to its governors required them to make conversion one of their objectives. The most famous early convert was Pocahontas, daughter of Powhatan, head of the Powhatan Confederacy. Pocahontas was baptized by the Reverend Alexander Whitaker before her marriage to John Rolfe in 1614.**

### **Anglican Religious Credentials**

**One of the handicaps faced by the Church of England in Virginia and the other American colonies was its lack of authority to ordain priests. To receive holy orders, candidates were obliged to travel to England. This was an obstacle some were unwilling to confront. As a result, the Church of England often experienced a shortage of priests in America. Among the pious young Americans who made the perilous journey was Thomas Read, a Virginian, who was ordained by Richard Terrick, Bishop of**



***London, on September 21, 1773, at which time he also received a license to preach in Maryland. Read's ecclesiastical credentials, as well as a special, protective carrying case, which has his name etched on its front, are seen here.***