

Lucy Hutchinson / Puritans / Cromwell

Post by “Joshua” of January 12, 2024 at 6:18 PM

[Here](#) is Lucy Hutchinson's letter to the Earl of Anglesey, denouncing her own translation of Lucretius. And [this](#) article at Smithsonian Magazine is good for dispelling America's 'creation myth'.

Quote

In the storybook version most of us learned in school, the Pilgrims came to America aboard the Mayflower in search of religious freedom in 1620. The Puritans soon followed, for the same reason. Ever since these religious dissidents arrived at their shining “city upon a hill,” as their governor John Winthrop called it, millions from around the world have done the same, coming to an America where they found a welcome melting pot in which everyone was free to practice his or her own faith.

The problem is that this tidy narrative is an American myth. The real story of religion in America’s past is an often awkward, frequently embarrassing and occasionally bloody tale that most civics books and high-school texts either paper over or shunt to the side. And much of the recent conversation about America’s ideal of religious freedom has paid lip service to this comforting tableau.

The Puritans actually left for the New World because they despised the religious toleration that was taking root there, and wanted a new country in which *only* Puritanism was tolerated. To that end, they hanged Quakers and women accused of witchcraft, banned the celebration of Christmas, and rejected a non-Puritan colonial governor appointed by the British Crown.

Lucy Hutchinson was in England, and worked on her translation during the Interregnum. Her husband, Colonel John Hutchinson, was a politician and a judge, and in that role he was one of the 59 signatories to the warrant for the execution of King Charles I. After the Stuart Restoration with the coronation of Charles II, John Hutchinson and many other co-conspirators were exempted from the general amnesty and he died in custody.

The overall impulse of the Puritan movement was similar in its aims to the previous work of a 15th century Dominican Friar named [Girolamo Savonarola](#). The religious moral panic he kicked off in Florence led to the burning of books, art, cosmetics, mirrors, elegant clothing, sculptures, and so on. In his frantic sermons, he condemned atomism by name. He was eventually excommunicated by Pope Alexander VI, charged with heresy and sedition, and hanged in the Piazza della Signoria. Anyone who was in possession of any of his writings was required to hand them over to the church for destruction, or face the same fate.