Massachusetts
In the 1600s, English Puritans settled in New England. People in their communities obeyed the rules of the Bible. Puritan religion shaped the government of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. All settlers had to go to church.

A town meeting was held once a year. Only men with property could vote on laws for their town. Puritan towns had more self-government than most Spanish or French colonies.

Some colonists thought Puritans should not tell them what to believe or how to act. Roger Williams was a dissenter. He did not believe the government should make laws about religion. Williams wanted religious freedom. The Puritans banished him from Massachusetts Bay.

In 1636, Williams started a new colony that became Rhode Island. Rhode Island’s government was separate from the church. Anne Hutchinson also disagreed with Puritan ministers. She held meetings that allowed men and women to discuss religion. Puritans did not think women should teach men about religion. Hutchinson was banished and went to Rhode Island.

Thomas Hooker also disagreed with the Puritans. He wanted to start a place where men who did not belong to the church could vote. He started the colony of Connecticut. Other colonists settled the area that became New Hampshire and Maine.

Conflicts over Land
The Puritans lived on American Indian land. Colonists bought the land from the Indians and expected them to leave. Indians believed land could be shared, but not owned. Colonists and the Pequot Indians fought over the land. Colonists killed most of the Pequot Indians and took their land. More colonists arrived. The Wampanoag Indian leader Metacomet, called King Philip, felt his people had to defend their land. In 1675, another war began. A year later the colonists won King Philip’s War. They enslaved some Wampanoags and forced the rest to leave. Few American Indians remained in eastern New England after the war.