

NEW ENGLAND MEETING HOUSES

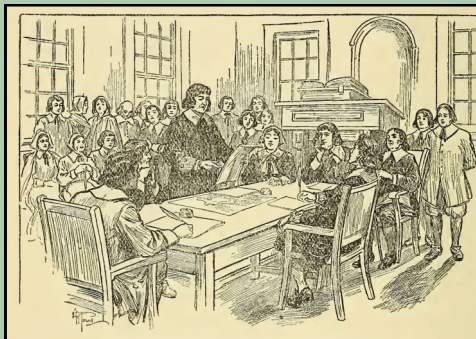
What was a New England meeting house?

Every town settled in New England in the 17th and 18th centuries had a meeting house. It was the center of the community and almost always the largest building in the town. The meeting house played three important roles in community life.



1. Town Meeting

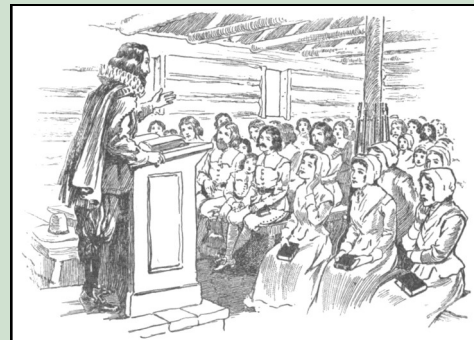
At least once a year, everyone in the town would come together at the meeting house to hold a town meeting. During this meeting, the men of the community would elect town officers and debated any big decisions the town government needed to make. They also voted on the town budget, which said how much money the town government could spend and how much money the town government needed to raise in taxes.



Meeting houses were not heated in New Hampshire's colonial period! People would bring hot bricks and rest their feet on them to keep warm.

2. Church

The town's meeting house also served as the church for the community. This is where townspeople came for religious services. Church services often lasted all day on Sunday!



Moose on the Loose™
Social Studies for Granite State Kids

3. School

The town's meeting house was also the town's school. Kids spent much less time in school than they do now!

