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Anne Hutchinson – Part II

Lead: In 1637 the Massachusetts Bay Colony put religious reformer Anne Hutchinson on trial for challenging the authority and theology of the Church.

Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.

Content: Hutchinson and her family had emigrated from England to the Massachusetts to escape what they felt was religious persecution. An intelligent and independent thinker, Anne began to hold a weekly discussion group in her home. She

and her followers did not hesitate to criticize the colony's religious and political leaders for what they perceived as the leaders' narrowness on morality and religion. Anne held the dangerous view that God spoke to individuals rather than through the clergy or church officials. Believing Hutchinson to be a threat to order and peace, the Massachusetts General Assembly enacted a law stipulating that women could neither organize, lead, nor attend meetings. Undaunted, Anne refused to stop and John Winthrop, one of the founders and Governor of the colony, in 1637, brought her to trial for insulting churches and their ministers and not honoring the fathers of the Commonwealth.

At first the trial went well for Anne, but toward the end she sealed her fate with an emotional outburst claiming that God spoke to her directly and that some ministers in Boston did not teach the truth. She was found guilty, banished and eventually. She was subsequently tried for heresy before the Boston Church; accused of being “a husband rather than a wife, a preacher rather than a hearer, and a magistrate rather than a subject.” Anne was found guilty and excommunicated from the church.

The Hutchinsons, along with some followers from the colony, established a settlement in present day Rhode

Island. After the death of her husband, and fearing the annexation by Massachusetts Bay, Anne and five of her children moved to the Dutch Colony of New Netherlands, a part of present-day Long Island. There in 1643 they were killed in an uprising of Native-Americans.

At the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.

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