

Early American Literature

Puritan Culture

Early discoveries

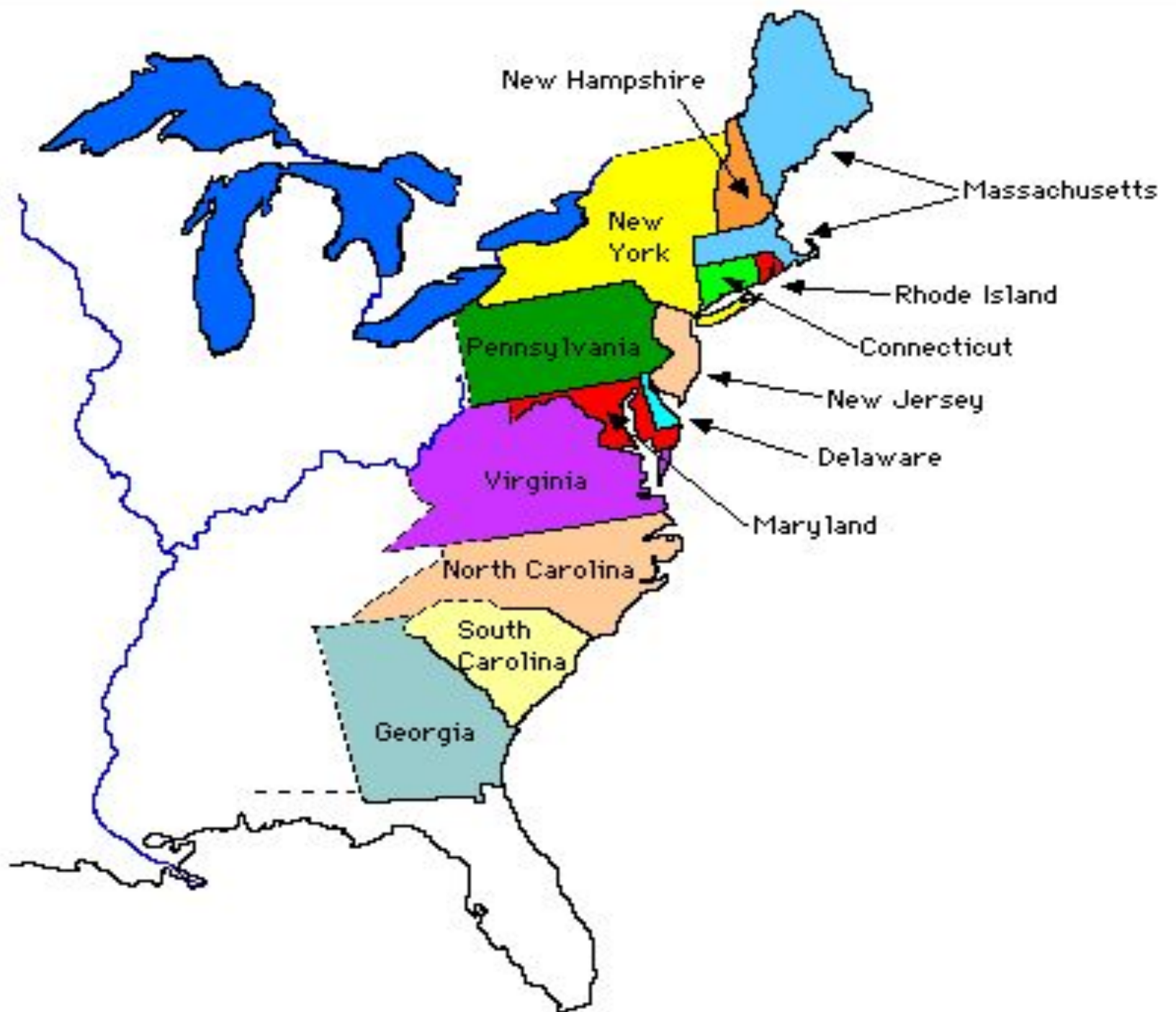
- Lief Ericson and the Vikings
- Opened the way for other Viking voyages
- Rough sea, climate and injuries
- 1963 – the ruins of some Viking houses found at L'Anse-aux-Meadows in Newfoundland

Columbus's coat of arms



Colonization

- Spanish colonies – Mexico, West Indies, South America, Florida
- French – parts of Canada
- Dutch – NYC
- England – the dominant colonizer
- Jamestown; Massachusetts Bay Colony, New Netherland



Massachusetts Bay Colony

- Puritans, Separatists (set out for the New World in 1620)
- The Mayflower, Plymouth
- Indians helped them to plant maize – Thanksgiving
- Strict religious rules in the new colony
- John Winthrop – a “Puritan Utopia” for the region

Colonies

- The Middle Atlantic Colonies - Pennsylvania and NY
- Philadelphia – busy docks and pursued trade. Population grew to over 30 000 people by 1776. The Scots and Irish.
- NY – founded by the Dutch, was sold to them by the Native Americans for \$24. Dutch, French, Swedes, English, Irish, Norwegians

Colonies

- The Southern Colonies- Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina Georgia – mostly rural
- Tobacco, rice, indigo, cotton
- German immigrants, Scot-Irish, English

Time line

- 1634 – Maryland accepted Catholics
- 1638 – Massachusetts restricted religious freedom
- 1646 – death penalty to those who didn't follow Puritanism
- 1649 – The Toleration Act
- 1667 – the Separation of Church and State

Time Line

- 1692 – The Salem Witch trials
- 1702 – the Anglican church made the official religion in Maryland
- 1728 – Jewish Synagogue built in NY
- 1741 – The Great Awakening

Salem Witch Trials

- February 1692 and May 1693
- "And now Nineteen persons having been hang'd, and one prest to death, and Eight more condemned, in all Twenty and Eight, of which above a third part were Members of some of the Churches of N. England, and more than half of them of a good Conversation in general, and not one clear'd; about Fifty having confest themselves to be Witches, of which not one Executed; above an Hundred and Fifty in Prison, and Two Hundred more accused..."

Ben Franklin

- Inventing – Stove, lightning rod, bifocals
- Medicine – founded first US hospital
- Printing – “Patron Saint of Printing”
- Public Safety – first police and fire departments
- Community service – street lighting, paving and cleaning

Franklin's Almanack

- Began publishing *Poor Richard's Almanack* on December 28, 1732
- Published for 25 years, 10 000 copies a year
- Contained calendar, weather, poems, sayings, astronomical and astrological information, mathematical exercise
- Proverbial sentences about industry and life

Franklin's Almanack

- Light purse, heavy heart.
- Great Talkers, little Doers.
- Distrust & caution are the parents of security.
- Nothing more like a Fool, than a drunken Man.
- Innocence is its own Defence.
- Look before, or you'll find yourself behind.
- Nothing but Money, is Sweeter than Honey.

13 virtues to live by

- temperance
- silence
- order
- resolution
- frugality
- industry
- sincerity
- justice
- moderation

Background

Diversity of cultures:

- Native Americans (all over the continent);
- Spanish (Florida);
- French (Louisiana);
- Dutch (New York);
- English (Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania),
- Puritans (Massachusetts)

Background

- Diversity of genres:
- Until the 17th century – no realistic novel and no short story
- 17th-18th centuries – dominance of non-fiction, such as political writings, personal narratives, and philosophy
- 19th century – fiction, poetry, drama; non-fiction is secondary

Between 1820 ad 1865

- Fiction: sentimental novel, Gothic romance, adventure and historical romance
- Western (frontier) themes, Domestic novel
- Numerous women-writers

18th and 19th centuries

- B. Franklin, Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson (Declaration of Independence)
- The basic principles of republican theory
- Washington Irving, James Fenimore Cooper, Edgar Allan Poe
- Search for a characteristic American literature

Frontier novel

- James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851)
- Adventure romances, set in American West
- Successfully emulated Sir Walter Scott – exotic Western settings, and the American revolution or Indian Wars as historical background
- Typical American characters: brave Am soldier, good and bad Indian, the pioneer, inexperienced newcomer

James Fenimore Cooper

- 1821 – The Spy: A Tale of the Neutral Ground – American Revolution
- 1842 – The Pilot: A Tale of the Sea
- The Leatherstocking Tales: The Pioneers (1823), The Last of the Mohicans (1826), The Prairie (1827), The Pathfinder: or the Inland Sea (1840)

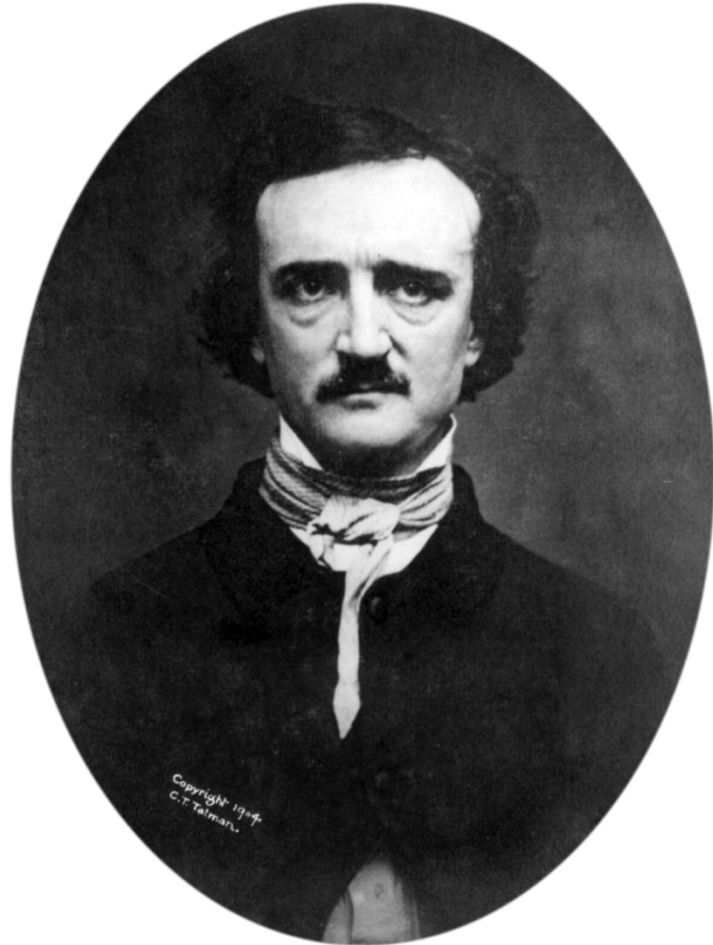
James Fenimore Cooper

- Natty Bumpoo – the Leatherstocking, the Deer Slayer, the Hawkeye
- Different stages of the character's life
- Shifting time of action – a fantastic character who can beat time: he gets old, then young, then dies, then he is young again (the theme of rebirth)

James Fenimore Cooper

- Natty Bumpoo – combines Indian (the wild nature) and white (civilization) qualities
- White “noble savage”
- Dreamlike ideal of the new American hero
- Cooper – novels of manners, sentimental fiction, non-fictional works

Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849)



Edgar Allan Poe

- Foster family
- 6 – 11 – England, boarding school
- University of Virginia
- 1829 – The Academy of West Point
- New York, extreme poverty, married his cousin Virginia (27-13)
- 1841 – The Murders in the Rue Morgue – first success
- 1845 – The Raven

Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849)


- Gothic fiction which aspired to the Romantic ideals of artistic excellence and philosophical depth
- Images of death and madness
- Numerous Gothic tales; body-mind problem, uncertainty about the fate; limited knowledge of the physical world and mystery



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POE



Poe's Lap Desk

This lap desk was used by Poe while at the University of Virginia. It was part of the Sumner estate which purchased it from the John Allan estate auction in the early 1920's. It is now owned by the City of Baltimore.



KITCHEN AREA

This area was... (text is mostly illegible due to blurriness)



Virginia Poe's Childhood Portrait



Virginia Eliza Poe
1802-1847



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Edgar Allan Poe

- 1840 – The Fall of the House of Usher – an allegory of the human mind, represented by a house
- 1841 – The Murders in the Rue Morgue
- 1845 – The Facts in the Case of M.Valdemar – a tale of a man hypnotized at the moment of his death – doubts about the nature of our life and thought

Edgar Allan Poe - poetry

- 1845 – The Raven and Other Poems
- The Raven – mourning and madness caused by death of a beloved person
- The Raven – a symbol of inescapable passage of time and loss
- Prime concern – the effect of the poetry on the readers
- Shouldn't be didactic or moralising, nor informative and instructive, shouldn't be burdened with social functions

The Romantic Period (1820-1860)

- The first great literary generation
- Walt Whitman, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, Edgar Allan Poe, Emily Dickinson, the Transcendentalists
- The “Romance” – a heightened, emotional, and symbolic form of novel
- Special techniques to communicate complex and subtle meanings

The Romantic Period (1820-1860)

- Heroic figures larger than life, burning with mystic significance
- Protagonists – haunted, alienated individuals, lonely characters, pitted against dark fates
- They grow out of their deepest unconscious selves.

The Romantic Period (1820-1860)

- One reason – the absence of settled, traditional community life
- America – constantly moving frontier
- The democratic American individual had to invent himself
- New literary forms
- Indicated how difficult it was to create an identity without a stable society

Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864)

- The House of the Seven Gables – the idea of a curse on the family; New England family: an inherited curse and its resolution through love
- Allegorical mode
- Historical settings and fantastic elements
- A moral truth rather than a realistic image of life

The Scarlet Letter (1850)

- An allegory of sin and redemption
- Life under a destructive burden of guilt
- Secondary characters – also allegorical
- Pearl – a symbol of vitality and innocence
- The Letter – ambiguous under different interpretations

Herman Melville (1819 – 1891)

- Descendant of a wealthy family which turned poor
- Sea voyages
- Typee (1846) based on personal experience – Christian missionaries were less civilized than the people they came to convert
- Moby Dick (1851) – symbols and metaphors of good and evil