I. Social Construction of a Myth: American Exceptionalism

A. Puritans viewed themselves as the New Israelites

1. They were the new "Chosen People"

2. The “New World” was the New Promised Land and God had

given it to them

Exodus 6:8 "I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. I will give it to you for a possession. I am the Lord.’”

3. New Covenant

a. agreement between God and the new chosen people

b. God will guide and look over his people: Providence

c. An ideal and exceptional society, a " City upon a Hill”

i. freedom from religious oppression

ii. freedom from the constraints of a class society

iii. freedom to create a truly Christian society, based

on the Scriptures

**“for we must Consider that we shall be as a City upon a Hill, the eyes of all people are upon us”**

B. Accomplishing the task:

1. turn the new Promised Land into a Garden, the Garden of Eden

Romans 13:2 "Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God. . .they shall receive to themselves damnation."

2. "Nature": a "hideous and desolate wilderness"

3. "Other":

a. wild, immoral, the devil's own "servants of Satan", 'demons from hell",

b. religious practices 'confusion among the damned"

c. hellish fiends and brutish men

4. Transform nature and eliminate the "Other"

C. When does this story become the origin story for "America" and a key component of American Exceptionalism?

1. After 1640 less than half of colonists came for religious reason.

2. “City upon a Hill": John Kennedy, Ronald Reagan, George W. Bush, Barack Obama, Mitt Romney

3. Grand Mythmakers of the late 18th/19th Century

a. Declaration of Independence

i. the status that “the Laws of Nature and Nature’s God entitle . ”

ii.. “. . .protection of divine Providence”

b. Plymouth Rock (1774)

c. the word "pilgrim" not popularized until 1794

d. painting Landing of the Fathers 1815 Sargent

<https://www.google.com/search?rlz=1C1GMIN_enUS697US697&tbm=isch&sa=1&ei=v3g4XvLJINPWtAaR9qDIDw&q=painting+%22landing+of+the+fathers%22+by+Sargent&oq=painting+%22landing+of+the+fathers%22+by+Sargent&gs_l=img.12...63378.69502..71914...0.0..0.153.1871.0j16......0....1..gws-wiz-img.Ajjq4dtBeVw&ved=0ahUKEwiypeKDk7bnAhVTK80KHRE7CPkQ4dUDCAc#imgrc=w0aapHom_ifc4M:>

e. History of the United States (1834) Bancroft

Bancroft’s multi-volume History of the United States proved to be more than a literary event. It was an **eloquent testimonial to the national purpose”**

f. organizations, Colonial Dames

g. National Holiday: Thanksgiving (Civil War)

h. Pilgrim Monument 1889 (now known as National Monument to the Forefathers): female figure of faith points to heaven and clutches a Bible

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Monument_to_the_Forefathers#/media/File:Monument_to_the_Forefathers_1.jpg>

D. By the end of the 19th Century: Fundamentals of American Exceptionalism

1. country with a special relationship to God

2. unique country: a City on a Hill

3. universal values: freedom, equality

4. destiny: divine providence