

# HARVARD

## In Colonial Times



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# Establishment & Basic Curriculum

Harvard was founded in 1636 by vote of the Great and General Court of the Massachusetts Bay Colony and named for its first donor, the Reverend John Harvard, who left his personal library and half his estate to the new institution. Nothing remains of its earliest buildings; brass markers in the middle of Massachusetts Avenue now indicate where the Goffe and Peyntree Houses once stood. The charter granted to Harvard by the Colony in 1650, with amendments and John Adams's further definition in the fifth chapter of the Massachusetts Constitution of 1780, is the authority under which the University of today operates.

For its first two hundred years Harvard College followed a set curriculum consistent with the instructional style of the period. It emphasized rhetorical principles, rote learning, and constant drilling. The faculty was very small, yet very distinguished. What was taught at Harvard during its creation era included, but was not limited to, mathematics, natural philosophy, medicine, english, and the sciences.

Harvard College Board. "History of Harvard College." *Harvard College*. Harvard College Board, n.d. Web. 24 Feb. 2013.

## What Does the Presence of Harvard Say About the Massachusetts Bay Colony?

The establishment of this prestigious school speaks volumes to the fact that colonial life in the Massachusetts Bay Colony had evolved past simply surviving. These colonists now sought to pursue higher learning, an aspect instilled within them from when they were brought up in the Puritan school systems. This would, obviously, spread to other colonies and promote widespread education, rivaling an education back in Europe.