

When the English came to America to escape religious persecution, things commenced at a shaky start. For example, Puritans fled from England because of religious persecution. They were being physically beaten because of their religious beliefs therefore they attempted to create a Utopia or "City upon a hill" in the New World. There "City upon a hill" began with a government based on religious beliefs. It developed into a government which condemned those who did not believe in the Puritan beliefs. For example, one had to believe in the Puritan religion and attend church to vote and become a member of the Puritan society. This practice further developed into a situation in which you were beaten or killed if you did not believe in the Puritan religion and remained in Puritan "Utopia" -- the exact situation which they had fled from England. Later, it would take the gathering of American thinkers to deduce what liberties were guaranteed and which were not, to avoid mistakes made by Puritans and others in history. The Forefathers of the United States conjured up the Bill of Rights which illustrated which rights were endowed to the people of the United States. They adopted the Bill of rights, which was drafted for political motivations, and it evolved into a document which shelters American people's civil liberties.

When the Bill of Rights was adopted, political motivations superceded libertarian views. James Madison claimed that this

"nauseous project of amendments" would "kill the opposition[for the ratification of the constitution] everywhere..." In the beginning, the Bill of Rights was first drafted up to appease the Anti-Federalists and coax them into ratifying the constitution. For without the Bill of Rights the constitution may have never been ratified. After its ratification, the Bill of Rights evolved into more realistic terms. The Federalists began to notice the importance of the Bill of Rights as much as the Anti-Federalists had. During the next few years the Bill of Rights began to be accepted by the American people as the essence towards freedom. As it was noticed more and more over the years, the Bill of Rights became the basis for individual rights. It entitled the American people to rights which they had not experienced before such as the freedom of press and speech.

In Tennessee's "Monkey Trial" of 1925, John Scope, a science teacher, was convicted for teaching evolution. Only 43 years later would that state law be overturned. This constant evolution of

the Bill of Rights has made it what it is today, a document claiming that the American people have certain 'unalienable' rights. In 1868, the 14th Amendment was drafted to insure that peoples rights towards life, liberty, and property would not be deprived by the state governments without due process of law. Here, the most basic rights of the people were secured from the state governments. In Minersville School

District vs. Gobits, Lillian Gobitas refused to salute the American flag. She was a devout Jehovah's Witness and was told not to "'Heil Hitler' nor any other creature." This straight-A student was eventually expelled and here father, Walter, took the case to the Supreme Court. In 1940 the Court ruled for Minersville School District, yet this decision was overturned on Flag Day, 1943. Lillian Gobitas, now 67, realized that she was entitled to the freedom to speak and to express herself, or freedom to not speak or not to express herself.

The Bill of Rights today is in need of revision;however it still protects civil liberties and is the best declaration for human rights that America has. Only 31 years ago did the Court rule that prayers would not take place in the business of government. In 1971 a defense analyst turned over the Pentagon Papers, which documented a hidden involvement with Vietnam. Nixon claimed that the papers were a "threat to national security." In this case, somebody had to defy the government in order to let the public know what the government was doing. The government today is still not telling the public the rest of the story and shouldn't the public have a right to know what is going on with foreign relations in our government? Only 2 years ago did the Court free Gregory Johnson. He was arrested for burning a flag in 1984. In the first amendment, the right to hold a peaceful assembly should not be prohibited. If burning a flag

causes this much controversy should it be noted as a peaceful assembly?

Now, 200 years later, does the Bill of Rights still apply today, under the different circumstances, towards everybody the in the same way it did when it was first drafted? The right to bear arms surely must not include automatic weapons. When James Madison constructed the Bill of

Rights did he know that it would apply to nearly 225 million people 200 years later? Although these rights of the American people are consistently being modified, the basic right to freedom and liberty will always be there in general.