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# On the Trade Winds of Faith: Puritan Networks in the Making of an Atlantic World

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ON THE TRADE WINDS OF FAITH: PURITAN NETWORKS IN THE MAKING OF AN  
ATLANTIC WORLD

by

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Bachelor of Arts  
Liberty University, 2007

Master of Arts  
Liberty University, 2010

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

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History

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2015

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## DEDICATION

To Mom and Dad for teaching me to dream, and to Hansel for reminding me those  
dreams could come true.

Had I the heavens' embroidered cloths,  
Enwrought with golden and silver light,  
The blue and the dim and the dark cloths  
Of night and light and the half-light,  
I would spread the cloths under your feet:  
But I, being poor, have only my dreams;  
I have spread my dreams under your feet;  
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.

William Butler Yeats

## ABSTRACT

This dissertation dismisses the New England dominance of colonial puritan historiography to argue that an interconnected community of Atlantic puritans pursued an alternate path to their faith apart from the Massachusetts Bay experiment. While a number of Atlantic puritans emerged from the nucleus of the Ancient Church and others eventually joined those original networks, ultimately membership within the puritan Atlantic involved the embrace of a particular attitude about faith, commerce, and political involvement. Atlantic puritans were concerned with the spiritual fate of Europeans and Native Americans scattered throughout the Caribbean and along the Atlantic coastline of North America as central to both England's political hedge against Catholic colonization and the hope for Christ's millennial return. This eschatological perspective served as the foundation of these puritans' Atlantic focus. Having imbued the Atlantic world with apocalyptic significance Atlantic puritans centered their commercial and political interests there as well. As a result individuals like Richard Bennett, Daniel Gookin, Nathaniell and Constant Sylvester, and the Bland Brothers exemplified the puritan Atlantic through their fusion of faith and commerce allowing providence to guide their way.

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## INTRODUCTION

In late sixteenth-century London a small separate puritan congregation by the name of the Ancient church began meeting on the southern banks of the Thames River. This community of believers became the foundation of Atlantic puritan networks that would reach from England to Amsterdam and across the Atlantic and Caribbean into Barbados, Virginia, Maryland, Rhode Island, and Long Island. English religious reform coupled with their separatist tendencies towards schism eventually brought the fellow believers to Holland seeking religious asylum, only to witness their congregation's eventual collapse in the 1620s. The Ancient Church's separatism had culminated in a diaspora with the first waves of migration leaving Amsterdam for the Chesapeake.

Individuals including former elder of the Ancient Church Edward Bennett and his nephew Richard set up plantations in Virginia and transported fellow puritans across the Atlantic. Other congregants remained behind in Amsterdam using their connections to Virginia as the cornerstone of their burgeoning trade. Into the 1630s, the Sylvester family, Giles and his two sons Constant and Nathaniell, kept their base in the Netherlands while trading in Spain, France, Africa, Barbados, and among the Bennetts for Virginia's tobacco. Nathaniell and Constant later left Europe for posts in Barbados and on Shelter Island, New York stretching the reach of puritan networks with roots in the Ancient Church.



At the same time puritans whose antecedents lay outside of the Ancient Church crossed paths with the former congregants and eventually joined their endeavors in building the puritan Atlantic. While the Bennetts were establishing a foothold in the Chesapeake, Daniel Gookin, and his two sons Daniel and John, signed a contract with the Virginia Company to import British cattle to the colony. The family also established a plantation called Marie's Mount, south of the James River and near to the Bennetts. The Bland family, brothers John, Adam, Edward, and Theodorick stationed themselves at ports in Spain, England, Virginia, and Tangier where they also came across one-time members of the Ancient Church and entered upon their networks. Adam, Edward, and Theodorick all eventually settled among puritans in the Nansemond region of Virginia, while Theodorick married Richard Bennett's daughter and John Bland helped the Sylvester daughters escape England for Rhode Island at the end of the English Civil War.

Together, the remnant of the Ancient Church and the shared convictions of fellow Atlantic puritans coalesced in an extensive network of puritan believers during the middle of the seventeenth century. This web of relationships based upon a common understanding of puritan faith blossomed into a network of business partners, planters, merchants, politicians, and even kinsman whose impact radiated throughout the Atlantic. These puritans' transatlantic focus shaped both their spiritual and temporal endeavors. While New England puritans had maintained relationships across the Atlantic divide these puritans, birthed from the Ancient Church, embraced the Atlantic as the nexus of their colonial pursuits. Their Atlantic perspective redrew the New Englanders' errand into the wilderness through an imperial lens.<sup>1</sup> Rather than an experiment of exemplary living,

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<sup>1</sup> Perry Miller "Errand into the Wilderness," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 10, no. 1 (1953): 3-32.

Atlantic puritans initiated an effort for puritan evangelization and colonization resting on the British mercantile system and a millennial hope for Christ's immanent return. Under the guidance of providence their Atlantic trade ventures, plantation efforts, and colonization experiments achieved a dual purpose of filling British coffers and strengthening the British religious and political position against Spanish and French Catholic colonization. At the same time, the puritans' millennial eschatology portended widespread conversion on the eve of Christ's apocalyptic return and through their providential perspective puritan efforts in the Atlantic, whether religious, economic, or political, encouraged the spread of their faith, resulting in a harvest of souls which would precede the second coming.

This dissertation dismisses the New England dominance of colonial puritan historiography to argue that an interconnected community of Atlantic puritans pursued an alternate path to their faith apart from the Massachusetts Bay experiment. The term Atlantic puritan refers not only to their geographic proximity to the oceanic divide between Europe and the Americas, but also to the central role that this oceanic expanse played in shaping their religious, economic, and political perspectives. While a number of Atlantic puritans emerged from the nucleus of the Ancient Church and others eventually joined those original networks, ultimately membership within the puritan Atlantic involved the embrace of a particular attitude about faith, commerce, and political involvement.

Atlantic puritans' apocalyptic hopes shattered the binary of New Englanders' focus on European conversion through an example of holy living. Instead, Atlantic puritans took an interest in the spiritual fate of Europeans and Native Americans scattered

throughout the Caribbean, along the Atlantic coastline of North America, and in Ireland as central to both England's political hedge against Catholic colonization and the hope for Christ's millennial return. Within their eschatological framework, Atlantic puritans understood the second coming as resultant of a wider acceptance of the gospel message bearing the fruit of increased conversion. Thus the spread of puritan faith would mount in a crescendo of Christ's ultimate return. Within the Atlantic puritan framework Native Americans, as the supposed lost tribes of Israel, assumed a particular significance. Their successful conversion would complete the return of Israel's remnant to the faith and ultimately allow for the second coming to occur. This eschatological perspective served as the foundation of these puritans' Atlantic focus. Having imbued the Atlantic world with apocalyptic significance Atlantic puritans centered their commercial and political interests there as well.

Atlantic puritans practiced providentialism with a keen eye for interpreting daily occurrences through a supernatural lens coupled with a sensitivity to promptings of the Holy Spirit. Alexandra Walsham has described a widespread acceptance and practice of providentialism across the confessional divide where Catholics, Protestants, and puritans all tried their hands at discerning God's supernatural influence in their everyday lives. Walsham argues that this exercise made Protestantism English while its exaggeration identified puritans as "the hotter sort of providentialists."<sup>2</sup> This providential perspective allowed Atlantic puritans to combine their commercial and political interests beneath a spiritual umbrella. Individuals like Richard Bennett and John Bland blended their trading ventures with the religious purpose of providing economic strength for Britain's Protestant Empire while supporting their own efforts to spread the puritan message

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<sup>2</sup> Alexandra Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

throughout the Atlantic. Richard Bennett saw Virginia's fledgling economy as divine punishment for its apostasy, calling on his fellow puritans and Protestants alike to send more spiritual nourishment to the colony. The Sylvester brothers interpreted their material wealth as evidence of their obedience to God, while urging John Winthrop, Jr. to follow similar promptings of the Spirit. Amid the fluidity and chaos of a developing Atlantic world, providence served as an anchor for Atlantic puritans when more visible forms of spiritual nourishment were found wanting and allowed them to see their economic interests as inextricably linked to their apocalyptic hopes. Whereas New England puritans had aligned commercial involvement with an exchange of local political order for the chaos and debauchery of the marketplace, Atlantic puritans rejected calls for free trade and instead supported state-sponsored monopolies and restrictive trade policies designed to benefit the British mercantile system and support the existing political structure. As such, Atlantic puritans successfully fused their eschatological interest in the Atlantic world with their political and economic ventures ultimately creating a unique manifestation of the puritan faith that differed both from the New England flavor and their English antecedents.

The puritan Atlantic emerged from a fractured religious landscape in England, what David Como has described as an "antinomian underground" where Levellers, Muggletonians, and Quakers existed in parasitic relationship with puritans.<sup>3</sup> Within this milieu of dissent, members of the Ancient Church embraced separatism in their aversion towards the moral and theological compromise rampant in the Church of England. As the hotter sort of Protestants, what Collinson identifies as an intense faction of a largely

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<sup>3</sup> David Como, *Blown By the Spirit: Puritanism and the Emergence of an Antinomian Underground in Pre-Civil-War England* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004).

conservative movement, they were comfortable associating with those outside of their immediate religious circle, yet preferred to worship and maintain their closest ties among those who shared their stricter convictions.<sup>4</sup> Their difference with fellow Protestants was a matter of degree, though a significant one. It expressed itself through their dislike of Catholic carryover within the Anglican Church, reliance upon Scripture and providential guidance, self-identification as puritans, heightened apocalyptic sensitivity, and association with other puritans.

Unlike Winthrop's followers in Massachusetts Bay, the remnant of the Ancient Church severed symbolic ties with the Church of England and saw separation as critical to their success. It was this separatist impulse that allowed former members of the Ancient Church to reform their congregation in Amsterdam. This divide also encouraged schism within their church and the eventual dispersal throughout the Atlantic and Caribbean. Independent of their puritan brothers, the separatists of the Ancient Church no longer needed a foil to define themselves against. Peter Lake's positive definition of puritan faith, where the essence of moderate puritanism was not formal doctrine, the critique of liturgy, or a specific stance on church polity, but an ability to recognize similarly minded believers in both private spiritual practice and collective worship, closely aligns with the ethos of Atlantic puritanism.<sup>5</sup> While their faith was born as a critique of established religion in England, the Atlantic transformed it into a heightened version of Protestantism opposing encroaching Spanish Catholic colonial efforts. Atlantic puritans were especially sensitive to any remnants of popery, and alert towards an

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<sup>4</sup> Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1967).

<sup>5</sup> Peter Lake, *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

impending millennium with Christ's apocalyptic return.<sup>6</sup> The essence of the puritan Atlantic and those who formed a part of it was the ability to identify fellow believers in a structured worship setting, but most importantly as members of the larger community living their faith in the mercantile transactions, agricultural pursuits, and political maneuvers central to the seventeenth-century puritan Atlantic.

Different from their New England counterparts, Atlantic puritans demonstrated a widespread transition into Quaker faith rather than an aversion towards it. During the latter half of the seventeenth century a large portion of the Atlantic puritan community experienced a conversion into Quaker faith. Individuals including Richard Bennett and Nathaniell Sylvester exemplify a movement away from *scriptura sola* and towards George Fox's inner light. While little documentation of their personal spiritual journeys survive a general examination of conversion from puritan to Quaker faith suggests an expansion of the Holy Spirit within puritan doctrine, perhaps as a compensation for the lack of spiritual leadership in colonial locales. Geoffrey Nuttall's classic discussion of Quakerism as the result of an exaggerated office of the Holy Spirit within puritan faith draws a continuum between puritan theology and history exemplified by Atlantic puritans.<sup>7</sup> As people of the book, puritans viewed the Holy Spirit as a guide in interpreting Scripture. They drew a clear line between the Holy Spirit's power in the apostolic era and its role in the current age. Most puritans feared Quaker teachings as

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<sup>6</sup> My discussion of the Ancient Church's separate puritanism builds upon Patrick Collinson's argument for puritans as merely the "hotter sort of protestants" dismissing previous notions of a radical puritan opposition. I have also considered Peter Lake's suggestion that the essence of moderate puritanism was not formal doctrine, the critique of liturgy, or a specific stance on church polity, but an ability to recognize similarly minded believers in both private spiritual practice and collective worship. Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1967); Peter Lake, *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

<sup>7</sup> Geoffrey Nuttall, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946).

dangerous because in the Holy Spirit's personal indwelling, Quakers argued that contemporary believers possessed the same powers as the apostles had experienced. They also separated Holy Spirit's role apart from the interpretation of Scripture to suggest that new divine revelation could be imparted to the believer through the indwelling experience of the inner light. Detaching the Spirit from scripture opened the possibility for eventual contradictions between supposed personal revelations and God's written word, which many puritans found problematic.<sup>8</sup> Atlantic puritans' beginnings as a separate puritan congregation under Henry Barrow's leadership coupled with the teachings that had received from Henry Ainsworth in Amsterdam made them uniquely predisposed to the Quaker message. Henry Barrow's views on extempore prayer coupled with Henry Ainsworth's argument for the continuance of the Apostolic age likely prepared Atlantic puritans for the Quaker message they would later hear. While it is not clear exactly what pushed Atlantic puritans to break with their former faith and accept Quakerism, their previous instruction likely played a role in their eventual conversions. In following George Fox's 1671 journey throughout the Caribbean and up the North American Atlantic coastline to demonstrate the widespread Quaker conversion among former puritans, this dissertation suggests further disparity between Atlantic puritans and their New England coreligionists.

The puritan Atlantic was formed on the basis of relationships with kinship playing a large role in the growth and maintenance of existing networks. Brothers like Nathaniell and Constant Sylvester as well as John, Adam, and Edward Bland used fraternal bonds to sustain their trading ventures throughout the Atlantic. At the same time, women like

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<sup>8</sup> Harry Stout, *The New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2011.); Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992).

Sarah Gookin Thorowgood Yeardley, Grizzell Brinley Sylvester, and Anna Bennett Bland employed marriage as a means to extend the puritan reach throughout the Atlantic. With kinship bonds playing a key role, family became a core element of the puritan Atlantic just as it had formed the center of the puritan colony at Plymouth. John Demos has shown how the household unit's position as an automatic part of puritan society made its function almost invisible. Consequently, "private and public life, formed part of the same moral equation. The one supported the other, and they became in a sense indistinguishable."<sup>9</sup> In operating as a business, school, vocational institute, church, and welfare institution families shaped the communities to which they belonged. The "family was joined to other institutions and other purposes in an intricate web of interconnections."<sup>10</sup> Puritan families within the Atlantic, especially those who had birthed the networks from the Ancient church, served a similar role in building and shaping the puritan Atlantic. Rather than acting as passive building elements, or reflections of the community to which they belonged, they actively created the world around them. Thus, the family, as the core of puritan and colonial society, became a central element of the puritan Atlantic as well.

These Atlantic puritans' contributions to seventeenth-century trade contribute an alternate understanding of the relationship between puritan faith and commerce than the narrative suggested by New England puritan historiography. New England studies have revealed a puritan merchant uncomfortable with financial success and its challenge to piety. While more recent work has asserted the prevalence of market involvement and commercial interests among puritan merchants, their unease with profit and financial

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<sup>9</sup> John Demos, *A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), second edition, 2000, 186

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*



success remains central to the narrative.<sup>11</sup> The collective efforts of Mark Peterson, Stephen Innes, and John Frederick Martin suggest that profit and commercial involvement played a key role in New England puritanism. While chipping away at Miller's puritan consensus their works identify subliminal currents rather than widespread public sentiment and suggest religious compromise in an effort to pursue economic success rather than an overarching spiritual and economic philosophy which allowed the two to work in unison. Atlantic puritans differed in their ability to pursue faith and commerce as parallel ventures with the same spiritual goal. Their uninhibited embrace of mercantile pursuit and financial gain allowed many scholars to presume that their faith had been sacrificed at the altar of worldly pursuit. Rather than exchanging piety for profit, Atlantic puritans instead fused their dual interests into a singular purpose. It was their alternate understanding of trade, which embraced British mercantile control, creation of monopolies, and protectionist policies that allowed Atlantic puritans to pursue commerce as a means to achieve a desired apocalyptic end. While New Englanders advocated for free trade and saw market involvement as the dismissal of local religious and political authority and an effort to escape proper accountability for the chaos of the Atlantic market, Atlantic puritans conceived of a different commercial endeavor. For individuals like Richard Bennett, John Bland, and Nathaniell Sylvester the marketplace was a beacon of order, controlled by the British government, aligned with puritan efforts against Spanish Catholic colonization, and even infused with Scriptural elements to

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<sup>11</sup> John Frederick Martin, *Profits in the Wilderness: Entrepreneurship and the Founding of New England Towns in the Seventeenth Century* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991); Stephen Innes, *Creating the Commonwealth: The Economic Culture of Puritan New England* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1995); Mark Peterson, *The Price of Redemption: The Spiritual Economy of Puritan New England* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997); Mark Valeri, *Heavenly Merchandize: How Religion Shaped Commerce in Puritan America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010).

dictate proper behavior. In working alongside the British Parliament to achieve favorable monopolies, control British trade, and ensure the success of their private colonial efforts, Atlantic puritans simultaneously achieved personal profit, while sustaining British political efforts and working as advocates on behalf of their fellow coreligionists. Mercantile efforts became a holy pursuit. Interpreted through their providential lens, worldly gain was evidence of spiritual obedience while pious business practices and the steady growth of their puritan communities ensured continued providential blessing. If Christ stood ready to make his millennial return, Atlantic puritans worked ardently to prepare an Atlantic world where protestant colonization defeated the Spanish Catholic foe, and puritan faith infused the language of trade.

The identification of an Atlantic community composed of puritans further highlights the importance of an Atlantic paradigm for colonial studies whereby the oceanic focus changed and shaped their particular experience. Building on the works of Karen Kupperman and Alison Games my examination of puritanism demonstrates how a developing Atlantic world, fluid and unstable, mobile and changing, shaped the eschatological, commercial, and political focus of a group of puritans in the seventeenth century.<sup>12</sup> The Sylvester brothers' ties to Amsterdam, Barbados, and Long Island coupled with the Gookins' roots in Ireland and the Bland brothers' trade throughout Spain, Tangier, and the Canary Islands rested upon a certain mobility at the center of the puritan Atlantic. This ability and necessity to travel throughout the colonies coupled with the prevalence of capital and property dispersed in a variety of colonial locales weakened Atlantic puritan tendencies to remain loyal to one particular colony, country, or region.

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<sup>12</sup> Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *Providence Island, 1630-1641: The Other Puritan Colony* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Alison Games, *Migration and the Origins of the English Atlantic World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).

Outside of their geographic fluidity, Atlantic puritans also experienced the flux of religious and political upheaval. The chaos of post-reformation England coupled with the ever-shifting political situation in England made it difficult for Atlantic puritans to place supreme allegiance with any particular political party or established religion. This geographic, religious, and political uncertainty of the seventeenth century instead strengthened and encouraged the formation of the puritan Atlantic. Within this instability emerged the constancy of relationships built on a shared faith blooming into a larger network of puritans with common religious, business, and political concerns.

Ultimately, a combination of the Ancient Church's unique brand of separatism, an alternate view of puritan trade, and the fluidity of the Atlantic world created a network of likeminded believers with common pursuits. This separate understanding of seventeenth-century puritanism, apart from the New England experience, suggests a revision of puritan historiography. New England's errand into the wilderness, and the subsequent efforts to chip away at that singular purpose, has previously been at the center of debates about puritanism.<sup>13</sup> The remnant of the Ancient Church proposes a different perspective on puritan faith that contrasts with the contemplative spirituality of New England which begot the wealth of primary sources available for historians today. Rather than dismissing Atlantic puritans as casual participants in their faith because of their shared interests in commerce and lack of publications, historians must also consider how the omission of similar puritan texts in the Chesapeake, Barbados, and Long Island sheds light on the

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<sup>13</sup> Miller, "Errand into the Wilderness"; Kupperman, *Providence Island*; also see Nicholas Canny, *The Upstart Earl: A Study of the Social and Mental World of Richard Boyle the First Earl of Cork, 1566-1643* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1982); more recent Atlantic approaches include April Lee Hatfield, *Atlantic Virginia: Intercolonial Relations in the Seventeenth Century* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Susanah Shaw Romney, *New Netherland Connections: Intimate Networks and Atlantic Ties in Seventeenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2014); Audrey Horning, *Ireland in the Virginian Sea: Colonialism in the British Atlantic* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2013).

Atlantic puritan. Perhaps a discourse on puritanism existed wherein some embraced a more solitary complete spirituality while others pursued a faith lived through daily action. Although those devoted to a life of study and devotion predictably left the records at the center of puritan historiography, those attempting to live their faith through action left less evidence of their convictions. In considering alternate forms of puritan piety, expressed through action rather than word and shaped by the emerging Atlantic world, we may go so far as to suggest that perhaps it was those in Massachusetts Bay whose piety should be held in question. Battered and tired from the struggles of post-reformation England and having sought shelter among the safety of fellow believers, perhaps New Englanders remained fearful of engagement with the opposition and hid instead behind a veil of separatism.

## Chapter Outline

The following dissertation analyzes the puritan Atlantic through the experiences of a number of its key members and families to argue that their Atlantic focus helped to shape these puritans' view of the end times and therefore their understanding of politics and commerce through a providential lens. Individuals and their corresponding families help to illustrate different characteristics of Atlantic puritans and their experiences shared together provide a more complete picture of the ideas, practices, and attitudes that formed the puritan Atlantic. The first chapter, "The Spiritual Economy of Richard Bennett," analyzes Richard Bennett, and his Uncle Edward Bennett's role in locating a center of puritan activity south of the James River in Nansemond, Virginia whose influence

radiated throughout the Atlantic. As a merchant, planter, Burgess, Councilman, Parliamentary Commissioner, and eventual Governor of Virginia, Richard Bennett uniquely fused his spiritual interests with political and economic endeavors. For Bennett, rather than seeing commercial and political concerns as competing forces working against a pursuit of piety, he viewed the three as inextricably intertwined and tied to Christ's impending return. Bennett saw his ability to achieve political influence and economic success as tied to the spiritual future of his fellow puritans in the Chesapeake. As part of a religious minority within a predominately Anglican colony, Bennett's attention to the British mercantile theory also colored his views religious practice from a protectionist perspective. Ultimately, Bennett developed a mercantile spiritual economy that fueled both his pursuit of temporal wealth and puritan piety.

The second chapter, "A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing: Daniel Gookin's Millennial Challenge for the City on a Hill," contrasts Daniel Gookin's Atlantic puritan perspective with that of his New England neighbors. As an English colonizer from Cork, Ireland, Daniel first traveled to Virginia with his father under a contract to provide cattle for the colony. After Governor Berkeley's persecution of the puritan minority, Daniel Gookin moved his family to Cambridge, Massachusetts where he became a missionary to the Algonquian alongside John Eliot. While common puritan sympathies welcomed Gookin into New England, his different flavor of puritan faith quickly revealed itself making him less comfortable in New England circles. Gookin's membership with the puritan Atlantic, his role in commerce among fellow believers, time spent among coreligionists in Virginia, and relationships maintained with puritans across the Atlantic had shaped his understanding of puritanism apart from John Winthrop's "City on a Hill." Gookin's

conception of puritanism embraced a collaboration between faith and commerce not unlike his colleague Richard Bennett, a broad membership among the visible sainthood that suggested the inclusion of praying Indians, and an eschatological vision that stretched beyond the proposed New Jerusalem in Massachusetts which sought to encompass puritans throughout the Chesapeake and in the Caribbean. Among New Englanders, Gookin's understanding of the faith contradicted the very core of their errand into the wilderness by threatening to redraw boundaries of membership among the elect and change the definition of New England community. Gookin also pushed acceptable limits in commerce, and ultimately challenged the providential vision at the heart of New England's purpose by repositioning the New Jerusalem outside of Massachusetts and elevating the Algonquians to a seemingly undeserved position in the hierarchy of conversion.

The third chapter, "Widows, Wives, and Daughters: Gendering the Puritan Atlantic" explores the role that women played within Atlantic puritan networks. As key shapers of a private life which became the center of public attention, wives and mothers influenced the puritan community around them. Underneath a thin veneer of male influence lay seemingly invisible layers of female effort which built and sustained puritan networks throughout the Atlantic. Through the tool of marriage women like Sarah Thorowgood Gookin Yeardley and Anna Bennett Bland successfully expanded the reach of puritan influence by solidifying connections with key families within the puritan fold. At the same time, women like Grizzell Brinley and Grace Walrond placed their families within more favorable circumstances by entering puritan networks in the midst of English political upheaval. Correspondence between females also built a bridge upon which their

husbands, brothers, and fathers built business and political relationships. Finally, women like Sarah Gookin Yeardley worked within acceptable female boundaries to question a discourse on native conversion and inadvertently challenge patriarchal authority and racial constructions. By taking in a Roanoke boy against popular wishes and participating in a dialogue on native conversion and acculturation with her former brother-in-law Daniel Gookin, Sarah challenged Virginia sentiments on attitudes towards the neighboring Indians. Her acceptance of cultural immersion mirrored both Daniel Gookin's Algonquian attempts and the beliefs of her brother-in-law Thomas Thorowgood. Having both been exposed to Thorowgood's theories on the supposed Hebraic lineage of American Indians, both Sarah and Daniel participated in an experimental discourse that seemed to implement Thorowgood's ideas while contradicting common practices for European-native relationships.

The fourth chapter, "Sweetly Bound: Sylvester Family Networks in the building of a Puritan Atlantic Empire", traces the role that Giles, Constant, and Nathaniell Sylvester played in creating and sustaining the puritan Atlantic, while also demonstrating how the relationships at the core of these networks came to supersede remaining loyalties to a distant metropole, shifting political parties, and rigid religious definitions. For the Sylvester brothers, their political and economic decisions came to rest on the foundation of their puritan networks from their early trade, to marriage, and their decision to create a provisioning plantation on Shelter Island. Nathaniell's first forays into the tobacco trade took him to the Chesapeake and up the James River to trade with many of the former congregants of the Ancient Church. When the political tides shifted in Barbados in the wake of a Royalist coup, Constant and Nathaniell remained tied to the Parliamentary

commissioner, Richard Bennett, who eventually awarded Constant with a position on the Council while likely alerting the brothers to shifting sentiments in the Parliamentary direction. As conditions became more hospitable on Barbados, their newly purchased property of Shelter Island became a useful auxiliary as a provisioning plantation for their Barbados efforts and a trading post for their northern Atlantic ventures. Nathaniell Sylvester's strategic marriage placed him at the center of New England's coveted puritan circles, while Constant's union with Grace Walrond gave him further access to elite planter circles on Barbados. The brothers' membership within the puritan Atlantic became a central impetus behind their actions as they negotiated competing political, regional, and economic loyalties in their lives.

The fifth chapter, "Ordering the Atlantic: The Blands' Holy Union of Commerce, Politics, and Puritan Faith" provides an alternate example of fraternal networks within the puritan Atlantic while further illustrating how faith, politics, and commerce coalesced. John Bland's publications demonstrate how an elevation of order as the supreme attribute of puritan faith allowed the brothers to align their commercial, political, and spiritual pursuits. Unlike their New England counterparts who advocated free trade and in turn created a perception of merchant practice that evaded political and religious authority and exchanged the order of community and law for the chaos of the market, the Blands supported a different kind of commercial involvement. Like their colleagues the Bennetts and Sylvesters, the Blands encouraged a mercantile policy meant to prop up British trade through the encouragement of monopolies, navigation acts, high import duties, and measures to encourage the inflow of bullion into the English treasury. This highly regulated, protectionist mercantile theory allowed the Blands to align what were



perceived as competing forces in New England through the lens of order. Because their mercantile theory upheld political and religious authority the three competing elements of faith, commerce, and politics could be viewed as working together for one common good. This allowed the Blands to spiritualize their economic endeavors by encouraging a puritan lexicon to permeate their understanding of British mercantile theory. They called for the formation of corporations to mirror the spiritual body of the church within the economic realm. They also developed moral precepts to govern trade that paralleled the Ten Commandments and saw their commercial success as germane to an imperial religious battle against Spanish Catholic encroachment. In a Trinitarian approach, commerce, politics, and faith could be the three-fold cord of their Atlantic vision.

After looking deeper into the lives of individuals who made up the puritan Atlantic, the final chapter takes a step back to explore a widespread acceptance of the Quaker faith among former Atlantic puritans. Following the geographical trail of George Fox's journey through the colonies I reunite a previously divided scholarship between the puritan Atlantic and the later Quaker Atlantic to argue that puritan communities and networks were key to the success of later Quaker missionary efforts. Because George Fox visited six Quaker communities which had formerly been puritan settlements, his journey provides a unique perspective in understanding the role of puritanism in Quaker conversion. In line with David Como's argument for a close relationship between puritanism and other post-reformation sectarian faiths, and following Geoffrey Nuttall's argument for the over assertion of the Holy Spirit within puritan faith leading towards Quaker belief, I argue that the puritan settlements dotting the Atlantic coastline were uniquely prepared for the Quaker message. Many of the Quakers being former puritans themselves were

likely aware of the puritan want for assurance, and probably targeted these puritan communities as potential sites for evangelization. After finding converts among the Bennetts, Emperors, Blands, and Sylvesters the Quaker faith not only found commonly prepared ground in puritan outposts, but also received access to a web of contacts making potential converts easily accessible. The Quaker faith was not delivered solely by foreign missionaries, but also came under the guise of friendship and community as recent puritan to Quaker converts maintained ties and continued correspondence with their puritan colleagues. This approach garnered significant success for Quaker missionaries as they reported large meetings and considerable convincements at former puritan communities in Barbados, Virginia, Maryland, Rhode Island, and Shelter Island.

Understanding Quaker missionary efforts with an eye to puritan Atlantic networks also offers an alternate interpretation for their seemingly futile efforts in Boston. Because their strategy of targeting settlements on the Eastern coastline had worked so well prior to arriving in Boston, Mary Dyer and her fellow missionaries likely expected at least a few converts in the puritan stronghold. Rather than viewing her death as premeditated display of martyrdom or a foolish plea for conversion historians should also consider her actions as the rational conclusion of Quaker missionary efforts throughout the colonies.

## CHAPTER 1

### OUT OF THE ASHES OF THE ANCIENT CHURCH: THE DIASPORA AND FORMATION OF A PURITAN ATLANTIC

In the winter of 1590-1591 Henry Barrow huddled in the corner of his cold cell at the Clink attempting to conceal pen and paper from the ever-watchful guards and the rising sewage in his cell. Having been imprisoned for defamation of the English religious establishment as a false church, Barrow wrote to encourage his followers who continued meeting secretly in their homes throughout the city. The Clink, infamous for its wet conditions and the deplorable citizens it harbored, was located in the southeast region of London known as Southwark just outside of city jurisdiction.<sup>14</sup> The prison was notoriously wet, cold, and pungent because it bordered the Thames to the north and the common sewer on the west. This allowed the waters from both to seep into the cells and prisoners would often sit in their own filth mixed with the stagnant sewage waters. The Clink even offered special punishment, tailored to these conditions, which threatened delinquents with soaking in the refuse waters until their skin began to rot away from the bone. Having spent nearly three years in “miserable close prisons” shut off from the “aire, from all exercise, from all companie or conversation with any person” Barrow jealously preserved his remaining link to the outside world. He had smuggled his earlier

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<sup>14</sup> The approximate position of the prison today would be west of Stoney Street and south of Clink Street. Fran C. Chalfant, *Ben Johnson's London: A Jacobean Placename Dictionary* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1978), 32-33.

work, *A Briefe Discoverie of the False Church*, sheet by sheet out from the prison through his friend and accomplice Daniel Studley and continued to write although the act had been forbidden in the Clink since the fall of 1588. Periodically the guards rushed into the cells rummaging prisoners' belongings and confiscating from them "all meanes so much as to write, yncke [ink] and paper" but Barrow persisted knowing his words continued to encourage the surviving remnant outside the prison walls.<sup>15</sup>

While Barrow remained in prison, the congregation of craftsmen, lawyers, tailors, goldsmiths, physicians, schoolmasters, shoemakers, apothecaries, shipwrights and haberdashers continued without formal leadership.<sup>16</sup> Barrow's fellow leader, John Greenwood, had been arrested prior to Barrow while the group was holding a religious meeting at Henry Martin's home on October 8, 1587. Greenwood and twenty of the worshipers were taken immediately to London's Episcopal Palace and later brought to the Clink.<sup>17</sup> Initially, Henry Barrow had escaped imprisonment but was arrested on Sunday, November 19, 1587, when he visited his colleague Greenwood in prison and a warden by the name of Shepherd took him without warrant and presented him at Lambeth Palace before Archbishop John Whitgift.<sup>18</sup> In 1592, John Greenwood was temporarily released from prison and named teacher of the Ancient Church during a private meeting on St. Nicholas Lane, but Barrow remained in prison. He was transferred to the Fleet, a jail used

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<sup>15</sup> Henry Barrow, *The Writings of Henry Barrow, 1590-91*, ed. Leland H. Carlson (London: Routledge, 2003), 30. All quotes from early publications have been modernized for greater clarity. Original spelling and punctuation remain the same while letter usage has been updated.

<sup>16</sup> Henry Barrow and John Greenwood, *The Writings of John Greenwood and Henry Barrow, 1591-1593*, ed. Leland H. Carlson (London: Routledge, 2003), 293-294.

<sup>17</sup> Champlin Burrage, ed., *The Early English Dissenters in the Light of Recent Research (1550-1641)* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1967), 2:19-20.

<sup>18</sup> Henry Barrow, "Barrow's First Examination" in *The Writings of Henry Barrow*, ed. Leland H. Carlson (London: Routledge, 2003), 91-92.

for offenses of the Chancery Court and Star Chamber.<sup>19</sup> Francis Johnson, a recent convert, became the new head of the Ancient Church while Greenwood operated below him as teacher. Once again, their leadership did not last for long as Johnson and Greenwood were taken from the home of Edward Boyse during a conventicle and placed in prison. Greenwood joined Barrow in the Fleet, while Johnson was locked up in the Clink.<sup>20</sup>

Members of the Ancient Church petitioned for their fellow congregants' release while continuing their ministry covertly in London. Barrow and Greenwood's death on April 6, 1593 and Archbishop Whitgift's unrelenting pursuit of nonconformists soon made it impossible for the dissenters to remain in England.<sup>21</sup> They fled to the Dutch city of Kampen in the province of Overijssel in 1593. Kampen was advertising for immigrants from all countries and promising to deliver rights of citizenship without cost.<sup>22</sup> By October 1595, however, they had moved to Naarden, a trading post closer to Amsterdam and weakened by a lack of leadership the congregation stumbled along in poverty receiving poor relief from the city magistrates.<sup>23</sup> A beleaguered remnant of the Ancient Church's former English glory, maybe as few as forty to sixty persons, reunited in Amsterdam with their recently released pastor Francis Johnson in 1596.

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<sup>19</sup> Burrage, *Early English Dissenters*, 50; The Fleet Prison was a jail that was used for offenses of the Chancery Court and Star Chamber located east of the Fleet Ditch and north of Ludgate Hill. In 1593 the prison was described as "a congregation of unwholesome smells of the town." Chalfant, *Ben Johnson's London*, 81-83.

<sup>20</sup> John Penry, "To The Right Honorable The Lords and Others of Her Majestie's Most Honorable Privie Counsell," in *The Writings of John Greenwood and Henry Barrow*, ed. Leland H. Carlson (London: Routledge, 2003), 395-401.

<sup>21</sup> Scott Culpepper, *Francis Johnson and the English Separatist Influence* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2011), 67.

<sup>22</sup> Keith L. Sprunger, *Dutch Puritanism: A History of English and Scottish Churches of the Netherlands in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1982), 47-49.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

When the Ancient Church arrived in Holland the Netherlands had become a refuge for puritans of varying degrees as well as other sects birthed from the Reformation. The congregation's time in Holland was far from peaceful as they frequently clashed with surrounding sectarian groups while competing congregations, especially the Anabaptists, often succeeded at wooing members away from their separate puritan congregation. John Smyth, an early leader of the Baptist movement, and his followers, intermingled with members of the Ancient Church before he accepted the Baptist faith. His ultimate fracture with the church led some of the members of the Ancient Church to follow Smyth in the "heresies of the Anabaptists." At one point half of the members of the Ancient Church excommunicated the other half, leaving the remaining few to worship at the home of Jean de l'Ecluse on the Lange Houstraat in Amsterdam.<sup>24</sup> That is where Francis Johnson found the vulnerable remnant when he arrived and reestablished leadership in 1596. Under Johnson's guidance they built their own church along an alley known as the Barndesteeg, or the alley of burning near the modern red-light district.<sup>25</sup> This unlikely group of refugees would eventually serve as the nucleus of a puritan movement reaching across the Atlantic. Within the religious community families such as the Bennetts, Uties, and Sylvesters used their time in Amsterdam as an opportunity to launch their Atlantic mercantile careers.

Separatism failed to create more than a thin veil of unity and a number of the former congregants of the Ancient Church found their differences with the church irreconcilable. Christopher Lawne, following his excommunication from the congregation in 1610, published the *Prophane Schism of the Brownists* detailing the

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<sup>24</sup> Burrage, I:56; Sprunger, 49.

<sup>25</sup> Sprunger, 48-50; Culpepper, 109.

ghastly sins of his fellow congregants. Lawne described his former fellow elders as the pillars of that “rotten separation, the one [Daniel Studley] by his wit, and the other [Edward Bennett] by his wealth.” He further called Bennett “a horne of the beast, that lends his power, wealth, and authority to the maintenance of the beast...As the King of Spain is unto the Poper: so is Master Bennett unto Master [Francis Johnson] Pastor of the Ancient Church.” He particularly abhorred Daniel Studley who he accused of committing “Adulterie, Incest, Murder, Treason, Drunkenesse, Perjurie, and Blasphemie” along with “his many lascivious attempts to a young maid” and his “teaching many wicked and ungodly songs and rimes unto children when he kept school; in stead of catechising them.”<sup>26</sup> George Johnson, Francis Johnson’s brother released his own tell all pamphlet, *A Discourse of Some Troubles revealing the offenses of his former brethren* in which he listed the faults of Johnson, Ainsworth, and Studley, leaving them with the chilling thought to “rest also assured that God likewise in due time wil discover them.”<sup>27</sup> As the sources of their temporal troubles shifted from a common opposition against English authoritarian structures to the infighting of disgruntled fellow congregants, the perseverance of the puritan community stood in greater peril. While others have marked the demise of the Ancient Church in Amsterdam as a failure with its congregants dispersal into various groups this continued schism actually allowed the Ancient church to persist. Their separation spurred migration across the Atlantic and formed the core of seventeenth-century puritan networks.

Separatist impulses within the Ancient Church had escalated to the point of fractious division. Christopher Lawne’s banishment and his desire to pursue his religious

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<sup>26</sup> Christopher Lawne, *The Prophane Scisme of the Brownists or Separatists* (1612), 15-16.

<sup>27</sup> George Johnson, *A Discourse of Some Troubles and Excommunications in the Banished English Church at Amsterdam* (1603), 185.

convictions elsewhere became the eventual catalyst for what would develop into a diaspora of the Ancient Church. After his split from the Ancient Church in 1610 and the resulting publication, Lawne recruited one hundred of his followers from the congregation to follow him to Virginia. It is likely that he also moved back to London for a time and also recruited fellow puritans that had not followed the congregation to Amsterdam. Sponsored by Richard Wiseman, one of Edward Bennett's business partners, and Nathaniel Basse, Lawne and his followers set off from England in March 1619 in the *Marigold* and arrived in the colony on May 20<sup>th</sup>.<sup>28</sup> By July Lawne had obtained a patent for a plantation on the lower side of the James River known by the Indian name Warresqueak in current Isle of Wight County Virginia. The area was eventually known as Lawne;s Neck and Lawne's Creek after it's original English settler.<sup>29</sup> There he established a plantation on the south side of the James River, which would become the puritan stronghold for Virginia coreligionists.

But shortly after their arrival, in the summer of 1619, the swampy conditions and unfamiliar surroundings overcame the new settlement with illness. While many moved to Charles City, Lawne himself never recovered from the seasoning period and died less than a year after his arrival. The following November, after Lawne's death, the patent was conferred to the remaining holders, including Basse, and Wiseman, "with all manner of pryvedges therein conteyned" and the Company stipulated that "the said Plantacon shall from hence forth be called the Ile of Wighte Plantacon." Because so many of the original settlers that had arrived with Lawne were now dead, the patent holders were given until

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<sup>28</sup> H.R. McIlwaine, ed., *Minutes of the Council and General Court of Colonial Virginia 1622-1632, 1670-1676 With Notes and Excerpts from Original Council and General Court Records in 1683, Now Lost* (Richmond, VA: Virginia State Library, 1924), 90.

<sup>29</sup> Martha W. McCartney, *Virginia Immigrants and Adventurers, 1607-1635: A Biographical Dictionary* (Baltimore: MD: Genealogical Publishing Company, 2007), 50.



“Midsomer 1625 to make vp the number of their said psonns menconed in their former patents.”<sup>30</sup> While Lawne’s settlement struggled from the disease that plagued Virginia’s early years, his attempt served as the impetus for puritan settlement from the ashes of the Ancient Church.

After Lawne’s death and Basse and Wiseman’s assumption of the patent, his former nemesis, and fellow congregant in the Ancient Church, Edward Bennett also set his sights on the new world. From his office on Bartholomew Lane, St. Olave Jewry, near St. Stephens Coleman Street Church, Bennett likely planned his own trip to Virginia while recruiting settlers from Amsterdam and England. He began transporting adventurers in 1621, eventually as many as 600, to Virginia, many of whom were probably separate puritans and followers of Johnson and Ainsworth. The Bennett family’s ties to the Ancient Church and their reach across the Atlantic became an important element of the congregation’s migration. As a successful merchant, Edward Bennett built a bridge of contacts reaching from Amsterdam and England to the Chesapeake upon which his fellow puritan colleagues eventually traversed the Atlantic. The son of Robert Bennett, a tanner from Elvelscombe, Somerset, and his wife Elizabeth Edney, Edward Bennett was the youngest of fifteen children, christened on February 2, 1577/8. He is believed to have made his fortune through marriage as his wife, Mary Bourne. She was the granddaughter of Richard Bourne, who had been a wealthy merchant in Wells, the brother of the Bishop of Bath, and the nephew of the Secretary of State to Queen Mary. While it is likely that Edward Bennett left England around the same time as his fellow members of the Ancient Church, the date is not clear. It seems that he

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<sup>30</sup> Susan M. Kingsbury, ed., *The Records of the Virginia Company of London* (Washington: G.P.O.:1906), 1:414, 255.

also spent some time in Delft, and travelled often between Holland, England, and the Chesapeake. Bennett's wealth had helped him to achieve leadership within the congregation and also allowed him to subsidize much of the Ancient Church's migration across the Atlantic.

As schism and Dutch apostasy threatened to destroy the Ancient Church, Bennett's focus on the mercantile potential of the New World, offered a new hope for many members of the congregation. In April of 1621 Bennett had been admitted a free member of the Virginia Company upon the recommendation of Edwin Sandys "for prohibiting the bringing in of Spanish Tobacco...by a treatise wch he made touching the inconvenience that the importacon of Tobacco out of Spaine had brought into this land."<sup>31</sup> For his "transporting of people to Virginia" Bennett received a patent for settlement in partnership with Wiseman and Ayres.<sup>32</sup> In November of the same year, Bennett was granted another patent for transporting 100 persons to the colony of Virginia.<sup>33</sup> His nephew, Richard Bennett received a patent for 2,000 acres on the Nansemond River for bringing a total of fifty people to the colony including William Durand, who would serve as a lay minister for the congregation, and Richard Glasock, who would later volunteer his home as a site for puritan preaching.<sup>34</sup> Edward and his family settled a plantation known as Bennett's Welcome in Warresqueak, below the James River and near the mouth of Burwell's Bay.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Kingsbury, *Records of the Virginia Company*, 1:446; Edward Bennett, *A Treatise Divided into three parts, touching the inconveniences, that the Importation of Tobacco out of Spain, hath brought into this land*, (ca. 1620).

<sup>32</sup> Kingsbury, *Records of the Virginia Company*, 1: 534.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 1: 554.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:53.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 1: 51.

Edward Bennett's business partner Nathaniel Basse also began a settlement known as Basse's Choice bringing one hundred settlers to Virginia.<sup>36</sup> Henry Jacob, a member of John Robinson's church in Leyden ventured to Virginia sometime between 1622 and 1624, probably in conjunction with either Lawne or Bennett. Taking about thirty members of his congregation, Jacob settled at Lawne's plantation in late 1623 or early 1624, dying shortly thereafter.<sup>37</sup> Another elder of the Ancient Church, Francis Blackwell, followed Lawne to Virginia and with Bennett's assistance took an additional 180 members of the congregation in Amsterdam to Virginia. After a short respite in England, during which Blackwell received the blessing of the Archbishop of Canterbury for his journey, he, along with his fellow separate puritans set off for the colony in August of 1618 on the ill fated *William and Thomas*. An unfortunate weather pattern blew the ship so off course and they did not reach the Chesapeake until March of the following year at which time 130 of the 180 passengers, the captain, and six of the sailors had already died.<sup>38</sup>

Early puritan settlement in the Chesapeake was fraught with difficulties both in journeying across the Atlantic and upon their arrival. Despite the many deaths incurred and the obstacles encountered, within the early years of the seventeenth century the remnant of the Ancient Church had established a veritable presence in the developing Chesapeake. The former elders of the Ancient Church and the congregants that had followed them became a strong community south of the James River. At the same time, some members of the Ancient Church remained behind in Amsterdam preserving puritan

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 1:561.

<sup>37</sup> D. Reid Ross, "Edward Bennett and his family in early seventeenth century Virginia and Maryland," *Virginia Tidewater Genealogy* 39, no. 2 (2008): 27-29.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 16.

influence and connections in Holland. The outlines of a puritan network created by the Ancient Church quickly expanded into a much larger web of connections as those outside of their former congregation were drawn to the network of puritan merchants.

Despite the difficulties Blackwell encountered, and the troubles incurred by the puritan colonists who fell victim to the Indian Massacre of 1622, the former leaders and congregants of the Ancient Church had effectively established a concentration of separate puritans in the Chesapeake Bay. While those that traveled to Virginia became the foundation from Ancient Church networks throughout the Chesapeake, another family maintained important merchant ties in Amsterdam and eventually looked towards Barbados and New England to expand the reach of the puritan merchant networks. The Sylvester family, Giles, Mary, their two daughters, and five sons, including Nathaniell and Constant, remained pillars of the Ancient Church after the Chesapeake contingent had departed and worked to strengthen puritan merchant networks outside of Virginia. In 1636, Giles had been one of the members of the Ancient Church, along with Nathaniel Arnold, asked to “borrow, draw and receive on behalf of the said congregation the sum of three thousand guilders” with an interest rate of 6.25%. The sum was used to “mortgage the housing belonging to the said congregation, called the English Church, at Vloonburch in Lange Houtstraat.”<sup>39</sup> As such, the elder Sylvester was likely a trusted member of the remaining congregation now under the leadership of Henry Ainsworth. He had been working as a merchant, along with his sons, for a number of years having traded “a certain amount of saffron, for the price of 32 guilders and 10 stuivers per pound” with a Hans Wijdershuysen as early as February of 1614, when he brought a case against the

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<sup>39</sup> Dutch Notarial Archives 848/97.

recipient for the remaining debt.<sup>40</sup> By 1615, Giles had partnered with two other merchants to charter the ship *De Waterhont* “to set sail from this land at the first suitable weather and wind God will give and to sail directly to the Condaet.” They contracted to charter the ship for a period of two months, not counting sailing days, during which time the merchants’ goods would be loaded onto the ship, delivered, and a new load would be acquired.<sup>41</sup> The following year, Giles chartered another ship called *De Jonge Raven* to Condaet under a similar contract.<sup>42</sup> In February of 1626 Gilles Sylvester was 42 years old and had established a reputation as a tobacco trader, likely doing business with his former congregants and colleagues in the Chesapeake, including Edward Bennett who had become one of the top exporters of tobacco for the colony.<sup>43</sup> Giles and his partners had agreed to purchase a shipment of Virginia tobacco “23 pieces, that is boxes, barrels and hogsheads of leaves of Virginia tobacco” for “14 or 15 stuivers per pond, and 18 stuivers per pound if they could chose half of it.”<sup>44</sup> The Sylvester patriarch continued to trade in Virginia tobacco, and also partnered with his sons in expanding the reach of the Ancient Church and its puritan merchants through the Caribbean and to New England.<sup>45</sup>

By March of 1640 Giles was trading in tobacco and cotton from Barbados as well.<sup>46</sup> One of his sons, likely Constant or Nathaniell, oversaw construction on a merchant ship “having been fitted with a new main mast for an English galleon, now at Texel while Constant Sylvester also transported 25 pigs from Barbados to St Christopher for the fee of freight on his own ship *Het huijs in Muijen* on behalf of a fellow merchant.

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<sup>40</sup> Dutch Notarial Archives 134, folio 173v.

<sup>41</sup> Dutch Notarial Archives 141/folio 48v-49v.

<sup>42</sup> Dutch Notarial Archives 149/102v.

<sup>43</sup> Dutch Notarial Archives 720/46.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> For more on his continued trade in tobacco: Dutch Notarial Archives 942/1171; Dutch Notarial Archives 720/68.

<sup>46</sup> Dutch Notarial Archives 1567B/1330; Dutch Notarial Archives 489/98.

<sup>47</sup> Together, Giles and his son Nathaniell owned *De Zeerobbee* and transported 150 hogsheads of Virginia tobacco to Amsterdam in September of 1644.<sup>48</sup> Nathaniel had traveled on the family's ship to Virginia, docking in Kecoughtan and later to Barbados, along the plantations of his former congregants now settled in Virginia.<sup>49</sup> His brother Constant Sylvester had also traveled aboard *De Zeerobbe* to "La Rochelle near the island of St. Martin, where they loaded supplies of wines, spirits linen and other goods. From there on the 14<sup>th</sup> of January 1645 to the salt islands, that is to Isla de Fogo, there they bought a number of cows, donkeys and some horses. With these they set sail for the Caribbean islands of the West Indies arriving first at Barbados," they also traveled to "Antigua, Nevis, St. Christopher and St. Eustace, they traded and exchanged their cargo, taken in at La Rochelle or St. Martin and the said animals at Isla de Fogo, for goods and freights from there, tat is tobacco, cotton, indigo, sugar, candied fruits and other goods."<sup>50</sup> Ultimately, Giles and his son Constant set up a number of plantations on the island of Barbados while Nathaniell began a provisioning plantation on Shelter Island to support their Caribbean outposts.<sup>51</sup> The Sylvester brothers not only maintained ties with their former Ancient Church congregants and extended the reach of the puritan Atlantic through their migration across the Atlantic, but also built upon these networks through marriage and business partnerships with those outside of the Ancient Church yet within the puritan Atlantic.

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<sup>47</sup> Dutch Notarial Archives 601/32v; Dutch Notarial Archives 1570/91; Dutch Notarial Archives 1570/237.

<sup>48</sup> Dutch Notarial Archives 848/903.

<sup>49</sup> Dutch Notarial Archives 1289 fo. 101v-102v.

<sup>50</sup> Dutch Notarial Archives 1294/68.

<sup>51</sup> Dutch Notarial Archives, 849/123; Barbados Department of Archives RB3/2, 68; RB 3/2, 192; RB 3/2, 635; RB3/2, 782-3; RB3/2, 57; Shelter Island Historical Society, Middleton et. al. "Articles of Agreement," 1652.

While the diaspora of the Ancient Church provided the framework for building a puritan Atlantic in the early years of the seventeenth century, a shared interest in trade, based on the British mercantile system, coupled with a proclivity towards puritan sensibilities, encouraged puritan merchants outside of the fold of the Ancient Church to enter the puritan Atlantic through business partnerships and marriage. It was through this avenue that influential Atlantic puritans like the Gookins, Blands, and Emperours became part of the puritan Atlantic.

An English colonizer in Cork Ireland, the elder Daniel Gookin first traveled to Virginia under a contract to provide British cattle for the Virginia Company and worked alongside Edward Bennett as a fellow planter on the south side of the James River while his son Daniel Gookin, Jr. collaborated with Edward Bennett's nephew, Richard Bennett, to find puritan ministers for their contingent of coreligionists. The Blands entered the puritan Atlantic through overlapping ties to the former members of the Ancient Church. The family patriarch, John Bland, had been a Virginia Company investor alongside Edward Bennett and had also worked with the former elder of the Ancient Church to settle Martin's Hundred with the help of Bennett's ship the *Godsguift* which transported 220 colonists in January of 1619.<sup>52</sup> His son, also a John Bland, who took up leadership of their familial enterprise, maintained ties with the Sylvester family through Nathaniell Sylvester's wife, Grizzell Brinley Sylvester. John Bland had invested a sum of money for the Brinley family in his Spanish enterprises prior to Grizzell and Nathaniel's marriage.

While the core of the puritan Atlantic was built upon the remnant of the Ancient Church, kinship ties and a common interest in puritan faith, trade, and British mercantilism, drew others into their networks that came to stretch across the Atlantic by

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<sup>52</sup> Kingsbury, *Records of the Virginia Company*, 1:410.

the end of the seventeenth century. The separatist impulse that had fueled the formation of the Ancient Church eventually led to its very destruction as remaining congregation collapsed under the weight of schism. Yet it was this very division that allowed for the formation of the puritan Atlantic. Christopher Lawne's defamation of his former co-elders and migration to Virginia, followed by Bennett, Basse, and Blackwell's efforts led to a strong presence of puritan settlers south of the James River in Virginia. At the same time, Giles Sylvester's trade throughout the Atlantic, which eventually resulted in his son's outposts on Shelter Island and Barbados, stretched the reach of the Ancient Church into New England and the Caribbean. The skeleton of the puritan Atlantic, birthed out of the Ancient Church, continued to grow through membership of likeminded believers such as the Gookins, Blands, and Emperours.



## CHAPTER 2

### THE SPIRITUAL ECONOMY OF RICHARD BENNETT

*“I Pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou keep them from evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” John 17:15-16, (KJV)*

Initially drawn together by a common faith, Atlantic puritans formed a community whose shared beliefs permeated economic activities and political aspirations. The backbone of their network rose from the collapse and later diaspora of the Ancient Church, a separate puritan congregation formed on the banks of the Thames in Southwark, London. Temporarily sustained by a migration to Amsterdam, the congregation eventually dispersed throughout the Atlantic sending adherents to the Caribbean, the Chesapeake, New England, and Long Island while laying the scaffolding for an Atlantic puritan network. Geographically displaced at the height of England’s political and religious upheaval, these individuals sought out former congregants as business colleagues, trading partners, and political contacts throughout the Atlantic eventually creating a community whose common faith became the foundation for their political and economic pursuits and the core of an influential Atlantic network.

Richard Bennett (bap. 1609-ca. 1675), as one spoke on a complex wheel of Atlantic Puritan connections, demonstrates how in the puritan Atlantic politics, religion, and economics fused together as one through the lens of British mercantile theory. For

Bennett and his colleagues, a shared faith became the core of vital business contacts and political connections while their participation in political and economic spheres came to influence their religious practice as well. Born into both the puritan faith and the merchant profession, Bennett welded his dual inheritance into a cocktail for success in the emergent Atlantic economy. Alert to the fledgling status of his puritan community in Virginia and Maryland Bennett maneuvered through politics and commerce in an attempt to secure a stable future for his coreligionists. In the wake of Cromwell's ascendance a backlash of Laudian reform coupled with Governor Berkeley's Cavalier sympathies threatened Virginian puritans allowing Bennett to employ his influence as a Burgess, Councilor, Commissioner, and eventually Governor to achieve a future for puritans in the Chesapeake region. Bennett's participation within the puritan Atlantic not only allowed him to use religious contacts for temporal gain, but also shaped his spiritual pursuits, coloring them with a tint of seventeenth-century British mercantile theory and allowing Bennett to embrace a unique spiritual economy.

Although Bennett's name can be found scattered among the secondary literature, few have included him in much more than a passing reference. Robert Brenner identifies Bennett as a minor player in an alliance of elite merchants, planters, and councilmen working to secure their fortunes through the Parliamentary establishment to the detriment of Virginia's common planters. Arguing against popular thought that most merchants aligned with Parliament during the English Civil War, Brenner suggests that there was a divide between the elite group, to which Bennett belonged, and the everyday merchant-planter. While merchant-planters embraced Royalism in opposition to the prevailing Parliamentarianism in hopes that political chaos would relieve trade regulations and

maximize profit, Bennett and his colleagues aligned directly with the Parliamentary party's mercantilist policies and positioned themselves to benefit from restrictive legislation. Although Brenner acknowledges a penchant towards puritanism among Bennett and other members of the merchant elite, religion remains tangential to his narrative of economic motivation.<sup>53</sup> I argue instead that a shared puritan faith was the source of cohesion among Richard Bennett's fellow merchant planters, and served as the impetus for Bennett's pursuit of economic affluence among Virginia puritans. While Royalist sensibilities in Virginia and Maryland threatened puritan existence in the Chesapeake, an alliance with Parliament offered religious security through economic stability. Rather than a threat to puritans' religious fortitude, trade and political involvement became a promise for their continued spiritual vitality as commerce, politics, and faith intertwined in the seventeenth-century Atlantic. In following the guidance of providence, Bennett and his puritan colleagues saw a spiritual reward for their earthly pursuits, interpreting monetary success as a sign of divine approval.

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<sup>53</sup> Robert Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution: Commercial Change, Political Conflict, and London's Overseas Traders, 1550-1653* (Brooklyn, NY: Verso, 2003), 203. Brenner argues that by 1628-1629 the majority of overseas company traders of London had been alienated from the Crown and had assumed positions of political opposition. The city merchant community and the Parliamentarians found an alliance difficult to forge because of their differing sociopolitical interests and options. While the two came together for a few brief years their alliance was short-lived and they eventually diverged (205). Two types of merchants began to emerge in the seventeenth-century Atlantic. Reflective of the Royalist sensibilities in Virginia, Barbados, Antigua, and Bermuda (all colonies who refused to submit to illegitimate commonwealth governors) many merchants supported a Royalism in the face of impending Parliamentarianism to take advantage of political chaos in the home country as a measure to gain freedom from English trade regulations. Another group of merchants aligned more closely with the parliamentary cause and garnered a considerable amount of influence within the Commonwealth.(585-586). Robert Brenner also poses that puritanism served as one of many common interests reinforcing mercantile interests and allowing growing solidarity to emerge naturally. As both centers of commercial development and concentrations of religio-political resistance Puritan colonies (New England, Providence Island, and Bermuda) attracted some of the most important new merchants. Some entered into colonial merchant activity through their puritan associations while others developed commitments to puritanism through their commercial associations. Ultimately the relationships between puritan motives and commercial interests allowed for ties to develop between the American merchant leadership and the Puritan aristocrats who ran the Bermuda and Providence Island companies as well as those involved in New England. A key alliance developed between puritan colonizers and the new merchant leadership prior to the English Civil War (148-149, 275).

The account of comparable New England puritans' internal conflict when faced with mercantile prospects sheds light on the differences between Richard Bennett and his Massachusetts counterparts, and offers Bennett as a representative example of the larger Atlantic puritan spiritual economy. Samuel Sewell's struggle to maintain piety in the face of impending luxury and consumerism coupled with the cautionary tale of Robert Keane's demise in New England public opinion runs in stark contrast to the fusion of faith and financial pursuits among Richard Bennett and his Atlantic puritan colleagues.<sup>54</sup> Sensitive to the fragility of a puritan presence in the Anglican dominated colonies of the Chesapeake; Bennett sought a position of economic and political power in order to secure his coreligionists' spiritual survival. In becoming a successful merchant, planter, burgess, councilman, commissioner, and governor, Bennett achieved temporal influence as a means to secure religious stability for fellow puritans. He placed himself at the center of Cromwell's nascent navigation policy as a Parliamentary commissioner ensuring their enforcement on the colonial front, and later as the Commonwealth Governor. Bennett and his colleagues could use mercantile pursuits to their spiritual end partly because of their alternate understanding of merchant involvement as compared to New England adherents.

New England puritans like Samuell Sewell, Robert Keayne, and their opposition had viewed flirtation with the market as an abandonment of local authority and a movement towards chaos and the anonymity that accompanied it. Their free market understanding not only encouraged disorder that begot a loss of moral accountability, but also an exchange of both local and national political authority for the law of the marketplace. Bennett and his colleagues conceived of a different market involvement,

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<sup>54</sup> For more on this see Valeri, *Heavenly Merchandize*.

one closely tied with Parliamentary regulation and order and supervised by the guiding hand of providence. Bennett's support of the Navigation Ordinance of 1651 and subsequent policies restricting trade within the British Empire to English ships not only protected his own merchant interests against foreign competitors, but also demonstrated his support for Cromwell. His advocacy alongside his uncle, Edward Bennett, to secure a tobacco monopoly for Virginia had attempted a similar goal of eliminating foreign agricultural competition under the guise of an effort to keep British currency within the empire and maintain a favorable balance of trade. As the monopoly in favor, Bennett and his puritan colleagues could exercise sovereign powers on the colonial front on Cromwell's behalf. In their support of state directed policies devoid of free commerce, preventing the outflow of British bullion, and maintaining a favorable balance of trade while securing England with a market in the colonies Bennett and his fellow puritan merchants aligned themselves with Parliament's policies and negotiated a favorable position within the Commonwealth government. As a result, economic protectionism gradually seeped into both Richard Bennett's understanding of Atlantic political economy and his conception of the puritan faith. Similar to the larger Elizabethan view of English colonization as an economic and political hedge against Spanish Catholic encroachment, Bennett and other Atlantic puritans began to construct their own political and economic hedge against the Anglican establishment in still developing colonial societies.<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, they began to see involvement in trade and commerce as germane to their spiritual pursuit all guided by providential direction.

A number of historians have recently shown that profit and piety were not two separate ends of the spectrum in puritan New England. John Frederick Martin has

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<sup>55</sup> Kupperman, *Providence Island*.

demonstrated that speculation and profit seeking were central to the first settlements in New England and that entrepreneurial interests motivated much of their spiritual invasion into the wilderness.<sup>56</sup> Mark Peterson has argued that there was a price to pay for redemption including a salary for the clergy, a cost for publishing and distributing catechisms and devotional literature, and building funds for both new and existent church buildings challenging previous assumptions that commerce undermined religious pursuit.<sup>57</sup> Similarly, Stephen Innes has demonstrated how puritanism inspired and tempered capitalism through a unique collaboration between emergent mercantile capitalism and the moral and religious elements that helped to control it. In Innes' argument New England economic growth came about because of the puritan ethic not despite it.<sup>58</sup> Beyond Karen Kupperman's work on Providence Island, little research has been done on the interaction between faith and commerce among puritans in the Atlantic world outside of New England, especially those puritan settlements in the Chesapeake and Caribbean.<sup>59</sup> While the aforementioned historians have revised the polarization of faith and commerce to reveal a realignment of seemingly opposing forces in colonial New England, the story of Richard Bennett accomplishes a similar purpose in the colonial Chesapeake demonstrating the fusion of religious and economic theory through the medium of puritan faith nearly fifty years before New England colonists reconciled piety and profit.

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<sup>56</sup> Martin, *Profits in the Wilderness*.

<sup>57</sup> Peterson, *The Price of Redemption*.

<sup>58</sup> Innes, *Creating the Commonwealth*.

<sup>59</sup> Kupperman, *Providence Island*.

## Entering the Atlantic

Richard Bennett's earliest foray into the Atlantic World came through trade. In the Bennett family commerce was a family affair. As one of Edward Bennett's many nephews, Richard began his career managing a portion of Edward's Virginia holdings. Edward Bennett's entry into the Virginia Company had been a carefully calculated move in his larger religio-political plan. In a pamphlet entitled "A Treatise Divided into Three parts, Touching the inconveniences, that the Importation of Tobacco out of Spain hath brought into this land" Bennett called for termination of Spanish tobacco imports. Instead, he proposed that a monopoly for the production of tobacco be given to the Virginia Company to not only encourage settlement in the fledgling colony but also bolster the English treasury. According to Bennett, the tobacco weed had sucked bullion from the English Monarchy and into the hands of Spain. An English annual dependency of 300,000 weight of tobacco had fueled the coffers of Spanish expansion in the Atlantic World. The subsequent lack of hard currency had restricted trade and colonization in British territories. Bennett's proposal of a Company monopoly on tobacco argued that the demand would encourage the development of Virginia as "the lucre of gaine by Tobacco, will draw thither more inhabitants in one yeere then the Company have done with all their care and charge ever since the plantation; and let them once be drawn thither, they will quickly finde better Commodities then Tobacco, as the Spaniards have done in the foresaid places." Bennett proclaimed, "Shut the gates of entrance of Tobacco, and you

open the gate for the entry of Treasure: but open the gate for the entry of Tobacco, and you shut the gate of the entrance of Treasure.”<sup>60</sup>

Bennett based his argument against the importation of Spanish tobacco on the quantity theory of money found in Jean Bodin’s *Response to Malestroit* (1568) and directed specifically at Spanish colonial ventures by Martin de Azpilcueta (1566).<sup>61</sup> The premise undergirding Bennett’s argument stipulated that the value of money was inversely related to the quantity of money in circulation. Therefore England was in danger of falling into economic depression because its gold inflows from trade were falling relative to competing countries like Spain. Bennett also structured his argument upon the need for a favorable balance of trade. First printed by Misselden in 1622, this concept had long been popular in orthodox economic policy and was first officially introduced by Richard Leicester and Richard Aylesbury, two Royal Mint officers in London in 1381.<sup>62</sup> Like those before him, Bennett’s tobacco proposals sought to keep English bullion within the borders and ensure that exports rose above imports. Bennett saw foreign trade as an essential element of the English political economy because of the country’s lack of gold and silver deposits. Through trade the country could acquire the necessary bullion it inherently lacked.

The Virginia Company readily took notice of Bennett’s lobbying on their behalf and rewarded his efforts with admittance into the Company, a position which would allow him to benefit directly from his own policy suggestions. By Sir Edwyn Sandys’ recommendation, Bennett’s service to the company included writing against the importation of Spanish tobacco and his “often attendance vpon the Committees of the

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<sup>60</sup> Bennett, *A Treatise*.

<sup>61</sup> Lars Magnusson, *Mercantilism: The Shaping of an Economic Language* (London: Routledge, 1994), 9.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*



lower howse of Comons about the same.” As a result he was recognized with admittance as a free member of the Virginia Company on April 12, 1621.<sup>63</sup> Like his fellow Atlantic puritans, Bennett viewed commerce with an eye to providence. Along with a coveted membership within the Virginia Company, his proposal for a tobacco monopoly would also ensure that the Bennett family, and faith community, prospered religiously and economically. In order for Virginia to produce the level of tobacco necessary to replace Spanish imports a full-scale conversion to a cash crop economy would prove necessary. While land was abundant, labor provided the more pressing challenge. Edward Bennett had conceived of a plan not only to acquire more land and benefit from the tobacco trade, but also to transport servants and laborers, including a number of coreligionists from England and Holland, to support the burgeoning agricultural economy.

Now a member of the Company, Edward, along with his nephew Richard and his brothers Robert, William, and Richard began settling Virginia and acquiring land through the head right system, which guaranteed fifty acres for every individual brought to Virginia at Bennett’s expense. Having argued that a Company monopoly on tobacco cultivation would encourage emigration to Virginia, Bennett set about meeting the demand for transportation by moving upwards of two hundred settlers to the colony. In November of 1621, Edward Bennett had already transported one hundred planters to Virginia by himself and another one hundred persons along with his partners Robert Bennett, Richard Bennett, Thomas Ayres, Thomas Wiseman, and Richard Wiseman.<sup>64</sup> By 1622, nearly fifty-five people resided at Warrosoyacke, or Bennett’s Welcome, the land

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<sup>63</sup> Bennett, *A Treatise*; Kingsbury, *The Records of the Virginia Company*, 1:446; 3:63.

<sup>64</sup> Kingsbury, *The Records of the Virginia*, 1: 554, 562. It is not clear if the Richard Bennett mentioned here was the father of the before mentioned Richard Bennett or the younger Richard Bennett. There was a Richard Bennett who had died sometime near August 28, 1626. On October 13, 1626, the General Court of Virginia ordered that an inventory of his estate be taken. McIlwaine, *Minutes of the Council*, 120.

Edward Bennett had first received as a patent.<sup>65</sup> Edward Bennett's ascent within the Virginia Company moved quickly, and he was identified as one of a few persons fit to serve as governor and deputy governor of Virginia and the Somer Islands Companies.<sup>66</sup> As a former elder of the Ancient Church, which had recently fallen to its demise in Amsterdam, Bennett's religious goals were never far from his economic pursuits, and he began to transport a number of fellow puritan congregants to Virginia. His role within the company and expanding property gave Bennett a level of both political and economic prominence. The land grants Bennett received through the summer of 1623, largely concentrated in the puritan regions of the colony, in the lower Norfolk and Nansemond regions, allowed fellow nonconformists to benefit from a religious community while unofficially designating a region of puritan influence in still fluid colonial society.<sup>67</sup> The fruits of the headright system, coupled with Bennett's advocacy on behalf of the Company, helped to build the beginnings of a hedge around the still vulnerable puritan community. Bennett also understood that within a mercantile political economy the continued development of commerce and industry was dependent upon an increase in population. He continued to transport fellow puritans, indentured laborers, and Negro slaves to Virginia. In both Bennett's religious and political economy, productive labor was a necessary source of value in order to increase production, stimulate economic growth, and strengthen his puritan community south of the James River.

Edward Bennett continued to champion his cause of tobacco, a cause that would remain paramount until his death when a number of other Atlantic puritans replaced Bennett in the exchange. In June 1622, he was appointed to a committee pushing for the

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<sup>65</sup> Kingsbury, *The Records of the Virginia Company*, 2:571.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:90.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:210.

payment of royal duties in tobacco itself rather than currency. Fully aware of the fickle nature of the tobacco market, Bennett and his company colleagues feared their payment of duties in hard cash might bankrupt the Company if the price for tobacco fell on the market.<sup>68</sup> Preferring instead to pass the risk onto the English monarchy, Bennett proposed that the crown accept their duties by taking a percentage of the product. He continued to fight against English importation of tobacco grown in Spanish colonies and supported a measure that revised his original argument for a complete monopoly for Virginia Company within the English tobacco market. Instead, he agreed that Spanish tobacco imports should be limited to 40,000 weight annually while Virginia would supply the remainder of English tobacco.<sup>69</sup> To achieve the increased tobacco production Bennett pushed forward policies allowing the company to grant loans to those willing to cultivate an additional 40,000 weight of tobacco and suppress the need for Spanish tobacco imports. Bennett's ship the *Godsguift* was also put to work transporting passengers to Virginia as workers to meet the increased demands for tobacco production.<sup>70</sup>

While Edward Bennett pushed for Virginia's increased tobacco production to meet the English demand and fight against the importation of the Spanish crop, his nephews and brothers capitalized on Virginia's resultant cash crop economy. The push for increased tobacco cultivation further limited the ability to grow sustenance crops which drove the market for importing these goods into Virginia. Robert Bennett, along with Richard, supervised the importation of goods from Spain and fish from Canada and Newfoundland to feed the colony's dependency. When the *John* and the *Frances* arrived in June of 1623, Robert Bennett reported that "19 Buttes of exclent good wyne, 750

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid.,2:33-38.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 2:366.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 2:387-88.

jarse of oylle, 16 Barelles of Resones of the Sonne, and 18 Barrelles of Rysse, tooe halfe hogshedes of Allmondes, 3 halfe hoghedes of wheate” not to mention “18 hoghedes of Olives and some 5 ferkenes of butter and one Chesse” had arrived safely in Virginia. Candles and linen rounded out the shipment while Robert and Richard patiently awaited the arrival of fish from Canada and Newfoundland. Robert expressed his expectation for to transport another two to three hundred men to the Bennett plantations the following year and increase the family’s landholdings in Virginia.<sup>71</sup> The variety of their wares attested to connections with East Indian and European traders or perhaps their own trade in those regions. If Robert’s boasts proved true and the sale of a mere four butts of wine would clear a voyage, this shipment likely garnered a generous profit for the Bennett family.<sup>72</sup> Ships from Newfoundland and Canada under the Bennett watch also brought fish to Virginia, while Robert and his brothers managed the corn and tobacco crops in Virginia. In the early days of the Virginia Colony, the Bennett family had achieved a considerable trading empire throughout the Atlantic that linked them to a strengthening position in the colony of Virginia.

Richard Bennett’s earliest work alongside his uncle involved transporting settlers and servants to Virginia aboard his uncle’s ships. As usual, the Bennett’s economic interests were not far from their religious motivations, and both Edward and Richard worked to move fellow puritans, many from their former congregation, to the colony of Virginia. There they hoped to bolster the colony’s feeble labor force while strengthening their puritan community through population increase, landholdings, and potential for economic output. The first record of the younger Richard working alongside his uncle,

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<sup>71</sup> “Lord Sackville’s Papers Respecting Virginia, 1613-1631,I” *American Historical Review* 27, no. 3 (1922): 506.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

appears on March 29, 1628 when the then twenty-year-old swore on behalf of his uncle Edward that Captain Preen and his ensigns had received payment for two men who had arrived by way of the *Hopewell* to Virginia in 1623.<sup>73</sup> Shortly after it seems that Edward had moved back to England leaving Richard in charge of the Bennett family's projects in Virginia. Under Richard's management indentured servants like Wessell Webling traveled to Virginia by way of the Bennett family ships at the cost of Edward Bennett. In exchange for his transportation Wessell contracted to serve three years service under the direction of Edward Bennett and his ensigns. Bennett accordingly "promised & covenanted to maintain me [Wessell] with sufficient meat drinke & apparel." At the end of the three year term Edward Bennett promised to give Wessell Webling 50 acres of land in Virginia and necessary and good apparel.<sup>74</sup> In this way, Bennett and his fellow planters secured labor for their ever-growing landholdings in Virginia. The Bennetts also sought the delivery of two men to be brought to Virginia in the *Hopewell* under the direction of Edward's deceased brother. Having never received the original servants from a Captain Preen, Preen was now ordered to "deliver unto Mr. Edward Bennnet two men servants with one suite of apparel convenient for each of them or 600 lb. of Tobacco for them & two hundred waight of Tobacco more for damadge & losse in the forbearance for soe long time."<sup>75</sup> Partnering with his uncle, Richard petitioned the court for debts owed to him by a Warrosquoiacke merchant since deceased.<sup>76</sup> Richard also represented his uncle in court regarding land disputes, specifically one with William Musick related to a lease in Warrosquoaicke.

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<sup>73</sup> McIlwaine, *Minutes of the Council*, 169.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 125.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 170.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 173.

On January 21, 1628, John Burland brought Richard Bennett to court claiming that Bennett had never fulfilled his agreement to deliver three servants. The witnesses testified that three seventeen-year-old servants had been delivered to Burland but he had refused to accept them. The court then ordered Richard to deliver three men to Burland off of his next ship or if no men arrived on that ship, he should offer Burland, equal compensation for the servants.<sup>77</sup> Richard Bennett continued to serve as an agent for his uncle regarding the transportation of servants to Virginia agreeing to deliver one manservant between the ages of 15 and 25 years to Captain Martiau within fourteen days of March 2, 1628.<sup>78</sup> While many of these servants seem to have come from England under terms of indenture, others were likely some of the earliest Africans to arrive in the colony of Virginia. In February 1625 Edward Bennett already possessed a number of negroes as servants on his plantations including “Antonio, a negro” who arrived in the *James* in 1621 and was likely the famous Anthony Johnson who eventually gained his freedom and became a slaveholder himself as well as “Mary, a negro woman” who arrived in the *Margrett and John* in 1622.<sup>79</sup> Richard Bennett’s early years in Virginia fused his religious convictions with economic ventures in the fluidity of Virginia’s burgeoning economy. Serving as a witness in the High Court of Admiralty on August 24, 1635, Edward Bennett testified that Richard Bennett had served as a factor for John Lawrence, William Penryn, Ambrose Harmer, Nicholas Raynberd and their ship the *Revenge* sending goods to Virginia. Richard Bennett had shipped tobacco from Virginia along with wool and tobacco from Nevis, and the ownership of these goods was now

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 181.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 187.

<sup>79</sup> “Isle of Wight County Records” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 7, No. 4 (April 1899): 217.

being disputed in England.<sup>80</sup> Not only did Richard Bennett work on behalf of his uncle Edward, but he also served as an agent for a number of other wealthy merchants in England and the colonies.

Richard Bennett's introduction into the Atlantic economy through his uncle's merchant activity was also an education in the uniquely English economic system of mercantilism. Edward Bennett's early treatise against Spanish tobacco importation outlined the fundamental elements at the core of British mercantilism including the need to create a favorable balance of trade in order to secure bullion in the absence of natural sources. His uncle's work with the Company in establishing monopolies and negotiating agreements for tobacco exports seized upon mercantilism's protective elements to ensure that Virginia engendered a profit for England. By aligning with Parliamentary mercantile policies, the Bennetts and their puritan colleagues positioned themselves to benefit from otherwise restrictive trade agreements understanding that within a monopoly system, they had to achieve a favorable position with the current government. Bennett's importation of numerous Virginia settlers coupled with his early involvement in the slave trade helped to create the large work force necessary for Virginia's economic success and British imperial profit. Within a framework of limited resources and a fixed amount of global wealth, the Bennetts were aware that their financial gains would represent another's loss. A protectionist impulse seeking to prevent their own loss at another's gain, central to mercantilist theory also seeped into Richard Bennett's perception of puritan survival in the Chesapeake as he attempted to negotiate a space for fellow puritans in the increasingly pluralistic religious economy of the colonial Chesapeake.

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<sup>80</sup> William Bennett Boddie, *Seventeenth century Isle of Wight County, Virginia: a history of the county of Isle of Wight, Virginia, during the seventeenth century, including abstracts of the county records* (Baltimore: MD: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1973), 276.

Under his uncle's tutelage Richard Bennett expanded his puritan networks beyond the reach of the Ancient Church and began to see his economic pursuits as tied to the puritan faith through mercantile theory. Bennett's providential framework allowed him to interpret material profit as evidence of divine blessing. At the same time spiritual obedience portended temporal rewards. Having learned from Edward Bennett's example, Richard Bennett moved on to establish his own puritan networks through his political and economic resources.

Richard Bennett's transition from purely economic enterprise to Virginia politics brought him into contact with another young entrepreneur named William Claiborne. First elected to the Virginia House of Burgesses in 1629, Bennett served along Claiborne when he was appointed to the Governor's Council in 1639. At the time of Bennett's 1628 arrival in Virginia, William Claiborne owned considerable property along with an island outpost for his trading ventures. Arriving in 1621 as the surveyor of Virginia within the newly appointed Governor Wyatt's entourage, Claiborne claimed quality tobacco land between Haxos Gaole and Blunt Point while building a plantation near the mouth of the James River at Kecoughtan.<sup>81</sup> Claiborne established his Kecoughtan plantation firmly within the puritan bounds of settlement in the Elizabeth City region. A few years later Francis Wyatt appointed Claiborne councilman under the in 1624 when he was just

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<sup>81</sup> Nathaniel Claiborne Hale, *Virginia Venturer, a historical biography of William Claiborne, 1600-1677: the story of the merchant venturers who founded Virginia, and the war in the Chesapeake* (Richmond: Dietz Press, 1951), 64; Kingsbury, *Records of the Virginia Company*, 3:486; Nell Marion Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers; abstracts of Virginia Land Patents* (Baltimore: MD: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1963), Book I, Part I, 17; Claiborne's Elizabeth City plantation was located in present-day Hampton, Virginia which had also been the site of an Indian village called Kecoughtan. Lord de la Warr had planted a settlement there in 1610. Claiborne's first patent on June 3, 1624, covered two neighboring parcels and totaled one hundred and fifty acres that were due him under the headright system for transporting William Harris in the George and William Morris and John PIPPS in the Tyger. While the company had absorbed the cost for transporting at least one of Claiborne's servants, he still claimed the head right. Hale, *Virginia Venturer*, 87-88.



twenty-four.<sup>82</sup> Claiborne supported Edward Bennett's petition for a Virginia Company tobacco monopoly and when John Harvey received an appointment to succeed Wyatt as governor in 1626, Claiborne was promoted to Secretary of State, which he held when Richard Bennett arrived in the colony.<sup>83</sup>

Through Claiborne that Bennett came to know a number of wealthy puritan merchants operating throughout the Atlantic. Robert Brenner has argued that Claiborne "may have been the most consistently influential political figure in Virginia throughout the whole of the pre-Restoration period."<sup>84</sup> Having acquired an key political position within the colony, Claiborne launched a lucrative mercantile career under the protection of grants and monopoly commissions secured from the Virginia Company. Between 1627 and 1629 he began a series of ambitious and successful trading ventures with the Susquehanna in an attempt to establish an extensive fur trading and provision network centered upon his property on Kent Island. Claiborne hoped that the island would serve as a new stopping point for fur traders from the Virginia backcountry and develop into a commercial center for food, clothing, and supplies. In his effort to secure Kent Island as a trading post under the Virginia charter, Claiborne partnered with William Cloberry and Maurice Thomson and introduced Richard Bennett to a new branch of the puritan Atlantic.

The partnership between Cloberry and Claiborne was mutually beneficial offering Claiborne access to Nova Scotia's fisheries and Cloberry access to provisions for his

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<sup>82</sup> Hale, *Virginia Venturer*, 102; Kingsbury, *Records of the Virginia Company*, 4:501; McIlwaine, *Minutes of the Council of Virginia*, 52.

<sup>83</sup> William Noel Sainsbury, J.W. Fortescue, Sir., Cecil Headlam, Arthur Percival Newton, eds. *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series* (London: Public Record Office: 1860), 2:77; Hale, *Virginia Venturer*, 108; H.R. McIlwaine, ed., "Petition form the Convention of 1625" *Journals of the House of Burgesses , 1619-1658/9*, 43; Sainsbury, *Calendar of State Papers*, 2:15, 35; Hale, *Virginia Venturer*, 107.

<sup>84</sup> Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution*, 120.

other colonial interests. William Cloberry had been involved in the Newfoundland and Guinea trades as well as in the American tobacco trade. More importantly for Claiborne's purposes, Cloberry worked closely with Sir William Alexander, the English secretary of state for Scotland, in settling Nova Scotia and growing the Canadian fur trade. In Cloberry's view, Claiborne's vision of Kent Island became a useful source of provisions for Sir Alexander's developing colony of Nova Scotia.<sup>85</sup> Although, the relationship with Cloberry seemed promising from the beginning, it was Cloberry who failed to obtain the proper charter from Parliament eventually leading to Kent Island's failure.

Maurice Thomson was already an accomplished merchant with interests throughout the Caribbean and Atlantic before joining Claiborne and Cloberry on their Kent Island enterprise. By the time he joined Claiborne's Kent Island venture, Maurice Thomson was already known within the Atlantic puritan merchant networks as well as the larger Atlantic economy. Born into a Hertfordshire family as the eldest of five sons, Thomson settled in Virginia by 1617 and worked similar to the Bennetts helping to transport passengers for the Virginia Company and Colony. He acquired his own landholding of 150 acres in the colony and gained entrance into Atlantic merchant networks through his brother in law William Tucker.<sup>86</sup> Thomson's recent fur trading venture in Canada, a partnership with Tucker, was particularly appealing to Claiborne.<sup>87</sup>

Maurice Thomson was also heavily entrenched in Caribbean commerce, providing a useful inroad for Claiborne and Bennett into the West Indian trade. Thomson had been first drawn into the Caribbean through his partner Thomas Combes who promised considerable profit from a previously unsuccessful tobacco plantation on St.

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 123.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 118-119.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 123.

Kitts. With Thomson's knowledge of planting and capital, Combes had hoped his failing venture would be given new life.<sup>88</sup> In the spring of 1626 Thomson and Combes sent three ships with sixty slaves to the thousand-acre plantation on St. Kitts, and Combes' close friend Governor Warner worked alongside the two in the early days of the colony. Through Thomson's foray into the Caribbean he soon developed a partnership with Thomas Stone, a merchant involved in retail trade operated a shop in Cateaton Street, London. Stone provided Thomson and Combes with connections to both Holland and Virginia through his nephew William Stone who operated the family plantation in Accomack, Virginia.<sup>89</sup> William Stone later became an influential political figure and the Governor of Maryland capitalizing on his links with the puritan merchant Richard Bennett to help settle the fledgling colony north of Virginia.<sup>90</sup>

Richard Bennett's service on the Governor's Council brought him back into contact with a former congregant of the Ancient Church named John Utie. Having assisted in his transportation to Virginia, Richard already knew Utie who arrived in Virginia on the *Francis Bonaventure* in 1620 while his wife, and son John came later *Seaflower* which carried a number of Bennett's émigrés. By early 1622 Utie had set up a plantation on Hog Island and had established himself in the sassafras trade. Under the direction of the Governor Francis Wyatt, Utie agreed to deliver a thousand weight of good sassafras, not to exceed the "bigness of a man's arm," by March of 1623 and his failure to do so would result in ten pound tobacco fine for every missing hundredth weight of sassafras.<sup>91</sup> Similar to Richard Bennett, Utie's segue into the political realm

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 126; PRO, C.2/Ch.I/T.24/64.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 128.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Kingsbury, *Records of the Virginia Company*, 4.

came swiftly and by 1623 he was representing Hog Island in the Virginia House of Burgesses. His puritan aversion towards frivolous musical expression surfaced when William Tyler accused him of being a fiddler “because he saw him play upon a viol at sea: and saith that he harde other say [that] he was a musitione in England.”<sup>92</sup> Appalled at the accusations, Utie brought Tyler to court for his “divers reproachfull speeches and Slanderous words to the ympayring of his good fame and reputation.”<sup>93</sup> Despite the defamation accusation Utie’s planter-merchant practices continued successfully, and he purchased an eighteen and a half foot shallop, six and a half feet in breadth, with mast, oars, yard, and rudder from Bryan Caught for 120 pound weight of tobacco and the use of a boy servant during the ship’s building.<sup>94</sup> In 1625 Utie was granted another 100 acres in the Tappahanna Territory against James City. He also began a business venture with Roger Webster to establish the Suthampton hundred company in Virginia.<sup>95</sup> Meanwhile, Utie continued his service as a burgess alongside Edward Bennett in 1627, with Richard Bennett in 1629 as a representative for the plantations between Archer’s Hope and Martin’s Hundred, and as a burgess of Hog Island.<sup>96</sup>

The Allerton family became another important contact for Richard Bennett and his fellow Virginian puritans. Isaac Allerton, Sr. and their three children had travelled from Leiden to Plymouth on the *Mayflower* in 1620. The Allertons were one of the wealthiest families in the young Plymouth colony owning a number of vessels that helped to establish the inter-colonial coastal trade and the New England fishing industry. After a disagreement with the New England religious leadership over tolerance, Allerton moved

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<sup>92</sup> McIlwaine, *Minutes of the Council*, 19.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 55, 55, 69, 77.

<sup>96</sup> McIlwaine, *Journals of the House of Burgesses*, 9-11.

his family to New Amsterdam in 1636 and expanded his trade to the re-exportation of tobacco. His work brought him to Virginia, the Caribbean, and New England as he assisted Bennett in delivering ministers to Virginia by providing them with a new ship and sufficient supplies for the remainder of the journey after wrecking off the shore of New Amsterdam. Allerton's son, Isaac Allerton, Jr., settled in Elizabeth City, Virginia and attended Harvard along with Richard Bennett's son and stepson.<sup>97</sup>

Claiborne's Kent Island venture coalesced in early 1631 and expanded the reach of Atlantic puritan networks as the partners made arrangements to trade with the Massachusetts Bay Colony, Nova Scotia, and Scotland.<sup>98</sup> On April 30, 1631, John Winthrop, Jr., wrote about a contract he had signed with William Claiborne, while both were in London, to ship forty tons of "Indian Wheat" from Virginia to Massachusetts.<sup>99</sup> With William Claiborne at the helm, the ship *Africa* belonging to Maurice Thomson's partner and brother in law William Tucker, sailed from England with twenty servants and supplies.<sup>100</sup> While Bennett was not a partner in the venture, he was both directly and tangentially related to all of its participants. Serving alongside Claiborne and Tucker within Virginia's Assembly and Council, Bennett established contacts with Thomson and Cloberry through political colleagues.

Relationships between these Virginia puritan merchants intersected at various points. Tucker, Utie and Claiborne had all participated in the ousting of Virginia's former governor William Harvey. While Edward Bennett and his puritan cohort had pushed for a monopoly on tobacco trade between Virginia and England, Harvey supported policies

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<sup>97</sup> Hatfield, *Atlantic Virginia*, 2004.

<sup>98</sup> Brenner, 124.

<sup>99</sup> Massachusetts Historical Society Collections, 5<sup>th</sup> Series, Vol 8, p. 31; Hale, *Virginia Venturer*, 144.

<sup>100</sup> Brenner, 124.

more aligned with free trade and favorable to common planters. Neither did Harvey support Claiborne's claim for Kent Island under the Virginia Charter, and he aligned instead with Lord Baltimore's effort to seize the burgeoning trading post. Conflict came to a head on April 28, 1635, when six councilors representing the puritan elite interests came to Harvey's house. In Harvey's words: "John Utye in the presence of the rest gave me a very greate and violent stroake upon the shoulder and sayd with a loud voice 'I arrest you for treason'; and thereupon Mathews and the rest of said company came all about me, and layd hoald on me and there held me so as I was not able to stire from the place and all of them said to me; you must prepare yourself to go for England, for you must and shall goe, to answer the complaints that are against you."<sup>101</sup> The puritan contingent in the Governor's Council had formed a coalition against the governor. Harvey's inclinations towards free trade against the puritans' mercantilist policies and favoring of Baltimore in the Kent Island conflict had reached a crescendo. The strong majority of Virginia puritans within the Council allowed them to band together and eventually oust their opposition. Bennett, Claiborne, Utie, Tucker, Thomson, and Cloberry, among others, were connected through a multilayered political, commercial, and social network. Some relationships took on a rather personal note as well, especially between the Bennett and Utie families after John Utie's untimely death sometime before May 12, 1638. Richard Bennett took his widow Ann as a wife and became a stepfather to Utie's children. From personal to political and commercial connections, these puritan merchant-planter-politicians formed the nucleus of Virginia's Atlantic puritan network, a network that would prove essential to Bennett's success.

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<sup>101</sup> "Declaration of Sir John Harvey," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 1 (1893-1894): 425-430.

While merchants like Maurice Thomson and William Cloberry provided Claiborne and Utie with necessary connections to Atlantic commerce, the political support they received in Virginia's Council and Assembly also proved invaluable to Thomson and Cloberry. Caught somewhere in between the established merchants like Thomson and politicians like Utie and Cliaborne, Bennett benefited from the association with both groups as he managed his political and commercial ascent. In the wake of the Virginia Company's collapse Maurice Thompson took up Edward Bennett's cause against foreign tobacco imports. He supported a policy that excluded foreigners from trade with Virginia in an effort find favor with the English government and benefit customs.<sup>102</sup> By the 1630s the elite merchants dominated by puritan interests had succeeded in excluding outsiders from all trade to any of the colonies on the American mainland or in the Caribbean. The Crown ruled that products from the colonies were to be exported to England only, cutting off any direct trade between America and Europe in an effort to pass all colonial goods through the English customs system. Essentially, this increased the price of tobacco throughout Europe and brought down the price of tobacco in the colonies by creating a surplus by limiting the market. Because many of the Virginia puritans owned their own shipping, or maintained close ties with English shipping, they were able to secure their exports and remain profitable within otherwise restrictive economic policies. Consistent with the protectionist vein of mercantile theory their efforts in achieving English profits negotiated for themselves favorable political positions at the expense of common planters unable to compete with the newly formed monopoly and limited access to foreign merchants.

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<sup>102</sup> Brenner, 585.

## Confronting Opposition in the Chesapeake

With Maurice Thomson's success in securing the tobacco monopoly originally proposed by Edward Bennett, Richard Bennett turned his eyes to the more pressing spiritual nourishment of his community. Their incumbent pastor having warned the puritan community of his imminent departure, Richard Bennett with the help of his kinsman Philip Bennett sought the assistance of the New England colony in providing spiritual leadership. Addressing a letter to the "Pastors and Elders of Christ's Church in New England and the Rest of the Faithful," Bennett, along with Daniel Gookin and John Hill, called on their fellow puritans in New England to provide necessary religious leadership to the Virginia faithful. Respecting their coreligionists' judgment, they asked that the Massachusetts puritans choose three ministers, one for each of the parishes, praying "that the Lord according to his promise will give us Pastors after his own heart which shall feed us with knowledge and understanding unto his mercy and truth therefore we Committ ourselves and our spiritual necessities."<sup>103</sup> The Virginia puritans were likely present in New England minds as Winthrop had recently signed a trading agreement with William Claiborne and his Kent Island partners. Winthrop sent the requested ministers: William Tompson from Braintree, John Knowles from Watertown, and Thomas James from New Haven. Winthrop saw their ministry "as seed sown, which would bring us in a plentiful harvest, and we accounted it no small honor that God had put upon his poor churches here, that other parts of the world should seek to us for help in this kind."<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Jon Butler, ed. "Two 1642 Letters from Virginia Puritans" *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, Third Series, Vol. 84, (1972): 106.

<sup>104</sup> John Winthrop, *The History of New England from 1630 to 1649*, ed. James Savage (Boston, 1853), 2:94.



They were delayed by a shipwreck on the coast of New Amsterdam, but the ministers finally arrived in late 1642 with the assistance of the Allerton family.

Cromwell's victory in England had resulted in a royalist resurgence in Virginia as Berkeley mounted an attack on nonconformists including the puritan population south of the James River. In 1643 the Virginia Assembly ordered the newly arrived puritan ministers out of the colony and John Knowles returned to New England in June of that year. Even in the face of official disapproval, the ministry had been successful meeting in private conventicles.<sup>105</sup> Shortly after the ministers departed, the Powhatan launched their 1644 uprising, a devastating massacre which Winthrop interpreted as God's wrath on those attempting to restrict puritanism in Virginia. Similarly Edward Johnson perceived the Indian attack as "the hand of God against this people, after the rejection of these Ministers of Christ." The Powhatan stopped just shy of the puritan settlements in Lower Norfolk and Nansemond, leading some to believe that God had protected "that place where Christ had placed his little flock" and likely providing providential encouragement for Bennett through this protection. Puritans from New England and Virginia believed "the Lord pittied the little number of his people among this crooked generation."<sup>106</sup> The Anglican majority continued to see the puritans as a dangerous minority and following the Indian attack Berkeley's Council and the Assembly worked to make Virginia inhospitable to the puritans by bringing their ministers to court on charges of noncompliance and banishing their lay preacher William Durand.

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<sup>105</sup> Winthrop, *History*, 2:115-116.

<sup>106</sup> John Winthrop, *Journal*, ed. James Kendall Hosmer, *Original Narratives of Early American History* (New York, 1908), 2:167-168; Edward Johnson, *The Wonder-Working Providence of Sion's Saviour in New England*, ed. J. Franklin Jameson, *Original Narratives of Early American History* (New York, 1910), 3: 265-267.

While Richard Bennett's previous involvement with his puritan community had been preventative in nature, shoring up financial and political strength south of the James River, Berkeley's appointment as governor and the outbreak of the English political conflict forced Bennett to take on a more active role in their protection. During this period the networks Bennett had nourished came to fruition. William Stone, linked to Bennett through Maurice Thomson's business partner Thomas Stone, offered settlement in the colony of Maryland where Stone now served as governor. In 1649 nearly three hundred of Bennett's nonconformists traveled from Virginia to the Severn and Patuxent Rivers in Maryland to continue under the promised protection of Governor Stone.<sup>107</sup>

Meanwhile, Richard Bennett and William Claiborne were rewarded for their advocacy for mercantilism by receiving appointments as Parliamentary Commissioner and left for England where they met up with the fleet they would lead in forcing Virginia and Maryland's submission to Parliamentary leadership. Once in England, they received instructions to sail on the *John* and the *Guinea Frigate* under the direction of Captain Dennis to Virginia and Maryland to force surrender. Cromwell ordered the Commissioners to deliver official notice of an act prohibiting trade with Virginia, Bermuda, and Antigua until their surrender to the new government. Bennett, Claiborne, and their colleague Thomas Stagg were "to use their best endeavours to reduce all the plantations within the Bay of Chesapeake to their due obedience to the Parliament of the Commonwealth of England." While clemency would be granted to those who cooperated, the commissioners were to "use all acts of Hostility" and "appoint officers to raise forces within every plantation aforesaid for the furtherance of the Service, and such persons as

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<sup>107</sup> Babette May Levy, *Early Puritainism in the Southern and Island Colonies* (Worcester, MA: American Antiquarian Society, 1960), 132-33; Daniel R. Randall, *A Puritan Colony in Maryland* (Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1886), 17.

shall serve as Soldiers if their Masters stand in opposition to the present Government to be discharged and set free from their Masters.”<sup>108</sup> Playing on colonial fears of slave insurrection, Claiborne, Bennett, and Stegg offered freedom to slaves willing to betray their masters in obedience to the Parliamentary administration. Each colony was ordered to publish all of the acts of Parliament along with the acts for abolishing the Book of Common Prayer and all inhabitants were ordered to take an oath “to be true & faithful to the Commonwealth of England as it is now established without a king or House of Lords.”<sup>109</sup>

Bennett and Claiborne seemed strategic choices to be the Parliamentary commissioners to Virginia and Maryland. Both men had a history of strained relationships with the Proprietor of Maryland and the Governor of Virginia. Claiborne’s conflict with Baltimore over Kent Island and Bennett’s recent struggles against Berkeley concerning over the Virginia puritans seemed sufficient motivation to encourage each commissioner to fulfill their duties. Perhaps Parliament also wanted to throw a little salt on Baltimore and Berkeley’s wounds of surrender, by forcing them to submit to their former, seemingly defeated, nemeses.

Writing from the *Ginny Friggat* in Maryland on March 24, 1651, Bennett and Claiborne reported Virginia and Maryland’s surrender. While Berkeley had begun inciting the support of the militia and 500 Indians the summer before his efforts were futile. The Governor “both in actions and speeches, got the Militia of the Country to be his party, and nothing talkt on but burning, hanging, plundering, etc., or anything, rather

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 39.

than yield to such bloody Tyrants, etc., as he called us.”<sup>110</sup> When the commissioners arrived Berkeley had apparently stirred his followers up to the point of believing “there was small likelihood or hope of anything else but ruin and destruction to this poor wicked Country; which from the Lords hand had deserved it.”<sup>111</sup> Bennett and Claiborne arrived before the *John*, carrying Stegg and Captain Dennis, and were left to achieve surrender themselves. They attempted to woo Virginians by “sending abroad Declarations and Copies of private Letters, which took well and gave great satisfaction to the People.” And on January 19<sup>th</sup> the Council of War met them at James City to request that the government continue under Berkeley for another year. Following the calling of an assembly and the cessation of arms and all acts of hostility “though not without divers difficulties yet without damage or harm to any, or the loss of drop of blood” the Virginians under Berkeley finally surrendered to Bennett and Claiborne.<sup>112</sup>

After achieving surrender in Virginia Bennett and Claiborne moved up the coast to Maryland. The Commissioners stipulated that Maryland residents obey the laws of the Commonwealth of England rather than following the direction of the Lord Proprietor. The Commissioners agreed to concede the following rights to Lord Baltimore: “That he should enjoy all his estate, have a yeares liberty to depart with his Estate, hire any ships to that purpose either Dutch or England.” Furthermore he was “not to be questioned for praying for, or speaking well of Charles Stuart in his Family or private discourse during the said time; nor hee nor any other for giving their opinion in Court at any time

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 34-35. “Surrender of Virginia to the Parliamentary Commissioners, March, 1651-2 an excerpt from the British Museum Library. E 665. 3. Page, 1604-1607” *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 11, no. 1 (1903):32-41.

before.”<sup>113</sup> In forcing Maryland’s surrender, Bennett and Claibore had successfully managed the surrender of three outlying royalist colonies in Barbados, Virginia, and Maryland.

Their service as Commissioners allowed William Claiborne and Richard Bennett to Benefit from Cromwell’s victory in England. For Bennett, the post of commissioner provided him with not only a smooth segue into his gubernatorial career, but a key opportunity to secure cooperation if not respect from his former nemesis William Berkeley. While Berkeley had worked tirelessly in the previous years to expel Bennett and his puritan followers from Virginia, his success proved temporary. On April 30, 1652 by unanimous vote it was decided “That Mr Richard Bennett, Esq. be Governor for this ensuing year, or until the next meeting of the Assembly.”<sup>114</sup> Colonel William Claiborne was also reappointed to his role as Secretary of State. Although Bennett’s tenure as governor was meant as temporary, he remained serving until the spring of 1655 and reinforced his newly acquired position by purchasing one of the former governor’s properties and taking up residence there. For the price of 27,500 pounds of tobacco Bennett purchased “the westernmost of the three brick houses” which Berkeley had built in James City.<sup>115</sup> While Bennett had received a diverse education in English mercantile theory up to this point, it was during his tenure as governor that the economic theory, which so heavily influenced Bennett’s commercial and political ventures, first began to seep into the spiritual realm. Ultimately, Bennett fused the economic and religious through the lens of British mercantile theory.

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>114</sup> McIlwaine, *Journal of the House of Burgesses*, 82.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 97.

Having taken the helm of Virginia's government, Bennett now weaved the religious, political, and economic future of Virginia into his millennial eschatological narrative. The end was drawing nearer and the present political and economic difficulties were a result of the colony's spiritual path. The recent political upheaval and dangerously fickle tobacco prices could only be divine punishment for the colony's spiritual apostasy. While Virginia had been punished for its hostility to true belief under Berkeley's leadership, now that Bennett had taken over leadership he hoped to discern God's path for the colony and interpret temporal events with an eye to divine leadership. In order to prevent such difficulties from occurring during his gubernatorial tenure Bennett would need to resurrect the piety of his backslidden colony. He wrote to John Ferrar, "we may say the lord Jesus christ is coming to take to himself his great power and rule in that he pulls down the Mighty from their seats and exalts the humble and meek." For Bennett this prophecy had already been realized, surely signaling Christ's impending return. Berkeley had been relieved of his political post, and the formerly persecuted Bennett had replaced him. The ascent of Bennett's puritan community seemed to suggest that the brink of the millennium stood near for God had already begun to remove "whatsoever stands in his way to his kingdom" through Berkeley's resignation and surrender to the Commonwealth government. Within his urgent apocalyptic framework, Bennett hoped Ferrar might be able to provide the spiritual nourishment Chesapeake puritans craved. He expressed "the greatest want that Virginia hath is the Ministry of the word in the power purity and spirituality of it for want whereof we know not God, our Savior, as without God in the world." The spiritual nourishment of Virginia would not only result in Christ's return, but Bennett also saw it as the key to Virginia's economic and political success.

Rather than appealing to Ferrar's compassion for their desolate spiritual state, Bennett argued that sending ministers to Virginia was "the best and surest way to Atteyne your end vizt. The flourishing and prosperity of this Country and the "Returning" of ...most staple commodities." Bennett also believed spiritual nourishment would lead to "larger and fuller "discovery," for "what soever, in that may tend to Comon and good for he that is truth it self and promised to those that seek the kingdom of heaven and his righteousnessness thereof that all other things shall be Added on."<sup>116</sup> Because the spiritual and temporal were inseparably linked for Bennett, the promise of Matthew 7:7 portended not only spiritual blessing, but economic and political blessings in Bennett's eyes. He assured Ferrar that his willingness to support Virginia's puritans with ministers would reap abundant divine rewards for the colony of Virginia. The colony and its inhabitants would flourish economically, while crops would grow, and adventurers would search out and discover and abundance of new resources in Virginia. As an ardent providentialist, Bennett interpreted the signs of the times according to a spiritual tune. Virginia's economic and political troubles had been a result of her debauchery and peace and affluence would surely be a result of her piety.

Richard Bennett quickly set about achieving the success he would later interpret as providential blessing. In November 1652 Bennett granted William Claiborne and his associate Henry Fleet exclusive privileges to any profit made through the discovery of lands uninhabited by English settlers. That they "may discover and shall enjoy such benefits, profits, and trades, for 14 years as they shall find out in places where no English ever have been and discovered, nor have had particular trade, and to take up such lands

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<sup>116</sup> Richard Bennett to John Ferrar, February 12, 1652, Ferrar Papers, Magdalene College, Cambridge, UK.

by patents proving their rights as they shall think good.”<sup>117</sup> This concession would not only encourage a favorable balance of trade by stimulating the exchange of goods with previously unreachd natives, but the trade would remain firmly within the hands of Bennett’s colleagues and fellow puritans. Before taking up his post as governor Bennett had also participated in the fur trade, likely alongside Claiborne. He had delivered a parcel of beaver skins aboard the *Susanna*, anchored at Kecoughtan near Claiborne’s plantation, in June of 1640.<sup>118</sup> His granting of privileges to Claiborne, was probably an effort to encourage trade for the colony that would also benefit Bennett and his coreligionists.

Richard Bennett also pursued peace with the neighboring Indians knowing temporal peace would likely encourage divine blessing. Signing a peace treaty with the Susquehannah Indians also allowed Bennett to return a favor to his colleague Claiborne while also doing his part to establish a favorable balance of trade. Claiborne’s expected profits in trade with the Indians along with his renewed claim to Kent Island would increase financial security for the Maryland puritans. After reinstating the fellow puritan William Stone as governor of Maryland, Bennett sat with the Maryland Governor’s Council on June 28<sup>th</sup>, 1652 to decide on a peace with the neighboring Indian tribe. Bennett, with fellow puritans Edward Lloyd, William Fuller, Thomas Marsh, and Leonard Strong, were given “full power and authority” to “conclude a league and peace” on behalf of the Maryland government “by the use of all lawful and fitting means.”<sup>119</sup> On July 5, 1652, the treaty was established between the “English nation in the province of

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 85.

<sup>118</sup> Public Record Office London, HCA 113/242

<sup>119</sup> Elihu S. Riley, “1652 Treaty with the Susquehannah Indians” in “An Ancient City”: *A history of Annapolis, in Maryland, 1649-1887* (Annapolis, MD: Record Printing Office, 1887): 28.



Maryland” and “the Indian nation of Sasquesahanogh.” The treaty granted Marylanders the land between the Patuxent River to Palmer’s Island on the west side of the Chesapeake and the land from the Choptank River to the Northeast branch on the east side of the bay, and it also reasserted Claiborne’s ownership of Kent Island and Palmer’s Island which had been challenged under Lord Baltimore’s proprietorship. While Palmer’s Island remained Claiborne’s possession, the Indians were granted the ability to build a fort of trade there, a profitable enterprise in Claiborne’s plan. It was agreed that both English and Indian slaves would be returned to their rightful owners if they happened to run away or escape. The two groups also developed a procedure for further trading, stipulating “That, upon any occasion of business to the English, or any message or the like, the Indians shall come by water and not by land, That there shall not be above eight or ten at the most at one time. And that they bring with them the token given them by the English for that purpose, by which they may be known and entertained.” Similarly, the English “when they send to the Indians the messenger shall carry the token which we have received from them.” On the banks of the River Severn, Bennett and the other Maryland representatives along with the war captains and councilors of the Susquehanogh, Auroghtaregh, Scarhuhadigh, Ruthehogah, and Nathheldianeh accompanied by their treasurer Sawahegeh debated and ratified the treaty.<sup>120</sup> Not only would the treaty benefit Claiborne’s Kent Island venture, but so too would it stimulate British profits within the larger English political economy and provide commerce for the newly settled puritan community in Maryland.

Bennett’s role as governor coupled with his continued post as Parliamentary commissioner left him uniquely poised to work on the puritans’ behalf. While obtaining

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 29-30.

surrender to the Parliamentary government and establishing trade with the local Indians used preventative measures to assist the puritan community, Bennett was soon forced to assume a more active political voice. On February 7, 1654 the Maryland puritans received notice that all who had obtained land under Lord Baltimore's declaration to the puritans on July 2, 1649 would be required to take an oath of fidelity within three months. Those who refused the oath "shall be ever barred from any right or claim to said lands."<sup>121</sup> Although Bennett was residing in Virginia at the time and operating as Governor, he also stood to lose the land grants he had received in 1649. In taking the oath the puritans would acknowledge Cecilius Lord Baron of Baltimore as "the true and absolute Lord and Proprietary of this Province and Country of Maryland, and the islands thereunto belonging." Additionally, oath takers would do everything in their power to "defend and maintaine all such his said Lordships and his Heires Right, Title, Interest, Priveledges, Royal Jurisdiction, Prerogative, propriety and Dominion over and in the said province of Maryland, and the Islands thereunto belonging" working to "prevent, any plot, conspiracy, or combination which I shall know or have cause to suspect."<sup>122</sup> Such an oath, stipulating Baltimore's right to certain territories and particular islands within the Chesapeake Bay was clearly directed against anyone associated with Claiborne's Kent Island project.

The puritans on the Severn River addressed a petition to their commissioners and supporters, Bennett and Claiborne, in response to the oath, hoping for their continued support. The puritan community reminded Bennett and Claiborne of the "great cost, labor, and danger" the puritans endured in order to remove themselves to Maryland and

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<sup>121</sup> Boddie, *Seventeenth Century Isle of Wight*, 66.

<sup>122</sup> Clayton Colman Hall, ed., *Narratives of Early Maryland, 1633-1684* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), 214.

described how the oath ran contrary to Governor Stone's original promise "of enjoying the liberty of our Consciences in matter of Religion, and all other priviledges of English Subjects." On the whole they considered it "not agreeable to the terms on which we came hither, nor to the liberty of our Consciences as Christians and free Subjects of the Common-wealth of England." The puritans' appeal to Bennett and Claiborne requested that the commissioners might relieve them "according to the Cause and the power wherewith you are entrusted by the Common-wealth of England."<sup>123</sup> The puritans on the north side of the Patuxent River under Richard Preston's leadership sent a complementary petition to Claiborne and Bennett, reinforcing their brethren's plea. They called Baltimore's oath "Tyrannical Power" and likened it to "the old form of Government formerly exercised by him [Baltimore] in this Province, which we did conceive, by the blessing of God upon your honors endeavors, had been fully made Null and void." Preston and his colleagues complained of Lord Baltimore's arbitrary laws and the "Popish Officers" appointed in the place of those Bennett had put in office. Ultimately, the settlers at the Patuxent saw the oath as "contrary to the Liberty and freedom of our Consciences, as Christians, and contrary to the fundamental Laws of England; contrary to the Engagement we have taken in Subjection to the Common-wealth of England, and unsutable to Freemen." Most importantly, Baltimore's orders were "contrary to the Word of God, to fight for, and defend, and maintain Popery, and a Popish Antichristian Government; which we dare not do, unless we should be found Traytors to our Country, fighters against God, and Covenant-breakers."<sup>124</sup> The limited supply of bullion in mercantile theory seemed to parallel puritan views election with both coloring

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<sup>123</sup> "The Humble Petition of the Commissioners and Inhabitants of Severne, alias Anne Arundel County" in *Narratives of Early Maryland*, 218-219.

<sup>124</sup> "Ibid., 219-221.

their exercise of political freedoms. The protectionist element which preserved eternal life and temporal prosperity for a select few also allowed puritans exclusive access to political freedoms which they reserved for themselves rather than sharing with neighboring Catholic and Anglican adherents.

Although Governor Stone shared Bennett's puritan sympathies and a common merchant network, Stone's allegiances to the proprietor Lord Baltimore had proved stronger. Having received word from Lord Baltimore, and ever loyal to his proprietor, Stone issued a proclamation on July 4, 1652 repudiating the reduction of Maryland by the parliamentary commissioners Bennett and Claiborne, charging them both, along with their puritan coreligionists on the Severn and Patuxent Rivers, with "drawing away the people and leading them into faction, sedition, and rebellion against Lord Baltimore."<sup>125</sup> Bennett and Claiborne quickly made plans to travel northward and a proclamation war ensued.

Having not yet heard from Parliament, the commissioners responded to the puritans as "very loving friends" encouraging them to abide by the laws Claiborne and Bennett had previously put in place under the commonwealth government. Baltimore's reversion back to the proprietary system had been unwarranted and the direct disobedience of Parliamentary orders. Bennett and Claiborne advised and encouraged their fellow puritans "in no Case you depart from the same, but that you continue in your due Obedience to the Commonwealth of England, in such manner as you, and they, were then appointed and engaged."<sup>126</sup> When Bennett finally heard from Cromwell, the Lord

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<sup>125</sup> William Hand Browne and Louis Henry Dielman, eds., "The Battle of the Severn" *Maryland Historical Magazine* 14 (1919): 164.

<sup>126</sup> "An Answer to the Petitions lately Received from the Inhabitants of the Rivers of Severn and Patuxent" *Narratives of Early Maryland*, 221-222.

Proprietor's response was unexpected and unwelcome. Oliver Cromwell wrote Bennett disappointed that the Virginia Governor had "gone into his [Lord Baltimore's] plantation in Maryland, and countenanced some people there in opposing the lord Baltimore's offers" and "with other forces from Virginia, you have much disturb'd that colony and people, to the endangering of tumults and a great deal of blood-shed there, if not timely prevented."<sup>127</sup> It seemed that perhaps Baltimore had reached Cromwell first with his grievances. For "at the request of the Lord Baltimore, and divers other person of quality here, who are engaged by great adventures in his interests," Cromwell ordered Bennett to desist saying, "[I] require you, and all others deriving any authority from you, to forbear disturbing the lord Baltimore or his officers in people in Maryland, and to permit all things to remain as they were before any disturbance or alteration made by you, or any other upon pretence of any authority from you."<sup>128</sup> Signing the letter "your loving friend, Oliver P.," Cromwell requested that Bennett refrain from any action until the differences between Baltimore and the Maryland puritans had been resolved by those at Whitehall.<sup>129</sup> While he had received direction from Whitehall to cease any action against Governor Stone in Maryland, Bennett's religious fervor seemed to direct him otherwise.

Despite Cromwell's instructions for Bennett and Claiborne to await further action from Whitehall, both perceived Stone and Baltimore's actions as personal infractions, Claiborne against his claim for Kent Island and Bennett against his puritan community. Neither was willing to wait for Parliamentary intervention. On July 15, 1654, the commissioners issued a declaration reminding Stone that they his gubernatorial office

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<sup>127</sup> "Letters from Mr. Cordker: 2 of 5", *A collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe*, volume 1: 1638-1653 (1742), Vol. xliii. p. 101.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

had only been reinstated dependent on him having “promised to continue in their said Obedience” to the Commonwealth government. Stone’s enforcement of Baltimore’s oath was “an express breach of his Patent” and was far too reminiscent of Baltimore’s actions in seizing Kent Island. By Baltimore’s “strange, and exorbitant proceedings, many great Cruelties and Mischiefs are likely to be committed, and many hundreds, with their Wives, and Families, are utterly ruined, as hath been formerly done here, and at Kent, though Planted before the Lord Baltimore’s Claim to Maryland.”<sup>130</sup> The two commissioners ordered all inhabitants of Maryland to remain in obedience to the Lord Protector of England “whereby they may assure themselves of the peaceable enjoyment of their Liberties, profession of their Religion, and their Estates, and that they shall be protected from wrong and violence in what kind soever.”<sup>131</sup> Meanwhile, Stone prepared an arsenal of armed men and soldiers to surprise the commissioners and their followers, but his violent efforts came to a peaceable end. The commissioners along with some of the inhabitants of the Severn and Patuxent communities crossed the River Patuxent and received a message from Captain Stone that they would meet the following day in the woods where Stone announced his resignation.<sup>132</sup>

On July 20, 1654, Governor Stone resigned his post as governor thinking it fit “for prevention of the effusion of Blood, and ruine of the Country and Inhabitants, by an Hostile Contest upon this occasion, to lay down my Power as Governor of this Province under his Lordship.” He further promised to submit to the government put in place by the Commissioners under Cromwell.<sup>133</sup> Bennett and Claiborne followed his resignation by

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<sup>130</sup> “A Declaration Published in Maryland” *Narratives of Early Maryland*, 224.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 225.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 227; “Order for Settling the Government of Maryland” *Narratives of Early Maryland*, 227.

<sup>133</sup> “Captain William Stone’s Resignation of the Government” *Narratives of Early Maryland*, 225-226.

appointing a new Government in Maryland.<sup>134</sup> To replace Governor Stone, Claiborne and Bennett appointed a number of their puritan colleagues, including Captain William Fuller, Richard Preston, William Durand, and Edward Lloyd among others to serve as commissioners under the Lord Protector for Maryland.<sup>135</sup> William Stone's surrender proved temporary, and, incited by Baltimore's critique of his capitulation, Stone and his followers ultimately came to arms with the Maryland puritans but were defeated.

Richard Bennett's action against Cromwell revealed his religious motivation as foundational to both his political and economic pursuits. Providence had likely guided his actions, as his spiritual convictions superseded economic and political pressures. Willing to sacrifice his gubernatorial position for a more pressing, necessary defense of fellow puritans, Bennett's actions against Baltimore on the Severn revealed the centrality of his puritan faith within his larger purpose. Having been given political authority, the puritans, through a majority in the assembly and the Council passed an act stipulating that "all the Inhabitants of the Province are required to declare in particular & Express Termes under their hands there owning & accepting of the present government and Subjection thereunto."<sup>136</sup> Under the pretense of their authority as commissioners, Bennett and Claiborne had forced the colony of Maryland to once again surrender to Parliamentary authority while neither commissioner had received the blessing of the Lord Protector Cromwell in their actions.

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 227.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> W.H. Browne, ed., *Proceedings and Acts of the General Assembly of Maryland* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1883), 1:339-340.

## Guided by Providence

On October 20, 1654, the newly appointed, puritan dominated, government in Maryland wasted no time in establishing their authority. In “An Act Concerning Religion” the assembly repealed previous freedoms for Catholics to practice their faith, stating instead that “none who profess and Exercise the Popish Religion Commonly known by the Name of the Roman Catholick Religion can be protected in this Province by the Lawes of England.”<sup>137</sup> Provided that religious liberty “be not Extended to popery or prelacy nor to such as under the profession of Christ hold forth and practice Licentiousness,” all others “such as profess faith in God by Jesus Christ (though Differing in Judgment from the Doctrine worship & Discipline publicly held forth shall not be retrained from but shall be protected in the profession of the faith).”<sup>138</sup> The puritan dominated assembly reinforced their act concerning religion by passing a number of laws consistent with their puritan sensibilities. An “Act Concerning Drunkenness” ordered that any found drunk and lawfully convicted would pay 100 pounds tobacco as a fine. Not only would the drunk be punished, but so would “Every person or persons in the Province that shall see any one Drunk and shall not within three days make it known to the next magistrate” be liable to a fine of 100 pounds of tobacco. Neither was drunkenness in private permitted as “Every master or mistress of any family, storekeeper or Shipmaster within this Province who shall Suffer Drunkeness in their house, Store, or Ship” pay the predetermined fine.”<sup>139</sup> The puritan controlled government also passed legislation sanctifying the Sabbath day and prohibiting “Inordinate Recreations as

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 341.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid, 342.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid, 343.



fowling, fishing, hunting or other” including “no souting of Gunns” to be used except in case of necessity. A breach of this law was punishable with a fine of 100 pounds of tobacco. Adultery and fornication were to be punished according to the judgment of the commission.

Bennett saw his spiritual, economic and political roles as inextricably linked within a larger purpose. As he had expressed to John Ferrar, the hope and promise of an impending millennium had made spiritual concerns as pressing as the visible economic and political troubles that Virginia faced. Bennett understood Virginia’s spiritual fate as woven together with the economic and political success of the colony. Bennett likely viewed protecting and preserving the faithful as tied to the temporal fate of the colony. The placement of puritan leadership in the Maryland legislature also secured a more stable spiritual future for Virginia and its surrounding colonies which would likely reap earthly rewards.

In 1655, Richard Bennett resigned the governorship to advocate for the puritans in London.<sup>140</sup> After working to clear up the conflict with Lord Baltimore, while continuing to represent his fellow puritans at Whitehall, Bennett retired from his work in England to once again resume a post on the Governor’s Council of Virginia. When Governor Berkeley was reinstated following the Restoration, Bennett once again served on the council of his former adversary.

For Richard Bennett economic, political, and religious pursuits coalesced within his larger identity as an Atlantic puritan. Like a true providentialist, Bennett interpreted the visible evidence in the world around him as signs of divine pleasure and punishment,

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<sup>140</sup> “State Papers, 1655, June (7 of 7)” A collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe, volume 3: December 1654-August 1655 (1742), V.xliii.p.105.

organizing his life and actions around these subtle promptings. Through building an extensive puritan network well connected within Atlantic economic and political circles, Bennett successfully rose to a position of considerable commercial and political success within the Virginia colony and the larger Atlantic world. While piety remained paramount for his minority puritan community willing to immigrate across the Atlantic and seek religious leadership from their New England coreligionists, their faith was also subject to more worldly pursuits. In order for the community of puritans residing south of the James River and later on the banks of the Severn and Patuxent Rivers to continue within predominately Anglican and Catholic colonies Richard Bennett had to serve as a necessary liaison, a representative for the religious community willing make economic and political moves for the religious end. Bennett's secular pursuits were meant to serve a more heavenly purpose. Consequently, Richard Bennett, along with his Uncle and colleagues, achieved economic influence while limiting the profits of Virginia's common planter class. In pursuing a policy of tobacco monopolies and regulations, a policy that strategically benefited Bennett, and his partners Maurice Thomson, William Claiborne, and William Cloberry, among others, a few within Virginia's puritan community amassed a considerable wealth and influence necessary to the puritan community's survival. Bennett's economic connections eventually aided in his political ascent from burgess, to councilman, Parliamentary commissioner, governor of Virginia, and agent to Parliament.

Bennett's life presents an alternate example of the interaction between puritan faith and commerce in the Atlantic world where piety was not inherently opposed to economic profit and political success. Similar to Mark Peterson's cost of redemption or

John Frederick Martin's profits in the wilderness, Bennett's example demonstrates how economic pursuit was not inimical to religious piety, but necessary to its very survival in the Chesapeake. Without Bennett's efforts in expanding and maintaining puritan networks with powerful and successful puritan merchants coupled with his political involvement as a Parliamentary commissioner and governor, his fellow puritans would not have wielded the necessary resources to combat both Berkeley and Baltimore's opposition. Not only did faith, politics, and the economy align in Bennett's ability to advocate on behalf of fellow Chesapeake puritans, but the three also worked together in his millennial vision. Bennett's appeal to John Ferrar revealed his understanding of temporal blessings as tied to Biblical promises through the words in Matthew 7:7, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened." Bennett's commercial and political pursuits were not inherently divergent from his religious convictions, but rather within his millennial framework they were woven together by the hand of providence. The interaction between faith and commerce within Atlantic puritan networks allowed for both the strengthening of religious bonds across geographical boundaries and the necessary connections to achieve economic and political prominence. Ultimately, Bennett and his coreligionists' adoption of a mercantile religious economy, whereby their faith colored economic and political concerns while their commercial interest and political positions supported their ability to preserve puritan community, demonstrates necessary cooperation between faith, economy, and politics rather than their perceived separation. Richard Bennett's persistent attempts and frequent success in using politics and commerce for a religious end continues to demonstrate the

complex relationship between spiritual conviction and temporal pursuit in the colonial world.

## CHAPTER 3

### A WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING: DANIEL GOOKIN'S MILLENNIAL CHALLENGE FOR THE CITY ON A HILL

*“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.” Matthew 7:15 (KJV)*

Roughly halfway between the Irish cities of Cork and Kinsale lies a small hamlet still known by the name of its medieval fortress, Carrigaline. The town’s inhabitants remember little of its namesake whose remains lie tucked away on a residential dirt road guarded by the neighboring dogs and a group of delinquent teenagers who use the ruins as a temporary escape from parental guidance. Covered in years of undergrowth and a rusty sign that prohibits trespassing, the remains of Gookin’s estate seem to have followed a similar path as their former owner. Despite his gravestone and a small roadside historical marker in Cambridge, Massachusetts, the story of Daniel Gookin has faded from much of colonial memory and receded to the background of puritan history. Perhaps, his fate, much like those of his Atlantic puritan colleagues fell prey to the ascendance of a New England narrative at the expense of a much broader and more complete Atlantic understanding of seventeenth-century puritanism.

Gookin's time spent working alongside the famed "missionary to the Indians," John Eliot, is likely the reason for which his name has appeared in a handful of recent works, although many of these studies fail to consider Gookin's full experience as an Atlantic puritan, choosing instead to isolate his Massachusetts years.<sup>141</sup> Yet, because Daniel Gookin pursued a faith infused with his transatlantic perspective, the early years spent in Ireland, Virginia, and England, along with his merchant career and his membership within a community of likeminded Atlantic believers should also be considered. Ultimately, it was Gookin's membership within a vibrant Atlantic puritan network, his participation alongside fellow believers in commerce, his time spent among coreligionists in Virginia, and the relationships he maintained that shaped his puritan experience and eventual reception after moving to New England.

Daniel Gookin formed his understanding of puritanism apart from New England's perspective. Shaped by Atlantic puritanism, Gookin's belief embraced collaboration between faith and commerce, a broad membership among the visible sainthood, and an eschatological vision that stretched beyond the borders of New England to encompass puritans throughout the Caribbean and Chesapeake.<sup>142</sup> Thus, while a puritan in name and

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<sup>141</sup> Discussions of Daniel Gookin's time spent in Massachusetts include Martin, *Profits in the Wilderness*, 23ff. Martin focuses on Gookin's work as a town-planter along with his other entrepreneurial interests in New England; M. Michelle Jarett Morris, *Under Household Government: Sex and Family in Puritan Massachusetts* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013). Morris discusses Gookin's inability to govern his household as his son became entangled in a case of improper premarital sexual intimacy; Louise A Breen, *Transgressing the Bounds: Subversive Enterprises among the Puritan Elite in Massachusetts, 1630-1692* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001). Breen demonstrates how Gookin's transatlantic perspective made him peculiar among more parochial puritans in New England, but spends little time discussing the extent of his previous Atlantic experiences.; Patricia Coughlan, "Cross-Currents in Colonial Discourse: The Political Thought of Vincent and Daniel Gookin" in Jane H. Ohlmeyer, ed., *Political Thought in Seventeenth-Century Ireland: Kingdom or Colony* (Cambridge, 2000), 56-82. Coughlan draws an interesting parallel between Vincent Gookin's theories on Irish colonization and Daniel Gookin's Algonquian missionary efforts, but does not discuss how Daniel Gookin's experiences in Virginia and merchant activities might have also informed his puritan views.

<sup>142</sup> Alan Heimert and Perry Miller argued similarly that the New England Puritans were post-millennialists believing that the New Jerusalem would be located in New England and placing themselves at the center of

profession to his New England neighbors, Gookin's faith came to contradict the very core of their errand into the wilderness. It threatened to redraw the boundaries of the elect and change the very definition of New England community, while pushing the limits of acceptable participation in commerce. This ultimately challenged the very spiritual vision at the heart of New England's purpose by repositioning the New Jerusalem outside of Massachusetts and elevating the Indians to a seemingly undeserved position in the hierarchy of conversion. In the eyes of New England puritans this made Daniel Gookin nothing more than a deceiver, a wolf in sheep's clothing using the mask of puritanism to disguise his evil intentions.

As an Atlantic puritan living in New England, Daniel Gookin never successfully fit the mold. While his contacts with puritan merchant entrepreneurs like Richard Bennett, William Claiborne, and Maurice Thomson demonstrated that faith and commerce could successfully align, his New England counterparts often distrusted the effects of profit on the vitality of their faith. John Frederick Martin argues that Gookin's entrepreneurial activity on the frontier represented a New England Puritan impulse for profitable speculation, although Gookin's behavior was not characteristic of Massachusetts puritans.<sup>143</sup> His participation in commercial profit alongside entrepreneurs like Bennett, Claiborne, and Thomson aligned Gookin more closely with an alternate perspective on the market. Whereas, merchant activity had become associated in New England with a push for free market commerce, a disassociation with local religious authority and government, and a plunge into the chaos, anonymity, and debauchery of the

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Puritan eschatology as a key component in bringing about Christ's return. Alan Heimert, *Religion and the American Mind* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966); Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1939).

<sup>143</sup> Martin, *Profits in the Wilderness*, 23-27.

Atlantic market, Gookin and his colleagues pursued a different path. Working alongside the Virginia Company and later Parliament to secure monopolies and fix prices, these puritan merchants pursued profit in line with government objectives where the order of the marketplace and political order reigned supreme. Their commercial endeavors were closely tied to the government-sponsored policy of British mercantilism as divine providence guided their actions. Because Gookin's faith was not connected to local New England government, neither was his understanding of commerce and politics. Within a broader transatlantic focus he could remain loyal to the British government and his puritan faith while also turning a profit.

Gookin's earliest experiences working with his father had introduced him to an extensive community of Atlantic puritans who saw things differently than their New England counterparts and fostered a community of likeminded believers outside of their local communities. When Gookin arrived in New England he encountered a puritanism with stronger ties to the regional colonial government. His later exploration on the frontier, push for Caribbean expansion, and evangelization of the Algonquians were only met with a fearful parochialism from the New England community who elevated loyalty to their local church above their membership in an Atlantic fellowship. Gookin's behavior challenged the commercial and geographic limits of puritan New England while also pushing theological boundaries. Louise Breen has aptly argued that Gookin's transatlantic experience alongside his backcountry speculation challenged the provincial interests of New Englanders in an area where religion and congregations had always symbolically defined community and community subsequently defined puritan faith. When Gookin suggested an alternate definition of community by seeking to broaden its



reach he inadvertently struck at the very core of their beliefs.<sup>144</sup> Rather than just questioning the insular focus and what Breen labels the tribalistic nature of New England puritans, Gookin's attempt to place the Massachusetts puritans within a wider Atlantic context upset their eschatological narrative. In suggesting that praying Indians should join the visible saints while insinuating that New England shared its providential purpose with a larger, Atlantic puritan community Gookin questioned the boundaries of membership on both physical and spiritual levels. This expansion of the visible sainthood also suggested a broader membership among the elect. Stretching puritan boundaries into the New England frontier and across the Atlantic threatened to offer membership and perhaps election to both Native Americans and African slaves previously excluded.

Not only did Gookin adhere to a wider geographical definition of puritan faith, but so too did he ascribe to a broader theological understanding of his belief. His fellow Atlantic puritans confronted with an unknown environment and largely isolated from former religious communities had chosen to emphasize the commonalities of their faith over the theological disparities. Similarly, Gookin widened ethnic conceptions of Puritan faith and called upon his fellow Massachusetts puritans to include praying Indians within the visible sainthood. Patricia Coughlin argues that Gookin's connection with his Irish cousin Vincent, coupled with his own experiences as an Irish colonizer, influenced him to adopt an assimilationist approach regarding the Algonquian Indians.<sup>145</sup> Breen suggests that alongside Gookin's transatlantic and frontier experience, his allowance of praying Indians into the visible sainthood represented another example of his desire to redefine the boundaries of Massachusetts puritan communities. In placing "Christian Indians at the

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<sup>144</sup> Breen, *Transgressing the Bounds*, 165.

<sup>145</sup> Coughlan, "Cross-Currents," 77-81.

center of the war's providential meaning" Gookin "effected a jarring reversal of the roles traditionally ascribed to Indians and Englishmen."<sup>146</sup> While Gookin did seek to expand the New England puritan community both geographically and theologically his efforts were not merely the result of previous transatlantic and frontier experience. Rather, Gookin's membership within a complex Atlantic puritan network alongside his relationships coreligionists in Virginia and Maryland allowed him to develop a broader communal perspective on puritan faith. As a result, Gookin understood the "halfway covenant's potential to expand the bonds of community" by allowing faith to move across ethnic boundaries.<sup>147</sup> Gookin's exposure to John Thorrowgood's theories labeling the Native Americans as the lost tribes of Israel also allowed Gookin to reconsider the Indians' role within Puritan eschatology. Rather than excluding them from puritan membership, Gookin saw their ultimate salvation as paramount to the millennium's arrival. Ultimately, Gookin's broader, Atlantic understanding of puritanism influenced his desire to admit praying Indians into the visible sainthood and challenged New England views by placing Native Americans at the forefront of their millennial eschatology.

Recognizing the Atlantic nature of puritanism also expanded New England's errand into the wilderness and suggested that the New Jerusalem might be located outside of Massachusetts Bay, making Winthrop's followers less central to Christ's millennial return. Resurrecting Perry Miller's foundational argument, the apocalyptic purpose of Massachusetts's errand into the wilderness, a covenant with God to build an exemplary "city on a hill," reveals the fusion of temporal and eschatological concerns at the

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<sup>146</sup> Breen, *Transgressing the Bounds*, 192.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 165.

forefront of the New England mind. Miller's contention that their success depended upon English observance of New England spirituality, that "the eyes of the world be kept fixed upon it in rapt attention"<sup>148</sup> demonstrates the severity of Gookin's proposal to turn the focus instead onto an Atlantic puritan community. While a narrow, insular view of the Massachusetts Bay colony allowed these puritans to occupy a unique role in the millennial narrative, ushering in Christ's return, Gookin's desire to see them as merely one element of a larger Puritan picture challenged their providential significance. No longer was New England tasked with a special mission from God through history, but rather the entire Atlantic puritan community would work together to achieve a shared eternal purpose.

As an Atlantic puritan within a New England puritan community Daniel Gookin always remained an outsider despite his economic and political successes. His redefinition of the New Englander's lines between faith and commerce, expansion of geographical limits on community, and broadening of puritan theological boundaries challenged the providential role of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. By replacing the colony's unique purpose within the larger Atlantic with Native Americans in the millennial discourse, Gookin upset the eschatological vision of New England puritans. His successful integration of profit and puritanism further disrupted their understanding of faith in the temporal realm. Gookin's membership within the larger Atlantic puritan community and simultaneous residence in the Massachusetts Bay Colony brought to the forefront differences between Atlantic puritanism and New England faith. While a fellow puritan along with his New England coreligionists, Gookin's membership within a larger Atlantic community challenged both social and spiritual expectations making him an

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<sup>148</sup> Miller, "Errand into the Wilderness," 15.

unwelcome reminder of oppositional belief within the puritan folds. Caught between his Atlantic puritan perspective and the provincial exclusivity of the Massachusetts community in which he lived, Gookin's example uniquely juxtaposes New England's flavor of puritanism against the broader Atlantic puritan belief.

### Becoming an Atlantic Puritan

Daniel Gookin spent his earliest years traveling to and from Ireland, Virginia, London, and Maryland while negotiating his place within a developing network of Atlantic puritans. Similar to Richard Bennett's access to connections through his Uncle Edward, Gookin's entrance into the puritan Atlantic was largely established through his father's complex political and business networks. Born into an English family of colonizers in Cork, Ireland, Gookin's first experiences in the Atlantic world came through commerce. His family had moved from Kent, England to Cork, Ireland under the encouragement of Daniel Gookin's uncle, Vincent Gookin, and in March 1618 Daniel Gookin, the elder, agreed to lease the family's Irish estate, Carrigaline, to the wealthy landowner Richard Boyle. The 1200 pounds sterling Gookin received in exchange would help finance other real estate ventures which eventually provided the capital for both the elder and younger Gookin to enter the colonial economy.<sup>149</sup>

The family's first expansion into American ventures came through a contract with the Virginia Company to provide cattle for the fledgling colony. Gookin, Sr. partnered

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<sup>149</sup> Frederick William Gookin, *Daniel Gookin, 1612-1687, assistant and major general of the Massachusetts Bay Colony: his life and letters and some account of his ancestry* (Chicago: R.R. Donnelley & Sons Co., 1912), 32-33; Alexander Balloch Grosart, ed., *The Lismore Papers of Richard Boyle, First and "Great" Earl of Cork* (Chiswick Press, 1886): Series I, vol. I, 182, 194.

with Thomas Woode and began transporting cattle from Ireland to Virginia. They delivered livestock in exchange for eleven pounds per heifer and three pounds ten shillings for every “Shee Goate.”<sup>150</sup> Besides his trade in livestock, Gookin was also permitted to “Trade barter and sell all such Comodities hee shall carry thither att such rates and prizes as hee shall thinke good.”<sup>151</sup> Accompanying his first delivery to Virginia aboard the *Flying Harte*, Daniel Gookin, Sr., arrived on November 22 1621/2 to find the starving Virginians encouraged by the arrival of much needed supplies. Having lived on the edge of starvation, Governor Wyatt remarked at how well furnished Gookin’s ship was “with all sorts of p’visione, as well as with Cattle s wee could wyshe all men would follow their example.”

While Gookin, Sr. was a welcome sight for Virginians in dire need of sustenance, his good will venture also garnered him a healthy profit. Not only did he collect from his trade in livestock and other commodities, but Gookin also took advantage of the headright system receiving 50 acres for each of the fifty Irish colonists and thirty additional passengers he brought to Virginia.<sup>152</sup> Gookin’s land grants eventually became the basis of a plantation he named Marie’s Mount in honor of his wife. Having fortified his property against Indian attack, in May 1622 the elder Gookin left the plantation under the care of his servants and departed for England on the *Sea Flower*, a ship which had carried many puritans from Amsterdam to Virginia. The elder Gookin’s stay in England included making a report on the recent Indian massacre in Virginia and an attempt to settle his account with the Virginia Company regarding 150 acres due him at Newport

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<sup>150</sup>Gookin, 38. Kingsbury, *Virginia Company Records* for Nov. 13, 1620 and in the minutes of the Quarter Court Nov. 15, 1620.

<sup>151</sup> Kingsbury, *Records of the Virginia Co.* I:501-502.

<sup>152</sup> Edward Neil, *History of the Virginia Company of London* (Albany, NY: Joel Munsell, 1869), 285-286; John Smith, *General History*, 140.; Kingsbury, *Records of the Virginia Co.* I:618, 535, 626.

News, which would be added to Marie's Mount.<sup>153</sup> Daniel Gookin, Sr. also spent his stay developing useful contacts with the New England Company and purchasing shares. He had already been admitted as a member of the Virginia Company and on June 17, 1622, he was appointed to a committee in charge of distributing the possessions of those killed in the Indian massacre.

Shortly thereafter the elder Gookin returned to Ireland and began preparing another shipment of cattle and settlers for Virginia. He sent what was probably his own ship, the *Providence*, on a second journey led by the former captain of the *Mayflower*, John Clarke, who he had likely met on his most recent trip to England.<sup>154</sup> The *Providence* arrived with 40 men and thirty additional passengers in April 1623, but because of the Virginia Company's looming demise Gookin never received the land grants due him, a slight for which he sought rectification during the remainder of his life<sup>155</sup> Despite this grievance, over the course of his years as a successful merchant and colonizer, the elder Gookin established a veritable network of puritan contacts in the Atlantic. Daniel Gookin, Sr.'s involvement in the Virginia and New England Companies, coupled with his contacts at Whitehall and those in Ireland built his son Daniel an extensive web of colonial relationships. Within his wider network Daniel Gookin, Sr. also developed close ties with a number of Atlantic puritans involved in the colonial enterprise, relationships that his son capitalized on in the years to come.

As a member of the Virginia Company, the elder Gookin served alongside the Virginia colonizer and former member of the Ancient Church, Edward Bennett. Both entrepreneurs also pursued ventures in Virginia through trade and land acquisition during

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<sup>153</sup> Kingsbury, *Records of the Virginia Co*, 2:65, 73, 90, 89.

<sup>154</sup> Gookin, 45; McIlwaine, *Minutes of the Virginia Company*, February 13, 1621/2.

<sup>155</sup> Gookin, 46.

the colony's early years. Through his investments and work alongside the *Mayflower* Captain John Clarke, Daniel Gookin, Sr. also developed relationships in Winthrop's Massachusetts Bay colony. Richard Boyle, who had purchased and leased the Gookin's Irish estate also became an important contact eventually serving as a patron to the younger Gookin.<sup>156</sup> Among Gookin, Sr.'s Atlantic contacts outside the Puritan purview, Ferdinando Gorges, the New England colonizer and founder of Maine, developed a lasting relationship with the elder Gookin that carried on through both Gookin and Gorges' sons. Before the Daniel Gookin, Jr., made his entry into colonial commerce and Atlantic puritan networks his father had already developed an extensive, layered network that would serve him in his colonial pursuits.

Beyond his father's connections in Atlantic commerce, the younger Gookin forged his own relationships with key Atlantic puritans. Record of the younger Daniel Gookin in Virginia first appears in 1631 at the time of his father's death in Ireland during the spring of 1632/3. Placed in charge of their father's Virginia holdings, Daniel Gookin, Jr., and his brother John began to grow roots in the developing Virginia society. John had been granted 500 acres on the Nansemond River, in the heart of the puritan community, for his transportation of settlers to the colony. In the next five years he received an additional three grants totaling 1490 acres and was appointed a commissioner for keeping monthly courts in Lower Norfolk. In 1639 John became a burgess for Lower Norfolk and married Sarah Thorowgood, the widow of Captain Adam Thorowgood, and the daughter

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<sup>156</sup> Nicholas P. Canny, *The Upstart Earl: A Study of the Social and Mental World of Richard Boyle* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 38-39.

of a London merchant. John continued in public service as the commander of the Lower Norfolk Court in March 1643, but died shortly after later that November.<sup>157</sup>

Daniel Gookin's Virginia career began as an assistant to his father in 1630/1 when he executed an indenture between himself and a servant named Thomas Addison. In agreement with the original terms of indenture:

The said Daniell Gooking younger, in the behalf of his father, as well for and in consideration of the good and honest service the said Daniel Gooking and his assignes have had and received from the said Thomas Addison, as alsoe for an in consideration of the yearly rent and other conditions hereafter mentioned and expressed, doe give, grant, assigne and confirme unto the sd Thomas Addison his heires one fifty acres of land, being part of the land belonging to the lordship of the said Daniel Gooking, as scituate and leyeth above Newport News at a place there now called Maries Mount.<sup>158</sup>

Gookin continued to amass land in Virginia receiving a grant from Governor Harvey on December 29, 1637, for the transportation of fifty persons to the colony, which probably included property owed to Gookin's father for transporting seventy colonists on the *Providence* in 1623.<sup>159</sup> After securing capital in Virginia, Gookin traveled back to England to rekindle relationships with his father's former contacts and perhaps to lend his services to the puritan military forces.

While in London, Gookin met and married his second wife sometime after receiving his marriage license on November 11, 1639. In 1641, Mary Dolling Gookin and her 29-year-old husband traveled with their infant son back to Gookin's plantation in Nansemond. As a significant landowner and the son of a successful merchant, Daniel received a position in the House of Burgesses representing Upper Norfolk at the Grand Assembly on January 12, 1641/2. Later that year Gookin was also granted the position as

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<sup>157</sup> *Virginia Historical Magazine*, vol. 5, 458, 435; vol. 2, 99; *Lower Norfolk County Antiquary*, i, 144.

<sup>158</sup> *New England Historical Genealogical Register*, 1, 347.

<sup>159</sup> *Records of VA Land Office*, I, 511; Gookin, 62-63; Campbell's History of Virginia, 350.



Captain of the militia to defend against the surrounding Indians.<sup>160</sup> He worked alongside his brother, just before John's death, to ensure that the "Indians who have committed the Outrages may be sent in to receive such condigne punishmt as the nature of the offense may justly merritt, as alsoe to restore the goods stolen."<sup>161</sup> Meanwhile, Gookin continued to acquire more land in Virginia through transporting another twenty-eight servants to the colony. As the demand for labor shifted from British indentured servants to African slaves Gookin brought slaves of his own to the colony including a slave by the name of Jacob Warrow. For his continued transportation of colonists Governor Berkeley granted Gookin another 1400 acres on the Rappahanocke River.<sup>162</sup>

Gookin's religious networks were merely an extension of his business and political connections. A fellow merchant and burgess in the Virginia Assembly, Richard Bennett, discussed in the previous chapters, served as an informal leader and advocate of the puritan community to which Gookin belonged. Through that same community, Gookin was also connected to Philip Bennett, kin to Richard, John Utie, a fellow puritan and councilman, and Richard Claiborne a puritan sympathizer, councilman, secretary of state, and landholder south of the James River. On May 24, 1642, Gookin, along with Richard Bennett, John Hull and seventy-one other signers sent word to the Massachusetts puritans expressing their need for religious leadership. Likely influenced by his father's contacts with the New England puritans in his decision to seek aid, Gookin's links with the Northern colony only solidified when the three ministers arrived in Virginia later that year. Following Governor Berkeley's cold reception and the Assembly's passing of acts to encourage stricter allegiance to the Book of Common Prayer a number of puritans,

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<sup>160</sup> *Virginia Historical Magazine*, ix, 51.

<sup>161</sup> Gookin, 65-67.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*

including the newly arrived ministers, made plans to leave the colony. Gookin spent a short period in Maryland, having received land grants under Governor Stone's provisions, but shortly thereafter moved to Massachusetts.<sup>163</sup> Probably drawn to the northern colony through his relationships with the three ministers that had visited Virginia, Gookin arrived in Boston on May 20, 1644. Six days later he joined the First Church in Boston and on May 29 he was made a freeman in the congregation.<sup>164</sup> The combination of Gookin's inherited contacts and the networks he had developed on his own helped pave the way for a smooth transition to Massachusetts life. While Gookin was readily welcomed into the Massachusetts puritan community his beliefs regarding puritan social expectations would soon reveal themselves as contrary to the New England way.

Perhaps deceived by Gookin's promise to abide by the New England Way, Massachusetts puritans quickly made the new settler at home in their community. Before long, Gookin had amassed a considerable amount of land along with the titles of Superintendent to the Praying Indians and Assistant and Major General to the Massachusetts Colony. His ascent was rapid and clearly aided by his previous contacts with the New England community as well as his perceived agreement with their way of life. Shortly after Gookin's arrival in Massachusetts the town of Cambridge voted to grant him farm in Shawshin provided that he purchase a house in Cambridge. Gookin complied and bought a house located near the current site of the Hasty Pudding Club. As

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<sup>163</sup> John Winthrop, *The History of New England*, edited by James Savage (Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Co., 1853), 2:93, 115-116; William Walter Henning, ed., *Statutes at Large; Being a Collection of all the Laws of Virginia from the First Session of the Legislature, in the Year 1619* (Charlottesville, VA: Published for the Jamestown Foundation of the Commonwealth of Virginia by the University Press of Virginia, 1969), I:277; Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana* (New York: Russel & Russell, 1967), I:440.

<sup>164</sup> *The Book of General Lawes and Libertyes Concerning the Inhabitants of Massachusetts* (Cambridge, 1648).

promised, Gookin received a 500-acre farm in exchange. In 1657, the General Court granted Gookin another 500 acres in the Pequot country bordering the Narragansett. After exhausting normal avenues for land acquisition Gookin sought out more peculiar means of increasing his property holdings. Gookin involved himself in a number of town planting projects beginning with his proprietorship of Southertown, which became Stonington, Connecticut. He received another 500 acres in 1655 between Concord and Lancaster and in 1677 purchased 130 acres from the Indian Plantation south of Marlborough. Gookin's frontier interests spread to the town of Boggswon, later Sherburn, where he owned a proprietary right and a farm.<sup>165</sup>

While his first town planting projects were relatively small, Gookin identified an opportunity for considerable wealth and prowess through managing the Worcester development. The very scale of the project, which had intrigued Gookin through the promise of fruitful returns, became the cause of the project's difficulties in its early years. Continually lagging behind schedule and suffering from intermittent inactivity, the Wooster settlement seemed far from a sure reality. On May 15, 1667 Gookin was appointed to "view a place about ten miles westward from Marlborough, at or about a place called Quansigamon Ponds, and make report to this [General] Court whether the place was capable of making a plantation."<sup>166</sup> Gookin and his colleagues returned to the General Court with a report on the land deeming it "conveniently scituated & wel watered with ponds [and brooks] & lying nearre midway beetwene Boston & Springfield

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<sup>165</sup> Martin, *Profits in the Wilderness*, 24; Gookin Grant, 1657, XLV, 60b, Mass Archives: General Court Order, May 20, 1658, Photostats, MHS; Southertown Proprietors Petition, 1663, II, 43, Mass. Archives; Gookin Indian Deed, May 2, 1677, and Court Confirmation May 28, 1679, Photostats, MHS.

<sup>166</sup> William Lincoln, *History of Worchester, Massachusetts: From its Earliest Settlement to September, 1836 with Various Notices Relating to the History of Worchester County* (Worcester, MA: Henry J. Howland, Printer, 1862), 303; Daniel Seagrave, *Records of the Proprietors of Worchester, Massachusetts* (Book On Demand Ltd., 2013), 12.

about one [day's] ioyrny from either."<sup>167</sup> The proprietors suggested that the town consist of an eight mile square, that a committee be appointed to direct the plantation, that a good minister of God's word be placed there so that the "such people there bee planted may not liue like lambs in a large place," and that 200 to 300 acres be distributed among the settlers in exchange for a small rent to be paid over the course of seven years.<sup>168</sup>

Once the General Court agreed that the area was inhabitable they appointed Gookin to lead the settlement committee he had proposed. Gookin's work alongside praying Indians also made him a strategic choice as he served a key role in the negotiations to purchase the property from the Indians in exchange for "two coats and four yards of trading cloth, valewed at twenty six shill." This purchase gave the puritans "civil or natural right, in all and singular the broken up land and woodlands, woods, trees rivers, brooks, ponds, swamps, meadows, minerals, or any other thing, or things whatsoever, lying and being within that tract of land, conteyning eight miles square."<sup>169</sup> In 1669 Gookin determined the guidelines for the Worcester settlement including provisions for a schoolhouse and a minister, but the lots were not provisioned until 1675. In exchange for his efforts, Daniel Gookin received the second lot of fifty acres bordering the property of Benjamin Hall and his son, Samuel Gookin's lands.<sup>170</sup> In 1684 Gookin was granted another eight lots from the Worcester settlement in payment for his work in establishing the town.<sup>171</sup> The following year Gookin was granted a 100 acre lot "lying upon the easternmost end of pakachooge H[ill]" along with a "lott vpon aplaine called

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<sup>167</sup> Seagrave, *Records of the Proprietors of Worcester*, 13.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid*, 13-14.

<sup>169</sup> "First Indian Deed, July 13, 1674" in William Lincoln and Charles Hersey, *History of Worcester, Massachusetts: From Its Earliest Settlement to September, 1836 with Various Notices Relating to the History of Worcester County* (Boston, MA: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 1988), 303.

<sup>170</sup> Seagrave, *Records of the Proprietors of Worcester*, 20-21.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid*, 38.

Racoone plaine of 80 Acres.”<sup>172</sup> He also received “eighteen Hut lost or house lots neare the mils on the west Side of ye mil” and for every lot one acre of meadow totaling 18 acres of meadow located “vpon mill brooke a little below the mills.”<sup>173</sup> Gookin eventually sold some of his land to John Eliot and John Smith, but on the whole, his ventures in Worcester allowed him to acquire a considerable profit.<sup>174</sup> While pursuing the settlement in hopes of extending the puritan commonwealth, Gookin extended the reach of his puritan community while also filling his pocketbook.

When living in Massachusetts Gookin maintained contact with coreligionists in Maryland and Virginia and rekindled business relationships with his father’s former colleagues. Shortly after Gookin’s arrival in Cambridge, Richard Bennett sent his son, Richard Bennett, Jr., and his stepson, Nathaniel Utie, to pursue their education at Harvard. In Bennett’s stead, Daniel Gookin served as a guardian for the boys and helped keep track of their tuition payments. While maintaining earlier contacts Gookin also resurrected relationships that had been important to his father’s Atlantic career. The elder Gookin had worked closely with Ferdinando Gorges, Sr. and in June 1663 Daniel Gookin reached out to the son of his father’s former friend in a letter reminding Gorges’ of his father’s relationship with Daniel Gookin, Sr.: “Though I am a stranger unto you in person, yet ‘tis not improbable that you have heard of my name, because my father who bore the same name was intimately acquainted with your honoured & deceased Sr Ferdinando Gorges.”<sup>175</sup> Gookin coyly walked the line between Massachusetts resident and friend of the Gorges family to navigate the contested boundaries between Maine and

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<sup>172</sup> Ibid., 40-41.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., 74-76.

<sup>175</sup> Public Record Office, London, CO/1/17/57.

the Massachusetts Bay colony. Many New Englanders were living within the region in question, an area that the Massachusetts colony claimed as their own, but that Gorges determined to be within Maine's borders. Gookin argued that the settlers "still adhere to the government of the Bay, & frequently make their address to it for protection and justice."<sup>176</sup> Gookin suggested that the opposing sides might come to "some honourable composition with the jurisdiction of Massachusetts." Making a proposal "from one that wishes your best good" Gookin skillfully sought to extend the jurisdiction of the Massachusetts Bay government while appealing to Gorges supposed desire for peaceful resolution and continued settlement. Both of their fathers had been involved together in Gorges' New England projects, and Gookin sought to pursue settlement ventures in Maine along with his Massachusetts and Connecticut interests. By 1680 Gookin had been appointed along with William Stoughton "to take order for the Survey of all the said Lands & making such Contracts & grants as to them shall seeme meete for the sale & dispose thereof" regarding lands that the Lord Proprietor of Maine had deemed worthy of sale.<sup>177</sup> Gookin's strategic negotiations with Gorges, Jr. allowed him to eventually obtain an opportunity for the management of future settlements in Maine, which would likely lead to continued profits.

Richard Boyle, the Earl of Cork and father to the scientist Robert Boyle, also became an important Atlantic Puritan contact and served as Gookin's patron during his later literary career. The Gookin family had first come in contact with Boyle upon moving to Ireland when the elder Daniel Gookin sold his land in Kent and purchased the castle and lands of Carrigaline, roughly seven miles southeast of Cork, Ireland, for

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<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> James Phinney Baxter, ed., *Documentary History of the State of Maine* (Portland, ME: Fred L. Tower Company, 1916), 4:394.

around 1,200 pounds sterling.<sup>178</sup> As the Earl of Cork Boyle contested Gookin's ownership of the land, and the two made an agreement whereby Boyle bought the property from Gookin for 1250 pounds and a 22-year lease of the surrounding lands for 100 pounds per year.<sup>179</sup>

Both his patron and a family friend, Boyle likely influenced Gookin's understanding of the puritan faith both during and prior to his time spent in Massachusetts. Boyle exhibited a curious puritan ethos reflective of Gookin's broader conception of the faith. As Nicholas Canny has described, the Earl of Cork's faith seemed to temper a forceful business policy that many of his Irish colleagues had questioned. Having saturated his mind in puritan writings such as William Perkins' *Cases of Conscience*; *The Practice of Piety*; A manuscript book of sermons by Archbishop Ussher; Dr Downham's sermons; and four manuscript books of religion bound up in quarto, Boyle successfully viewed his world and his work through a providential lens.<sup>180</sup> In a similar vein to Richard Bennett and other Atlantic puritans, Boyle seemed to conceive of his faith through a broader eschatological framework that allowed the result to justify the process by which it had been achieved. This "Machiavellian puritanism," present in Richard Bennett's employment of a mercantile spiritual economy and Boyle's attempts to spread true religion throughout Ireland while simultaneously acquiring wealth through questionable means, allowed for a looser ethical code within the puritan faith in order that Kingdom goals might be achieved. For Richard Boyle, the Earl of Cork, material success served as evidence of God's blessing on his religious pursuits, and like many puritans he encouraged a rigid spiritual climate within his home in choosing tutors and apprentices

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<sup>178</sup> Gookin, 31, *Lismore Papers*, Ser. I, I, 302.

<sup>179</sup> Gookin, 33; *Lismore Papers*, Ser I, I, 182, 194, 204, 206, 213.

<sup>180</sup> Canny, *The Upstart Earl*, 27-28.

for his children.<sup>181</sup> Boyle's continued influence on Gookin's life and writings likely corresponded with what Daniel Gookin already knew of Atlantic puritan practice and continued to expand his understanding of faith beyond the New England way. His "Machiavellian puritanism" followed the guiding hand of providence to use temporal means to achieve spiritual goals. This flexibility and fluidity between the temporal and spiritual realms seemed to parallel Gookin's own approach as well as what he had previously witnessed among other Atlantic puritans.

The amalgamation of Daniel's influences during his early career, including his inherited profession as a merchant, his exposure to Atlantic Puritanism through individuals like Bennett and Claiborne, his own success as a frontiersman, and his rekindled contacts with Atlantic merchants and Puritans like Ferdinando Gorges, Jr. and Richard Boyle allowed Gookin to view puritanism as consistent with his business pursuits and the amassing of wealth. While John Frederick Martin has argued that Gookin was representative of a New England Puritan quality whereby profit aligned with puritanism, it is likely that Gookin's easy alignment of piety and profit came from his Atlantic experience. Gookin and his father had witnessed Edward Bennett's attempts to achieve tobacco monopolies for the Virginia company and secure a favorable balance of trade to not only benefit the English crown but also ensure capital flowed into his and fellow puritan colleagues' pocketbooks. Daniel Gookin's father had also achieved success in business through transporting Irish adventurers and reaching an agreement to supply cattle to the Virginia colony. Finally, Gookin's understanding of faith and commerce was probably also influenced by what Nicholas Canny labels "Machiavellian Puritanism" in the life of Richard Boyle. As a part of a puritan community whose

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<sup>181</sup> Ibid., 32.



emphasis on cohesion superseded a focus on particularities of doctrine and theology, Gookin's broader conception of the faith and its practice, specifically in relation to his business pursuits, demonstrates further how puritan faith and financial interests were not inherently diametrically opposed. In following providential guidance, Gookin could use earthly means to achieve spiritual goals and interpret financial gain as a blessing from God. His support of British mercantilism and collaboration with Parliamentary policies allowed Gookin to perceive profit as aligned with order, government, and faith, unlike his New England counterparts. Both during his tenure in the Chesapeake and while living in Cambridge, Gookin pursued financial gain along with spiritual nourishment as a speculator and property owner. Although there were others in New England ascribed to a similar ease in dealing with business and beliefs, Gookin remained an outsider with regard to his faith and practice as he challenged New England boundaries between faith and commerce.

A number of scholars have chipped away at the understanding of New England puritanism as diametrically opposed to commercial profit.<sup>182</sup> While these works contribute to a dialogue on a variety of puritan experiences within the northeast, Daniel Gookin's example provides yet another perspective. Mark Valeri has recently outlined New Englanders' eventual acceptance of the need to participate in market activity, but he identifies this transition as occurring much later than when Gookin moved to Cambridge.

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<sup>182</sup> John Frederick Martin has demonstrated that speculation and profit seeking were central to the first settlements in New England and that entrepreneurial interests motivated much of the spiritual invasion into the wilderness. John Frederick Martin, *Profits in the Wilderness*; Mark Peterson has shown that there was a price to pay for redemption including a salary for the clergy, a cost for publishing and distributing catechisms and devotional literature, and building funds for both new and existent church buildings challenging previous assumptions that commerce undermined religious pursuit. Peterson, *The Price of Redemption*; Stephen Innes has demonstrated how puritanism inspired and tempered capitalism through a unique collaboration between emergent mercantile capitalism and the moral and religious elements that helped to control it. In Innes' argument New England economic growth came about because of the puritan ethic not despite it. Innes, *Creating the Commonwealth*.

Valeri argues that individuals like Richard “Keayne were in fact deeply ambivalent about their participation in England’s burgeoning market” while Gookin pursued commerce with less hesitation.<sup>183</sup> A shift in thought and only began in 1669 with the founding of Old South Church and reached its crescendo in 1699 when Brattle Street Church opened its doors.

A renewed emphasis on providential guidance, similar to Gookin’s own approach, finally allowed for New England puritans to accept their place within the market. While the establishment had effectively controlled commerce in New England during the seventeenth century, Mather’s heightened emphasis on providential teachings pushed for a separation between civil and religious authorities allowing merchants to move outside of the purview of the church. The embrace of an imperial identity among merchants allowed their virtuous participation in the marketplace to serve a larger religio-political purpose while tying them to British mercantile theory. Gookin’s discomfort while living in New England and the backlash he experienced from fellow residents stemmed from his untimely practice of a puritan mercantile theory that would not gain popularity in New England until nearly fifty years later. His membership within a transatlantic puritan merchant community, ties to the empire, and advocacy for mercantile theory, all foreshadowed a similar trend that only occurred in New England after the Halfway Convent and towards the end of the seventeenth century. Gookin likely also experienced an artificial delay brought on by his membership within the First Congregational Church, which remained a conservative stronghold while more liberal fellow merchants, in favor of the Halfway Covenant, split to form the Old South Church.

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<sup>183</sup> Valeri, *Heavenly Merchandize*, 3.

The difference between Gookin and his New England puritan neighbors was not merely a case of mistaken timing. Rather, even later merchants like Keayne, remained opposed to royal and Parliamentary policies that supported monopolies. Instead they advocated for the realization of free trade that would allow for new forms of paper bills, accounting practices that permitted changing interest rates, and fluctuating currency values. These methods helped to solve commercial disputes quickly and gave courts the power to fix prices according to market conditions. Whereas Gookin and his colleagues supported the mercantilist structure and worked in line with existing government organization, merchant activity in New England implied instead an opposition to authority and a desire for political independence. Trade in New England had developed an association with antinomian thought, radical puritan teachings, and an emphasis on individual spiritual experience. This allegation had likely crossed the minds of Gookin's opponents regardless of its validity.<sup>184</sup> Gookin was susceptible to such accusations, as his transatlantic focus seemed to deny local authority and accountability just as antinomianism moved away from pure Scriptural guidance to follow personal promptings from the Holy Spirit.

### Pushing Geographical Boundaries in New England

Gookin's background within Atlantic puritan networks also influenced his desire to expand New England geographical boundaries. His own travels to and from Ireland, England, Virginia, and Maryland gave Gookin an Atlantic perspective, while his friendships with Atlantic puritan entrepreneurs reinforced his understanding of a broader

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<sup>184</sup> Ibid., 42-43.

puritan community unhampered by arbitrary, geographical obstacles. Upon arriving in Cambridge, Gookin quickly involved himself in frontier speculation while championing an opportunity to settle coreligionists in Jamaica. As Louise Breen has suggested, Gookin's dabbling on the frontier, coupled with his Atlantic experience, did not sit well with fellow New Englanders for whom the definition of puritan faith was closely tied to a rigid understanding of local community. By attempting to stretch the geographical boundaries of puritanism in New England, Gookin challenged loyalties to regional authority and suggested that New England's religious leaders should be accountable to a larger Atlantic community of puritan believers. Supporting broader membership lines for the visible sainthood also threatened to challenge previous understandings of membership among the elect. In expanding Puritan boundaries into Indian territories and Caribbean outposts Gookin forced his community to consider the potential inclusion of undesireables within their visible sainthood. If puritan geography remained strictly controlled so, too, could membership among the elect remain restricted, excluding from potential sainthood Native Americans and both free and bonded Negroes in Jamaica. Gookin's view of the Halfway Covenant as containing the "potential to expand the bonds of community" contradicted the popular clerical view that the Halfway Covenant would help keep puritan communities set apart from their surroundings.<sup>185</sup> His work alongside the praying Indians and advocacy on their behalf made Gookin's coreligionists even more circumspect in supporting his campaign for geographical expansion. Puritan fears became real when Gookin proposed for integrated schooling with English and Indian children learning side-by-side. When Gookin attempted to expand the boundaries of puritan

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<sup>185</sup> Louise A. Breen, "Praying with the Enemy: Daniel Gookin and the Dangers of Intercultural Mediatorship," in Martin Daunton and E.B. Halpern, eds., *Empire and Others: British Encounters with Indigenous Peoples, 1600-1850* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 165.

community to Jamaica he highlighted a dangerous connection between physical boundaries and spiritual membership. Attempting to Christianize African slaves in Jamaica suggested that membership among the elect could be polluted by different races and cultures. As long as the borders of New England stayed rigid and impermeable, the road to election remained narrow and carefully guarded by puritan authorities, but any tampering with the visible border might unwittingly open a gateway to the elect.

Pushing beyond the borders of civilization into territories deemed uninhabitable and perilous Gookin pursued ventures in a number of settlement towns including Worcester while purchasing property from Indian contacts and attempting to convince fellow New Englanders to establish a new settlement in Jamaica. Puritan victory in the English Civil War gave way to a renewed interest in foreign affairs like Cromwell's Jamaican initiative. On May 10, 1655, an English garrison landed in Kingston and claimed the island for Cromwell.<sup>186</sup> Colonization was considered the most effective manner by which the English could hold the Island, and Cromwell thought New England the best source of potential puritan colonists. In an effort to create a Caribbean evangelical outpost in the center of Spanish control and pagan apostasy, Cromwell appointed Gookin as commissioner and tasked him with encouraging New Englanders to resettle in Jamaica. Gookin received the appointment on September 21, 1655 while in England on business, and Cromwell ordered him to leave five days later by way of the *Ketch* and the *Fraternitie* to New England where he would address the Governing Magistrates and General Courts and present them with the Jamaica initiative.

Leaving no detail to question, Cromwell provided Gookin specific instructions for advertising the Jamaica initiative stipulating that Gookin describe “unto them the content,

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<sup>186</sup> Gookin, 86.

situation and goodnesse of the said Island” as well as “the plenty of horses and other cattle which are thereupon” and “the goodnesse safetie and conveniences for Trade of the Harbor.”<sup>187</sup> Gookin was to assure potential settlers of their security on the island, highlighting the presence of between six and seven thousand soldiers and twenty ships stationed there for protection and a vast ability of provisions for potential settlers. A successful puritan settlement in Jamaica would accomplish a dual purpose from Cromwell, allowing him to check Spanish expansion and trade in the Caribbean while acting as a missionary post in an area largely untouched by the puritan message. He hoped that

This place (if the Lord so please) may be inhabited by People who know the Lord and walke in his ffeare that by their light they may enlighten the parts about them which was a choise end of our undertaking this Design, and might alsoe from amongst them have persons fit for Rulers and Magistrates who may be an encouragement to the good and a terror to the evill doers.<sup>188</sup>

In exchange for the discomfort caused in uprooting families, Gookin was to offer willing settlers the ability to use the land and possess its natural resources “with all edifices Horses Cattle tame or wyld, ffisheries woods Trees fruits and Profits thereupon” without rent for the first seven years with a mere one penny per acre charge beginning in the eighth year.<sup>189</sup> Neither were their goods or merchandise to be taxed with customs duties. To transport the New Englanders, Cromwell promised to provide six ships and upon arrival each male of twelve years or older would receive twenty acres and women and children would each receive ten acres.

After a ten-week trip across the Atlantic from Isle of Wight to Boston, Gookin seemed less than hopeful about the success of his mission. He reported to Secretary John

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<sup>187</sup> Interregnum Entry Book civ, 304-306.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

Thurloe that “some principal men in the country doe well resent the designe of his highness & I doubt not but will promote the same.”<sup>190</sup> Apparently Major Sedgwick’s report on Jamaica, following his November 5, 1655, visit had reached the New England coast before Gookin had arrived. Sedgwick’s reports were less than optimistic, chronicling how the British army was in “as sad and deplorable and distracted condition as can be thought of, and indeed think, as never poor Englishmen were in.” Many of the soldiers were dead “their carcasses lying unburied in the highways and among bushes,” and “many of them that were alive walked like ghosts or dead men, who, as I went through the town, lay groaning and crying out, ‘Bread, for the Lord’s sake!’”<sup>191</sup> Before having an opportunity to present the case for Jamaica Sedgwick’s words had influenced an audience already fearful of the outside world and Gookin’s hope for success seemed slim. Gookin’s cause was furthered hampered by “some unworthy persons (that came from thence, have as I understand) brought up an evell report upon the Island in Respect of the unhelthfulness thereof” to work in creating a negative perception of the island.<sup>192</sup> By the second day after his arrival in Boston Gookin had presented Cromwell’s Jamaican experiment to the Governor and other principal men who “seem to resent things very well,” but Gookin was delayed in spreading the word outside of Boston because of the harsh winter weather.<sup>193</sup> The New Englanders expressed two objections to the initiative, including “the unhelthfulness of the island occasioned by an evell report raised by some unworthy persons” and the “strong fears of cotinuell invasion and disquiet by the

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<sup>190</sup> Oxford Bodleian Library Rawlinson Manuscript, MSS. A 34, 609; Gookin 94.

<sup>191</sup> Gookin, 92.

<sup>192</sup> Rawl, MSS. A 34, 609; Gookin, 93.

<sup>193</sup> Rawl, MSS. A 34, 689.

Spaniards.”<sup>194</sup> Despite Cromwell and Gookin’s initial excitement about the evangelistic opportunity in Jamaica any hope for success seemed to have escaped Gookin even before setting foot on American soil.

Three months later, Gookin reported that despite their initial opposition to the initiative, in response to Cromwell’s orders the Governor’s Council had printed a declaration and sent it throughout the towns and plantations in New England. To maximize the reach of his message, Gookin also employed “some persons of trust in places remote to be helpful in promoting the business.”<sup>195</sup> Gookin himself traveled to New Haven and delivered the news to Governor Eaton who “Thankfully accepted his Highneses love and abundant kindness” and printed the necessary advertisements hoping to “further the worke in the West Indies which they trust is of God.”<sup>196</sup> Despite all his work to promote Cromwell’s new settlement, Gookin was hesitant to report success for “The minds of most men were averse for present forasmuch as about that very time there came divers letters from thence dated in November, declaring the sore hand of God in the sicknes and mortality of the English upon the Island, inasmuch that of 8 or 9 m Englishmen landed there, more then one halfe were dead; & such as yet lived were in languishing condition.”<sup>197</sup> In April only a few had pledged support for the new colony, Gookin lamented that, had it been a more healthful island, such as Hispaniola or Cuba, New Englanders would have readily signed up for the adventure but Jamaica had received “a low esteeme in these parts, & in some respects as I conceive much worse yn it

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<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

<sup>195</sup> Rawl., MSS. Xxxviii, 263.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid.



deserves.”<sup>198</sup> About twenty persons, some of whom were pious, had agreed to move to the Island and Gookin had arranged for a ship to transport them to Jamaica. Still others complained that Cromwell’s instructions did not provide special provisions for ministers or gentlemen to travel to Jamaica and Gookin suggested that providing some allowance might convince those concerned that they could not transport their entire estates to the Caribbean.

By July of that summer Gookin’s prospects for settling Jamaica had all but vanished. He reported to Secretary Thurloe that “the great Mortalitie of the English upon the place, the prophanenesse of the generalitie of the soldiers, The continuall hazard of men’s lives, by the sculkin Nigroes & spanyards” had caused “many to suspend their resolves & desire to wait longer intreating the Lord to guide them in a right way for them & their wives & little ones.”<sup>199</sup> Roughly three hundred individuals had agreed to move to Jamaica the following autumn. Gookin’s efforts had received little return and he lamented “it is a trial to mee (but the Lords disposeings silenceth my hart) that his Highness Cost & my travel hath been hitherto so ineffectuall,” but he continued to hope that “those concerned shall find returnes of this bread cast upon the waters in its best season.”<sup>200</sup> Having reaped little fruit from his efforts Gookin volunteered his own resignation seeing that his work had come to an ineffectual end and hoping that he might return to England to tie up loose ends that remained from his previous trip.

Gookin’s observations were correct in his failed attempt to convince New Englanders to relocate to Jamaica. Governor Endicott respectfully declined the offer in

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<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

<sup>199</sup> Rawl, MSS, xxxix, 431-2.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

hopes that he was “promoting what may conduce to or welfare.”<sup>201</sup> By August, the three hundred planning to relocate had received ill news from a three-man scouting mission to Jamaica which reported that despite the “fertilie, pleasantness, and present healthfulness of the Island,” the “scarcity of victual and their whole dependence upon forraigne supplis” coupled with the death of Major Robert Sedgwicke made the prospects of a successful puritan plantation on the island slim.<sup>202</sup> The former Governor of Nevis, Luke Stokes’, unsuccessful settlement at Port Morant only continued to discourage any of Gookin’s remaining volunteers. Gookin reported that “since the returne of those that went to view the Island from hence, and the intelligence by the last of them, of the mortalitie amongst the Nevis planters, such a dampe is put to the most active ingagers, that all are silent to a remove at present.”<sup>203</sup> Gookin still held hope that the fickle adventurers would “repent” of their changed minds. It seemed a shame to pass up such an opportunity to “enlarge the profession of the gospel, where Sathan & Antichrist hath so long had his throne: but the mind and hart of man is so blind and unstable, that he is most ready to miss his own mercy and neglect his duty.”<sup>204</sup> By June of 1657 Gookin had officially dismissed any remaining hopes of settling Jamaica under Lord Cromwell’s direction.

For Gookin the failure of Cromwell’s Jamaican initiative amounted to more than an abandoned hope. Both Cromwell and Gookin alike viewed the mission as a key religious and political project to advance the puritan empire while curtailing Spanish expansion and Catholic doctrine. Furthermore, the prospect of another Caribbean puritan settlement must have portended a brighter future for Gookin’s coreligionists in the

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<sup>201</sup> Rawl, MSS, A xliii, 125.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> Rawl, MSS, A li, 185.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

Southern and Island colonies. Ultimately the differences which had led to the settlement's failure stemmed from glaring contrast between Gookin's and his fellow puritans' providential vision for their Massachusetts community. While New Englanders viewed their colony as the New Jerusalem, a temporal and eschatological center of puritan activity, Gookin's transatlantic perspective and membership within the Atlantic puritan community influenced his view of New England as merely one outpost of a larger Atlantic Puritan mission. His assignment to resettle New Englanders in Jamaica had been key to combatting Spanish Catholic forces and foundational to the spread of puritanism throughout the Atlantic, a move that would eventually bring about Christ's millennial return. In their respectful rejection of both Cromwell and Gookin's offer to resettle in Jamaica, New England officials did not concern themselves with a global, political and eschatological vision of puritan faith. Their concerns took on a parochial nature, cited fears of temporary discomfort, and did little to consider that their light and momentary troubles might pale in the surpassing greatness of a growing religio-political puritan empire and the prospect of a closer millennial return.

Citing his coreligionists' fears of sickness, danger, and starvation, Gookin eventually resigned his effort to establish a puritan settlement in the former Spanish colony. While actual dangers likely stood behind the mission's failure, a larger question of puritan expansion with Gookin at the helm became a contributing factor in the failed attempt. Gookin's association with frontier expansion coupled with his involvement in Indian ministry, alongside John Eliot, made expansion under his direction particularly suspect to most New Englanders. Shortly after the failed Jamaica attempt Gookin expressed his support of the Halfway Covenant as an opportunity to extend visible

sainthood to Native Americans. Likely concerned with the potential outcomes puritan expansion might have on membership among the elect, New Englanders approached both frontier expansion and Caribbean settlement with caution and dismissal.

Gookin's desire for Caribbean expansion at the commission of Lord Cromwell juxtaposed with what Louise Breen has labeled tribalistic tendencies among New England puritans brings to light the differences between Gookin's Atlantic perspective and the localism of New England faith. Through a lens of Atlantic puritanism Gookin saw the Jamaica mission as an evangelical hope and a strategic empire and stronghold, a buffer against Spanish Caribbean efforts, and an opportunity to conquer papist heresy. Blinded by an adherence to local religious authority the New Englanders' critique of the mission and eventual refusal to support it stemmed from fears that the extension of their physical boundaries might compromise a strict membership within the elect. Endicott and other Massachusetts officials dismissed the opportunity as dangerous unwilling to outweigh discomfort with eternal reward. His very reasoning for dismissing Gookin's efforts that he might promote "what may conduce to our welfare" revealed an apathy towards transatlantic puritan concerns. New England parochialism coupled with fears that the expansion of communal boundaries might in some way betray the exclusivity of their faith likely prevented many from supporting Gookin.

Expansion for New England puritans represented a dangerous endeavor, both spiritually and temporally. Shifting boundaries for their faith based community suggested the potential for admitting dangerous, less desirable members into the visible sainthood. At the same time, the threat of Spanish attack and Indian massacre made the prospect of expansion an unnecessary risk. Much like his alignment of commerce and faith, Gookin's

membership within a puritan community unconfined by temporal geographical restraints put him at odds with his New England neighbors and highlighted the differences between their puritan way and his Atlantic faith. While his early entry into the Massachusetts Bay community seemed a smooth transition, points of contention between Gookin and his colleagues began to bubble to the surface until the mounting pressure could no longer be suppressed.

### Relocating the New Jerusalem

Gookin's clash with puritan neighbors regarding his pursuit of faith and profit and his desire to extend New England's geographical boundaries all rested upon an underlying theological difference between his Atlantic puritan views and the New England way. Ultimately, these seemingly benign differences regarding puritan business practices and community expansion unearthed much deeper theological disparities between his own faith and that of his New England neighbors. Behind his broader geographical understanding of puritanism and his belief that profit and puritanism could align, Gookin proposed a different providential vision for New Englanders that questioned both membership among the visible saints and the overarching eschatological purpose for New England. Within their millennial belief that a 'heaven on earth' would segue into Christ's return and establishment of the New Jerusalem, New Englanders saw their particular errand into the wilderness as uniquely significant to the end times. Envisioning themselves on a specific mission to serve as a "city on a hill" and pull fellow Englishmen from their apostasy, New England Puritans adopted an isolationist view more

focused on exemplary holy living and the continued relationship with their audience in England. Claiming the Israel's spiritual inheritance as their own, New Englanders conceived of the Massachusetts Bay Colony as the New Jerusalem and their own holy experiment as penultimate to the millennium.

In his 1685 sermon "A Call from Heaven" Increase Mather likened their earthly city to the heavenly capitol, suggesting its eventual transformation saying, "Where was there ever a place so like unto New Jerusalem as New England hath been? It was once Dr. Twiss his Opinion that when New Jerusalem should come down from Heaven America would be the seat of it. Truly that such a Type and Embleme of New Jerusalem, should be erected in so dark a corner of the world, is matter of deep Meditation and Admiration."<sup>205</sup> Despite Mather's lamentations that the settlement had fallen into apostasy in its second generation, he still carried on the identification of New England puritans with God's chosen people. Urian Oakes's *New England Pleased* (1673) similarly likened the errand into the wilderness with the New Jerusalem, stating, "this our Common-wealth seems to exhibit to us a specimen, or a little model of the Kingdome of Christ upon Earth."<sup>206</sup> Samuel Sewell's writings provide another example of the identification of New England as the center of revelatory events as he reflected, "I propound the New World: as being so far from deserving the Nick-names of Gog and Magog; that it stands fair for being made the Seat of the Divine Metropolis."<sup>207</sup> New

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<sup>205</sup> Increase Mather, *A Call From Heaven* (Boston, 1685), 77-78.

<sup>206</sup> Urian Oakes, *New England Pleased With* (Cambridge, 1673), 21.

<sup>207</sup> Samuel Sewall, *Phaenomena quaedam APOCALYPTICA* (Boston, 1697); Sacvan Bercovitch has argued that while consistent in many ways with protestant millennialists of their time, New England puritans were distinct in their application of God's promises to his chosen people Israel, to their own mission. In order to transfer Israel's inheritance on to themselves, New England Puritans reduced the relationship between God's old and new chosen people to merely a spiritual relationship allowing for them to coopt the inheritance of their biblical forefathers. Sacvan Bercovitch, "Horologicals to Chronometricals," in *Literary Monographs*, ed. Eric Rothstein (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1970), 57.

Englanders had claimed Israel's providential inheritance as their own, placing themselves at the center of the apocalyptic narrative.

Daniel Gookin's broader perspective struck at the heart of puritan purpose by challenging the colony's eschatological significance. While New England puritans elevated their local religious community over their spiritual membership within the Church, Gookin reminded them of their role alongside other puritans throughout the Atlantic. Having loyalties to coreligionists in Ireland, Virginia, Maryland, and the Caribbean, Gookin saw the New England settlement as merely one spoke of a larger Atlantic puritan mission. His efforts to perpetuate puritan ideas and practices more popular outside of New England coupled with his desire for expansion further emphasized his belief that the New England colony did not hold any special significance within the Atlantic puritan community. In debunking their role as an exemplary puritan settlement, Gookin not only challenged their temporal authority, but also their eschatological purpose.<sup>208</sup>

Already living on the margins of colonial society and adhering to controversial economic and expansionist doctrines, Gookin took his challenge one step further in

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<sup>208</sup> In *Providence in Early Modern England* Alexandra Walsham argues that "Providentialism was not a marginal feature of the religious culture of early modern England, but part of the mainstream, a cluster of presuppositions which enjoyed near universal acceptance. It was a set of ideological spectacles through which individuals of all social levels and from all positions on the confessional spectrum were apt to view their universe, an invisible prism which helped them to focus the refractory meanings of both petty and perplexing events. Central to the political, medical, and philosophical thought and the literary and historical discourse of the period, it was also an ingrained parochial response to chaos and crisis, a practical source of consolation in a hazardous and inhospitable environment, and an idea which exercised practical, emotional, and imaginative influence upon those who subscribed to it." As what both Walsham and Collinson call the hotter sort of protestants, or perhaps "providentialists" Puritans in England and New England readily adopted providential ideas and meanings to their own circumstances. Therefore, discerning the workings of an eternal God on the temporal world both in the present and the world to come became important to most early modern confessions and especially meaningful to New England Puritans. As such, Gookin's challenge to the New England Puritans, questioning the very meaning of their colony by altering their providential purpose was not merely a dismissible accusation, but a serious threat to the community and the faith that held them together. Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England*, 2-3.

suggesting that Native Americans in New England might be admitted into the visible sainthood and that their role in the impending millennium could in fact supersede that of the New England faithful. Gookin's support for the Halfway Covenant as a measure to admit praying Indians into the puritan community contrasted with others fear of hypocrisy resultant of extending membership to those who had not met the full requirements of conversion. Gookin argued that external performance, even if disingenuous, might encourage some towards true repentance. Through the exercise of visible Protestant ritual the heart might be soon to follow:

We may not presently exclude them [the Praying Indians] out of visible Christianity, but rather endeavor to convince and reform them, if God please to be instrumental to correct them, and turn them to God effectually. Whilst men do externally attend the means of grace, keep the Sabbath, pray in their families morning and evening, and endeavor and desire to be instructed in Christian religion, both themselves and children, as the praying Indians do, there is charitable encouragement and good hope, through grace, that, as God hath wrought effectually upon some, so he will upon others, in his own time and according to his good pleasure, that he hath purposed in himself. I account it my duty not to censure and judge, but to pray for them and others.<sup>209</sup>

Daniel Gookin's Irish cousin Vincent had advocated a similar theory in reference to the English Protestant colonization of Ireland stating, "The son may be sincere though the father be a hypocrite, and what his earthly father intended onely for the saving of his estate, his heavenly father may advance to the saving of his soul."<sup>210</sup> Gookin's Atlantic perspective allowed him to argue against the clerical grain, yet in support of the Halfway Covenant.<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> Daniel Gookin, *An historical account of the doings and sufferings of the Christian Indians in New England, in the years 1675, 1676, 1677* (New York: Arno Press, 1972), 515.

<sup>210</sup> Vincent Gookin, *The great case of transplantation in Ireland discussed, or, Certain considerations wherein the many great inconveniences in the transplanting the natives of Ireland generally out of the three provinces of Leinster, Ulster, and Munster, into the province of Connaught, are shewn* (1655), 4-5.

<sup>211</sup> See also Louise Breen and Patricia Coughlin.



Gookin's position with regard to church membership extended beyond discussion of the halfway covenant to his proposal for a multicultural church where Indian children would be educated alongside European students. He suggested first that young Indian children "with the free consent of their parents and relations, be placed in sober and Christian families, as apprentices, until the youths are twenty one years, and maids eighteen years of age."<sup>212</sup> Through the apprenticeship relationship males would learn a trade while females would be trained in good housewifery, both being instructed how to read and write in English and taught the Christian way. Gookin also recommended the establishment of free schools by which Indians could be instructed in both the Christian faith and the English language. In order to minimize cost and ensure success Gookin proposed that the English colonists should send their children to the same school at Marlborough and pay the schoolmaster for the native children. He argued that "the English and Indian children learning together in the same school, will much promote the Indians' learning to speak the English tongue" and "the Indians will be able to converse with the English familiarly; and thereby learn civility and religion from them. Secondly, they will be able to read any English book, the better to teach them the knowledge of God and themselves."<sup>213</sup> As a result of his Atlantic influence, Gookin understood Native integration within a larger framework colored by the experience of English colonizers in Catholic Ireland. Gookin's assimilation tendencies have also been traced to his previous experience as an English colonizer of Ireland prior to his migration to Virginia.<sup>214</sup> In Ireland the governmental authorities had prohibited that the planters should associate

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<sup>212</sup> Gookin, 79.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., 81-82.

<sup>214</sup> See Nicholas Canny, "Dominant Minorities: English Settlers in Ireland and Virginia, 1550-1650" in *Minorities in History*, edited by A.C. Hepburn (London: Edward Arnold, 1978); Patricia Coughlan, "Counter-currents"; and Breen, *Transgressing the Bounds*.

with the native Irish for fear that the “intermixture of the Irish with the English” would serve the future overthrow of the colony.<sup>215</sup> Although the English officials overseeing the colonizing process had envisioned a segregated society the actual was far from the ideal. Many governing authorities saw the principal threat to colonization as emanating from within the population while the colonists saw the greatest challenge to their security as coming from the outside.<sup>216</sup> Daniel Gookin’s cousin, Vincent Gookin, had been a proponent of colonial integration among the English settlers and the native Irish from a religious perspective arguing:

Principles of Christianity teach us, that Separations of persons, are then onely lawfull when necessary, and then onely necessary when the malignity of the poison is greater than the virtue of the Antidote, or obligation of duty. Here two things then ought to be weighed. First, whether it be more probably as things now stand that the Irish Papists should pervert the English protestants, or that the English Protestants should convert the Irish papists. Secondly, whether the English Protestants be more obliged by any Special duty to continue many of the Irish Papists than by that general fear and probably hazard to remove them.<sup>217</sup>

In retrospect and agreement with his cousin, Daniel Gookin adopted a similar argument, suggesting that, had an integrative, civilizing process been adopted in Ireland, perhaps the results would have been more successful, the Irish “enmity and rebellion against the English” would have “been long since cured or prevented, and they better instructed in the protestant religion; and consequently redeemed from the vassalage and affection to the Romish see; who have by this means kept the greatest part of them in ignorance, and consequently in brutishness and superstition to this day.”<sup>218</sup> Ultimately, Gookin’s

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<sup>215</sup> Canny, “Dominant Minorities,” 53.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>217</sup> Vincent Gookin, *Transplantation*, 2.

<sup>218</sup> Daniel Gookin, *Historical Collections of the Indians in New England: Of their several nationas, numbers, customs, manners, religion and government, before the English planted there; also a true and faithful account of the present state and condition of the pryaing Indians (or those who have visibly received the gospel in New England) declaring the number of all that people, the situation and place of their towns and churches, and their manner of worshipping God: together with a brief mention of the*

argument for the Halfway Covenant as a method for extending puritan membership coupled with his assimilationist missionary theory challenged the definition of community in New England, thereby questioning doctrinal understandings of visible sainthood and the elect. Gookin's approaches suggested that uncivilized, racially distinct Native Americans might be heirs to the same Biblical promises as the English puritans residing in New England. But Gookin's theological challenge did not end there.

Not only did Gookin challenge New England puritan theology by attempting to stretch the lines of membership across geographical and racial boundaries, but he contested their eschatological framework which placed New England puritans at the forefront of the providential narrative. Through his colleague John Eliot, Gookin gained exposure to a curious pamphlet authored by Thomas Thorowgood entitled "Jewes In America" which purported that contemporary Native Americans had descended from the lost ten tribes that had settled in the northern kingdom of Israel.<sup>219</sup> In response to Thorowgood's pamphlet John Eliot argued that he "saw some ground to conceive that some of the Ten Tribes might be scattered even thus far, into these parts of America"<sup>220</sup> and founded his reasoning on a biblical and genealogical examination of Thorowgood's theory following the line of Scriptures.<sup>221</sup> Eliot eventually concluded that American natives had originated from two sources: some from the sons of Joktan who ventured

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*instruments and means, that God hath been please to use for their civilizing and conversion, briefly declaring the prudent and faithful endeavours of the Right honourable the Corporation of London, for promoting that affairs: also suggesting some expedients for their further civilizing and progagating the Christian faith among them (Boston, MA: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1792), 82.*

<sup>219</sup>Thomas Thorowgood, *Jewes In America, or, Probabilities that the Americans are of that Race* (London, 1650), page unnumbered.

<sup>220</sup> John Eliot, "The learned Conjectures of Reverend Mr. John Eliot touching the Americans, of new and notable consideration, written to Mr. Thorowgood," in *The Eliot Tracts*, edited by Michael P. Clark (Westport, CT: Praeger publishers, 2003), 410.

<sup>221</sup> Eliot, "Conjectures," 422.

westward and others from the line of Shem through Eber, which became the lineage of Christ through Jacob.

Hence therefore we may, not only with faith, but also with demonstration, say, that fruitful India are Hebrewes, that famous civil (though Idolatrous) nation of China are Hebrewes, so Japonia, and these naked Americans are Hebrewes, in respect of those that planted first these parts of the world: The family of Sem was the chiefest Church of the world since the flood, among the Sons of Noah, because the holy line of Christ did run in his family.<sup>222</sup>

Furthermore, Eliot conjectured that the ten tribes, being scattered eastward would have peopled the lands of America: “Hence why ought we not to believe, that the ten Tribes being scattered Eastward, are scattered to the utmost ends of the Easterne world? And if so, then assuredly into America.”<sup>223</sup> Through his close work alongside Eliot, Gookin gained exposure to the theory and likely associated with its promulgation through Eliot. Gookin also maintained a personal connection to Thorowgood through his deceased brother John, who had left behind a widow, Sarah Thorowgood Gookin, the former sister-in-law of Thomas Thorowgood. Through a curious though likely not coincidental circumstance, John’s widow Sarah also developed an interest converting and civilizing a young Roanoke boy whom she accepted into her family and raised in the assimilationist method, consistent with both Daniel and Vincent Gookin’s approaches. Through both his work alongside Eliot and his familial associations with Thorowgood, the New England community likely associated Daniel Gookin with the theory of Hebraic lineage.

Thorowgood’s Jewish question allowed both Gookin and Eliot to see the Indians as predisposed to the Christian message. They needed only to be reminded of their Jewish heritage and their role as God’s chosen people. John Eliot’s acknowledgement of the Hebraic heritage among the American natives conveniently positioned his own mission at

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<sup>222</sup> Ibid, 420.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid., 422.

the center of global eschatology. The salvation of Native Americans would not only bring the gospel to the uttermost ends of the earth, but also restore the lost tribes to their status as God's chosen people and fulfill a central precursor to the millennium. In proposing that there existed among the Indians a lineage from Shem through Joktan, Gookin and Eliot could then conceive of New England as the birthplace of the eastern branch of the millennium. In his argument for Joktam's descendants having traveled to America, Eliot conceived of America as the eastern part of the world, specifically the "utmost ends of the Easterne world"<sup>224</sup> and revised early modern English sources who had placed America on the western part of the world and called its natives "Western Indians" referring to the direction America lay from the colonizing Europeans.<sup>225</sup> Drawing from Ezekial 40, Eliot surmised:

Again when the glory of the Lord cometh into that glorious Temple, he is upon his Westerne progresse, and first enters that Temple at the Easterne gate, Ezek. 43. 1,2,3 &c. again the fronspeece of that Temple is Eastward, Ezek. 47. And those preious waters of that Sanctuary, so wholesome, powerful, and pretious, they run Eastward into the East land, and the further Eastward the more deep & wonderful they be: doth not all this shew, that there shall be a glorious Church in all the Easterne world? And God grant that the old bottles of the Westerne world be not so uncapable of the new wine of Christ his expected Kingdom, that the Easterne bottles be not the only entertainers thereof for a season.<sup>226</sup>

Positioning New England at the "Eastern Gate" relocated the beginning of the millennium from England and Western Europe to the New World and specifically Gookin and Eliot's mission, making their work presumptuously significant. Furthermore, their acceptance of the lost tribes theory allowed their project for Indian conversion a special sequence in bringing about the millennial hope. Eliot argued:

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<sup>224</sup> Eliot, "Conjectures," 422.

<sup>225</sup> Richard W. Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission to the Indians before King Philip's War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 88.

<sup>226</sup> Eliot, "Conjectures," 421.

Though the Lord has scattered the ten tribes into corners, and made their remembrance to cease among men, as he threatened, Deuteronomy 32.21, insomuch as that they are lost, and no one knows where to find them up again; yet the Lord has promised to bind them up again, and to gather together those dry and scattered bones, and to bring them to know the Lord, and to be known and acknowledged among men again.

Before the second coming the remnants of the lost tribes of Israel would be gathered together and brought under the new covenant. Therefore, Eliot and Gookin's mission and its direction towards the lost tribes took on a penultimate sequential significance as necessary to the immediate realization of the millennium. The indistinguishable mixture of the lost tribes and the descendants of Joktan also allowed the Joktanites a "secondhand stake in the biblical promises."<sup>227</sup> Gookin and Eliot's acceptance of the same ideas allowed him to situate New England missionary efforts and the praying towns as essential in the eschatological events preceding the impending millennium.

Ultimately, Gookin's challenge to puritan membership alongside his association with Thorrowgood's lost tribes theory and the elevation of Native American conversion as the key to the millennium, challenged the significance New Englanders held for their own colonial mission. Rather than viewing his local community as a unique puritan settlement, and the future site of the New Jerusalem, Gookin saw them as part of a larger puritan community dispersed throughout the Atlantic. Maintaining contact with coreligionists in Ireland, England, Virginia, and Maryland, while pushing to establish puritan settlement in Jamaica, Gookin ultimately deemphasized New England's providential significance and suggested that perhaps Native American conversion was more crucial to the millennium's arrival than the New England plan for holy living.

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<sup>227</sup> Cogley, "John Eliot's Mission," 89.

## The False Prophet Revealed

On the night of February 28, 1676, the tension surrounding Gookin and his character finally reached a breaking point. Private Richard Scott stormed into Cambridge's Blue Anchor Tavern and launched into an angry tirade against the supposed traitor. Tavern keeper Elizabeth Belcher reported on the incident describing how Scott "broak out into many hideous railing expressions against the worshipful Captain Daniel Gookin, calling him an Irish dog that was never faithful to his country, the sonne of a whoare, a bitch, a rogue, God confound him, and God rott his soul." Scott's threat reached beyond words as he spouted, "if I could meet him alone I would pistol him. I wish my knife and sizers were in his heart. He is the devil's interpreter."<sup>228</sup> Nor was Richard's Scott's threat isolated. Earlier that day, the anonymous "society A.B.C.D" had posted flyers throughout town warning Gookin and his colleague Thomas Danforth "to prepare for death, for though they will deservedly dye, yet we wish the health of their soules."<sup>229</sup> Louise Breen analyzes Richard Scott's behavior as a reaction against Gookin's challenge to New England's isolationist ideas. While Gookin's transatlantic connections and Native American assimilation policy clearly contributed to community sentiment as expressed through Scott, his outsider status among New England puritans stemmed from a larger cause. Ultimately Gookin's Indian integration policy during King Philip's war and threatening Atlantic contacts were merely manifestations of his allegiance lying outside of New England borders. Scott's accusation against Gookin's fidelity to his

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<sup>228</sup> Breen, 145.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

country revealed Daniel Gookin's ultimate loyalty to a larger puritan community, unhindered by geographical or political borders.

Daniel Gookin adhered to an alternate understanding of puritan faith than his Massachusetts neighbors. From his travels throughout the Atlantic and in Ireland, England, Virginia, and Maryland, Gookin detached his faith from a particular locale yet linked it to a transatlantic community of merchants tied to an imperial focus. His exposure to puritans in various locales also emphasized spiritual transcendence beyond arbitrary geographical boundaries. In maintaining relationships with puritan individuals throughout the colonies, Gookin inadvertently challenged New England's parochial vision and their perceived control of membership among the elect. Gookin's ties with Bennett, Claiborne, Thomson, and Boyle facilitated his participation in Atlantic commerce, questioned his supreme loyalty to New England, and encouraged his pursuit of providence above local religious and colonial authorities. His participation within the Atlantic marketplace and comfort with faith and commerce did not sit well with New England neighbors who saw his transatlantic allegiance as betrayal of regional loyalties and misunderstood his pursuit of kingdom goals through economic means as a plunge into apostasy.

Richard Scott's words were not merely a reaction to Gookin's fraternization with Indians or his desire to bring them into puritan membership, nor were they a response to a fear of his transatlantic ties challenging New England tribalism. Scott viewed Gookin's actions as an all out theological attack at the very core of the faith that upheld his New England community. As a wolf dressed in sheep's clothing, Gookin had slyly entered Cambridge, positioned himself as a political and financial authority, and then sought to



change the bedrock of their community both temporally and eternally. Much like the false prophets about which Jesus had warned his disciples, Gookin had come to the puritan community under the auspices of shared faith only to question the very cornerstone of their religion. Following Jesus' warning that false prophets would "secretly bring in destructive heresies" in an attempt to lead the elect astray, Gookin's entry into the New England had been followed a path of destruction.<sup>230</sup> Richard's Scott's label of Gookin as the "devil's interpreter" suggests Scott's view of Gookin as a deceiver, akin to Satan the father of lies. Scott's statement also resurrected a discourse on associating Indian practices, behavior, and even natural habitat as emanating from the devil.<sup>231</sup> Gookin's association with the praying Indians, and particularly his role as a liaison and advocate on their behalf, made him the very "devil's interpreter" in the eyes of his New England colleagues. Ultimately Gookin's attempt to correct and improve upon the New England experiment according to his Atlantic understanding of puritanism had been rejected in favor of a return to their errand into the wilderness.

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<sup>230</sup> 2 Peter 2:1, Matthew 24:24, ESV.

<sup>231</sup> See Fernando Cervantes, *The Devil in the New World: The Impact of Diabolism in New Spain* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997) and Michael Gaudio, *Engraving the Savage: The New World and Techniques of Civilization* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2008); Julie Solomon, "To Know, to Fly, to Conjure": Situating Baconian Science at the Juncture of Early Modern Modes of Reading" *Renaissance Quarterly* 44 (Autumn 1991). This can also be seen in Fray Bernardino de Sahagun, *Florentine Codex: General History of the Things of New Spain*, translated by Charles E. Dibble (Santa Fe, NM: The School of American Research and the University of Utah, 1982).

## CHAPTER 4

### WIDOWS, WIVES, AND DAUGHTERS: GENDERING THE PURITAN ATLANTIC

In the fall of 1654 Virginia Ferrar penned a letter to “the truly to be honored Lady the Noble Colonell Frances Yeardley’s Wife at the plantation at Lin Haven in Virginia.”<sup>232</sup> Having looked through the pages of her father’s colonial correspondence, Virginia had come across a curious letter from Frances Yeardley and felt compelled to write Sarah Gookin Yeardley about her acceptance of a young Roanoke boy into the Yeardley home. Upon receiving the letter Sarah likely knew of Virginia only by name, through her husband’s correspondence, but the flattering note may have been the flowering of a deeper friendship. Virginia ingratiated herself by beginning, “your great and eminent worth, Invites me” to “Congratulate your great Couraidge and magnenimious Spirit in the protection of that good Roanoke King” and ending with the statement that she saw Sarah as an “Example in all the Collony.”<sup>233</sup> The Ferrar-Yeardley letter provides a useful starting point for studying the role that women played in creating and maintaining puritan networks throughout the Atlantic. Both independently and alongside their male counterparts, women helped to establish what would become a puritan Atlantic empire. As seventeenth-century economic and religious interests shifted westward towards the Americas, a number of key females, likely representing many more

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<sup>232</sup> Virginia Ferrar to Sarah Gookin Yeardley (Ferrar Papers, Box VII, No. 691 (i))

<sup>233</sup> Ibid.

who remain nameless, helped to bring together a network of likeminded puritans separated across regional divides yet drawn together by the Atlantic.

In gendering the puritan Atlantic we move beyond a mere surface view to analyze the complex yet sometimes invisible layers of scaffolding supporting puritan networks. Predominately male relationships that were balanced on the nexus of commerce, faith, and politics also rested upon a uniquely female effort to establish and maintain relationships across the Atlantic divide. In an effort to combat England's religious and political upheaval and in the midst of female monarchical leadership many seventeenth-century English writers revived an ancient debate touching on the order of households, women's inclinations towards good and evil, and the role of women as subordinate to male authority.<sup>234</sup> At its base this attempt to recapture household governance was a movement to reassert political and religious authority. An orderly household was the building block for a "divinely sanctioned social order" and a microcosm for the justification of monarchical authority.<sup>235</sup> In the absence of religious and political order during the Commonwealth period the role of a proper household government became ever more crucial. At the same time, Atlantic puritans shifted their focus from European debates to the more pressing needs of colonial life. Atlantic puritans seemed more focused on the dynamics of a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic Atlantic world intersecting

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<sup>234</sup>Kathleen Brown discusses this dialogue arguing that the discussion of women's role within the household and its implications on the larger social order came to the forefront just as England and other European countries look towards the Americas for colonial expansion. England was not alone in the venture as Spain, the Netherlands, France, Portugal, and Italy pursued similar efforts for overseas trade while simultaneously initiating a debate on the role of women with regard to nature, power, and national identity. Kathleen M. Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996),14. Brown mentions contemporary works including William Strachey's *The Historie of Travell into Virginia Britania*, Samuel Purchas' *Hakluytus Posthumus*, and *Purchas His Pilgrimes: Contayning a History of the World in Sea Voyages and Lande Travells by Englishmen and Others*.

<sup>235</sup>*Ibid.*, 15.

with the providential callings of their faith. As such, they may not have been as concerned with upholding gender norms as a foundation for empire. Location in the Atlantic coupled with their participation in providentially guided colonial commerce and politics probably established a distance between Atlantic puritans and this more deliberate resurgence of patriarchy. Eventually a reemphasis of proper gender roles as tied to imperial authority rippled through the Atlantic reaching the communities to which these Atlantic puritans belonged.

Kathleen Brown argues for a reemphasis on patriarchal authority amidst the absence of social and political order in seventeenth-century Virginia, although Atlantic puritans may have experienced this phenomenon differently. Their existence outside of the Anglican Church and their dependence upon puritan networks, mobility, and layered identities throughout the Atlantic may have delayed their implementation of contemporary patriarchal ideas emanating from England. Generally opposed to the royalist cause, neither were they immediately concerned with establishing household governance as a justification for monarchical rule. Ultimately, the larger movement towards patriarchy, while present within the colonies and communities to which puritans belonged probably did not resonate as strongly within Atlantic puritan circles.

Atlantic puritan women, likely working within their understanding of acceptable female roles, inadvertently challenged the English imperial justification as tied to a reemphasis on patriarchy. Their exercise of marriage and correspondence fit neatly within proper gender roles and their participation within a discourse on Native Christianization and presence in transatlantic legal matters did not immediately challenge allowable norms. While these isolated actions failed to upset colonial expectations, the subliminal

messages put out by their collective efforts suggested a more central female role within the puritan Atlantic. Although women like Mary Mapletoft Utie and Anna Bennett Bland exercised their female voices within the allowable spheres of marriage and correspondence, their collective efforts reached beyond the gendered divide. In working to support their husbands', brothers', and fathers' faith and business networks by expanding their reach and maintaining relationships these women's efforts came to effect the larger puritan community and the Atlantic world.

In ordering their own households, puritan wives and mothers also created their own little commonwealths ultimately shaping the communities to which they belonged. For John Demos family was a dynamic shaper of society rather than a reflection of it or passive participant within it. In Plymouth the family assumed many core functions of society. As a business, school, vocational institute, church, house of corrections, and welfare institution, what occurred behind closed doors was far from private.<sup>236</sup> Because the larger community depended upon the successful performance of such duties, the local government exercised a natural supervision over the family.<sup>237</sup> The continued harmony of the family was thus of central interest to the functioning of society. Demos argued, "the family was joined to other institutions and other purposes in an intricate web of interconnections."<sup>238</sup> A network that mirrored the very puritan Atlantic. Just as Plymouth families performed a variety of functions within their community shaping the world in which they lived, the families that helped to form the puritan Atlantic through the Ancient Church also shaped the puritan networks' behavior. At the core of their

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<sup>236</sup> John Demos, *A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 812-4.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid, 184.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid., 186.

households, puritan women used their roles as wives and mothers to create and maintain the puritan Atlantic. At the same time the governmental oversight of the family, both within and without puritan circles, gave others the opportunity to express their discomfort with female practices within the puritan fold. When Sarah Gookin Yeardley used her proper role as a mother to accept a Roanoke Indian boy into her home, her dismissal of colonial boundaries between the Native and the European challenged both male and imperial authority and upset the community around her. Ultimately, the female's place within the family was far from a seclusion into the domestic sphere. Instead she was placed at the heart of a society-shaping unit where her functions as a mother, sister, daughter, and wife allowed her to help build the puritan Atlantic.

The female experience of the puritan Atlantic was directly related to the more visibly documented male presence. Contacts made by individuals like Nathaniel Sylvester, Richard Bennett, and Daniel Gookin were often based upon relationships that had been previously built by the women in their lives. Supporting this fraternal layer of the puritan merchant network existed an equally influential community of puritan wives, widows, and daughters. By reaching across the Atlantic through their pens they initiated relationships with fellow puritan women that ultimately led to an extension of their husbands' religious, commercial, and political networks. Furthermore, through their roles as widows and wives these same women formed lasting bonds between powerful puritan families strengthening the religious networks that became the basis for their husbands', brothers', and fathers' financial and political success. Just as their male relatives sought to merge faith, commerce, and politics to achieve short-term temporal results and eternal

heavenly reward, these women uniquely employed their abilities as females to create and maintain an advanced network of puritans throughout the Atlantic.

The creation of this female puritan network was both the deliberate and accidental handiwork of a few well-positioned women at the core of Atlantic puritan circles and can be analyzed through a sampling of their experiences. Women made their mark on the puritan Atlantic primarily by extending the reach of networks through marriage and widowhood. While initial marital unions often created bonds of trust that aligned families along religious, political, and economic lines, these ties were not severed but extended through widowhood. Oftentimes women outlived their husbands and married twice if not three or four times. Each marriage was an opportunity to unite religious, political, or economic allies through kinship. Marriage, within the puritan Atlantic, was both a product of the circles within which individuals traveled and an opportunity to expand the reach of one's social milieu. Consequently, women chose their partners carefully, and because they often outlived the men in their lives their marital choices affected not only the successive families they had united, but also the expansion of a larger puritan Atlantic. Women like Sarah Thorowgood Gookin Yeardley exemplify this trend as a wife to three influential men, some of whom she pushed into the throes of the puritan Atlantic. As the widow of both Adam Thorowgood and John Gookin and the wife of Francis Yeardley, Sarah Thorowgood Gookin Yeardley both deliberately and unintentionally placed herself at the center of Atlantic puritan networks. Her success in tying together three prominent Virginia families allowed her a unique opportunity to serve as a vessel transporting ideas and practices through her extensive familial networks. Similarly, Anna Bennett Bland and her sister Elizabeth Bennett Scarborough followed in their mother

Mary Anne Utie's steps by demonstrating the power a single union could display in uniting families. Mary Anne Utie Bennett had successfully brought together the Utie and Bennett families after her first husband's death, and her daughters similarly tied their upwardly mobile family to the Virginia tidewater elite. A further example lies in the marriages of Grizzell Brinley to Nathaniel Sylvester and Grace Walrond to Constant Sylvester. While Sarah, Anne, Anna, and Elizabeth all worked from within the puritan Atlantic to extend the reach of their networks, both Grizzell and Grace used matrimony as an entrance into the puritan Atlantic empire and a movement away from less favorable royalist associations on the brink of the Commonwealth period. Just as the puritan Atlantic came to transcend religious, economic, and political associations with the old world, so too did marital bonds within puritan networks fuse seemingly opposing forces and therefore expand the reach and influence of the puritan Atlantic community.

While marriage was the most common tool employed by puritan women in shaping their respective networks, it was far from their only recourse. Some puritan women defended and preserved their families' holdings through the legal system. Anna Bennett Bland, after the death of her first husband Theodoric Bland, entered an extensive lawsuit with her sister-in-law Sarah Bland concerning the brother's shared venture in Virginia. While also creating a rift between the sisters-in-law Anna's actions were meant to preserve her family's ability, specifically her son's from her previous marriage, to participate in the world of Atlantic puritan commerce. Both women, as sole executrices of their husbands' estates, displayed persistence in protecting their husbands' reputations and financial legacies while demonstrating their own comfort with Atlantic mobility in



traveling from England, to Virginia, and back to England in pursuit of a favorable verdict.

Sarah Thorowgood Gookin Yeardley also used her status as a wife and a mother to create a discourse on the acculturation and Christianization of natives among Atlantic puritans. As a widow of Adam Thorowgood, the brother of Thomas Thorowgood, Sarah gained early exposure to early theories asserting that American natives had descended from the ten tribes of Israel. In her second marriage to John Gookin, Sarah tied Thorowgood's theories to her new brother-in-law, Daniel Gookin's efforts to Christianize Algonquian Indians alongside John Eliot. After accepting an Indian boy into her own home she carried on an experiential dialogue about practices for Native acculturation and conversion within the puritan fold.

Finally, through the use of their pens a number of puritan women helped to build a bridge of correspondence that maintained ties between families which ultimately led to profitable business connections or kinship bonds for the men in their lives. Mary Mapletoft Utie, the wife of Nathaniel Utie, maintained correspondence with her cousin Virginia Ferrar tying her husband to the influential Ferrar family. Virginia's father was John Ferrar, the Deputy Secretary of the Virginia Company and her uncle was Nicholas Ferrar, a businessman and theologian. While these examples only provide a sampling of the female influence within seventeenth-century puritan networks, their stories open a key window into parallel female networks that existed in symbiotic relationship with emerging Atlantic puritan networks of the period.

## A Scarcity of Women in Virginia

With an abundance of males on the colonial frontier, women likely knew they held the matrimonial upper hand. As early as 1614 the Virginia Company recognized a need for wives and children in order to prevent men from falling into idleness and to encourage permanence settlement.<sup>239</sup> The 1619 meeting of the Virginia Assembly echoed that sentiment stating: “in a newe plantation it is not knowen whether man or woman be more necessary.”<sup>240</sup> The company treasurer, Sir Edwin Sandys suggested that:

A fit hundredth might be sent of woemen, maids young and uncorrupt to make wives to the inhabitants and by that meanes to make the men there more settled and lesse moveable who by defect thereof (as is credibly reported) stay there but to get something and then to returne for England, which will breed a dissolution, and so an overthrow of the plantation.<sup>241</sup>

Eventually Sandys’ plan brought 147 women to Virginia between 1620 and 1622, although the sex ratio in Virginia still remained severely skewed with men outnumbering women four to one.<sup>242</sup> Using the imbalance to their advantage many puritan women saw their marital partner as a strategic choice. Not only were well-bred and well-connected women a coveted commodity in Virginia, but the wealth possessed by widows also lured many men into matrimony. Possessing the power of choice through scarcity, many puritan women recognized the ability to select from among potential suitors as a source of power for themselves, their families, and the greater puritan community. Marriage could solidify bonds between two families previously aligned or it could establish

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<sup>239</sup> Kingsbury, *Records of the Virginia Company*, 1:256.

<sup>240</sup> “Proceedings of the Virginia Assembly, 1619,” in *Narratives of Early Virginia* edited by Lyon Gardiner Tyler (New York, 1907).

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>242</sup> Brown, 82.

amicable relations among those divided along religious, economic, or political lines.

Because not all marriages within the Atlantic puritan world occurred between those with shared puritan sympathies, these unions often introduced the spouse outside of the puritan fold to an untapped political and economic network. In this manner the Atlantic puritan empire came to reach beyond the stretch of religious sympathies through kinship ties.

Sarah Gookin Yeardley's three marriages exemplify the power that women possessed in choosing their mates and in joining multiple families under an Atlantic puritan umbrella.<sup>243</sup> As a young bride, Sarah Offley Thorowgood first arrived in the colony of Virginia shortly after her wedding on July 18, 1627 at St. Anne's Church in Blackfriars, London. Adam had been living in the colony before Sarah's arrival, having travelled on the *Charles* in 1621 as a "servant" of Mr. Edward Waters. Their return to Virginia in 1628 was not only promising on the personal front for the newlywed couple, but also portended a successful professional future for Adam who had just received news of his appointment as commissioner for holding monthly courts in Elizabeth City. In 1629 Thorowgood served as a Burgess for Elizabeth City from 1630-1632 a Burgess for the Lower Part of Elizabeth City, and by 1637 he had achieved a position on the Governor's Council. It was at this time he also served as the presiding justice of the County Court of Lower Norfolk moving his family and wife to Lynnhaven Bay, in current Princess Anne County.<sup>244</sup>

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<sup>243</sup> David Ransome discusses how women were transported to Virginia in the early years of the colony and also challenges the view that early Virginia was a ruthless, male dominated society in the early years by providing an example of healthy married families whose concerns were sex, land, and status above death and disease. David R. Ransome, "Shipt for Virginia": The Beginnings in 1619-1622 of the Great Migration to the Chesapeake" *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*. Vol. 103, No. 4 (Oct. 1995): 443-458; David R. Ransome, "Village Tensions in Early Virginia: Sex, Land, and Status at the Neck of Land in the 1620s" *The Historical Journal*, 43, 2 (2000): 365-381.

<sup>244</sup> Essex Pedigrees, undated, published by Harleian Society, with additions in italics from the Visitation of Middlesex, 1669, 416ff.

As his political career ascended, Thorowgood also rose to a considerable economic position in the colony. He was originally awarded 200 acres on Back River in Elizabeth City due to him as an adventurer to Virginia, and in 1634 he purchased another 200 acres from Captain Stephens, adjoining his original land grant on the Back River.<sup>245</sup> He also received an additional 5,350 acres “at the espetiall recommendation of him from the Lordships and others of his Majesty’s Most Hon’ble privie Councell.”<sup>246</sup> The large grant was the result of a letter directed at the Governor and Council requesting that Thorowgood be allowed land on “the Chesapeakean River to the southward of the Bay, where it may be most convenient for him.”<sup>247</sup> He received the sizeable grant for transporting himself, his wife Sarah, and 105 additional persons to the colony between 1628 and 1634.<sup>248</sup> Much like his puritan colleagues, Thorowgood was also heavily involved in Atlantic trade, specifically as it related to the tobacco market. In February 1636 he issued a complaint against John Paine for 9 hogsheads of tobacco which had never arrived at their intended destination. Thorowgood testified that he had shipped the hogsheads on the *John and Dorothy* under Paine’s care to be delivered to his brother John Throowgood. He proposed that Paine had taken the ship to Galway, Ireland for fraudulent purposes, although Paine claimed there had been leak in the boat necessitating the stopover. Supposedly Paine had sold the tobacco for under market price and then refused

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<sup>245</sup> “Abstracts of Virginia Land Patents” *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 2, No. 4, 414.

<sup>246</sup> Essex Pedigrees, undated, published by Harleian Society, with additions in italics from the Visitation of Middlesex, 1669, 416ff.

<sup>247</sup> John Frederick Dorman, *Adventures of Purse and Person: Virginia 1607-1624/5* (Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Company, 4<sup>th</sup> ed, 2004), 607ff.

<sup>248</sup> British National Archives, PRO PC/2/44/155.

to restore the tobacco or pay compensation for the proceedings against him in King's Bench.<sup>249</sup>

Adam Thorowgood's early political and economic activity within the colony placed him and his new wife Sarah at the center of a burgeoning Atlantic puritan community. Adam was a member of the first court held for Lower Norfolk County on May 15, 1637 and also met with the court on November 21, 1638 at the home of Mr. Julian. Likely influenced by his brother Thomas' puritan inclinations, Thorowgood also served as a vestryman of the puritan-dominated Lynnhaven Parish and prior to the church being built his house became a site for penance. In 1639 Thorowgood also provided the land for the county's first church on the West side of Western Branch of Lynnhaven River.<sup>250</sup> In the House of Burgesses Thorowgood served alongside key puritan individuals like Richard Bennett and John Utie while his residence in Elizabeth City south of the James River in the Lower Norfolk region placed him at the nucleus of Virginia's puritan activity. In support of her husband's political and economic endeavors Sarah was likely thrust into the world of Atlantic puritanism. It was through the connections that she established with fellow puritans that Sarah developed an interest in Indian evangelization and it was also through these relationships that she met her next husband, John Gookin.

While Sarah and Adam's marriage was cut short with Thorowgood's untimely death in the spring of 1640, the thirteen years they had spent married seemed sufficient time for Sarah to absorb a considerable amount of influence from the Thorowgood family. In his will Adam left his young widow a considerable share as "a memorial of my love—not any ways intending to cut her off from an equal share in my estate with my

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<sup>249</sup> British National Archives, PRO C2 Charles 1 W49/3.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid.

children.” This included “a mare and a foal, one of the best cows in the pen, half a dozen goats, four sows, and part of the plantation at Lynnhaven, for life.”<sup>251</sup> “All remainder of horses, cows, goats, sheep, hogs, servants, crop and other estate” was to be equally divided between his wife Sarah and their surviving children Adam, Ann, Sarah, and Elizabeth. Sarah also took with her a bed with blankets, a rug, two pairs of sheets and pillow cases, a table with carpet, one table cloth with napkins, knives, and forks, a cupboard and cupboard cloths, one linen and one woolen, as well as six chairs, six stools, six cushions and six pictures hanging in her chamber, one pewter basin, a warming pan, a bed pan, tongs, a fire shovel, and a child’s wicker chair.<sup>252</sup> The items awarded to Sarah Thorowgood, along with her four children, represented not merely a metaphorical continuation of her union with Adam, but a physical legacy of her ties to the Thorowgood family and her continued relations with them. While Sarah would move onto marry again the following spring she would carry with her the remnants of the Thorowgood union and eventually combine three families through widowhood and marriage.

By May 1641, less than a year since her first husband’s death, Sarah had remarried to John Gookin, an English colonizer who had recently arrived in Virginia from Cork, Ireland. John had come to Virginia following his father Daniel and his brother by the same name. Daniel Gookin, Sr. had worked out agreement with the Virginia Company to provide cattle and livestock for the young colony of Virginia. They delivered the English livestock in exchange for eleven pounds per heifer and three pounds ten shillings for every “Shee Goate.”<sup>253</sup> Besides his trade in livestock, Gookin was also allowed to “Trade barter and sell all such Comodities hee shall carry thither att such rates

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<sup>251</sup> Ibid, 416.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

<sup>253</sup> Frederick William Gookin, *Daniel Gookin*, 38.

and prizes as hee shall thinke good.”<sup>254</sup> Not only did he collect from his trade in livestock and other commodities, but Gookin also took advantage of the headright system receiving 50 acres for each of the fifty Irish colonists and thirty additional passengers he brought to Virginia.<sup>255</sup> Gookin’s land grants eventually became the basis of a plantation he named Marie’s Mount in honor of his wife. Daniel Gookin, Sr. left Virginia in May 1622 and departed for England on the *Sea Flower*. Placed in charge of their father’s Virginia holdings, John Gookin and his brother Daniel began to grow roots in the developing Virginia society. John had been granted 500 acres on the Nansemond River, in the heart of the puritan community, for his transportation of settlers to the colony. In the next five years he received an additional three grants totaling 1490 acres and was appointed a commissioner for keeping monthly courts in Lower Norfolk. In 1639 John became a burgess for Lower Norfolk the same year that he married Sarah Thorowgood. John continued in public service as the commander of the Lower Norfolk Court in March of 1643, but died shortly after later that November.<sup>256</sup>

Sarah’s marriage to John, though brief, connected her and her children by Adam Thorowgood to the Gookin family and its networks in England, Ireland, and Massachusetts Bay. Her brother-in-law Daniel Gookin maintained connections with many of the same individuals tied to Adam Thorowgood in the House of Burgesses and the Thorowgood family’s residence in Lower Norfolk County. As a lay leader for Virginia’s puritan community and a merchant Daniel Gookin associated with individuals including Richard Bennett and the Utie family as well as William Claiborne. When John

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<sup>254</sup> Kingsbury, *Records of the Virginia Company*, I:501-502.

<sup>255</sup> Neil, *Virginia Company*, 285-286; John Smith, *General History of Virginia*, 140; Kingsbury, *Records of the Virginia Company*, I:618, 535, 626.

<sup>256</sup> *Virginia Historical Magazine*, vol. 5, 458, 435; vol. 2, 99; Lower Norfolk Co. Antiquary, i, 144.

and Sarah were married in 1639 Daniel Gookin was still residing in Virginia, although following John's death in the late 1640s he relocated with his family to the city of Cambridge in Massachusetts Bay to work alongside John Eliot as a missionary to the Indians. Twice widowed at a relatively young age, Sarah Thorowgood Gookin retained a considerable estate from her late husbands making her a lucrative catch for a successful Virginian bachelor. Another four years passed before Sarah remarried, this time to the son of Virginia's former Colonial Governor, Frances Yeardley.

Similar to Sarah Yeardley, other puritan women used matrimony as a means to advance their family's influence and consequently strengthen Atlantic puritan networks. Following the death of her first husband, John Utie, Mary Anne Utie looked for a favorable match that would not only ensure her security but also advance the opportunities for her son Nathaniel Utie. Her late husband's ties to Richard Bennett, the two having served together on the Council and in the Virginia House of Burgesses, coupled with both families' origins in the Ancient Church made her second marriage to Bennett a reasonable religious and economic choice. Her marriage to the successful merchant, planter, and politician Richard Bennett placed both her and her son at the center of puritan networks and Virginia's elite. John Utie and Richard Bennett had been fellow congregants of the Ancient Church in Amsterdam, colleagues in the House of Burgesses and on the Governor's Council, and neighbors on the south side of the James River. While the connection between the families had been strong before John's death, matrimonial ties to the rising Bennett family portended a bright future for the Utie family. As a stepson to the Parliamentary commissioner and commonwealth governor of Virginia, Nathaniel Utie eventually secured a Harvard education, under the watchful eye



of Daniel Gookin, and a political position in Maryland. In uniting her first husband's landholdings on Hog's Island with Richard Bennett's plantations at Bennett's Welcome and on the Severn River in Maryland, while bringing the two families into a strong union of likeminded puritans, Mary Anne exemplified a practice that would be later carried out by her daughters Anna and Elizabeth Bennett.

Anna's marriage to Theodoric Bland aligned the Bennett family with powerful merchants whose reach spanned from England to the Iberian Peninsula, Tangier, and the Canadian fishing ports. The Bland brothers, through the example of their father and uncle, had created a fraternal network of puritan merchants throughout the Atlantic. Theodoric's brother John managed the operation in Spain, while Edward and Theodoric cultivated tobacco in Virginia and pursued efforts to encourage trade with the surrounding Indians.<sup>257</sup> Through the Bland family, the Bennett's were also linked to the Emperors, a puritan family with connections in England, Barbados, and Lower Norfolk, Virginia. John, Theodoric, and Edward's uncle, also a John Bland, had married Mary Emperer, the daughter of Francis Emperer, Sr. and the sister of the Francis Emperer who eventually resided in Virginia after living in Barbados for a time.<sup>258</sup> This same uncle,

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<sup>257</sup> Edward Bland, *The Discovery of New Brittain* (London, 1651) in Alexander S. Salley, Jr., ed, *Narratives of Early Carolina, 1650-1708* (New York, 1911); Alan V. Briceland, "The Search for Edward Bland's New Britain" *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 87, no. 2 (1979).

<sup>258</sup> This John Bland could have been a number of different John Blands. There was a John Bland, brother to Theodorick Bland, but his wife was Sarah Bland and not Mary Emperer Bland. It also might have been both Theodorick Bland and John Bland's father whose name was also John, although he was married to a Susanna Dublere. It was most likely John Bland of Twickenham who married Mary (most likely Emperer) Bland. In Mary's will she asks to be buried in the Parish Church of St. Olave, Hart Street "as neare her late husband and her child, as conveniently may be," and gives her nephew John Bland (most likely Theodoric and Edward's brother) 100 pounds. (Nicholas Carlisle, *Collections for a history of the ancient family of Bland* (London, 1826),156). John and Mary (Emperer) Bland then must have had a son named John at one point, who could be the deceased son she speaks of being buried next to. Also, if this is the correct John Bland his nephew is probably the John Bland of Virginia, merchant, and brother to Theodoric Bland. This would make Mary (Emperer) Bland the Aunt of John and Theodoric Bland. Some have also suggested that the father of Theodoric and John Bland was married to Mary (Emperour) Bland although I am not sure how this would have been possible. The father of Mary Emperer (wife of John Bland and Aunt of John,

John Bland, had begun the family's venture in Virginia becoming an investor in Martin's Hundred on January 30, 1622 and partnering with John Newman, Robert Watson, and Richard Perry as co-owners of the ship *Abigail*. While Anna solidified the Bennett ties to the Bland family through her marriage to Theodoric, the relationship between the families actually dated back to 1618 when Theodoric's Uncle, John Bland, commissioned Edward Bennett's ship the *Godsguift* to transport settlers to Martin's Hundred.<sup>259</sup> Out of the brothers, John took the lead, William was stationed at Seville, while Edward took the post in Sanlucar, Spain and the Canary Islands for a time. Adam was the first of the brothers to travel to Virginia and after his death Edward traveled there followed by Theodoric.<sup>260</sup> Ultimately Anna's marriage to Theodoric expanded the Bennett reach from Virginia to Spain, the Canary Islands, and Tangier while their ties to the Emperor family brought them closer to merchant and slave connections in the Caribbean.

Not to be outdone by her sister, Elizabeth Bennett also made a strategic choice in marriage, tying her family to one of the most powerful lineages on the Eastern Shore of Virginia through her marriage to Colonel Charles Scarborough, the son of Captain Edmund Scarborough.<sup>261</sup> Edmund Scarborough had been a prominent Virginian alongside Elizabeth Bennett's father, Richard, serving in the House of Burgesses as Speaker of the House for a time, justice and sheriff Northampton, Surveyor-General of

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Theodoric, and Edward Bland) was likely the father of the Francis Emperor who lived in Virginia, making Mary and Francis Emperor, Jr. siblings. Their father died in 1654 as a tobacco merchant living in Norwich England. (G. Andrews Moriarty, "The Emperour Family in Lower Norfolk County" *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 23, no. 4 (1915), 417). Francis Emperor's will also mentions a John Bland as an executor and a grandchild by the name of John Bland who was likely the child who was deceased in 1671 (Lothrop Withington, *Virginia Gleanings in England: Abstracts of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>-century English wills and administrations relating to Virginia and Virginians: a consolidation of articles from the Virginia magazine of history and biography* (Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1980), 638).

<sup>259</sup> Dorman, *Purse and Person*.

<sup>260</sup> Briceland, "The Search for Edward Bland's New Brittain," 133.

<sup>261</sup> James Wise, "Scarborough Family" *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 34 (1926), 374.

Virginia and the leader of improvement projects including the erection of a salt works.<sup>262</sup> Edmund received a number of land grants on the Eastern Shore including those due him for the transportation of his late father, mother, himself, and a servant received in November of 1635.<sup>263</sup> Charles carried on his legacy by adding to the family's holdings through a large number of grants including 3,050 acres on the Pungoteague in 1652 as well as further grants in the county in 1647 and 1655 and grants in Accomack in 1681.<sup>264</sup> He also served as a member of the House of Burgesses, on the Governor's Council and as Councilor, Collector, and Naval Officer of the Eastern shore. In the militia he was the Commander-in-chief of Accomack County and simultaneously the justice of that colony. Elizabeth's husband took part in Bacon's Rebellion, but escaped virtually unscathed with a fine and a lifetime pardon. Following the pardon, Charles was prosecuted in 1687 by the authorities for stating, "King James would wear out the Church of England, for wherever there was a vacancy he filled it with one of another persuasion."<sup>265</sup> Against the monarch's religious waffling, Scarborough's membership within the puritan Atlantic, accessed through his wife Elizabeth, revealed a more stable Atlantic empire in which the couple could place their loyalties.

On the northern edges of the Atlantic in England, Grizzell Brinley also considered the role of marriage, but as a means to break into developing puritan networks from without rather than expanding them from within. The daughter of the former royal exchequer whose royalist ties had placed the family precariously wedged between shifting political and religious sentiments, Grizzell identified an opportunity to escape her

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<sup>262</sup> "Abstracts of Virginia Land Patents" *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 4, no. 3 (1897), 317.

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*, 293, 316.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*, 317.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*

father's shadow and gain entry to the more promising, ascendant Parliamentary party. Her elder sister had made a similar move a few years prior marrying William Coddington, the puritan governor of Rhode Island and removing herself from the center of political and religious tumult in England. In marrying Nathaniell, Grizzell exchanged a Euro-centric focus on confessional, social, and political boundaries for a more flexible definition of faith, commerce, and politics embraced by puritans in their newfound Atlantic environment. Her ability to transition from the daughter of the royal exchequer to the wife of a prominent Atlantic puritan merchant demonstrates a willingness to trade the instability of Europe's fickle political and national allegiances for the certainty of a network based on relationships formed on the trust of a common faith. The marital union was not merely favorable for Grizzell as an escape from war-torn England and out of the shadow of her sister, but also expanded her husband's access to fellow puritans by connecting Nathaniell to her brother-in-law William Coddington as well as the Winthrop family through John Winthrop, Jr.

Constant Sylvester's wife made a similar strategic decision that reconciled her father's combatant royalist convictions with Constant's puritan Parliamentary leanings. While Grace's father, Colonel Walrond, had led a coup on the island of Barbados to protest Parliamentary control in England at the same time that Constant fled the island for fear of backlash against remaining puritans, the eventual surrender of Barbados to Parliamentary commissioners, Richard Bennett and William Claiborne, placed Grace in a fragile position. In marrying Constant, Grace offered her new husband entrance into an elite circle of Barbadian merchants, whose royalist sympathies would have previously prevented Constant access to the cohort. At the same time Grace secured a position for

herself and her family that aligned with the new Commonwealth government. Much like her sister-in-law Grizzell Sylvester, Grace used her marriage to gain entry to the puritan Atlantic world while exchanging rigid divisions for more fluid understandings of faith, commerce, and politics.

### An Atlantic Discourse on Native Christianization

While marriage served as one method of solidifying bonds and connecting families, women also used the contacts they had made through successive marriages to spread ideas and practices across the puritan Atlantic. In her three marriages, Sarah Thorowgood Gookin Yeardley both deliberately and inadvertently disseminated her particular convictions through family lines and up the Atlantic coastline. Her first marriage to Adam Thorowgood brought Sarah in contact with a compelling suggestion about the American Natives as descendants of the lost tribes of Israel.<sup>266</sup> Adam's elder brother, Thomas, had published his thesis on the topic in a work entitled *Jewes in America*.<sup>267</sup> He was not the first to suggest such an idea as it had been a popular assertion of missionaries in the Iberian project coming from Joannes Fredericus Luminus and Gilbertus Genebrardus' works published in 1567.<sup>268</sup> Thomas also corresponded with Roger Williams whose observations of Native language and religion portended a possible Hebraic ancestry among the natives of Rhode Island.<sup>269</sup> Thomas Thorowgood posed the

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<sup>266</sup> "Abstracts of Virginia Land Patents" Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 2, no. 4, 414ff.

<sup>267</sup> Thorowgood first published *Jewes in America* in 1650 and released a revised and expanded edition in 1660 entitled *Jewes in America*. For additional information see Richard W. Cogley, "The Ancestry of the American Indians: Thomas Thorowgood's *Jewes in America* (1650) and *Jews in America* (1660)" *English Literary Renaissance* 35, no. 2 (2005): 304-330.

<sup>268</sup> Cogley, "Ancestry of American Indians," 307.

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.*, 307.

question “so the Jewes did Indianize, or the Indians doe Judaize, for surely they are alike in many, very many remarkable particulars, and if they bee Iewes, they must not for that be neglected.”<sup>270</sup> In her marriages to first Adam Thorowgood and later John Gookin, Sarah Thorowgood Gookin likely passed on the theory to her new brother-in-law, Daniel Gookin. Before relocating to Cambridge, Massachusetts, Daniel Gookin had lived alongside Adam and Sarah Thorowgood as well as Sarah and John Gookin. While Eliot corresponded with Thomas Thorowgood it is probable that Daniel helped to strengthen if not establish the connection between the two having a familial contact through his sister-in-law Sarah Gookin.

From Sarah’s marriages to Thorowgood and Gookin emerged a shared affinity for care of the Natives with a sympathy likely derived from the theory of Hebraic lineage. While Daniel Gookin worked to acculturate the Algonquians of New England Sarah Gookin Yeardley accepted a young Roanoke boy into her home to be educated and Christianized in a similar fashion as that proposed and enacted by Eliot and Gookin. For Gookin, Eliot, and Yeardley alike the conjecture that the Natives might be of Hebraic descent offered an added importance to their own efforts. According to their millennial eschatology the lost tribes of Israel would experience the final conversion prior to Christ’s return. If indeed the Native Americans were of Hebraic lineage any conversion efforts would be the last step in bringing about the millennium and Eliot, Gookin, and Thorowgood would have directly participated in the precipitation of Christ’s return. Eliot had accepted Thorowgood’s ideas asserting “Hence why ought we not to believe, that the ten Tribes being scattered Eastward, are scattered to the utmost ends of the Easterne

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<sup>270</sup> Thomas Thorowgood, *Iewes in America*, page unnumbered.

world? And if so, then assuredly into America.”<sup>271</sup> In response to Thorowgood’s theory, both Gookin and Yeardley’s practices seemed to mirror each others’ and follow a similar theoretical path. When considered the remnant of the lost tribes of Israel rather than utterly depraved devil-worshippers the surrounding tribes were merely backslidden Christians who had forgotten, even if it had been a matter of centuries, their chosen position within the kingdom of God. Rather than displaying a fear or aversion towards the natives Eliot. Gookin, and Yeardley portrayed a need to immerse Indians into European colonial culture to realize their conversion and ultimate acceptance into colonial society.

For Sarah Gookin Yeardley cultural and religious immersion included her acceptance of the young Roanoke boy into her own home. Virginia Ferrar praised Sarah “in the admittance in to your Family of that his Child the most hopefull Crhistian and taking the tuission of him for the Educatinge him in the Faith of our Lord and blessed sovierne jesus Chris:” While other “barbarian Englishe” had spoken ill of the Yeardley’s decision, Virginia was sure that the Lord “will not faile to blesse your Family in all they that hence givan” so that they might be an “Example in all the Collony.”<sup>272</sup> Virginia’s letter was a response to Francis Yeardley’s own letter to John Ferrar regarding the matter. Frances Yeardley wrote to John Ferrar requesting eggs and advice to begin silk cultivation in Virginia and had also recounted the story of how Yeardley and his wife had come to take this Indian boy into their home. After traveling to Roanoke Island where the Indians “received them civilly, and shewed them the ruins of Sir Walter Raleigh’s fort, from whence I received a sure token of their being there” Yeardley invited the Roanokes

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<sup>271</sup> John Eliot, “Conjectures,” 410.

<sup>272</sup> Virginia Ferrar to Sarah Gookin Yeardley (Ferrar Papers, Box VII, No. 691 (i)).

to come and make their peace with the English “which they willingly condescended unto.” As a token of gratitude Yeardley brought them to his own home to stay for a week, “in the interim of which time, hearing and seeing the children read and write, of his own free voluntary motion he [the Indian King] asked me, (after a most solid pause, we two being along), whether I would take his own son, having but one, and teach him as our children, namely in his terms, to speak out of the book, and to make a writing.” Yeardley agreed and at the point of his departure the Indian “expressed himself desirous to serve that God that Englishmen served, and that his child might be so brought up; promising to bring him in to me in four moons.” The Yeardley family took the Roanoke boy into their home and raised him alongside their own children. While their experiment in native acculturation and Christianization was isolated and small compared to Daniel Gookin’s efforts with the Algonquians, it was Sarah Yeardley’s own attempt at suggesting an alternate approach to evangelizing the native.

Because the family assumed such a central role in colonial, and specifically puritan community, the Yeardley’s actions were not free from public scrutiny. While Francis Yeardley was away on business in Maryland and Sarah at home with the Indian child and his father, the Yeardley’s neighbors began to protest the Yeardley’s acceptance of the Roanoke child, they “murmured, and carried themselves uncivilly towards them, forbidding their coming in any more; and by some over-busy justices of the place (my wife having brought him to church in the congregation), after sermon, threatened to whip him, and send him away.” Francis recounted, how the boy’s father, “the great man was very much afraid, and much appalled; but my wife kept him in her hand by her side, and confidently and constantly on my behalf resisted their threatenings, till they publicly



protested against me for bringing them in.” Francis Yeardley immediately “dispatched away a boat with six hands, one being a carpenter, to build the king an English house” which Yeardley had initially promised. He sent 200 sterling in trust to purchase and pay for the land they desired. Yeardley further recounted how “the Rowanoke presented his child to the minister before the congregation to be baptized which was solemnly performed in presence of all the Indians” and the child then left with Yeardley “to be bred up a Christian, which God grant him the grace to become!” The surrounding community’s protest and disapproval of Sarah Yeardley’s guardianship over the Roanoke boy illustrates Demos’ argument for the centrality of the family unit. Sarah’s actions, while well within her proper household functions, could not be isolated from the surrounding community. In accepting the young Indian boy, raising him within her home, and bringing him to church to be baptized, Sarah questioned assumptions about race and religion at the center of Virginia’s colonial experiment.

As a wife and mother Sarah Yeardley’s actions within the household were far from benign. Her gendered role placed her at the center of the puritan Atlantic and her regional Virginia community allowing her to influence and shape the world around her without stepping outside societal expectations. As such Sarah Yeardley challenged patriarchal reassertions and racial demarcations as tied to empire. Her acceptance of the young Roanoke boy into her home ran against the general fear and aversion that had surfaced in the Chesapeake following successive Indian massacres in 1622 and 1644. Sarah Yeardley’s use of the female role, that seemed to challenge the gendered divide without moving beyond it also subsumed a racial question. As Kathleen Brown and others have suggested the role of the good wife alongside the properly patriarchal

husband became an important constant against which Virginia colonists could define the other, both native and African. In a developing social environment the ebb and flow of Atlantic tides seemed to mirror constantly shifting, semi-permeable boundaries between Europeans, Indians, and Africans. Grasping for visible categories in the wake of a revived discourse of a woman's role in society, European colonists began to associate the proper patriarchal roles, that of a submissive wife and a dominant husband, as characteristic of the European. Because neither American Indians nor African slaves possessed a similar patriarchal union at the base of their social organizations this also became a symbol of civility and a tool of differentiation. Therefore, in seemingly challenging gendered boundaries, although her actions remained within the proscribed limits, in moving beyond what her neighbors considered appropriate for a European colonist of her standing, Sarah Thorowgood Gookin Yeardley not only suggested a broader role for women of her time, but also shifted the ever-fragile, still developing lines between European, Indian, and African. In using her role within the family unity to unwittingly push gender boundaries of an elite European colonist, Sarah seemed to mimic the stronger female position within the surrounding Powhatan tribes, which consequently feminized their male partners from the English perspective. Not merely an easily dismissed case of aberrant behavior or a misguided step, Sarah's actions, whether deliberate or accidental, were a clear challenge to the social fabric of a fragile colonial Virginia which sought to create tangible categories for a colony that still remained largely in flux.

While Sarah's care of the Roanoke boy paralleled Daniel Gookin's practice of native acculturation and Christianization mirroring Thomas Thorowgood's theories, the

two also shared another curious connection. A number of scholars have argued that Daniel Gookin's integrative approach to Native American acculturation stemmed also from his connection to his cousin, Vincent Gookin's, writings on Irish colonization. As the wife of John Gookin, Sarah Yeardley was also connected to Vincent Gookin and likely discussion of his colonization theories. Addressing the Irish colonization theory, Vincent Gookin had suggested that English transplants live among the pagan Irish rather than separating themselves. He argued that they should not fear being led astray, and that in living in community with the Irish they would yield more conversions. Similarly, Daniel Gookin had proposed a multicultural school in New England where Indian children would be educated alongside puritan students. Through the apprenticeship relationship males would learn a trade while females would be trained in good housewifery, both being instructed how to read and write in English and taught the Christian way. Gookin also recommended the establishment of free schools by which Indians could also be both instructed in Christian faith and the English language. In order to minimize cost and ensure success he proposed that the English colonists should send their children to the same school at Marlborough and pay the schoolmaster for the native children. It is likely that Gookin's assimilationist perspective came at least in part from his cousin Vincent Gookin while also stemming from his sympathy for the Judiac theory, which added a neo-platonic flavor to the debate by suggesting that the natives were merely backslidden Christians rather than utterly depraved. This, along with the necessity to convert the Indians in order to bring about the millennial return encouraged a willingness to accept the natives into European culture rather than encouraging separation and division for fear of their influence upon the English settlers.

Similarly, Sarah Thorowgood Gookin Yeardley was likely influenced by a combination of both sources, her late husband's and former brother-in-law's connection to Irish colonization theory coupled with her first husband's ties to the Hebraic lineage theory. As Francis Yeardley had written, they had welcomed the Indian boy into their home in order that he might "teach him to do as our children, namely in his terms, to speak out of the book, and to make a writing, which mostion I most heartily embrace." Much like Gookin, alongside Eliot, had suggested education and civilization as a means towards conversion, Sarah and Francis Yeardley welcomed the Roanoke boy into their home which was followed shortly by his baptism and conversion. The acceptance of the Roanoke prince into their family was very similar to Daniel Gookin's own suggestion of a school for native and English children. On a microcosmic scale, Sarah's education of her own children alongside the native boy within her home mirrored Daniel Gookin's proposal for a multicultural school in New England.

Sarah and Daniel's adoption of Vincent Gookin's unconventional approach to Irish colonization within the context of Native American acculturation and Christianization served as a solution to their predicament while also acting as a critique on the mainstream gendered construction of both the Gaelic Irish and the Native Algonquians. As Kathleen Brown has argued: "When English writers described native populations as feminine and lands as virgin, domestic and imperial interests fused to create a powerful justification for English domination."<sup>273</sup> Conquest was justifiable because Indians had failed to tame the wilderness, because native men were insufficiently virile to exploit the nature surrounding them.<sup>274</sup> A similar motif had emerged in Irish

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<sup>273</sup> Brown, *Good Wives*, 41.

<sup>274</sup> Brown, *Good Wives*, 56-57.

colonial writings, which also suggested that the semi-nomadic culture of the Gaelic Irish revealed a weakness among males by demonstrating their inability to tame the Irish countryside. Writers like Strachey had written of the Indian man as an impotent husband to a virgin woman or childless wife. Because of their presumed masculinity European men could better take advantage of American or Irish resources, penetrating the virginal lands of Cork and the Chesapeake and therefore warranting their usurpation.<sup>275</sup> The female lead in agriculture only seemed to confirm to Europeans a weakness among Indian men in allowing women to claim an improper, masculine role.<sup>276</sup>

In contrast, neither Gookin nor Yeardley feminized the native or the Irishman, advocating instead a missionary approach not based upon domination, but rather grounded in acceptance, equality, and European vulnerability. Their seemingly benign rejection of gendered caricatures of both the Indian and the Gaelic Irishman dismissed not only an approach that seemed ineffectual to both on a pragmatic level, but also removed justification for European domination and subsequently challenged the English colonial project. Recognizing that Christianization through domination and a forced denial of cultural heritage had proven unsuccessful, Gookin and Yeardley proposed instead that Indian children be placed on equal footing with European children to be educated, Christianized, and acculturated alongside their European peers. Their similar assimilationist approaches, while implemented on different scales, suggest a shared participation with contemporary dialogue surrounding Judiac theories and the overlapping influences of Irish colonization theory on the missionary project. While no correspondence remains between the once brother and sister-in-law, from their related

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<sup>275</sup> Ibid.; William Strachey, *Estward Ho!* (1605).

<sup>276</sup> Ibid, 57.

projects emerges a discourse of practice where the implementation of these theories, the ability to witness a parallel experiment, and the opportunity for shared feedback on successes and failures allowed them to embark on two similar projects to Christianize the Roanokes and Algonquians apart from contemporary prevailing approaches to Indian relations in the surrounding colonies at the time.

While it is unclear if Gookin and Yeardley's approach, as influenced by Thorowgood and Vincent Gookin, was meant as an overt critique on the colonial project or merely an attempt to correct previous missionary failures, whether inadvertently or deliberately, their suggestions challenged not only other approaches to native missionary efforts, but also the subliminal discourse of domination thinly veiled by these efforts. Finally, as a woman, critiquing the patriarchal colonial discourse through her missionary project, Sarah Yeardley's challenges likely only further irritated her opposition. The neighbors who had spoken out against Sarah's bringing the young Roanoke boy to church, and allowing him to live in her home, were not merely angered by the danger of having an Indian living among them. As Demos has argued, Sarah's actions within the family were closely linked to the community around her. In acting as a mother to the Roanoke boy and following her husband's lead, Sarah questioned the racial divide and challenged a feminization of the native and the legitimacy of Virginia's colonial project. Sarah's actions within the home became a challenge to society because her role within the family was a part of the public sphere.

## Female Correspondence and Legal Disputes in the Puritan Atlantic

A number of women within the puritan Atlantic used their pens as a means to establish and maintain important networks. Through her written hand, Mary Mapletoft Utie constructed a web of correspondence tying Virginia puritans to one of the most influential colonial families of the period. Before her marriage to Nathaniel Utie, Mary Mapletoft regularly wrote letters to her cousin Virginia Ferrar. The two young women exchanged notes regularly. On one occasion Mary expressed how she was “extremely ashamed of my selfe that I have not before now fulfilled your desire in sending you the Balletts truly my deare Cosen.”<sup>277</sup> Mary and Virginia’s relationship also satiated Virginia’s curiosity about the New World as she called upon Mary to send her colonial objects likely related to her interested in silk cultivation as well as other agricultural pursuits. Mary wrote to Virginia again in September 1647 asking her to give her love to her cousins as well as her brother, who was studying in Cambridgeshire with Virginia at Little Gidding.<sup>278</sup> Virginia responded to Mary just prior to Mary’s wedding to Nathaniel Utie expressing how “you shall every have my best wished and prayers for your wellbeing and wedding.”<sup>279</sup> Their exchange of letters continued through the years. After her marriage to Nathaniel Utie Mary wrote her cousin from their home in Spesutia, thanking Virginia for the hospitality she had shown on Mary’s recent trip to England.

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<sup>277</sup> Mary Mapletoft to Virginia Ferrar Nov. 12, 1645, Ferrar Papers Magdalene College Cambridge University.

<sup>278</sup> Mary Mapletoft to Virginia Ferrar Sept. 29, 1647, Ferrar Papers Magdalene College Cambridge University.

<sup>279</sup> Virginia Ferrar to Mary Mapletoft November 1, 1647, Ferrar Papers, Magdalene College Cambridge university.

While separated across the Atlantic the cousins still maintained a strong relationship punctuated by occasional visits.

Even after her marriage to Nathaniel Utie, Mary remained close to her cousin Virginia. She expressed in a letter, “Althoug my habitation be among the heathens yet itt hath no I Thanke god, mayd me doe ungrateful as to forget your extraordinary civill treatment of me when I had the happiness of your doe much longed for company.” She continued expressing thanks to her cousins, Virginia’s parents, for their hospitality as well. “I bless my good god he hath brought me home again in safe tie and I trust he will bring me to my... and country again for I can have noe comforte heare without them, but live in hope to see you within this years or two if it please god to bless my endeavors prent I pray my due respect to my Cosen John Ferrar & his Lady with my humble thanks for the last kindness.”<sup>280</sup> While Virginia and Mary’s letters represent a window into female correspondence during the seventeenth century, they also demonstrate how letters exchanged between women across the Atlantic could create a foundation for the development of Atlantic puritan networks of the period.

On the surface the Ferrar family’s Anglican ties seemed irreconcilably opposed to the puritan network to which Mary Mapletoft Utie belonged, through her marriage to Nathaniel Utie. Despite their differences, female correspondence between the two women bridged a gap allowing the Uties and Bennetts access to the Ferrar family while giving Virginia a window into the curiosities of the colonial world. Similar to Grace Walrond and Grizzell Brinley’s movements across the confessional divide, Mary’s union to Nathaniel Utie allowed Richard Bennett’s stepson access to the former Deputy Secretary

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<sup>280</sup> Mary Utie to Virginia Ferrar, January 16, 1663, Ferrar Papers Magdalene College Cambridge University.



of the Virginia Company, John Ferrar, and his brother Nicholas Ferrar. In crossing the divide between puritan and Anglican, Mary exemplified the mobility and fluidity characteristic of the puritan Atlantic. Nathaniel Utie's stepfather, Richard Bennett, had corresponded previously with John Ferrar calling upon the Virginia Company to help Bennett and his puritan colleagues in the fledgling colony of Virginia, but Nathaniel's marriage to Mary Mapletoft coupled with her continued correspondence with the Ferrars through Virginia solidified a relationship into a kinship tie and expanded the reach of the puritan Atlantic into the Ferrars' circles.<sup>281</sup>

While Sarah Thorowgood Gookin Yeardley created a discourse of practice relating to current theories surrounding Native American conversion and Mary Mapletoft built a bridge of correspondence upon which her husband could establish networks with an influential Atlantic family, Anna Bennett Bland, the widow of Theodoric Bland, pursued legal means to secure the property and position of her sons. Following her husband's death, Theodoric's widow persisted in a drawn out court battle with her sister-in-law Sarah Bland, the widow of Theodoric's brother, John Bland. The troubles had apparently begun shortly before John Bland's death, when Giles Bland, Sarah and John's son and Anna's nephew, went to Virginia on his father's behalf in order to lay claim to what they believed were their lands. Sarah, John, and Giles argued that John had settled his three brothers, Adam, Edward and Theodoric, in Virginia "under certaine Articles, Agreements, and Coversants uplied the Plantation in wch they were settle to the vallew of above ten thousand pounds." "Expecting proportionate Returnes from them" John was

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<sup>281</sup> "Richard Bennett to John Ferrar" February 12, 1652, Ferrar Papers Magdalene College Cambridge University.

likely saddened and disappointed to find that both of his brothers died shortly after.<sup>282</sup> Apparently, Anna Bennett Bland had requested that John or one of his representatives' travel to Virginia in order that they might settle Theodoric's will and her own inheritance. Giles arrived in the Chesapeake either in or shortly before 1676 but did not get along well with his aunt, became entangled with legal affairs after assaulting a councilman, and eventually pursued fatal involvement in Bacon's Rebellion. Sarah came to Virginia to testify on Giles' behalf when he insulted a councilman, but she was unable to come to his aid when he was sentenced to death and hung for his role in the rebellion.<sup>283</sup> Therefore, both Anna and Sarah Bland were left as their deceased husbands' representatives in a legal battle that would span the better part of the next decade.

Whether by the strength of her case or the depths of defamation to which her foe, Sarah Bland, had fallen following her husband's death and her son's treasonous execution, Anna and her new husband Colonel Leger St. Codd won the case in Virginia. This forced Sarah Bland to file an appeal to the Privy Council at White Hall in order for her case to be presented in London. Her petition was heard before the Privy Council on August 3<sup>rd</sup> of 1682. Both parties, Anna and her husband Col. St. Leger Codd and Sarah Bland, were ordered to appear before the court in London and remained there for the better part of 1684. After being passed through the Privy Council, Sarah's appeal was eventually referred to the Lords of the Committee for Trade and plantations.

In her extended dispute with Sarah Bland, Anna Bennett Bland Codd fought for the inheritance she felt her husband had rightfully left her, while holding tightly to the

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<sup>282</sup> British National Archives, PRO CO 1/36/67.

<sup>283</sup> PRO CO 1/39/65 "Proclamation of Sir William Berkeley, Governor of Virginia, 10 February 1676/6;" PRO CO 1/36/86 "The Humble Petition of Sarah Bland Mother of Giles Bland now in Virginia"; PRO CO 1/36/109-110 "The Petition of Giles Bland"; Also see *The Virginia Gazette* "Remainder of the Account of Bacon's Rebellion, in the year 1676" printed February 23, 1769.

threads that still bound the Bennett and Bland families. Sarah's persistence and Anna's equally formidable response demonstrate the extent to which Atlantic puritan women defended their families, property, and ultimately their livelihoods within the court system. Both Anna and Sarah's willingness to travel from England, to Virginia, and back to England for extended periods of time further illustrate the connections that existed between puritans throughout the Atlantic. While their male counterparts often traveled to New England, Ireland, or throughout the Caribbean, women were far from passive participants within Atlantic puritan networks, but rather actively pursued and established relationships that were not only consistent with their faith, but beneficial their family's political and economic pursuits.

Anna Bennett was not the only woman to pursue legal means as Sarah Thorowgood Gookin Yeardley was also an advocate for her self and her family within the court. After the death of her first husband she was called to the Lower Norfolk County Court in order to present her accounts as guardian of Adam Thorowgood's children. A special accommodation was made because of "the great distance of her residence" from the court at Elizabeth River that two agents would be sent to her home so that she would not have to make the journey herself.<sup>284</sup> Sarah had been called to account because the two overseers of Adam Thorowgood's estate, Henry Sewell and Captain Willoughby, had "disclaimed" their role in the matter. The issue still had not been resolved at Jamestown in 1642 when the assembly ordered that the overseers and guardians of the estate had to give "an exact account."<sup>285</sup> Nearly six years later the court was still awaiting her presence in court. The King's magistrates had complained that Sarah "hath been oftentimes by

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<sup>284</sup> "The Court Order of Lower Norfolk County, March 12, 1641," in Thomas C. Parramore, *Norfolk: The First Four Centuries* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2000), 26.

<sup>285</sup> *Ibid.*

severall orders of this court...summonded,” but “utterly refuseth” to appear.<sup>286</sup> The court had received a letter from Thorowgood’s widow explaining, “Please to take for answere that my resolutions are from this inferior court to appeal to the Grand Court of the Governor and Counsell, at James Citty, there to give up such accoumpts...in case the lawe may compel an executrix and mother of her children, left...sole guardian to their full age to give up accounts, to any but her children.”<sup>287</sup> Sarah had refused the summons on principle arguing that there existed no precedent “eyther in the Realm of England or in these parts...where an executrix in my condition was ever ciled to accopt. before the full age of their children,” as such she requested “not to be molested” further about the issue.<sup>288</sup> Sarah also claimed that because the majority of her holdings were located in England she was “not soley under the power of this court.”<sup>289</sup> Probably because of her late husband’s connections within the Atlantic puritan community, and subsequent friendship with William Claiborne, Sarah ended her letter with a postscript of well wishes to Claiborne and his wife, “to whom I have sent a small basket of apples per the bearer.”<sup>290</sup>

The court responded in August agreeing to give Sarah Thorowgood Gookin “respite till the next court to bring an accopt. and inventory” the failure to do so would result in a fine of 1000 pounds of tobacco.<sup>291</sup> Sarah ignored the time frame and did not respond until November 15<sup>th</sup> when she called for additional time in a petition and was granted an extension until the December session. By December 15<sup>th</sup>, the twice-widowed

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<sup>286</sup> Ibid, 27.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid.

<sup>288</sup> Ibid.

<sup>289</sup> Ibid.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid, 28.

Sarah was now married once again to Captain Francis Yeardley who requested that a previous fine of five hundred pounds of tobacco be rescinded and that he be given until April of the following year to submit the Thorowgood accounts. While the Thorowgood accounts were eventually presented before the court, Sarah Thorowgood Gookin Yeardley had defended her belief that the court's summons was unprecedented and beyond its jurisdiction. Arguing that it was only her children that could bring her to account and that because her primary holdings remained in England that the Lower Norfolk County Court was operating outside of jurisdiction, Sarah effectively abated the court's affronts. Similar to Anna Bennett Bland she defended herself and her family from the court as a woman and a widow.

From their marriage choices to their contribution to a discourse on Native American Christianization, pursuit of legal battles to defend their sons' and husbands' properties, and use of correspondence to expand the reach of their networks women played a key role in the construction of a puritan Atlantic empire. Neither were the roles that women played merely supportive to their husbands' business and financial pursuits. Through their correspondence with friends and relative they established key contacts which often blossomed into financial leads. While the records of only a few of these women survive, because many of them worked within normative conventions of the period their examples likely allude to a much broader participation of women within the puritan Atlantic. As wives, widows, mothers, and daughters these women used the available resources at their disposal to shape both the colonial and puritan communities around them. The examples of Grizzell Brinley, Grace Walrond, and Mary Mapletoft suggest that decisions to enter the puritan networks were calculated and carried distinct

consequences. Grizzell's transition from the daughter of the royal exchequer to the wife of a puritan merchant-planter not only placed her on the other side of England's religious and political divide, but also helped to protect her family from the ever-shifting alliances of Civil-war England. Similarly, Grizzell Brinley and Grace Walronds' marriages to the Sylvester brothers gave Nathaniel and Constant access to elite Barbadian merchants and New England puritan networks previously inaccessible through a veil of royalism.

Although marriage provided a starting point for a number of women within puritan networks, others pursued avenues outside of the marital bed. Sarah Gookin Thorowgood Yeardley's welcome of the Roanoke boy mirroring the Irish colonization theories through the Gookin family and Thorowgood's Hebraic lineage thesis helped to create a discourse on native relations within the puritan Atlantic. At the same time Anna Bennett Bland Codd's legal pursuit of her late husband's property to protect her son's inheritance provided a potential entrance for her sons into the Atlantic economy and attempted to preserve the connections she had made years earlier in her marriage to Theodoric. Finally, the seemingly benign correspondence between female relatives engaged in by Mary Mapletoft and Virginia Ferrar allowed Atlantic puritans access to influential colonial families who would have otherwise remained inaccessible to Atlantic puritans.

Ultimately the role that women played in constructing a puritan Atlantic empire was not inconsequential. Through Mary Mapletoft Utie fellow puritans received an audience with leaders of the Virginia Company and through Sarah Thorowgood Gookin Yeardley Atlantic puritans developed an altered understanding of successful European-Native relations. Mary-Anne Utie Bennett solidified the relationship between two key

puritan families while Anna Bennett connected her family to a successful fraternal network of merchants. Grizzell Brinley moved herself and her family from their fragile royalist position on the edge of the Commonwealth while Sarah Offley fused compatible theories through her successive husbands.

While making a palpable contribution to the birth of a puritan Atlantic, these women also simultaneously challenged both gender and racial boundaries in the developing Atlantic society. Within their little commonwealths, puritan women exercised a power that reached outside of their homes and beyond the private sphere. In embracing their roles as wives, daughters, and mothers they inadvertently critiqued the fragile social order of the New World. Sarah Yeardley's obedience to her husband's requests and extension of her maternal instinct to the Roanoke boy deviated from what her neighbors saw as appropriate boundaries between native and European. Because gender norms were intertwined with racial categories of the period, Sarah Yeardley's actions inadvertently challenged the attempts to define European settlers against an African or Indian other through a reassertion of patriarchy. For her detractors, Yeardley mimicked the native matriarch and while she obeyed her husband's desire to accept the Roanoke boy she also upset constructed racial divisions between the civilized English settler and his savage Indian neighbor. Her attempts to Christianize through immersion as influenced by Thorowgood and Gookin's theories also undermined thinly veiled missionary efforts to convert the heathen native through feminization and domination, revealing a gap in European justification for the seizure of Indian lands. Anna and Sarah Bland's extensive legal battles, while within their proscribed female roles, demonstrate the role to which female puritans helped to shape the puritan Atlantic. Ultimately Demos'

little commonwealths reaches beyond the boundaries of the Plymouth colony to become a central element in building and shaping the puritan Atlantic. Families like the Bennetts, Sylvesters, Gookins, and Blands assumed the functions central to puritan community and the females within those households used their private responsibilities as a means to shape and mold the world around them. Women like Sarah Yeardley, Anna Bennett Bland, and Mary Mapletoft Utie embraced their roles as daughters, sisters, wives, and mothers to build and shape the puritan Atlantic while simultaneously challenging the community outside of their puritan fold.



## CHAPTER 5

### SWEETLY BOUND: THE SYLVESTER SUGAR NETWORKS IN THE BUILDING OF A PURITAN ATLANTIC EMPIRE

Tucked behind overgrown thickets of wineberries and hidden by a knoll covered in pine trees bleeding with sap, Sylvester Manor seems to appear suddenly around a bend in a burst of yellow. Flanked by lush gardens and a pacific inlet that mirrors its reflection, the Georgian home visually evokes a presumed narrative that betrays its layered past. The still-present eighteenth-century structure dominates the landscape suggesting a story of European colonial privilege that conceals a much more complex history of intermingling Atlantic puritan interests, Dutch mercantilism, Manhasset culture, seventeenth-century alchemy, and African folkways on Shelter Island.<sup>292</sup> The misleading visual narrative at Sylvester Manor, concealing layered histories behind the surviving Georgian façade, seems to mirror the very blurring of religious and political boundaries that occurred as the Sylvester brothers arrived on Shelter Island.

The tumult of Civil War England rippled throughout the Atlantic, yet colonial sentiments did not always align with the metropole. The Atlantic crossing and the pressing needs of colonial life often demanded cooperation across religious categories, imperial borders, and colonial governments. This fluidity, coupled with ever-present

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<sup>292</sup> Katherine Howlett Hayes, *Slavery Before Race: Europeans, Africans, and Indians at Long Island's Sylvester Manor Plantation, 1651-1884* (New York: New York University Press, 2013). Hayes provides an in depth analysis of the intersection of European, Native American, and African life on Shelter Island.

encounters with the unfamiliar, encouraged Atlantic puritans to embrace personal relationships, bonds of trust, and the constancy of a community drawn together by shared convictions to ultimately form the puritan Atlantic.<sup>293</sup> Previous categories of identity, tied to a European context, came to compete with the pressures of survival and success in an Atlantic world where European currencies of status, wealth, and power did not always carry the same value. As a result, a number of Atlantic puritans embraced complex and layered identities. At once tied to their country of origin, religion, profession, station, and colony of residence, individuals like the Sylvester brothers skillfully manipulated these categories within fluctuating circumstances. Guided by the hand of providence, the Sylvesters and their fellow Atlantic puritans navigated the Atlantic using their layered identities as a tool in achieving a larger spiritual goal.

With the tensions of the British Atlantic mirroring the conflict in England, the struggles between Parliamentarians and Royalists manifested themselves in shifting allegiances and colonial backlash as reliance upon the existing English government became evermore fragile. At the same time geographical expansion called into question national boundaries and the identities developing around them. Families like the Bennetts and Sylvesters crossed between Dutch, English, and Iberian waters, others like Daniel Gookin traveled between Ireland and Virginia.<sup>294</sup> Ultimately the combination of a fragile political system in England and the mobility of these individuals made the English definitions of empire more distant. Instead, many relied primarily on relationships formed

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<sup>293</sup>Heather Miyano Kopelson, *Faithful Bodies: Performing Religion and Race in the Puritan Atlantic* (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 16. Kopelson also argues that skin color and freedom status were not the only or most significant components of identity in the seventeenth century and religious affinity often served as a stronger source of identity.

through the puritan Atlantic while following the guiding hand of providence to discern which loyalties would serve them best in the particular moment.

The Sylvester family-brothers Nathaniell, Constant, Giles, and Joshua-were deeply entrenched in the puritan Atlantic. They built upon and relied on its networks and participated in its economy of favors and exchange of goods, all the while working towards the goal of both an earthly and a millennial puritan empire. Their marital and familial choices, business decisions, and correspondence were intimately linked to their spiritual goals as realized by a community of likeminded Atlantic believers. From their early trade in Virginia to their purchase of Shelter Island, the brothers depended upon relationships tied back to the Ancient Church. The Sylvester brothers also contributed to and benefited from a system of spiritual credit and exchange within puritan circles. They strategically employed appeals to a shared dependence upon providence to coerce cooperation and political and economic favors while receiving the same from others. Gradually, their reliance upon relationships formed within the puritan Atlantic alongside a supreme loyalty to providence allowed the Sylvesters to begin constructing a new understanding of empire. Some have described how Nathaniell Sylvester created an isolated empire on Shelter Island, protected from surrounding influences and free from colonial interference. His island was instead the nexus of seemingly disparate interests, all drawn together by a shared participation within the puritan Atlantic. As the stopping point for Colonial governors, puritan leaders, native allies, and fellow merchants the waters surrounding the small island were much less a watery borderland than a bridge across the Atlantic.

The Sylvester's puritan Atlantic was built upon their relationships birthed out of the Ancient Church. Both April Hatfield and Susanah Shaw Romney have aptly argued for the central role that networks across the Atlantic played in the development of individual colonies. Hatfield demonstrates how Virginian networks stretched like tentacles across the Atlantic coloring the growth of Virginia society from its early trade in tobacco, to the development of a slave code upon the Barbadian example, and the flourishing of a heterogeneous religious environment. Romney offers another example of how what she labels intimate networks based on love, sex, and a desire for profit created the Dutch Atlantic Empire.<sup>295</sup> Karen Kupperman's effort to correct the dissection of colonial history into "hermetically sealed little units" that ignored "massive evidence of an integrated colonial vision that was widely shared on both sides of the Atlantic" pushed historians out of the New England and Chesapeake dichotomy and opened their eyes to a much more vibrant colonial screenplay where characters passed from scene to scene across an Atlantic backdrop.<sup>296</sup> Nicholas Canny's work in highlighting Ireland as a testing ground for British colonial practice, further broadened the Atlantic theatre and introduced a whole new cast of characters.<sup>297</sup> Building off of Canny's work, Audrey Horning has suggested that rather than working as an example to later colonial efforts, Ireland participated in a British colonial discourse in which "the influence of the New World on English activities in sixteenth-century Ireland was far greater than the reverse."<sup>298</sup> This research has led to a movement away from isolated analyses of colonial

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<sup>295</sup> Hatfield, *Atlantic Virginia*; Romney, *New Netherland Connections*.

<sup>296</sup> Kupperman, *Providence Island*, ix.

<sup>297</sup> Nicholas Canny, *The Upstart Earl: A Study of the Social and Mental World of Richard Boyle the First Earl of Cork, 1566-1643*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

<sup>298</sup> Horning, *Ireland in the Virginian Sea*, 100.

locales to explore the interconnection of colonial development and follow the paths of those who moved among and between the Atlantic colonies.

This chapter demonstrates how for many seventeenth-century individuals an Atlantic network of likeminded puritan believers came to gradually displace complete reliance on imperial and colonial identities. The Sylvesters are a representative example of how individual relationships built upon overlapping interests in faith, mercantilism, and politics created the puritan Atlantic, an understanding of empire that surrendered their interests in profit and politics to providence to achieve both temporal and eschatological goals.

Born into the wealth and decadence of seventeenth-century Amsterdam the Sylvester brothers came to profit as both a providential blessing and a means to secure religious vitality. At the same time their religious connections provided an opportunity to establish themselves within Atlantic trade and politics using their relationships from the Ancient Church as the starting point for many of their American and Caribbean ventures. Fellow Ancient Church congregants, Edward Bennett and his nephew Richard, had moved on ahead of the Sylvesters settling in Virginia and mounting a fierce campaign against Spanish imports and the need for the Virginia Company to achieve a monopoly on tobacco.<sup>299</sup> The Bennetts along with other former congregants like the Utie family drew Nathaniell towards the Chesapeake and up the mouth of the James River introducing him to the beginnings of a puritan Atlantic that would become the foundation for his colonial experience.<sup>300</sup> At the same time Constant Sylvester began to establish himself on the sugar island of Barbados, tying himself to fellow puritans on the Island

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<sup>299</sup> Edward Bennett, *A Treatise*.

<sup>300</sup> Kingsbury, *The Records of the Virginia Company*, 1: 554, 562, 2: 90, 571, 210, 33-38, 366, 387-88.; McIlwaine, *Minutes of the Council*, 120.

and those on the colonial mainland. Their decision to purchase Shelter Island occurred within the political and relational milieu of the Commonwealth Atlantic as puritans navigated the pitfalls and advantages of an English government in flux.

Just as the brothers' early trading ventures were tied to their puritan connections in the Ancient Church so too were their choices in love and matrimony based upon a desire to extend their reach within the puritan empire. Nathaniell's decision to marry Grizzell Brinley gave the young entrepreneur a coveted entry point into puritan New England. Through his ties to William Coddington, Grizzell Brinley's brother-in-law and the Governor of Rhode Island, as well as John Winthrop, Jr., the Governor of New Haven and heir to the Winthrop Dynasty, Nathaniell began using his own efforts to expand upon the puritan networks he had previously inherited. Similarly Constant's marriage to Grace Walrond brought the young planter into coveted Barbadian circles and provided a convenient opportunity for the daughter of Colonel Humphrey Walrond to shift allegiances during the Commonwealth period.

The Sylvesters' early years were spent benefitting from their contacts to Dutch mercantilism through the Ancient Church. In their later years the brothers became active participants within the puritan Atlantic, extending its reach and influence among the northern colonies and Caribbean. Through their relationships with John Winthrop, Jr. they dabbled on the edge of what Walter Woodward has labeled Christian alchemy, developing a complicated relationship with the puritan heir as willing participants in his experiments, consumers of his alchemical knowledge, and benefactors of his resultant ties to commerce.<sup>301</sup> Short circuiting Winthrop's three-pronged approach to the pursuit of

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<sup>301</sup> Walter William Woodward, *Prospero's America: John Winthrop, Jr., Alchemy, and the Creation of New England Culture, 1606-1676* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

alchemical knowledge to further the puritan cause on earth through entrepreneurial efforts, the Sylvester brothers seemed more interested in an altruistic mercantilism than the scientific knowledge it produced. The Sylvesters also drew upon their shared religious foundation with Winthrop appealing to a common reliance upon providence as a means to receive economic and political assistance. While the Sylvesters seemed more interested in trade while the younger Winthrop pursued his alchemical interests, their shared acceptance of providential guidance allowed the Sylvesters and Winthrop to cooperate within the puritan Atlantic despite their differences.

From the small island tucked away in Gardiner's Bay it may seem that Nathaniell Sylvester and his brothers effectively created a shelter from outside influence, such as the overbearing theocracy of Massachusetts Bay or the apostasy of Dutch mercantilism on Manhattan. But in name Shelter Island seems to forsake its true purpose for the Sylvester family. Far from an isolated landmass cutoff from its surroundings by a band of water, the island became instead a nexus for the development of a puritan Atlantic and the center of trade, commerce, and intellectual exchange for fellow believers. The water that surrounded it was much less a division, but far more a point of connection between fellow Atlantic puritans reaching as far as the Chesapeake, the Caribbean, and England. From their small island, Nathaniell, Constant, Giles, and Joseph did their part to advance the puritan Atlantic extending both its temporal reach through trade and commerce and hoping to bring about a millennial empire through the spread of the puritan message and Christ's ultimate return.

## Inheriting the Puritan Atlantic

Within the puritan Atlantic, spiritual matters and economic endeavors cooperated in a larger vision for puritan advancement across the Atlantic. As their bodies moved across the watery expanse the beginnings of an Atlantic puritan empire began to take shape, one that would in turn provide the entry point for the Sylvesters to begin their Atlantic careers. Born into the midst of Simon Schama's embarrassment of riches the Sylvester brothers saw puritan faith woven into inordinate wealth as a blessing from God for the sustenance of the Church.<sup>302</sup> Nathaniell and Constant's parents, Giles and Mary Arnold Sylvester, spent nearly forty years in Amsterdam having married in 1613. Giles had come from England in the early seventeenth century, likely along with fellow members of the Ancient Church who left London after John Greenwood, Henry Barrow, and a number of other congregants had been imprisoned at the Clink.<sup>303</sup> Mary arrived later with her father, a wealthy English merchant. Similar to the Bennetts, Maurice Thomson, and other puritan merchants, the Sylvesters did not adhere to any merchant guild, but belonged to what Robert Brenner has labeled the New Merchant leadership, a cohort of independent merchants, many of whom shared puritan sympathies and wished to distance themselves from competing notions of empire along national lines.<sup>304</sup> Along with fellow congregants, Richard Bennett, John Utie, Christopher Lawne, and other puritans who would end up in Virginia, the Sylvester family began laying the groundwork for an extensive merchant network based both on their ties to the Ancient

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<sup>302</sup> Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (New York: Knopf, 1987).

<sup>304</sup> Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution*, 203.



Church and their Dutch contacts. While Edward Bennett, his nephews Richard and Phillip, the Utie family, Christopher Lawne, and other former congregants traveled to Virginia, the Sylvesters remained in Amsterdam. Although the exorbitant wealth of seventeenth-century Holland had begun to disgust John Robinson, William Bradford, and other Pilgrim fathers, the Sylvesters' longer stay in Amsterdam seems to suggest at least a quiet reconciliation with the obscenity of worldly profit, a comfort that would spur their own quest for a temporal wealth that held a spiritual end.

While the Bennetts, Uties, and other former congregants of the Ancient Church began cultivating and trading tobacco south of the James River in Virginia, the patriarch of the Sylvester family, Giles Sylvester, also entered Atlantic commerce through the lucrative tobacco trade, likely serving as the Dutch factor for his colleagues in Virginia.<sup>305</sup> He chartered two ships in 1615 and 1617 to travel to Condaet in the southern coast of Portugal. Giles quickly shifted his attention in the 1620s and 1630s toward tobacco in Virginia and Barbados having probably been allured by Edward Bennett's work in the tobacco trade. This is evidenced by his inspection of a supply of Virginia tobacco from the Dutch trader Agge Ottens in February 1626, which was likely not his first venture into the tobacco trade, having bought some from the Englishman Mr. Lord in June 1625.<sup>306</sup> It seems that Giles' puritan convictions did not stand in the way of profit for the young merchant. In 1634 Giles had neglected to pay his duties on five barrels of tobacco and avoided the tax by having the cartman deliver the barrels into the cellar of the Sylvester home.<sup>307</sup> For the Sylvesters the pursuit of profit and even tax evasion were

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<sup>305</sup> Mac Griswold, *The Manor: Three Centuries At a Slave Plantation on Long Island* (New York: FSG Books, 2013), 47-48.

<sup>306</sup> Amsterdam Notarial Archive, NA 720/46; NA 720/68.

<sup>307</sup> Amsterdam Notarial Archives, NA 942/1171.

not evils but rather necessary ends to fund their puritan purpose. Giles also acted as a co-owner of a ship carrying cotton from the West Indies, in partnership with his brothers-in-law Nathaniel and Elias Arnold. By 1640 he had sold twenty thousand pounds of Barbados tobacco to an Amsterdam broker and had purchased another ship in Rotterdam.<sup>308</sup> At the same time Edward Bennett was alerting parliament to the dangers of Spanish tobacco importation and fighting for a Virginia Company monopoly on the commodity, Giles Sylvester used the valuable weed as an entry point for Atlantic commerce.<sup>309</sup>

Before long the Sylvester sons entered their father's world of Atlantic commerce. In 1644 Giles' oldest son, Constant, left Amsterdam for La Rochelle, France where he purchased wine, spirits, and linen. He later traveled to the Cape Verde Islands and loaded livestock including cows, donkeys, and horses. This cargo was then sold in the West Indies and the ship was again loaded with tobacco, cotton, indigo, sugar, candied fruits and beaverskin. Rather than traveling back to Amsterdam, probably to avoid paying duties, the ship returned to La Rochelle and then came back to Barbados carrying another shipment of wine and spirits. Once her cargo had been sold the ship sailed across the Atlantic to Guinea in Africa probably as an opportunity to purchase slaves for the Sylvester plantations on Barbados and the later venture on Shelter Island.

Trade between the Sylvester family and contacts in Virginia, based on their Ancient Church ties, remained strong through this period.<sup>310</sup> Nathaniel traveled to Virginia in February 1644 aboard his family's ship the *Seerobbe*. On the southern bank of

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<sup>308</sup> Amsterdam Notarial Archive, NA 141/48v-49v; NA 149/102 v.

<sup>309</sup> Griswold, *The Manor*, 50.

<sup>310</sup> Amsterdam Notarial Archives, 1289/101v-102v, July 20, 1644, the *Seerobbe* has been in Virginia; Amsterdam Notarial Archives 848/903, September 13, 1644, Giles on behalf of his son Nathaniel in collecting payment for tobacco loaded onto the *Seerobbe* in Virginia; NA 1687B/2051, October 25, 1646, tobacco transported on the *Seerobbe* from Virginia does not arrive in the Netherlands;

the James River he probably purchased hogsheads from former Ancient Church congregants venturing down the Nansemond River past Nathaniel Basse's plantation and into Bennett's creek where Richard Bennett, his brother, and Uncle Edward grew tobacco on Bennett's Welcome. A short distance up the James River, past Burwell Bay, he probably also docked on Hog Island to purchase tobacco from John Utie, another former congregant and fellow puritan. But before venturing up the James Nathaniel offloaded his coveted European wares in James City including "thred stockens...new fashioned shoes...pinnes...tufted Holland" as well as "wines and spirits."<sup>311</sup> Having spent the better part of a year in Virginia, Nathaniell reflected upon the less than desirable climate, comparing the air in Virginia to that of Shelter Island. Years later he wrote to Winthrop, Jr. marking the contrast in regions: "The difference of that place and this I haue founde verie great, but generallie it is more unhelthie than N: England. The Lord be prayed, we haue in these parts generallie injoyed our helths, and my hopes are it hath bin so with yu, seeing no news to ye. contrarie."<sup>312</sup> Nathaniell's ties to Virginia through the diaspora of the Ancient Church coupled with the tempting prospects of a burgeoning puritan community south of the James River, in Nansemond, probably gave the young Nathaniell Sylvester some reason to consider settling in the region. A base of mercantile operations in the Chesapeake Bay would have given him proximity to his brother in Barbados while tapping into already existing relationships with powerful individuals in the region that shared his puritan inclinations, many of whom were on the Governor's Council and served within the House of Burgesses. Having sailed from Kecoughtan, Nathaniell was likely introduced to William Claiborne, a friend, fellow public servant, and business

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<sup>311</sup> Griswold, *The Manor*, 60.

<sup>312</sup> Nathaniel Sylvester to John Winthrop, Jr. October 10, 1654. *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Second Series*, Vol. 4, 274.

colleague of Richard Bennett's who also served as the Secretary of State in Virginia. Richard Bennett was known to pass frequently through Kecoughtan trading aboard vessels like the *Susanna* in tobacco and beaverskins and traveling in the same circles as Nathaniell Sylvester.<sup>313</sup> At the time that Nathaniell passed through Kecoughtan plantation and probably made his acquaintance, Claiborne was embroiled in a controversial project quite similar to the Sylvesters' eventual plantation on Shelter Island. Up the Chesapeake Bay Claiborne had found his own island enterprise, a trading post and provisioning plantation on Kent Island that might have set Nathaniell on the path of considering an island venture for himself.

Although a community of fellow puritan merchants may have been tempting for Nathaniell, and he later preferred the weather in New England to that of Virginia, another deterrent from settling in the Chesapeake was likely the conflict beginning to brew between Governor Berkeley and the Virginia puritans. Three puritan ministers from Boston had arrived in October 1642 and the following year, just prior to Sylvester's arrival, Berkeley ordered that they return to New England and began enforcing conformity "that the lirtargie of the church of England for the administration of the word & sacrament, be duely performed according to the book of common prayer." By the end of 1643 the three ministers had returned to New England and by 1645 charges had been brought up against the puritan minister Thomas Harrison for "not reading the booke of Common Prayer and for not administering the sacrament of Baptisme according to the Cannons and order." As a result Berkeley had the doors of the three Norfolk churches nailed shut, firearms confiscated from religious dissenters, and any who met for religious

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<sup>313</sup> PRO HCA 13/242, "Deposition of Richard Bennett of Nansemond, taken at James City June 6, 1640."

observances in their homes arrested.<sup>314</sup> It was during this time that the exiled Reverend Thomas Harrison pursued a plan to transport Virginia puritans to Bermuda to join a group of coreligionists. Sylvester's presence in Virginia from 1644-1645 amidst the contention between Berkeley and his puritan colleagues not only influenced him against settlement in Virginia, but also likely shaped his eventual settlement on Shelter Island. Having witnessed a backlash of royalist sympathies against puritans on the south side of the James River, Sylvester stood poised to protect his own family from a similar fate.

Another reason that Nathaniell could so easily leave fellow puritans behind in Virginia was the lure of a sweeter venture in Barbados. The stability of Virginia's cash crop seemed to be in danger. Edward Bennett continued to pursue a tobacco monopoly while John Ferrar and William Berkeley's encouraged exploratory silk cultivation. Perhaps the sugar economy of Barbados seemed a more promising source of investment. Having experimented in tobacco cultivation during the early years, the Caribbean Island had recently experienced what has been labeled a "sugar boom." While some scholars have identified a decline in the Island's economy prior to the introduction of sugar, Russell Menard argues for a steady increase in economic growth followed by a boom in the adoption of sugar cultivation. The crop diversification that preceded Barbados' sugar economy was lucrative, but did not yield the same profits as sugar cane. Tobacco and indigo plantations had brought slavery to Barbados, while the transition to sugar transformed Barbadian society into a plantation culture that relied on a large population of African American labor supervised by an elite class of largely absentee landholders.

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<sup>314</sup> Hening, *The Statues at Large*, 241, 277; Bruce, *Institutional History of Virginia*, 1: 254-255; Kevin Butterfield, "Puritans and Religious Strife in the Early Chesapeake," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 109, no. 1 (2001): 5-36; Alice Granberry Walter, ed., *Lower Norfolk County, Virginia Court Records Book A and B* (Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1994), 167;

While some have postulated Dutch backing in the switch to sugar cultivation, Menard suggests that English investors provided the majority of capital behind the economic shift, and likely Giles Sylvester contributed to the transition desiring a more steady supply of sugar for his Atlantic trade.<sup>315</sup> The shift to sugar production on Barbados also precipitated a transition whereby the planters became their own merchants, a dual profession which became common among Atlantic puritans.

When Nathaniell anchored in 1646 aboard the *Seerobbe*, he entered upon a well-established family business on the Island. His father had traded in Barbados since 1639 and his older brother Constant had already taken over two of the family plantations and was in the process of acquiring land for a warehouse on the waterfront of Bridgetown harbor. The family's ties stretched into the elite circles of Barbadian planters such as that of James Drax on whose friendship the elder Giles relied. Right after Nathaniell's arrival on the island, perhaps as a result of the younger son's report to his father, Giles Sylvester accused Constant of taking the family plantations into his own possession and overstepping his role as steward of the family operation. Giles requested Henry Drax's assistance in 1647 to "take the conveyances of the said plantacions, appurtenances and immunities and for me in my name and to use to take possession thereof," since Giles believed Constant had "contrarij to my order hath taken the conveyances of the said plantations in his owne arme though for my use benefitt and advantage."<sup>316</sup> Perhaps Giles had been upset by his son's expansion of their holdings in Barbados just prior to Nathaniell's arrival.

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<sup>315</sup> Russell, Menard, *Sweet Negotiations* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006).

<sup>316</sup> Dutch Notarial Archives, NA 849/123, August 22, 1647.

On September 15, 1645, Constant had obtained a grant from John Crispe for “one pcell of land of Fortye foot square lying in the prish of St Michaell neare ye seaside betweene the sd storehouse of Mr James Maxwell & the storehouse of Mr Ralph Lane.” The land had been marked “with a Palmeto stampe & a standing Plmeto tree with a X in each of them for the marked bounds in breadth.” Upon the property stood “one stonehouse therepon erected of Fiftye foote in length & ninteene foot broad with thirty foote of Land more behind the sd store house & free egress & regresse from the sd storehouse to ye seaside.”<sup>317</sup> Likely purchased as a warehouse to store goods of trade with convenient access for loading, Constant’s business on Barbados had clearly reached beyond a small agricultural enterprise. Giles’ effort to check his son’s behavior seemed to not have curbed Constant’s expansion efforts. On August 28 1647 Constant purchased another fifty acres along with four Negroes previously belonging to Capt. Robert Terrell for the sum of three hundred twelve pounds and ten shillings.<sup>318</sup> It was not until April 1654 under the auspicious Commonwealth government and with fellow puritans in the Barbados assembly, that Constant acquired another 140 acres on island commonly known by the name of Peartree Valley. Along with the land Constant received “all manner of houses edifices buildings profits timbers and timber trees waters and watercourses...the cattle servants and slaves and other goods whatsoever which were then upon the said plantation.”<sup>319</sup> His purchase included all “except ye xtian servants who where only for their severall time of services) unto him the said Constant Sylvester.”<sup>320</sup> On March 10, 1653 Constant obtained another “plantation or percell of land contayneing sixty seven

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<sup>317</sup> Barbados Department of Archives, RB3/2, 68.

<sup>318</sup> Barbados Department of Archives, RB3/2, 192.

<sup>319</sup> Barbados Department of Archives, RB3/2, 635.

<sup>320</sup> Ibid.

acres of land scytuate and being in ye parish of St Georges in y said Island and adjoining upon ye lands of ye said Constant Silvester.”<sup>321</sup> Constant’s growing real estate, coupled with the reach of his Atlantic trade placed him in good company on Barbados as he was accepted into an elite circle of wealthy planters on the island.<sup>322</sup>

Along with his responsibilities as a plantation master and his extensive trade with his brothers, Constant also served as an attorney and ensign for his friend and later partner in Shelter Island, Thomas Middleton. Middleton had granted Constant “all my full power and lawfull authority concerning the premises” in order that they might obtain “all such goods wayes means merchandizes duties dues and demands wtsoever as are ue owing and belonging unto me.”<sup>323</sup> With the Sylvester family’s contacts in Virginia and ties to Amsterdam and with Constant’s sugar plantations in Barbados the family had created an extensive trading network even before branching out towards Shelter Island. After Constant’s death, one of his plantations in St. Georges of which he had given the moiety to his daughter Grace Pickering, totaled 230 acres under the names of Constant Upper Plantation and Constant Lower Plantation. The plantation contained “the mansion house Garden Orchard Caring house boyling house and Still house Together also with one entire Wind mill With its appurtenances and all this the houses buildings Erectments or Easements on the two hundred and thirty acres of Land being on or to the Same belonging together with one hundred forty one negro Slaves men Womane.”<sup>324</sup> From Barbados, Constant shipped sugar, rum, molasses, Barbados tar, and palm oil to New

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<sup>321</sup> Barbados Department of Archives, RB3/2, 782-3.

<sup>322</sup> Barbados Department of Archives, RB3/2, 57.

<sup>323</sup> Barbados Department of Archives, RB3/2, 487-88, 501.

<sup>324</sup> Barbados Department of Archives, RB2/32,91.



England.<sup>325</sup> Despite the family's favorable economic position when Nathaniell arrived in the blue waters of Carlisle Bay by way of Virginia, a royalist backlash had begun simmering. While Constant stood poised to expand his trade, having just purchased an additional parcel of land and a warehouse in Bridgetown, political tensions were ready to prevent the success of the family's mercantile ventures.

### The Sylvesters' Island Experiment

Nathaniell's time spent in Virginia had been a formative period, a rekindling of puritan ties and an introduction into the network of commerce he was connected to through fellow coreligionists at the same time that political associations with England became ever more fragile. His likely awareness of Claiborne's then failing plan on Kent Island probably inspired the Sylvesters' decision to establish a similar island provisioning plantation and trading post. He could also learn from Claiborne's own mishaps. This knowledge coupled with the uncertainty of a Parliamentary victory in England, encouraged the Sylvester brothers to hedge their bets outside of Barbados. Although Constant and Nathaniell's puritan sympathies towards the Parliamentary party placed them upon the victorious side of the English conflict, a large Royalist population on the sugar island spurred on a backlash against changing power at the metropole and the Sylvesters found Barbados increasingly hostile territory. While fellow planters like Colonel Henry Walrond conspired to organize a coup of the Barbadian government,

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<sup>325</sup> "Constant Sylvester to John Winthrop, Jr" 277, "Giles Sylvester to John Winthrop, Jr." May 30<sup>th</sup>, 1666, 282, *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*. Series 2, Volume 4. Also see "Giles Sylvester A Letter from Barbados" Griswold, 70.

Nathaniell and Sylvester made plans to venture northward, at least until a more favorable leadership returned to the island. Having witnessed the beginnings of a similar situation in Virginia, Nathaniell and Constant were probably fearful of facing the same fate as their fellow puritans recently exiled to Maryland. Their partner Thomas Middleton, also a Parliamentarian, sought an escape from the Royalist conditions as well. At the same time, their ties to Richard Bennett and acquaintance with William Claiborne most likely provided the brothers some inside knowledge on the conflicts in Virginia and Barbados. Bennett and Claiborne had recently been appointed as commissioners to Cromwell charged with obtaining the surrender of the Royalist governments in Virginia, Maryland, and Barbados. Surely the Sylvester brothers hoped that their friends and fellow congregant would be successful, but if this was not the case their turn northward would provide alternate opportunities.

Bennett and Claiborne traveled to England where they received instructions to sail on the *John* and the *Guinea Frigate* under the direction of Captain Dennis to Virginia and Maryland. They stopped first in Barbados bringing their fleet of fifteen ships to supplement Sir George Ayscue's efforts at forcing the island's surrender. The two were given power to grant clemency to all who cooperated and "use all acts of Hostility" against any who did not. Their offers of freedom from slavery to those willing to betray their masters in obedience to the Parliamentary government must have proven a sufficient threat to the Barbadians living under a black majority. By January 11, 1652 after enduring a two-month blockade, Barbados surrendered to the Commonwealth government and Richard Bennett and Claiborne were sent to Virginia eight days later to force the surrender of the last outstanding royalist colony. After Bennett and Claiborne's

successful efforts in demanding surrender the Sylvesters were once again in welcome company. Fellow Parliamentarians and puritans were in power and their friend Bennett oversaw the establishment of a compliant government. During the interim period, when the brothers were still unsure of their ability to return to Barbados, they purchased, along with other partners, the property on Shelter Island. The Sylvesters' close ties with Bennett likely gave the brothers confidence that surrender would allow them to return to the island under more favorable terms. Bennett's influence also provided them with influential positions within the new government. Both Constant and Middleton received posts on the Barbados Council and Assembly among religious and political allies.<sup>326</sup> While Nathaniell and Sylvester had escaped the conflict unscathed, the fickle nature of the English political system seemed to only throw the brothers deeper into reliance upon fellow puritan allies.

Nestled between two fingers of eastern Long Island, Shelter Island lay within the quiet waters of Gardiner's Bay, protected from the open Atlantic directly eastward. The watery borderland that surrounded the small island seemed to mirror a less visible buffer protecting its inhabitants yet placing them among familiar neighbors. Long Island bordered New Amsterdam to the west and the New Haven northward across the quiet Long Island Sound. For the Sylvester brothers, the small island sheltered within an inlet was uniquely positioned between likeminded puritan sympathizers on its north and fellow Dutch settlers to the west with much needed access to shipping. With two successful sugar plantations on Barbados, Constant and Nathaniell Sylvester along with their original partners Thomas Middleton and Thomas Rouse meant for Shelter Island to be an

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<sup>326</sup> Randall, *A Puritan Colony in Maryland*, 17, 39, 33-35. Also see "Surrender of Virginia to the Parliamentary Commissioners, March, 1651-2 an excerpt from the British Museum Library. E 665. 3. Page, 1604-1607" *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*. Vol. 11, no. 1 (July 1903): 32-41.

outpost from which they could raise livestock and grow foodstuffs later shipped to the Caribbean. Just as Claiborne had seen his Kent Island as a trading post that worked alongside his tidewater plantations, the Sylvester brothers hoped that Shelter Island might be an auxiliary plantation that would work in partnership with Constant's plantations in Barbados as well as the family's ties to the Netherlands, England, and the Chesapeake. What began as a small trading venture, positioned for intra-business exchange, eventually developed into a much larger enterprise. Through contacts in New England, Amsterdam, and the Caribbean the Sylvester brothers created a successful exchange built on their faith-based networks that spanned the Atlantic.

The Sylvesters set themselves up to profit from the impending Commonwealth, while also preparing for a likely return to the Stuart monarchy. Thomas Middleton, Thomas Rouse and Constant and Nathaniell Sylvester purchased Shelter Island in 1651 from Stephen Goodyear paying "sixteen hundred pounds of good merchantable muscovado sugar."<sup>327</sup> By 1652 when the four business partners signed their "Articles of Agreement" it was clear that Constant, Rouse, and Middleton would be able to return to Barbados, at least for the time being, therefore, Shelter Island would operate like a corollary rather than an independent plantation. The pastures, orchards, gardens, estuaries, and mill were all to be held in common among the partners and no livestock was to be slaughtered for the first six years except what was necessary for household consumption or if an animal was diseased. In order to live on the island Nathaniell was permitted "to wit a house with Six or Seven convenient Roomes" and while the contract

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<sup>327</sup> Hayes, *Slavery before Race*, 37.

allowed him to trade outside of the partnership the funds to support that trade were to come out of his private account.<sup>328</sup>

While Constant was increasing landholdings on Barbados, Nathaniell sought to establish a hedge around Shelter Island by buying up the surrounding land. On January 8, 1665 he purchased “one Neck of Land called horseneck, now known as Lloyd’s neck, for five hundred pounds sterling from John Richbell.<sup>329</sup> That particular piece of land had passed from the Manhasset Indians through their sachem Wyandanch to Samuell Mayo in September 1654, a transaction for which Nathaniell had served as a witness.<sup>330</sup>

Nathaniell purchased the property on the northern shore of Long Island for his daughter Grizzell in anticipation of her marriage to Latimer Sampson. Sampson’s untimely death during the engagement allowed Horseneck to pass back to Nathaniell’s daughter Grizzell and her husband James Lloyd.<sup>331</sup> The brothers had initially purchased Shelter Island in 1652 under the Commonwealth government but also obtained a charter from the Duke of York following the Restoration. Under Richard Nicolls’ terms the Island would remain independent from surrounding towns and neighboring colonies. With the help of their friend Bennett, Constant Sylvester was able to return to Barbados while Nathaniell set about establishing the small island as an outpost for the family’s trading networks and an entry point into the northern reaches of the puritan Atlantic.

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<sup>328</sup> Shelter Island Historical Society, Middleton et al. “Articles of Agreement” 1652.

<sup>329</sup> Sylvester Manor Archive, Fales Library NYU, Box 140, Folder 5, Agreement Between John Richbell and Nathaniell Sylvester re Horse Heck, January 8, 1664.

<sup>330</sup> Sylvester Manor Archive, Fales Library NYU, Box 140, folder 2. Deed of Sale-Horseneck, with American Indian Signatures. September 20, 1654.

<sup>331</sup> Sylvester Manor Archive, Fales Library NYU, Box 140, Folder 7 “Agreement Between Nathaniell Sylvester and Latimer Sampton re Horse Neck. October 18, 1666”; Sylvester Manor Archive, Fales Library NYU, Box 140, folder 8. Indenture-John and Ann Richbell to Nathaniell Sylvester, Thomas Hart and Latimer Sampson for Horseneck. November 17, 1666”; Sylvester Manor Archive, Fales Library NYU, Box 140, Folder 9, “Amendments to Bill of Sale of John Richbell to Thomas Hart and Latimer Sampson re Horse Neck” 1666.

After running aground in Narragansett Bay and losing nearly all of their possessions, Nathaniell and his new wife arrived on the island in 1652. They had made a stop in Barbados, probably mixing pleasure with business but upon his return to Shelter Island Nathaniell quickly took advantage of the contacts he had established over the previous years and began launching his trading ventures. In March 1654 Nathaniell wrote to John Winthrop, Jr. concerned about a number of missing “sawed pipe-staves.”<sup>332</sup> The staves were needed to pack and ship salt and English goods, along with another 300 tons of unnamed commodities.<sup>333</sup> By July the pipe-staves still had not arrived and Nathaniell was growing anxious. Apart from Nathaniell and Giles’ procurement of pipe staves and salt, Constant also exported sugar, tar, and palm oil.<sup>334</sup> The Sylvester brothers had wasted little time in transforming the former Manhansett territory into a trading post and provisioning plantation.

Even in its early years, the Shelter Island enterprise seemed to mirror another Atlantic puritan venture, a small island nestled between the Eastern Shore and the mainland coast in the Chesapeake Bay, a project that remained under the direction of their acquaintance William Claiborne. The Kent Island venture had begun in 1627 when the young Secretary of State, William Claiborne, received permission from Governor George Yeardley to set out in a “Sahllop for discoverie of the Bottome of the Bay.” Yeardley gave “full power & authority unto him the said William Clayborne to goe & make...voyage & saile into any of the ...ports & having within the said ay of Chesapiake or into any pt. or parts of this Colonie & there to trade & trust noth the Indians for furr

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<sup>332</sup> Nathaniell Sylvester to John Winthrop, Jr. March 15, 1652. *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Second Series*, Vol. 4, 271.

<sup>333</sup> *Ibid*, 272.

<sup>334</sup> Constant Sylvester to John Winthrop, Jr. April 6, 1659. *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Second Series*, Volume 4, 277.

skins & ... any other commodities of what nature or qualities soe in they be.”<sup>335</sup> Shortly after Claiborne set about on a second expedition under Governor Harvey’s direction to establish connections with the Dutch for “increase of trade & commerce to obtaine this my Comission to sayle & traffique into ye adjoyneing Plantations of the Duch seated upon this Territory of America.”<sup>336</sup> Not only was this advantageous for the colony as a whole, but it allowed Claiborne to make contacts with Dutch merchants that would be key to his trading post, some of which may have included the Sylvester family. Having discovered the island and identified as a future site of settlement Claiborne obtained a charter from King Charles giving him license to “trade in corn, furs, and any other commodities with their ships in those parts of America for which a patent has not already been granted to others.” Charles further ordered that “Everyone is commended, specially Sir John Harvey Governor of Virginia and the rest of the Council of Virginia, to support this trade.”<sup>337</sup> Under a partnership with William Cloberry and Maurice Thomson Claiborne strategically managed the island as a trading post with the local Susquehanna. The island doubled as a source of raw materials and a place to raise livestock later shipped throughout the colonies. Claiborne and his colleagues “felled the best timber trees for the making of “pipe staves” valued at 1000 pounds.<sup>338</sup> Additionally, they raised cattle on the island and pursued a lucrative trade in beaver pelts from the neighboring Susquehanna.<sup>339</sup>

Despite Claiborne’s early successes, trouble with his partnership and the discovery that Cloberry had never obtained the correct charter to stand up against Lord

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<sup>335</sup> PRO CO/1/39/113 “By the Governor and Captaine general of Virginia”

<sup>336</sup> PRO CO 1/39/118 “By the Governor and Captaine Generall of Virginia”

<sup>337</sup> PRO CO 1/39/115

<sup>338</sup> PRO CO 1/39/126-127.

<sup>339</sup> PRO HCA 13/243/17 Part I “Libel of William Claiborne”

Baltimore's competing claims for the island led to his venture's ultimate demise. While Claiborne's efforts had come to a loss, the Sylvester's hoped to profit from his example. Similarly, they purchased a small island strategically located between the Manhasset, Dutch shipping and puritans in New Haven. Initiating trade with the Manhasset, the Sylvesters established Shelter Island as a source of raw materials much like Kent Island's original intent. Where Claiborne had failed to obtain the proper charter for Kent Island, the Sylvester brothers and Middleton were careful to pursue the appropriate measures obtaining not only a grant from Goodyear, but also records which recorded the lawful purchase of Indian lands through the Sachem Wyandoch. Following the Restoration, the brothers also received a charter for the island from the Duke of York making their title to the island defensible against competing claims. While a direct connection between the two island projects is unclear, it seems likely that when the Sylvesters had crossed paths with Claiborne, both in Virginia and Barbados, the puritan colleague had provided the brothers with at least an inspiration, if not direction, for their Shelter Island project. Not only did the growing network of Atlantic puritans provide a wealth of valuable mercantile and political contacts to the Sylvester brothers, but similar efforts likely also served as an example and a model for their own colonial project.

By the time of Nathaniell's death, the island once known as Manhansack Ahaquashuwamock had developed into the center for commerce that Claiborne had once hoped to establish on Kent Island. At that time the Sylvesters managed a livestock operation including horses, some of which had been transported from Southampton to Shelter Island as early as 1656.<sup>340</sup> In a 1681 inventory there were forty horses on the

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<sup>340</sup> Charles J. Hoadly, *Records of the Colony or Jurisdiction of New Haven, from May, 1653* (Hartford, 1858), 190-194.



Island, twenty owned in partnership and the other twenty owned outright.<sup>341</sup> Sylvester also raised and traded “Mares, Cattle, sheep” and “hogs” while managing a millhouse in partnership with Constant on the island.<sup>342</sup> The property also boasted an extensive garden, orchards, a salt house and a cider mill which had been built by Nathaniell, as well as a number of slaves.<sup>343</sup> The brothers’ attempt to create a provisioning plantation in the northern reaches of the Atlantic had developed into a veritable trading post of its own, perhaps more successful than Constant’s sugar holdings on Barbados. At the time of Nathaniell’s death, his brother Constant was considerably indebted to Nathaniell, although the cause of these debts is not clear. Where Kent Island had failed, the Sylvesters’ Shelter Island had become a center of trade connecting the Caribbean with the northern Atlantic and serving as a key spoke in the puritan Atlantic.

### A More Perfect Union

The key to Sylvester success was not merely tapping into an existing puritan network that rose from the ashes of the Ancient Church, but also the ability to expand the reach of that network through their own efforts, often through the tool of marriage. Although contacts could be established through fellow businessmen, nothing seemed quite as successful for Atlantic puritan merchants as the marital bond. While their Chesapeake colleagues spread the puritan seed through Virginia’s available population of tidewater widows, Nathaniell and Constant knew well that a strategic marriage could signal the launching of their mercantile careers. Richard Bennett’s children married into

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<sup>341</sup> Shelter Island Historical Society, Budd et al. 1680, Hayes, 42.

<sup>342</sup> Will of Nathaniel Sylvester, Shelter Island Historical Society.

<sup>343</sup> Ibid.

the Scarborough, Bland, and Calvert families extending the reach of the puritan networks and entering the family into elite tidewater circles. At the same time the Sylvester brothers pursued similarly strategic unions. Nathaniell, though younger, married first and while he professed it to be a happy union it also gave him entry into the coveted puritan networks of New England. He wrote to John Winthrop, Jr. while still a newlywed saying “it hath pleased God to change my conditon. By marriage, in wch., prayesd be His name, I finde my selfe very happie, and I hope in God wee may be a comfort unto each other.”<sup>344</sup> Though Grizzell Brinley’s father had been a royalist working in the service of the king as the royal exchequer, she likely saw in Nathaniell an opportunity to cross over into more favorable circumstances, just as her sister had done in marrying William Coddington.<sup>345</sup> As the tides began to turn towards the Parliamentarians her father’s position, and that of his children, became more precarious. He had lost his job in 1644 and his Royalist sensibilities endangered his childrens’ prospects in England. Grizzell’s mother, Anne, reached out to a curious contact by the name of John Bland, the brother-in-law of Richard Bennett’s daughter Ann, who supposedly lent the family 400 pounds which would be given to the Brinley children if anything was to happen to Thomas and Anne. John Bland’s connections in Spain and his previous relationship to the Ancient church through the Bennett family allowed him to invest the Brinleys’ money there which yielded the family some returns on their security.<sup>346</sup> The Brinleys’ contact with Bland demonstrates that despite Thomas Brinley’s royalist employemtn the family did not travel too far from puritan circles. Furthermore, John Bland likely knew of the

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<sup>344</sup> Nathaniell Sylvester to John Winthrop, Jr. August 8, 1653, *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Second Series*, Volume 4, 271.

<sup>345</sup> Griswold, *The Manor*, 101.

<sup>346</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.

Sylvester family if he had not met them directly. Two of Bland's brothers, Theodoric and Edward, lived in Virginia and managed a tobacco plantation while John traded throughout the Atlantic and even spent some time as an official in Tangier. Another brother also managed the family's trade in Spain. Their arrangement was very similar to that of the Sylvester family though the brothers' posts were in different locales.

Theodoric had recently married one of Richard Bennett's daughters, Anna Bennett Bland, directly linking the Bland family to the network of Ancient Church migrants to which the Sylvesters belonged.

Thomas Brinley's mutability, his ease in shifting from a royalist exchequer to the father-in-law of two prominent colonial Parliamentarians expresses an early willingness to exchange the instability of political and national allegiances for the certainty of a network based on relationships and a bond founded on the trust of a shared faith. While Brinley's past employ seemed to exclude entrance into the puritan Atlantic, the encouragement and acceptance of his daughters' marriages perhaps alludes not to a sudden change of religio-political sentiments but instead to an exchange of institutional allegiances for a membership within a community of individuals drawn together by a common thread. For the Brinleys loyalty to the Royalist faction had only betrayed their constancy. The curious example of Thomas Brinley's movement to the puritan cause likely demonstrated to his daughters the fragility of English government and a need to place one's loyalties outside of the fickle political center. For the Brinleys, entrance into the puritan Atlantic was an escape from dangerous political allegiances and perhaps the rejection of a Royalism which had only left the family destitute and vulnerable. While marriage into the puritan Atlantic on the brink of Royalist defeat seems more like a

strategic political move than a spiritual decision, both Grizzell and her sister Anne's acceptance of their new membership seems to suggest a deeper resonance. For their family their marriages may have been motivated by political necessity and financial need, but for Grizzell and Anne the unions also provided entrance into a vibrant community of puritan believers—a relational, faith based community that seemed to offer more hope and constancy than the Royalism they had abandoned.

With Royalists' waning power, the Brinleys were quick to marry their daughters' off to those positioned on the upswing of the conflict. On a trip to England for the purpose of securing another charter for Rhode Island, William Coddington met and married Grizzell's elder sister Anne in 1650. The next year Coddington took both his new bride and her younger sister back with him to Rhode Island. Because of her connections to Coddington and his ties to the puritan networks of New England, Grizzell likely seemed a very wise choice for Nathaniell Sylvester.<sup>347</sup> Having just completed the purchase of Shelter Island along with his brother and partners, Sylvester now sought entry into a tightly guarded network of puritan merchants and entrepreneurs in the Northern Atlantic. Coddington's separate puritan tendencies, having left the Massachusetts Bay because of spiritual differences, likely aligned with Sylvester's own separate puritan upbringing in the Ancient Church. Through Coddington Nathaniel was given access to none other but the Winthrop family, specifically John Winthrop, Jr., who settled only a short distance from Nathaniell on Fishers Island. With his new connections to Coddington, Winthrop, and his island neighbor Lion Gardiner, Nathaniell Sylvester set about expanding his puritan network as he began to carve a place for himself and his new wife on Shelter Island.

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<sup>347</sup> Griswold, *The Manor*, 120-122.

Constant's marriage to the daughter of a wealthy Barbadian planter, Grace Walrond, was also regionally strategic. Grace's father, Colonel Humphrey Walrond owned a plantation near the sea where Richard Ligon boasted he was "the best seated for a Feast, of any I know: I must say this, that though he be wanting in the first Course, which is Beef; yet, it will be plentifully supplied in the last, which is Fish; and that the other wants."<sup>348</sup> This was probably because Walrond owned what Ligon deemed to be the only river on the island where "a mixed water, of fresh and salt: at the time of the tide comes in, it brings with it some fishes.. as big as Salmons, which have been overgrown with fat, as you have seen Porpoises; but extremely sweet and firm."<sup>349</sup> Because his plantation was on the sea Ligon argued:

Walrond has the advantage of all the Planters in the Island; for, having a Plantation near the Sea, he hath of his own a Seine to catch fish withal, which his own servants and slaves put out to Sea, and twice or thrice a week, bring home all sorts of such small and great fishes, as are near the shore; amongst which, some are very large, and excellently well tasted. For, he being a Gentleman, that had been bred with much freedom, liberty and plenty, in England, could not set his mind so earnestly upon his profit, as to forget his accustomed lawful pleasures, but would have his Table well furnished, with all sorts of good meat the Land and sea afforded; and as freely bid his friends welcome it.<sup>350</sup>

The Walronds commonly took in fish such as snappers, both red and gray, cavallos, mackerels, mullets, and cony-fish. In addition to the natural wealth of his property, Walrond also owned a number of slaves and Ligon was particularly taken by Walrond's apparent kindness to his servants "for , he got such love of his servants, as they thought all too little they could do for him; and the love of the servants there, is of much

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<sup>348</sup> Richard Ligon, *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbados*, edited by Karen Ordahl Kupperman (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 2011), 88.

<sup>349</sup> Ligon, 74.

<sup>350</sup> Ligon, 83-84. Humphrey Walrond was also a friend to Ligon and nursed him back to health. Ligon also wrote of Walrond: "And I, as the poorest of his friends, in a lingering sickness, and near death, found such a charity with him, as I shall never forget to pay my thanks for, to the last hour of my life; and I shall account it as a great happiness, (if ever it fall in the compass of my power) to be serviceable to him or his, as anything that can befall me in the world.

concernment to the Masters.”<sup>351</sup> Walrond was not hesitant to exert his authority over the slaves. Having lost three or four of his negroes to suicide he “caused one of their heads to be cut off, and set upon a pole a dozen foot high; and having done that, caused all his Negroes to come forth, and march round about this head, and bid them look on it, whether this were not the head of such a one that hanged himself.”<sup>352</sup> For Constant, marriage to Henry Walrond’s daughter cemented his position within the elite circles of Barbadian plantation owners. Through his father’s friendship with Drax, Constant was deemed a legitimate planter, but his marriage to Grace likely gave him full access to the wealth of contacts at his fingertips. Walrond’s extensive plantations probably helped to fill the Sylvesters ships across the Atlantic, while their access to fishing on the island likely proved an invaluable export and source of sustenance.

Much like the Brinley family, Humphrey Walrond was a Royalist who probably encouraged his daughter to accept more promising circumstances in her husband’s Parliamentary arms.<sup>353</sup> While Constant was making preparations to leave the island, Humphrey Walrond organized a “coup” on April 29 pushing Governor Bell to proclaim Charles II as the monarch on May 3, 1650.<sup>354</sup> When the coup ultimately failed and the island surrendered to Cromwell under Richard Bennett and William Claiborne, Walrond likely saw Constant as a convenient escape for his young daughter Grace. Walrond’s ardent loyalty to the crown seemed at least temporarily misplaced during the Commonwealth, and entry into puritan circles through Constant Sylvester provided an opportunity to escape fickle political alliances. For both Nathaniell and Constant

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<sup>351</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>352</sup> Ibid., 102.

<sup>353</sup> “Introduction” Richard Ligon. *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbados*, edited by Karen Ordahl Kupperman (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 2011), 4-5.

<sup>354</sup> Ibid, 29.

Sylvester and their wives, marriage became a tool to expand puritan networks across political lines. While the brothers' nonconformist views placed them within the Parliamentary camp, their separate-puritan leanings allowed them to transcend purely political allegiances seeking aid instead from puritan allies across the Atlantic. For Henry Walrond and Thomas Brinley access to a puritan network, separate from the dangers of direct political association, seemed attractive, at least for a time, which allowed the Sylvester brothers to extend their reach into circles that would have remained inaccessible to a purely political Parliamentarian.

#### Dabbling in Puritan Alchemy

One of the most valuable gifts that Grizzell Brinley gave her husband in marriage was a connection to the son of John Winthrop through her brother-in-law William Coddington. As a fellow puritan ally, a trading partner, and a political advocate and correspondent, John Winthrop, Jr. developed a close relationship with all of the Sylvester brothers. His proximity to Nathaniell at Fisher's Island, his shared puritan sympathies tempered by a more cosmopolitan outlook than those in Massachusetts Bay, and his time spent in Amsterdam seemed to have allowed him to develop a certain affinity for the Sylvester family. While the elder Winthrop was known for his stringent reliance to the puritan code, John Winthrop, Jr.'s faith was softened by an interest in science, an entrepreneurial vein and a mere geographical distance from his father's colony on Massachusetts Bay. These differences likely drew Winthrop, Jr. to his Long Island

neighbor whose separate puritan leanings and pursuit of mercantile profit did not seem contradictory to their shared understanding of the puritan way.

While advantageous on many levels to Nathaniell and his brothers, the relationship with Winthrop also introduced another curious element. As a practicing alchemist and a member of a transatlantic scientific community, Winthrop's interest in what Walter Woodward has labeled Christian alchemy seemed to rub off on the Sylvester brothers. According to Woodward, while many alchemists sought profit for its own sake "A Christian researcher's profits could, with God's blessing, be considerable, even huge, but whatever control of nature the alchemist gained from his practice was to be employed first and foremost in an effort to perform Christian service to society and further the positive and godly reformation of the world."<sup>355</sup> The younger Winthrop's scientific pursuit for the betterment of those around him and the encouragement of Christ's return aligned well with the Sylvester's own pursuit of mercantile success to achieve a broader puritan influence throughout the Atlantic. Not only did Winthrop's approach to alchemical science justify a measure of profit, but it necessitated it, as profits funded a postmillennial quest for the betterment of life on earth and thus brought nearer Christ's return.<sup>356</sup> The practice of alchemy was not foreign to the Sylvesters even in their puritan circles. Richard Boyle, the patron of Daniel Gookin, a fellow Atlantic puritan residing in Cambridge, was deeply involved in alchemical science of the period. Because Winthrop's alchemy was based on a quest for primordial wisdom and recapturing knowledge that had been lost in Adam's fall, it mirrored the puritan quest at the center of the Sylvesters'

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<sup>355</sup> Woodward, *Prospero's America*, 21.

<sup>356</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.



project. The puritans' theological desire to return to an uncorrupted original and perfect state was much like Winthrop's quest for the lost knowledge in the world around him.<sup>357</sup>

Thus Winthrop and the Sylvesters shared a desire for economic profit as a means to bring about their millennial faith. The Sylvesters seemed to short-circuit their friend's three-pronged approach with alchemical science at the center, emphasizing instead a providential mercantilism where their pursuit of profit funded the puritan cause. Both the Sylvesters and the younger Winthrop, while deeply entrenched in the science and economic theory of their day, while remaining committed to divine guidance. Because Scripture did not speak to the specificities of their scientific interests or involvement in trade, everyday events and occurrences could be used to interpret God's favor. Whether it was material profit in the case of the Sylvesters, or scientific discovery in Winthrop's framework, each saw temporal reward as evidence of divine favor and maintained these subtle promptings of the spirit as the guidance of their pursuits.

Winthrop had come to America knowing that New England offered him access to alchemical resources unavailable in the old world. Although Winthrop belonged to scientific circles throughout the Atlantic and Europe his exchange of theoretical knowledge still lacked access to a fresh source of study and a network of individuals willing to cooperate in providing access to those materials. The abundance of untapped nature coupled with the American climate fueled Winthrop's many scientific ventures. At the same time the Sylvesters expanded his laboratory of ideas offering him access to regions outside of his immediate reach allowing Winthrop to study the Chesapeake and the Caribbean from the comfort of Fisher's Island. Consequently, while none of the Sylvester brothers seemed to fully embrace an alchemical interest of their own, they were

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<sup>357</sup> Ibid., 40.

pleased to entertain Winthrop's experimental requests and also respected him as an authority on alchemical medicine. Within the favor economy of the puritan Atlantic, Nathaniell and his brothers understood that their dalliances in Winthrop's scientific study offered them a credit, one which could be used to access the Winthrop family's extensive networks and tap into the coveted northern stretches of the puritan Atlantic. While the Sylvester brothers did not enter upon Winthrop's scientific theorizing, their role as merchants did provide them access to minerals outside of Winthrop's immediate purview. Thus, the brothers often served as assistants in procuring necessary materials, feeding Winthrop's alchemical study and inserting themselves deeper into Winthrop's circle of trust.

Much of the Sylvesters' cooperation and support came through their ability to explore climates and environments outside of Winthrop's immediate reach. Because of their connections to Barbados, Winthrop often called upon Constant and Giles Sylvester, both residing on Barbados for a time, to investigate possible natural resources on the Island. Winthrop's mining projects in Massachusetts and Connecticut likely spurred his desire to acquire additional minerals unavailable in New England. Giles Sylvesters' response to the younger Winthrop suggests that he had requested a particular stone presumed native to Barbados. Giles wrote Winthrop on March 29, 1658, having failed to locate the requested mineral, he explained, "since my arivall here have inquired conserninge the stone which is sawed here and find them altogether unfit for thy use; they will not beare the fire of our furnaces, much les a blast. Neither is there any stone in this contrey as I cann here of, but such as will burne to lime." Winthrop was probably interested in practical use of the stone as a source of energy as well as its ability to "burn

to lime.” In burning to lime the stone was likely sought after as a source of energy and a renewable source of lime, needed for preserving. Giles explained, “The stone we use for our furnises comes from England. I could send thee a barrel of this contry marl, but at present there is no shipinge belongine to our parts.”<sup>358</sup> Despite his failure to obtain the mineral for Winthrop, Giles understood his colleague’s scientific pursuits within a providential framework. Giles exhorted his fellow puritan, “Which if thou abideth faithfull to, and steadfast towards God and his truth, this knowe: that thy reward is sure, and thy peace in doinge can no man take away.” Winthrop’s faithful service, if not recognized on earth would reap a heavenly reward and “the crowne which is laid up in store for us shall be received. So, in the name and power of the Lord God, my deer frind, goe on as thou hath begune, that thou may finish thy testimony in faithfulness, that so thou maist retourne with the Ransomed One, and with the songs of Sion and everylasting rejoycinge.”<sup>359</sup> While Giles and his brothers seemed primarily focused on trade, it was in fact only an axillary of their primary spiritual focus as Giles described, “whatever I doe, or undertake, it is with this promise: to stand singall to my God and to doe His will in all things.”<sup>360</sup> Intertwined with Winthrop’s alchemical interests and the Sylvesters’ mercantile pursuits was the central pursuit of providential guidance, ordering their steps in the temporal world.

Outside of Giles’ communication with the younger Winthrop, Constant also procured materials for his alchemical study. On April 6, 1659 he wrote Winthrop sending him “such sugars as my plantation doth yield, & a little of or Barbados tarr, as they call it,

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<sup>358</sup> Giles Sylvester to John Winthrop, Jr. March 29, 1658. *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Second Series*, Volume 4, 276.

<sup>359</sup> Ibid.

<sup>360</sup> Ibid.

& some palm oile, wch is brought us hither from Ginny.”<sup>361</sup> While the sugar was likely a gift, the palm oil and tar were probably related to Winthrop’s interest in natural resources and study of energy. Constant closed the letter with a regret that “I have not els at present” revealing his desire to send Winthrop available commodities at his disposal.

While Nathaniell Sylvester’s proximity to Winthrop made him less valuable as a source of rare materials, he did depend on his friend as a source of medical knowledge, especially when it came to the care of his young child. On the 6<sup>th</sup> of April 1655 he wrote to Winthrop concerned about the “distemper of my youngest child, wch. Is taken with an extream stoppage in ye nose, in so much as that it is not able to fetch its breth through ye nostrils, wch dooth disenable ye poore infant to suck, and is not able to eate without great payne, wch causes the child to falle away exceedingly.” Distraught by the child’s sickness, Nathaniell turned immediately to his friend, a regional expert on the use of alchemical medicine, “beinge ignorant in giving of it any thing wch may cause comfort unto ye child I have made bould humbly to crave your advise, with such means as yu in your discretion may think most fitting.”<sup>362</sup> Nathaniell’s desperate request for advice reveals not only a trusting friendship, but a deeper respect of Winthrop’s medicinal alchemy. Though Winthrop was unable to save the young child who had been born healthy that had developed sore eyes and congestion only three days into life, the correspondence not only reveals the anguish of a helpless father, but also a faith in his friend as a source of reliable knowledge in the field of medicine. Nathaniell’s trust in Winthrop’s practice was not unique as many New Englanders including John Davenport

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<sup>361</sup> Constant Sylvester to John Winthrop, Jr. April 6, 1659. *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Second Series*, Volume 4, 277.

<sup>362</sup> Nathaniell Sylvester to John Winthrop, Jr. April 6, 1655. *The Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Second Series*, Volume 4, 275.

sought Winthrop's medical advice. The relationship between the Sylvesters and John Winthrop, Jr. exemplifies the relational core of the puritan Atlantic, as fellow believers called upon those within their circle of shared faith as purveyors of knowledge, experts, and friends. Like the Sylvesters, Winthrop, Jr. relied upon his membership in the puritan Atlantic to pursue temporal goals with a clear spiritual end. His scientific study for the betterment of society and the eventual arrival of the millennium depended upon a network of likeminded believers who acted upon their faith beyond the theological arena.

As faith, family, and commerce overlapped in the Sylvesters' expanding networks, the providential guidance and millennial hope held in common became an important element of their relationship with John Winthrop, Jr. In the favor economy of the puritan Atlantic the Sylvester brothers exchanged their cooperation in Winthrop's alchemical experiments for access to the younger Winthrop's puritan contacts and his New England industrial enterprise. Playing upon their mutual understanding and respect of the puritan faith, the brothers called upon their New England neighbor in the interest of both legal and business trouble. By September of 1660 conflict had arisen regarding the Sylvesters' right to ownership of Shelter Island and Joshua Sylvester wrote to the family friend John Winthrop, Jr. regarding the matter and hoping that he, as one of the commissioners, would stand by the Sylvester interest as "some persons are active to molest our right in this island...and their shamlesnes is such that theye would have the Comissioners to joyne with them in their wicked interprises." Rather than a legal appeal explaining the rightful ownership his brothers Nathaniell and Sylvester held on the island, Joshua instead appealed to a shared spiritual conviction "the Lord, who abhors the counsell and inttent of the wicked foxe, will preserve you all, and give you wisdom to act

nothing but what may tend to His glory, the fruits of which will produce to you a peace and honour.”<sup>363</sup> Joshua’s appeal was a providential plea. As the hotter sort of providentialists, Winthrop and the Sylvesters understood the supernatural consequences of temporal decisions, and the earthly blessings for their spiritual obedience. As such, Joshua spoke of the matter with confidence. Winthrop’s assistance would secure for himself and his community “the fruits of which will produce you a peace and honour” while his denial of the matter would condone the actions of a wicked fox and reap a similar reward.

Giles and Nathaniell also appealed to Winthrop using a similar providential language. For the Sylvester brothers, in the puritan Atlantic economic enterprise overlapped with spiritual duty allowing Giles and Joshua to call upon their friend’s assistance as an act of obedience to God. Within the puritan Atlantic where ties of kinship, political allies, and business partnerships were viewed in unison with the larger puritan purpose, their behavior was likely the norm. If their daily business pursuits held a more heavenly goal of expanding the stretch of puritan influence throughout the Atlantic and thus bringing nearer Christ’s millennial reign, the mundane of everyday business transactions and legal disputes surely did not escape the religious purview. Rather faith, profit, and politics were braided together in a neat cord that strung the Sylvesters together with their puritan allies across the Atlantic. Because the brothers would have likely received similar appeals from the likes of Bennett or Coddington, they did not hesitate to color a legal dispute in the language of spiritual obedience, because for them a matter of business was surely an issue of eternal significance.

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<sup>363</sup> Joshua Sylvester to John Winthrop, Jr., September 7, 1660, *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Series 2, Volume 4, 278.*

The Sylvesters and Winthrop also interpreted European and Atlantic political conflicts through their religious perspective. In May of 1666 Giles wrote from Madera of “ye state of or Nation in England, wch is exceeding deplorable and said. Ye last sommer there dyed upward of 250,000 of the Plage, and abt. 20,000 for want of bread.” Giles continued, “As to ye war, there is no licklyhood of peace, and trade we have none.” The prospects for improvement in England did not seem favorable either, “It is thought that ye sickness will be as hot this sommer as it was ye last, and I feare a great famin will accompany it.” The prices were rising, as “Hay was sould at L5 10s p load, and we have had noe rainse all this winter nor ye spring.” At the end of his description of England’s hopeless state, Giles turned to a discussion of religious tensions explaining, “persecution is as much as ever it was.” Sylvester’s reference was not lost on Winthrop, both familiar with the persecution largely focused on post-reformation sectarians. In ending a discussing of England’s state with a reference to persecution Giles seemed to imply that the troubles, famine, disease, and war were likely a providential consequence of continued religious upheaval and persecution. He closed with an appeal, “What there may be, God knows. Ye Lord be marcyfull to poor England!”<sup>364</sup> For Giles, as for his friend Winthrop, the financial, political, and social issues faced by England were likely tied to her spiritual state.

From their early days in Amsterdam to their ultimate triangulation of efforts on Barbados and Shelter Island and in the Netherlands, the Sylvester family gradually came to understand the Atlantic through their puritan experience. Their entry into Atlantic trade developed out of their ties to the Ancient Church, while their growth in commerce and

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<sup>364</sup> Giles Sylvester to John Winthrop, Jr. May 30, 1666 *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, Series 2, Volume 4.*

marriage was also linked to their puritan convictions. Although the brothers remained tied to their Dutch past, English origins, and commercial endeavors these layered identities were all filtered through a larger lens of providence providing a central impetus and a spiritual anchor for their pursuits. Entering Atlantic commerce under the shadow of the English Civil War, negotiating the shifting alliances of the Commonwealth period, and grappling with the reversal of the Restoration, Nathaniell, Constant, and their brothers seemed to shift away from a central reliance upon English political parties or local colonial governments. In their place the remnant of the Ancient Church became the nucleus of the Sylvesters' puritan Atlantic empire. Their experiences in Atlantic commerce, politics, and faith were shaped by their puritan contacts dispersed throughout the colonies. Former members of the Ancient Church and fellow Atlantic puritans influenced Nathaniell's entry into Virginia tobacco markets and provided a model and relevant political knowledge in their decision to purchase Shelter Island and establish a provisioning plantation. Constant's return to Barbados under the direction of Bennett and Claiborne's Parliamentary commission and the family's ever expanding tentacles of trade relied intimately upon relationships at the core of the puritan Atlantic. Furthermore, Constant and Nathaniell's marriages and their friendship with John Winthrop, Jr. came both as a product of their association with Atlantic puritans while also providing an opportunity for them to stretch the very reach of their puritan ties. Not only did puritan relationships shape the Sylvesters' Atlantic experience, but also their merchant interests were filtered through a spiritual lens. A primary devotion to God colored their pursuit of trade and a dependence upon providential guidance as well as their political interpretations. Upon finding out about the imminent war between England and Holland,



Giles Sylvester wrote to John Winthrop, Jr. encouraging him “We must commit all unto ye Lord, continew fervent in prayer, and without seasing offer up our supplications; never more need than now, though it is necessary allways to doe so.”<sup>365</sup> From their early days entering merchant commerce the Sylvesters avoided primary allegiance to a particular empire or guild pursuing instead an independent route outside of the Merchant Adventurers. Just as their separatist-puritan tendencies placed them on the outskirts of established faith and their operation outside a merchant guild on the edge of mercantile interest, their understanding of empire ultimately developed outside of primary political or religious divisions and instead along the lines of relationships built upon a common thread of puritan sympathy.

The example of the Sylvester family demonstrates not only the depth and influence of a seventeenth-century puritan network in shaping their Atlantic experience, but also how competing understandings of empire came to create overlapping Atlantic loyalties and challenged definitions based on established lines of nationhood or faith. As individuals like the Sylvesters moved throughout the Atlantic they were less likely to form strong ties with particular colonies or local governments. Transitioning between Dutch and English loyalties, they came to understand their participation within the Atlantic as defined not purely by religious or political categories but by the relationships they held with puritan individuals throughout the Atlantic. A core of individuals exchanging goods, ideas, and favors across geographic boundaries and colonial borders, came to replace any primary loyalties to colonial governors or European metropolises for the Sylvester family, as they instead created their own puritan Atlantic empire.

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<sup>365</sup> Giles Sylvester to John Winthrop, Jr. June 28, 1664 *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 279, Series 2, Volume 4.

## CHAPTER 6

### ORDERING THE ATLANTIC: THE BLANDS' HOLY UNION OF COMMERCE, POLITICS, AND PURITAN FAITH

There remains yet another family that exemplifies the power of fraternal bonds in pulling together puritans throughout the Atlantic. The Bland brothers, John, Adam, Edward, and Theodorick, stationed at ports in Spain, England, Virginia, and Tangier also played a part in creating and maintaining the puritan Atlantic. While other scholars have examined the individual influence of particular brothers such as John and Edward Bland, little work has been done on the collective project that the Blands pursued, their shared geographical reach, and their participation in the puritan Atlantic community. Neville Williams' rescue of John Bland from the buried records in the National Archives at Kew Gardens reveals a merchant of London, Seville, Jamestown, and Tangier. He emerges as a model of the Atlantic figure who navigated the watery borderland as a point of connection between otherwise disparate locales, but Williams' does not fully explore the Bland family as a key fraternal core of the puritan Atlantic.<sup>366</sup> From Edward, Adam, and Theodoric's forays in Virginia to George's Spanish merchant career, Edward's work in the Canary Islands, and John's mayoral career in Tangier the Bland brothers traversed the Atlantic and anchored their influence throughout. As merchants to the Iberian Peninsula,

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<sup>366</sup> Neville Williams, "The Tribulations of John Bland, Merchant London, Seville, Jamestown, Tangier, 1643-1680" *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. 72 (1964): 19-41.

Barbados, the Chesapeake, and other Atlantic regions, they entered the Atlantic puritan network and expanded it simultaneously.

The Bland family's navigation of semi-permeable boundaries during and after the English Civil War, their association with fellow Parliamentarians and Royalists alike, and their participation in an international trading network that crossed boundaries of alliances emphasizes the puritan Atlantic's tendency to move beyond national boundaries, political associations, and rigid religious categories. Central to their success as Atlantic merchants, the Blands interacted with a variety of individuals who both shared their political and religious sentiments and held diametrically opposing views. They moved across the Atlantic into unfriendly waters and enemy territories demonstrating a disregard if not a dismissal of national proscribed boundaries. Kinship ties and business connections placed the Bland family within a network of puritan merchants operating throughout the Atlantic and espousing similar ideals less grounded to a particular state-sponsored religion or national boundary. The Blands and their fellow puritan colleagues including the Bennetts, Emperours, and Sylvesters found their membership within a community of believers seeking to establish and maintain ties throughout the still unfamiliar Atlantic. Ultimately, the kinship at the core of the puritan Atlantic rose above competing concerns for political division and empire boundaries as Atlantic puritans placed their supreme loyalty in the guiding hand of providence.

Not only does the Bland fraternal partnership illustrate the breadth of puritan networks in the seventeenth-century Atlantic, but it also brings to light the differences between New England fears of puritan commerce and the embrace of mercantile pursuits among their Atlantic counterparts. As the leader of their familial commerce, John Bland

published a number of treatises on Atlantic trade from his puritan perspective. Much like his colleague Richard Bennett, Bland was concerned not only with his individual profit, but also with the building of a powerful British mercantile economy. Similar to Bennett, he welded the spiritual to the commercial by sanctifying his financial pursuits and spiritualizing his business endeavors. In doing so, Bland, Bennett, and other Atlantic puritan merchants created a parallel understanding of puritan trade that existed apart from the New England narrative which has come to dominate colonial historiography.

New England's involvement with trade had often run in opposition to the local government and religious authorities. Boston's merchants had embraced policies of free trade pushing to open the port to all potential business until they convinced the government to create a separate inferior court in Boston. While the gradual movement outside of religious purview allowed Boston's merchants to develop a moral language more in tune with Atlantic trade, the conflict and separation also created deep seeded views of merchants as abandoning communal religious values for the individualism and debauchery of the Atlantic market. During the Antinomian Controversy many merchants landed on Hutchinson's side while Winthrop "believed that Hutchinson's followers sought nothing more than free rein for their spiritual pride and material greed." Market involvement, antinomian deviance, and transatlantic focus all fell in the same category as "the orthodox lumped the Boston radicals and other dissenters together into a single religious style: heretical, deviant, immoral and commercial."<sup>367</sup> The 1669 formation of the Old South Church separated many of Boston's successful merchants from the conservatives of the First Church while the introduction of Mather's jeremiad messages further fractured merchants and the church, eventually pushing mercantile disputes

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<sup>367</sup> Valeri, *Heavenly Merchandize*, 43-44.

outside of religious jurisdiction into the realm of the civil courts. This transition was fraught with conflict, schism, and the association of merchant commerce and transatlantic focus with heresy, individualism, and disregard for authority. While a number of historians have demonstrated how it was not so uncommon for New England puritans to dip their toes into the sea of commercial promise, opening New England to widespread Atlantic trade left scars which fractured the community. Ultimately, those who embraced the pursuit of profit remained opposed to their more devout neighbors and leadership.<sup>368</sup> It is this divide, which pushed New England merchants outside of the communal authoritarian structure, which differs from the Atlantic approach.

Acceptance of the New England narrative pitting commerce against puritan community, faith, and leadership has led many to assume that an embrace of commercial activities among Atlantic puritans necessitated a softening of religious mores and a resignation to Laodicean faith. Rather than incorrectly simplifying Atlantic puritan commerce to a narrative of secularization more appropriate in seventeenth-century New England, we should consider a different view of commerce underneath the puritan umbrella. This alternate perspective allowed Atlantic puritans to fuse spiritual and economic interests in the seventeenth-century Atlantic. For the Bennetts, Blands, and Sylvesters alike, commerce did not carry the same negative associations as it did among contemporary New Englanders. Whereas New England puritans developed an affinity for free commerce and open trade, Atlantic puritans despised that understanding of merchant activity. Grounded in order, both spiritual and temporal, the Blands, Bennetts, and Sylvesters among other Atlantic puritans, encouraged a mercantile policy meant to prop

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<sup>368</sup> Mark Peterson, Stephen Innes and others have shown how New England participation within the Atlantic commercial economy was not rare, but they have still shown that there existed a certain amount of tension between New England merchants and their community religious leaders on the subject.

up British trade through navigation acts, monopolies, high import duties, and efforts to encourage the influx of bullion into the English treasury. Aligning with an imperial effort to check Spanish expansion on a political and religious front, these efforts contributed an element of economic warfare to the religio-political conflict. Thus, individuals like Richard Bennett, John Bland, and Nathaniel Sylvester worked alongside Parliament to legislate imperial economic policies advocating monopolies for the Virginia Company, regulation of trade within the empire, and punitive import taxes in order to encourage the success of their own domestic products.

Ultimately, this highly regulated, protectionist, and mercantile understanding of Atlantic trade, which aligned with spiritual and political authority structures, was quite different from the free trade, antinomian tinged tendencies of New England merchants that portended a rejection of communal religious and political authority. Because their economic pursuits already supported political authority and substantiated a religious need for order, the Bland brothers could easily combine their spiritual and economic concerns without deemphasizing a pursuit of piety or checking their desire for profit. Instead, they spiritualized their economic endeavors as their success in trade boosted British mercantilism and encouraged Protestant, as well as puritan imperial power during the Commonwealth period. At the same time they allowed their spiritual lexicon to permeate an understanding of British mercantile theory calling for the establishment of corporations akin to the spiritual body of the church and developing moral precepts to govern trade that paralleled the Ten Commandments. Because there was no need to reject political authority in pursuing mercantile interests, Atlantic puritan merchants did not associate their behavior with antinomian activities or heresy as their New England

counterparts had. Rather in a Trinitarian approach, commerce, politics, and faith could be the three-fold bond working together for the mutual benefit of England and its puritan merchants.

### Building a Mercantile Fraternity

From their shifting posts in Virginia, Spain, England, Barbados, Tangier, and the Canary Islands, the Bland brothers not only built a merchant network upon commercial ties, but also capitalized on their relationships to prominent puritan families. Related to one time Governor of Virginia, Richard Bennett, through Theodorick's marriage to his daughter Anna, the Bland family achieved access to a burgeoning puritan community in the Chesapeake that remained linked to Cromwell's government. While Anna and Theodorick's marriage cemented ties between the two families, it is likely that they were already related through Richard Bennett's cousin and the daughter of Edward Bennett, who had married a Thomas Bland and had taken up inherited half of her father's land in Isle of Wight, Virginia.<sup>369</sup>

At the same time, the brothers were related to the Emperors of Lower Norfolk and Barbados through their uncle, also a John Bland who had married a Mary Emperor, the daughter of Francis Emperor. Ultimately the Bland brothers not only provide a further example of the role that kinship played at the core of the puritan Atlantic, but also demonstrate how for many community ties came to supersede doctrinal rigidity, allegiance to a established faith, and alignment along political boundaries. As they

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<sup>369</sup> John Bennett Boddie, *Seventeenth Century Isle of Wight County*, 276. The Bennetts may have also had some sort of relationship with the Sylvesters as Edward Bennett's other daughter was named Sylvester Bennett, although there might not have been a relationship between her name and the ties between the two families.

traversed the Atlantic, these brothers also came to influence dialogue on merchant practices while expanding the reach of seventeenth-century puritan networks.

The Blands' entrance into the puritan Atlantic began before the brothers came of age. Their father was a Virginia Company investor, purchasing four shares of the company from David Waterhouse, as well as an adventurer taking part in the Martin's Hundred venture. He and his partners received a patent on January 30, 1622 for 20,000 acres along with a promise for an additional 20,000 once enough settlers had arrived on the plantation.<sup>370</sup> The grant also included 15,000 acres for schools and churches, 100 acres for glebe land and 50 acres for anyone remaining in the colony for over three years. To people the settlement, Bland employed Edward Bennett and his ship the *Godsguift* to transport 220 colonists in January 1619 to Martin's Hundred.<sup>371</sup> Like Bennett, Bland's associations within the Company were in support of Edwin Sandys. Bland served on company committees, sending supplies to the colonies at his own expense and joining the Company's Council for Virginia in June 1623.<sup>372</sup> At the same time, his status as an adventurer placed him on a number of committees focused on agricultural production, both the control of tobacco and the encouragement of alternate crops. He also served on committees for "the making of Spoe Ashes," "pottashes," "the sowing of flax," "the employmt of Weavers, and the "sowing of Hemp."<sup>373</sup> Working with Bennett, Bland also pushed "to suppress hereafter the inordinate excessive plantinge of Tobacco so generally distasted hitherto."<sup>374</sup> Committee members hoped to encourage Virginia's planters "more

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<sup>370</sup> Dorman, *Adventures of Purse and Person*.

<sup>371</sup> Ibid; Kingsbury, *Records of the Virginia Company*, 1:410.

<sup>372</sup> Briceland, "The Search for Edward Bland's New Britain," 131-2.

<sup>372</sup> Edward Bennett, *A Treatise*.

<sup>373</sup> Kingsbury, *Records of the Virginia Company*, 1:365.

<sup>374</sup> Ibid., 1:413.



ernestlie to plant such Staple Comodities” including “Corne, Silk Codde, Silkgrass, Hemp Flax,”<sup>375</sup> while Bland was also tasked with “the settinge of some certaine price vpon Corne in Virginia whereby to encourage the Planters to plant Corne there in aboundance.”<sup>376</sup> Deeply entrenched in the tobacco trade, both personally and professionally, the elder John Bland’s work with the company relied heavily on the success of Edward Bennett’s advocacy for a Company tobacco monopoly.<sup>377</sup> As Bennett argued against the importation of Spanish tobacco, Bland was “entreated” to “sell and dispose of all the tobacco come home.”<sup>378</sup> The price for Bland’s imports was dependent upon Bennett’s fragile enterprise.<sup>379</sup> On May 8, 1622, Bland was put in charge of the tobacco brought to England from Virginia on the *George* “to sell and dispose of all the Tobacco come home in the said Shippe aswell from the Colledge Tenante as from the Treasurer and Capt: Nuce or any other way belongine to the seuerall Companie.”<sup>380</sup> As part owner of the 350-ton ship *Abigail*, the cargoes that Bland brought to and from Virginia depended upon the ever-fluctuating price of the fickle weed.<sup>381</sup> Bland and Bennett served together on a committee “touching the ffarming of the Spanish Tobacco” which attempted to create a joint stock by which they would rent a farm of Spanish Tobacco.<sup>382</sup>

Outside of his work with tobacco, the elder Bland also served as a factor for fur trade with the Indians on behalf of the Company Adventurers.<sup>383</sup> Like his fellow puritan

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<sup>375</sup> Ibid.

<sup>376</sup> Ibid., 2:466.

<sup>377</sup> Edward Bennett, *A Treatise*.

<sup>378</sup> Briceland, “The Search for Edward Bland’s New Britain,” 131-2.

<sup>379</sup> Edward Bennett, *A Treatise*.

<sup>380</sup> *Records of the Virginia Company*, 1:631.

<sup>381</sup> Briceland, 131-2; Kingsbury, *Records of the Virginia Company*, 1:410.

<sup>382</sup> Kingsbury, *Records of the Virginia Company*, 2:420.

<sup>383</sup> Ibid., 1:515.

colleagues, John Bland was invested in the success of the fledgling colony and therefore the defense of its reputation. When he received a letter written by a friend detailing some reports of former Virginia residents “of thee Barronesse and in fertilytie of the Soyle” reports verified as false and indented “to the discourragment of sundry Adventurers who purposed to transport men thither for the setting vpp of Iron worke” Bland presented the letter to the Company and the author was held responsible for his false claims.<sup>384</sup> Many of the ties that John Bland established with fellow Atlantic puritans including Edward Bennett became a critical starting point for the fraternal networks his sons would eventually establish.

From their father, the Bland brothers inherited entrance into Atlantic puritan networks, upon which they worked to expand and capitalize through their own entrepreneurial efforts. The leadership of the family business fell to his namesake John Bland and Adam, Edward, William, and Theodorick joined their brother at outposts across the Atlantic. John spent his time between Seville and London, William was headquartered in Seville, Edward maintained operations at Sanlucar, Spain and later in the Canary Islands while Adam was the first brother to venture to Virginia, shortly followed by Edward after Adam’s death.<sup>385</sup> In 1643, John Bland began to make preparations for the worsening relations between Spain and England. Just as Nathaniel and Constant Sylvester sought out Shelter Island as a possible escape from Royalist backlash on Barbados, John Bland began to prepare for political upheaval’s effects on Spanish trade. He feared that the King of Spain might seize his goods then stored in Seville and in early 1643 sent 10,000 pounds worth of wine, oil, dyestuffs, and other goods to his partner

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<sup>384</sup> Ibid., 1:275-6.

<sup>385</sup> Ibid, 133.

Andrew King in England.<sup>386</sup> The Bland brothers hoped to take a temporary hiatus from their Iberian commercial endeavors until the political climate had settled. John left his brothers Edward in the Canaries while William stayed behind in Seville awaiting the end of political conflict between Spain and England.

With mounting tensions in England, John Bland made preparations to increase his investments in the Chesapeake. John Bland planned to significantly increase his Virginia investments as a safety measure. He initiated plans for an expansion of his interests in Virginia and gave instruction concerning equipment to be assembled in London and later shipped to his brother Adam to be used at their Virginia plantations. Ironmongery, tools, pots, pans, and clothing were to be sent to Adam as the family shifted their interests towards the Atlantic. While Bland had previously hedged his bets with Parliament, having voluntarily loaned them 2,500 pounds towards raising an army, his associations with the Royalist Andrew King placed him in danger of economic ruin. By the end of 1642, King had “Left his usual place of abode” and gone to Oxford joining King Charles in exile. Some accused Bland’s associate King of being a “condefederite” having left the city just in time to escape arrest. It was not long before Parliament issued the orders for Andrew King’s property to be seized because of his Royalist sympathies. Through their association with King, the Bland brothers suffered a significant loss. The goods which had been consigned to King upon their arrival in England were impounded by Parliamentary agents and seized under the assumption that they belonged to King. Additionally, the Committee of Camden House took hold of the cargo on the *Seville Merchant* which was ready to set sail to Virginia; that cargo was meant for Adam

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<sup>386</sup> State Papers.23/110 fol. 782; Williams, *The Tribulations of John Bland*, 20.

Bland.<sup>387</sup> It included cases of strong waters, rundletts of aquavita, “a mill to bolt withal,” “a box with irons belonging to the stone mill, together with hogshead stoness, iron spindles, standard posts, collers, and harnessed ironed kerb.”<sup>388</sup> Also on the ship were tawing pans, pint potts, bread grators, busling ladles, plate tinder boxes, lamps, quart potts, bread grators and pepper.<sup>389</sup> Outside of the household goods, Bland’s shipment also included a number of tools and supplies for his plantations including 2 plain irons, 6 pickaxes, 4 iron crowes, nail peircers, carpenders hammers and small hammers.

Overall, the cargo intended for Adam in Virginia suggested a serious investment in the Blands’ Virginia holdings. The considerable amount of tools on the ship likely reveals a reaction to expanding cultivation, while the supplies were probably sent to sustain the growing population. The total of confiscated goods, including bills of lading and invoices, amounted to nearly 13,865 pounds according to Bland’s records.<sup>390</sup>

Unfortunately, John Bland had little success in recouping the family’s loss. When he arrived to appeal his case and reclaim the goods seized in error nearly everything had already been sold “for the benefit of the state.” The political upheaval in England had also encouraged commercial panic as wine, oil, and indigo flooded the market causing the prices for his remaining goods to plummet. When John Bland arrived in England all that was left of the seized goods were “five small cases of Portugal hair buttons and 120 kirtals of lignum rodium.”<sup>391</sup> Bland attempted legal means to reclaim his possession, appearing before the Committee for Compounding on May 5, 1645, and again on August

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<sup>387</sup> State Papers 23/205, fol, 544-6.

<sup>388</sup> “Appendix A,” Williams, *Tribulations of John Bland*.

<sup>389</sup> Ibid.

<sup>390</sup> PRO, E. 154/4/17

<sup>391</sup> *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, 1664-5*, ed. M.A.E. Green (London, 1863), 23/108 fol. 301; 22.

28<sup>th</sup> of the same year, but his efforts did not amount to much.<sup>392</sup> The sequestrators eventually granted Bland an order for restitution totaling 2,718.13s.4d. pounds but he only ever received 267.16s.11d. Ultimately, Bland's claim had been lost in the English political shuffle, and little hope remained for its recovery.<sup>393</sup>

The Blands' legal issues kept John Bland in London although he remained focused on the plantations in Virginia and trade to Barbados. Trade was temporarily upset by Cromwell's expedition against Hispaniola while the fractures with Spain threatened the Blands' trade with the Iberian Peninsula and the Canary Islands. Admiral Blake's attack of Malaga and Blockade of Cadiz gave Bland the opportunity to secure a contract to provision the fleet at Lisbon.<sup>394</sup> But the political situation in Spain remained fickle and when English troops were sent to fight in Flanders alongside France, the English merchants remaining in Spain were arrested and their goods were seized. Among those arrested was John's relative and representative George Bland, who wrote his colleague and kinsman from prison in Santa Maria del Mar. George reported that they had lost all of John Bland's goods and George Bland and the other prisoners had been treated poorly "had we been among the Turks we should have had a better passage than we received from this people."<sup>395</sup> It seems like John Bland had been attempting to advocate on George's behalf, but the letters had not been successful. Enclosed in "a common jail, among rogues, murderers, and thieves, after having kept us in a castle 4 months in chains, without allowing us a bed to lie on more than the hard soil," John Bland's relative clearly

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<sup>392</sup> Williams, *Tribulations*, 22.

<sup>393</sup> *Calendar of the Proceedings of the Committee for Compounding*, 1643-60, Part V, ed. Mary Anne Everett Green (London, 1892), 3285; *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, 1654*, ed. MAE Green (London 1880), 155; *tribulations*, 22.

<sup>394</sup> *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic*, 1658-9, ed. MAE Green (London 1885), 508; Williams, *Tribulations*, 23.

<sup>395</sup> "George Bland to John Bland, March 17, 1657," Williams, *Tribulations*.

hoped that the appeals would soon be heard in Madrid. He continued, “I have not hitherto complained before, but finding no remedy I cannot longer forbear and conceive it very fit the injuries we have received should be made notorious.” William Bland had been some assistance to George and his fellow prisoners, but the prospects for further reprieve seemed grim. George appealed to John Bland for his continued advocacy on the prisoners’ behalf:

God in his mercy look upon us and give us patience, and the Lord stire up the harts of our governors in England to have compassion upon us. And I beseech you, Sir, to use your utmost endeavor with General Montague and to apply yourself unto his Honour, as also unto the Commissioners of the Admiralty that they may be informed by you of our sad and miserable condition and that God would incline their hearts to commiserate so that we may be redeemed from this our insupportable bondage.<sup>396</sup>

George Bland also requested that if “Spaniards of quality” fall into English lands they not be set free until their English counterparts in Spain were released.

While John Bland remained in England hoping to secure George’s release and restore amicable trade relations between Spain and England, Edward left his post in the Canaries and headed towards Virginia to replace his deceased brother Adam. The first records of Edward Bland’s arrival in Virginia appear in July 1646 after his purchase of 2000 acres on the south side of the James River, within the geographical limits of Virginia’s puritan community. The following March, Bland was granted another 13,000 acres “on the S. side of James River, about a mile from the head of Upper Cipoakes” Creek.<sup>397</sup> Bland added to his property through purchasing an additional 3,000 acres adjacent to his land. After Edward’s death controversy arose between the brothers’ widows about ownership of the land, and John Bland, his widow Sarah, and son Giles’ all

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<sup>396</sup> Ibid.

<sup>397</sup> Ibid.

asserted that the property purchased under Edward's name was bought with John's personal income, although it is not clear the extent to which property was held in common among the brothers.<sup>398</sup>

From Virginia, Edward Bland set about procuring new products to trade while developing alliances with Carolina's Native Americans as potential trading partners. On August 27, 1650 he set off from Fort Henry on the Appomattox River with three other men, two servants, four horses, and an Indian guide by the name of Pyancha.<sup>399</sup> While the group was meant as a surveying party, Bland was clearly focused on the profitable merchandise encountered along their journey. Taking notice of navigable rivers and fertile land, Bland scouted the surveyed territory as a potential agricultural source, a place of new settlement, and an area from which to procure natural resources. Near the town of Maharineck Bland reported the discovery "very rich Lands, well timbered and Watered, and large dry Meadows."<sup>400</sup> Towards Hocomawananck Bland found "old Indian fields of exceeding rich Land, that beare two Crops of Indian Corne an yeare [in contrast to the one crop per year in Virginia] and hath timber trees above five foot over, whose trunks are a hundred foot in cleare timber, which will make twenty Cuts of Board timber a piece, and of these there is abundance."<sup>401</sup> Nearby stood "great Reeds thrice as big as the largest Arrow Reeds we have about our Plantations."<sup>402</sup> Bland found Nottaway Town "wel timbered, watered, and very convenient for Hogs and Cattle."<sup>403</sup> Among the

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<sup>398</sup> Ibid.

<sup>399</sup> Edward Bland, *The Discovery of new Brittain*, 1.

<sup>400</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>401</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>402</sup> Ibid.

<sup>403</sup> Ibid., 1.

Hocomawanack Bland traded for Otter skins.<sup>404</sup> They also showed Bland where sturgeon were caught in the Blandina River.<sup>405</sup>

On Charles Island and Berkeley Island Bland reported “exceeding rich Land, and cleare fields, wherein growes Canes of a foot about, and of one yeares growth Canes that a reasonable hand can hardly span.”<sup>406</sup> The Indians told Bland and his company that the canes “were very sweet, and that at some time of the yeare they did such them, and eate them, and of those we brought some away with us.”<sup>407</sup> At the head of the James River at the foot of the mountains Bland observed the Oconacheans and the Nessoneicks alongside the people of the Blandina River. The abundance of old men and children led Bland to believe that the weather there was “far more temperate then ours of Virginia.”<sup>408</sup> The Indians told Bland and company that “at the bottome of the River was great heapes of Salt; and we saw among them Copper, and were informed that they tip their pipes with silver, of which some have been brought to this Country, and ‘tis very probable that there may be God, and other Mettals amongst the hils.”<sup>409</sup> Near Farmer’s Chase Bland observed “very great Rocky stones, fit to make Mill-stones, with very rich tracts of Land, and in some places between the head of Farmers Chase River and Black water Lake, is ground that gives very probably prooffe of an Iron, or some other rich Mine.”<sup>410</sup> Whether Bland hoped to settle the newly surveyed country himself, manage its settlement, or establish ties with the local Indians for trade and procurement of natural resources, the abundant information he provided on the current state of North Carolina was likely an

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<sup>404</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>405</sup> Ibid.

<sup>406</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>407</sup> Ibid.

<sup>408</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>409</sup> Ibid.

<sup>410</sup> Ibid., 16.



invaluable resource to his brothers John and Theodorick. From across the Atlantic, John received a wealth of knowledge about the potential for trade and agricultural cultivation in the Chesapeake, while Theodorick received a veritable manual upon his arrival in Virginia.

Theodorick came in Virginia in 1653 after his brother Edward's untimely death. The swampy marshes of the Chesapeake had been unkind to the Bland brothers claiming both Adam and Edward and leaving Theodorick, William, and John to manage the fraternal networks from posts across the Atlantic. While Edward had been more concerned with exploring natural resources for their burgeoning trade networks, Theodorick focused on entering local politics as a voice for his fellow merchants and the family's pursuits. He served as Charles City justice, Burgess of the same county, and also the Speaker of the House in 1660. Theodorick was also a Burgess from Henrico County and a member of the Governor's Council from 1663-1671. As a member of the Council, Bland served alongside his father-in-law Richard Bennett as well as other successful puritan merchants and their sympathizers, including William Claiborne. Theodorick's community involvement also included his work as "overseer of the horse ferry boate" which operated over the south side of the James River and connected him and his puritan colleagues to Jamestown. In managing the Bland plantations Theodorick expanded their property with the purchase of Westover from Sir John Pawlett in April 1665, a property that would later pass into the hands of William Byrd. At some point the brothers had also purchased a tract of land that was originally known as "Basse's Choice" situated on the east side of Pagan Bay and containing four hundred acres, two hundred and fifty of which was marsh land. It was likely one of Basse's sons in law who sold the land to John Bland.

In 1659-60, William Drummond, serving as an agent for the Basse estate, was ordered to pay Theodorick Bland twenty-five hundred pounds of tobacco in damages for a suit regarding the property.<sup>411</sup> When Sarah Bland brought a lawsuit against Anna Bennett Bland after Theodorick's death, she mentioned a number of properties in Virginia including Bartletts, Kimerges, Herring Creek Mill, Jordans, Westeffe[r] [probably Westover], Upper Chippoakes, Sunken Marsh Plantation, Basse's Choice, Jamestown lot, Lawne's Creek as well as "other lands &c, servants, slaves, chattels &c." Both Nathaniel Basse, the original owner of Basse's Choice, and Christopher Lawne, the original settler at Lawne's Creek were early puritans who had come from the Ancient Church in Amsterdam to settle in the Chesapeake. It was likely through their network ties to the Atlantic puritan community that the Bland brothers were able to acquire such properties in Virginia.

Not only did Theodorick succeed in expanding the family's political influence, but he also used marriage as an entry point into a larger community of Atlantic puritan merchants. His marriage to Anna Bennett, the daughter of Virginia's Commonwealth Governor Richard Bennett, placed Theodorick at the nexus of Atlantic puritan activity. Shortly after their 1660 marriage, Richard Bennett gave the newlywed couple a property in James City, one of the Governor's row houses that originally belonged to William Berkeley.<sup>412</sup> Through Anna's sister Elizabeth's marriage, the Blands were also connected to the powerful Eastern Shore family, the Scarboroughs. Through their father's sister's marriage, the Bland brothers were connected to the Emperour family, fellow Atlantic puritans who had come from Barbados to Virginia. Their Uncle John Bland, had married

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<sup>411</sup> "Isle of Wight Country Records" *William and Mary Quarterly*, 7, no. 4, 231.

<sup>412</sup> *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 8, 73

a Mary Emperor, the daughter of Francis Emperour, a tobacco merchant of Newport whose will was dated January 6, 1654. It is not clear exactly how this Francis Emperor was related to Captain Francis Emperor and Francis Tully Emperor of Lower Norfolk, but the similar vocations and shared name suggest it was clearly the same family.<sup>413</sup>

The daughter of Sarah Emperour and Edward Oistin, a magistrate who left his namesake in Oistin's Town and Oistin's Bay in Christ Church, Barbados, Sarah Emperour married her cousin, Francis Tully Emperour of Lower Norfolk, Virginia. He lived primarily in Lynnhaven parish, nearby his cousin and brother-in law by the same name, but also spent some time in Princess Ann County serving as a justice there from 1691-1693. A planter and merchant, he owned an estate by the name of Fairfield as well as land in Lynnhaven and his wife's properties in Christ Church parish Barbados. Splitting his time between Virginia and Barbados Francis Tully Emperour provided ready access to the West Indies for both his immediate relatives, fellow Virginia puritans, and the Bland relations.

Sarah's brother, Captain Francis Emperor was also a prominent citizen of Lower Norfolk, Virginia. Born around 1628, he came to Virginia around 1650 receiving power of attorney on January 20, 1650 from Thomas Marsh, a fellow puritan in the region. According to the headright system he received 300 acres for transporting himself, Mary Emperour, and Charles Emperor. On August 15, 1661 he received more land for transporting Elizabeth and William Emperor and Marcus Tully. In November of 1673, his widow Mary received a land grant for importing herself, Captain Francis Emperour, William Emperour, Elizabeth Emperour, Markus Tuly and Wanny, a negro. A mariner and a merchant, Francis Emperor settled on the east side of the Elizabeth River in

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<sup>413</sup> Withington, *Virginia Gleanings*, 638.

Lynnhaven Parish, likely near Sarah Thorowgood Gookin Yeardley and served as a Commissioner for Lower Norfolk between October of 1652 and February of 1659 and at the same time served as the Sheriff of the county.

Not only was Emperour a political leader in the region, but he also assumed a position of religious leadership in helping to identify and attract a puritan minister for Lower Norfolk, Virginia. In November 1655 he provided transportation to Captain Thomas Wiloughby “intreated, and both by the Countie & thee Cort fully impowred to pvide a Minister of Gods word” who should be a “godly & honest man.”<sup>414</sup> A year later, in November 1656, he negotiated with a “Mr. Moore, Minister of God in New England [Long Island], when he was last at ye Mannadus” [Manhattan].<sup>415</sup> Convincing a puritan minister to move to the Anglican Virginia wilderness had clearly proven difficult, and Capt. Francis Emperor informed his colleagues of Moore’s unwillingness to come. Thomas Lambert urged Moore to travel to the Chesapeake promising him “yearely quantity of tob. & Corne & also to pvide for yor. Present entertainemt upon arrival & Convenient habitacon.”<sup>416</sup> Francis was also responsible for collecting for the provisioning of a minister in 1657.<sup>417</sup> Much like their relatives, the Emperours were mobile throughout the Atlantic and Francis traveled to Boston in 1656 serving as a translator of Dutch documents for the Massachusetts Court. Unfortunately his return trip on the *Ketch Dolphin* encountered some troubles damaging a number of his goods when the boat sprang a leak in Nantucket forcing them to anchor at Plymouth. In 1658 he traveled to the Indies and also traded with his brother, John Emperour for Barbadian sugar.

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<sup>414</sup> *Lower Norfolk County Virginia Antiquary* “The Church in Lower Norfolk County Volume 3”, 31-2.

<sup>415</sup> *Ibid*, 33-34.

<sup>416</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>417</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

Through Theodorick's marriage and their Uncle's union with Mary Emperour, the Bland brothers gained access to key puritan contacts in Virginia and Barbados. Richard Bennett's role as Commonwealth Governor and Parliamentary Commissioner likely served the Bland family well and might have even assisted in their ongoing legal battle to reclaim goods seized by Parliament resulting from their associations with Andrew King. Their relationship with the Emperour family placed them at the center of trade between Virginia and Barbados, allowing for easy access to slave labor on their Chesapeake plantations while cementing important puritan allies throughout the Atlantic. Marital bonds and blood ties became a central element of the Blands' ability to expand their reach throughout the Atlantic and establish trustworthy contacts for trade. As kinship connected fellow puritan merchants, the Blands helped to build an Atlantic puritan network held together by the bonds of community.

#### A Discussion on Puritan Trade

Theodorick's success in Virginia had convinced his brother John that the family's greatest hope lay in the Chesapeake. To combat Virginia's labor shortages John traveled to Chelsea College, a detention center for Spanish prisoners, and sought out former slaves willing to go to Virginia upon their release. He was successful in finding two mulattoes who expressed a desire to work in Virginia rather "than live eternally in prison"<sup>418</sup> and took them to labor on the family's Virginia plantations in exchange for the release of two English soldiers who had been captured when fighting at Ostend.<sup>419</sup>

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<sup>418</sup> *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, 1658-9*, M.A.E. Green (London, 1885), 38.

<sup>419</sup> *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, 1659-60*, ed. M.A.E. Green (London, 1886), 456.

With the hope of continued profits in Virginia, John Bland now set his sights on rekindling Spanish trade and exploring options in Tangier, which had recently passed into English hands after the King's marriage to Catherine of Braganza. Bland consulted his friend and colleague Samuel Pepys on the subject of Tangier sending him "three or four printed things that he hath wrote of trade in general and of Tangier particularly."<sup>420</sup> And after discussing his plans at length with Pepys he eventually left for Tangier in October 1664, with his wife following that February. Bland attempted negotiations with the Spanish to begin trade for English goods and traveled to his old stomping grounds in Seville, Cadiz, and Malaga, but the political conditions on the Iberian Peninsula remained fragile. On June 4, 1668 Tangier was incorporated and Bland became the first mayor, but was quickly at odds with the Deputy Governor Colonel Henry Norwood when the two disagreed over the unlicensed selling of wine.<sup>421</sup> In February 1668/9 Bland's troubles ended up in White Hall in front of the Committee of Tangier and his friend Samuel Pepys. Apparently, John and his son Giles had spread rumors about their adversary Norwood and fearing for his life John Bland fled to Cadiz and later London.<sup>422</sup> He eventually returned to Tangier in 1670 to resume his post as mayor but was accused by Norwood of monopolizing the trade at Tangier's port. John Bland retained his post as mayor until the end of 1676 at which time his son's death in Virginia brought him back to England.<sup>423</sup>

While serving as mayor in Tangier, Bland remained focused on the future of Atlantic trade within the British Empire. He published his first treatise on trade in 1659

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<sup>420</sup> *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, 1204, 2425, Gutenberg Edition, epub edition.

<sup>421</sup> *Pepys Diary*, 391, 700-701; *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, 1664-5*, ed. M.A.E. Green (London, 1863), 307; Williams, *Tribulations*, 26.

<sup>422</sup> *Pepys Diary*, 5222.

<sup>423</sup> Williams, *Tribulations*, 27.

and presented it to his friend Samuel Pepys before leaving for Tangier. Pepys' reception was favorable and he remarked, "Mr. Bland's discourse concerning Trade, which (he being no scholler and so knows not the rules of writing orderly) is very good."<sup>424</sup> Nearly thirty years after Edward Bennett had welded the puritan cause to the British political economy, John Bland and his brothers continued to pursue a favorable balance of trade for England that also padded their own pocketbooks. Bland's *Trade revived, or, A way proposed to restore, increase, inrich, strengthen and preserve the decayed and even dying trade of this our English nation, in its manufactories, coin, shiping and revenue*, approached the causes of England's decline in trade. Bland promised to restore English trade to a coveted position through a strategy of protectionism reliant upon the British mercantile system.

Bland outlined a system by which the British Empire might reclaim a favorable position among competing nations, which also promised profit for the individual merchants involved in achieving its success. First, "all Trades should center in Companies and Corporations, the only Foundation and Pillar upon which a lasting Monument of Trade and Manufactories is to be built and preserved." Bland continued by arguing that English merchants should be compelled to pursue a singular trade, rather than working both as shop-keepers and international merchants, a practice which allowed retailers bypass factors and undercut their merchant colleagues.<sup>425</sup> Bland argued further that all bonds and bills be made salable and transferable. This would allow for more available forms of payment in the market so that goods could be purchased when currency was difficult to obtain. This system would prevent merchants from having to

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<sup>424</sup> Pepys Diary, 1409.

<sup>425</sup> Bland, 3.

sell their goods below the market price due to a shortage of currency. By decreasing the need for loans, Bland also believed that “Interests and Usury will be utterly taken out of the Nation, which is the Canker and Moth of Trade.”<sup>426</sup> In a protectionist vein, Bland also suggested that that customs on foreign manufactured goods be raised while imported goods be forced to pay customs at the time of exportation.<sup>427</sup>

Key to Bland’s plan for trade was an emphasis on settling plantations in America, especially in Barbados. Considering the lack of natural resources on Barbados, Bland postulated, “How much greater advantages should we make if that vast Country of Virginia were manured, having therein so may millions of people and natives inhabiting the same, who would be civilized, and become consumers of our manufactories, and brought very easily and suddenly to assist and help us in the manuring of the Country.”<sup>428</sup> For Bland, Virginia’s success portended the production of “many notable and excellent commodities,” an increase in employment in England, support of the shipping industry, and funding for the continued study of navigation. Likely because Bland had a considerable amount of personal capital invested in Virginia, he foresaw a bright future for the colony. He predicted that with the civilization of the natives, Virginia’s climate, different from that of the British Isles, “would cause a vast expence of our Native commodities, to the very great increase of the commerce.” Additionally, native labor would help to cultivate the now useless Virginia land and introduce a number of commodities which were then imported into the British Empire like “Silk, Cotton, Curants, Wine, Oyl, Sugar, Rice, Spices, Hemp, Flax, Wool, and Corn, Masts, Pitch and Tar, all which are of use to us, and we cannot well be without the same.” Bland also

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<sup>426</sup> Bland, 6-7.

<sup>427</sup> Bland, 10.

<sup>428</sup> Ibid., 10-11.



predicted that Virginia's mines would be discovered and tapped providing England with an "admirable remedy for the disburdening itself of our supernumerary people which increase among among us." Not only could they ship England's poor to Virginia, but the success of the colony would also employ individuals in shipping and eventually encourage other countries to do commerce with Virginia.

Bland saw the colony as an opportunity to find a shorter passage eastward for trade with China because "the South Sea undoubtedly doth fall upon the backside of Virginia."<sup>429</sup> Virginia's commodities such as "Oaks for Planks, Pines, and Fir for Masts, Pitch, Tar, and Resin: the land full of Catel, Corn for Victualiling, Hemp and Flax for Cordage & Sails, Iron for Guns and other utensils; the Rivers abounding with Fish for loading ships as well as provisions" would supply England with much needed resources without forcing them to look beyond their borders. Another important strategy to reviving the British mercantile system lay in an increased impulse for discovery and exploration. This would hopefully produce new outlets for trade, increase the public revenue through the introduction of new wealth, provide a means and market to sell manufactured goods, secure navigation in and around America, and improve the art of navigation while also providing an opportunity to increase British territory.

Bland believed in the importance of increasing the nation's store of bullion for the use of commerce. This included the need to export foreign coins and to keep bullion in the country once it had been acquired. In order to do so, England would need to "introduce among ourselves the fabricks of all Forain manufactories that we many not be inforced to seek and fetch them else where." Once manufacturing had been brought

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<sup>429</sup> Ibid.

inside the empire, it was essential that the goods which English manufacturing produced remained cheap so that English citizens would purchase their own goods:

Coyn and Bullion, is that which doth compass all things, and is the wealth desired by all people throughout the universe, that manage Trade with Forain nations; It being an infallible rule, that all people ever strive to supply themselves with what they want where it is to be had best, and best cheap, and to compass their desires, what ever is most esteemed, shall be delivered up in exchange thereof, the esteem of Silver and Gold being the wheel that carrys all Commerce about.<sup>430</sup>

In order to make English coin and bullion the preferred choice of international exchange Bland suggested that both silver and gold coins be reduced to their purest form but made “neat and thin, as to its proportion of value” because “the thicker the coyn is the easier to be counterfeited.”<sup>431</sup> Bland believed creating a strong British currency would keep British coin from being exported and encourage foreign merchants to use British coin as an international currency. This in turn would bring foreign bullion into English borders and would allow the country to reduce taxes ultimately leading to individual and corporate prosperity.<sup>432</sup>

Bland argued that all of English shipping should be done by English ships, the Act for Increased Shipping should be repealed, and “all the Subjects of the Nation of England, and its dominions, shall not take to freight any Foreigners ships directly nor indirectly in any of the Ports belonging to England, and its dominions.”<sup>433</sup> Foreign goods should be subject to double customs duties, and in restricting foreign shipping English merchants would be protected from competition. Likely because of his own historical interests in Spain and the Canary Islands, Bland saw the purchase of Spanish wool as an

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<sup>430</sup> Bland, 14.

<sup>431</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>432</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>433</sup> Ibid., 17.

opportunity to soften relations between the two countries that they might work together for mutual benefit.

Whereas Bennett had worked to limit Spanish tobacco imports, Bland suggested that English merchants buy up all of the Spanish wool exports to prevent other countries from selling and producing textiles in competition with English exports. “The Hollander would be utterly disabled from counterfeiting our Woollen Draperies, and all his subtleties would come to nothing.” Not only would this prevent the Dutch merchant and clothier from taking English profits, but it would also increase English employment and “thereby keep the fabric of these sorts in our own Dominions.” Bland further suggested a number of other strategies to encourage growth in English trade including the adoption of a standard system of weights and measures which would ease commerce and avoid confusion. While Bland hoped to encourage commercial development at a national level, his concerns were not far from his own profit either. Another proposal was “that all Merchants trading beyond seas, not keeping shops for retailing, be exempted from all taxes that at any time shall be levied upon the Personal estates of men.” Instead, he argued that in exporting the nation’s manufactured goods they would generate a profit for the customhouse far greater than the amount their personal taxes would generate. They would also encourage trade and increase public revenue.<sup>434</sup>

Bland’s efforts to increase import taxes, take advantage of natural resources within the empire, search out new markets and colonies, and secure bullion within the British Empire was characteristic of British mercantile theory. Like Bland, the Bennetts and Sylvesters used government regulation to their advantage, dismissing any calls for free commerce within the Empire. Where New Englanders differed from their Atlantic

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<sup>434</sup> Ibid., 35.

counterparts lay in their understanding of commercial involvement. In advocating for free trade, the elimination of royal and Parliamentary policies that had historically favored guilds like the Merchant Adventurers and sanctioned monopolies for those in favor, New England seemed to open a Pandora's box of allowable behaviors exchanging the divinely ordered puritan community for the chaos of the market.<sup>435</sup> New Englanders pushed against local legislation while skirting guidelines at every turn and agitating for open policies on trade to open Boston's port to all business partners. Their eventual success in creating a separate inferior court in Boston, with Keayne as one of the judges, only accentuated the tension that had mounted between the market puritan leadership.

While New Englanders' behavior became associated with a dismissal of "communal values for mere individualism," the reality was not so simple as New England merchants allowed shifting understandings of providence shaped by a transatlantic focus to "reorient their perceptions of community and thus of moral good."<sup>436</sup> We cannot merely equate the acceptance of mercantile involvement with the spread of the "rational, individualistic, and secular religious style of the 1720s," as this does not adequately explain while contemporary puritans throughout the Atlantic like the Blands, Gookins, Bennetts, and Sylvesters were able to maintain a spiritual focus while accepting commercial involvement.<sup>437</sup>

In contrast to their New England counterparts, Bland and his cohort of puritan merchants accepted a mercantile practice that advocated monopolies, regulated trade, and controlled imports according to British mercantile theory. These policies which seemed restrictive to their New England coreligionists were actually the source of the Blands'

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<sup>435</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>436</sup> Mark Valeri, *Heavenly Merchandize*, 10.

<sup>437</sup> Ibid.

profit. Their power and influence had allowed them to help regulate and legislate the mercantile theory at the core of the British Empire to a degree that it was not only favorable to the national treasury but also advantageous to their personal pocketbooks. For Bland, and his colleagues like the Bennetts and the Sylvester brothers, an acceptance of commercial involvement in the Atlantic market was not synonymous with the dismissal of government policies and religious authority. The disorder and individualism associated with New England's puritan merchants remained foreign to Bland's mercantile practice. Instead, his divinely ordered universe aligned puritan faith with mercantilism. While New Englanders often saw commerce and faith as two competing forces attempting to regulate the sin and chaos of the market with the order of spiritual principles, Bland instead saw the two as aligned. The divinely ordered universe, revealed through Scripture, seemed to explain and define the order of British mercantile theory.

Like his colleague, and relative, Richard Bennett, Bland viewed British mercantile interests as intricately woven together with a spiritual vision. What was natural and good for England's political economy drew parallels with church organization outlined in Scripture. Whereas New England merchants' emphasis on the free market had been associated with individualism and a rejection of communal authority, both politically and religiously, Bland's conception of trade placed an emphasis on the need for corporations as a means to organize merchants into orderly bodies paralleling the metaphor of a spiritual body central to puritan church organization. His holistic view of order, both divine and political, placed the economic realm well within spiritual jurisdiction whereas New England puritan merchants eventually pushed mercantile law outside of spiritual oversight into the civil courts. Therefore, in calling for

corporations as the ordered bodies of British trade, Bland contrasted the individualism associated with New England's mercantile practice and embraced political and spiritual authority. The progression of his argument paralleled Philippians 2 as he argued for unity among English merchants, a unity exhibited through their organization into corporations. Bland described that the corporation should resemble "in its members and Body" the "Unity of Spirit." Therefore, "all Trades should center in Companies and Corporations, the only Foundation and Pillar upon which a lasting Monument of Trade and Manufactories is to be built and preserved," While these organizations "consist of many Members, they are but one Body united, and so consequently thus compact of one Intire Spirit."<sup>438</sup> In speaking of the early Church, Paul had similarly written, "make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in sprit and of one mind."<sup>439</sup> For Bland, the merchant organization he proposed was likely molded after the spiritual organization he had known. Bland continued to apply the spiritual imagery of the body of Christ, to the body of merchants in arguing against the dual practice of trades, that they should be "but of a single body, that having the more nourishment it may obtain thereby the greater strength and courage to support and maintain the glory of its birth and succession."<sup>440</sup> Bland alluded to Romans 12:5, "so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others," therefore, the independent actions of individuals merchants were closely tied to the larger mercantile body and their dual interest in retail and trade had distracted and weakened the center.

Whereas conflict had permeated New England merchant policy in their struggles against the religious and political authorities, Bland suggested a more docile approach.

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<sup>438</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>439</sup> Philippians 2:2.

<sup>440</sup> Ibid.

He argued that commerce thrived apart from political conflict, whether on a regional or international level. Bland suggested, “It is meet that a general peace be sought and established with our Neighbours and forein Princes, and likewise at home amongst our selves, without which, trade and ingenious Arts seldome or never flourish.” Viewing peace as “the Mother of all Commerce, Trade and ingenious Arts,” Bland advocated a turning away from conflict both on an external level and within England’s imperial borders.<sup>441</sup> Furthermore, his emphasis on peace as the mother of commerce seemed to portend a millennial hope of puritan eschatology, as righteous living, conversion, and a movement towards peace would ultimately precede Christ’s return. Therefore, in some way Bland’s revival of trade, consequent of a return to both local and global peace, would bring about the millennium and the ultimate puritan hope in Christ’s return.

In his effort to regulate shopkeepers who also dabbled in international trade Bland referenced the concept of calling, once again spiritualizing the mercantile pursuit rather than vilifying its tendencies towards apostasy. Rather than allowing his merchant trade to be labeled as a pursuit of wealth contrary to the puritan faith, Bland categorized it as a calling, a vocation ordained by God. Bland argued, “I would not that any person in this Nation should be permitted to use of two Trades; but to apply himself to one only.”<sup>442</sup> In advocating for the singular pursuit of one trade Bland continued, “That is, no forein Trader as a Merchant to be a retailing Shop-keeper at home, nor no Ingrosser or retayling Shop-keeper at home admitted to be a Trader, as a Merchant beyond the Seas, but each to

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<sup>441</sup> Bland, *Trade revived, or, A way proposed to restore, increase, inrich, strengthen and preserve the decayed and even dying trade of this our English Nation: in its manufactories, coin, shiping and revenue: whereby taxes may be lessened if not totally taken away...as also a way shewed how the duty of excise may be regulated...and likewise certain ways propounded for the raising of considerable sums of money* (London: Printed for Thomas Holmwood, 1659), 2.

<sup>442</sup> *Ibid.*, 3-4.

keep to their Trade and Calling.”<sup>443</sup> By using the works “trade” and “calling” interchangeably Bland appealed to a spiritual lexicon attaching both temporal and eternal consequences to the dishonest practice he had identified. Bland revived his discussion of a calling saying, “That we labour diligently and faithfully every one in that way wherein God hath called us, and not for lucre or gain to intrench upon each others callings.”<sup>444</sup> Bland’s discussion of merchant activity also questioned the New England perspective which viewed merchants as backsliders from their original spiritual calling. Instead, Bland suggested that merchants sought temporal rewards but were answerable to a higher power. A calling, or a vocation given by God, was not something to be ignored, nor a purpose from which a saint should be distracted. As such, a shopkeeper or a merchant should not casually dismiss their vocation, exchange it for another, or take it lightly by not fully devoting oneself to it. A dishonest mercantile practice could therefore be transformed into an act of spiritual disobedience.

Because Bland viewed his efforts in trade as a calling, he could similarly see God’s blessing exhibited temporally. He explained, “Let us but observe these few Rules following, and I dare warrant, will undertake that in a very short time we shall all see our dying trade revive and flourish, traders grow rich, the Nation powerful in strength Wealth and prosperity to dwell within our Walls, Lands, Towns, and Cities, and God will bless us, yea we shall be blessed.”<sup>445</sup> Bland followed with a list of moral practices to guide British spiritual merchandizing: “that we asperse no mans goods, or his good name,” “that we use no false lights, weights or measures,” “but deal uprightly, faithfully and truly with one another,” that they avoid “tricks and quilllets,” and “that we oppress not

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<sup>443</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>444</sup> Ibid.

<sup>445</sup> Ibid., 56.



each other in necessity, either by griping, usury,” “That the prosperity of another occasion not our envy, nor his living better than we make us to repine, but let us rejoice therein, and not thwart each other privately, but rather assist each other moe and more, and no way to think by the ruine of another we may reap the greater advantage.” About conflict, Bland suggested that “we strive to make peace, and rather hinder differences, than widen them, striving to be at peace with all men, and to hate no man, but to seek peace.” Bland continued by encouraging fellow merchants not to covet the riches of fellow merchants or desire fame through piracy or robbery. If a difference should arise between merchants, “Let us follow the example of Zacheus in the Gospel and make restitution.” Finally, Bland appealed to his fellow merchants:

That considering these sad and disastrous times, wherewith God hath afflicted this Nation, let us be charitable to one another, believing each other with our substance what we can, in having good thoughts for each other, good works and actions, and let not poverty cause us to despise or draw us back from assisting each the other, for with these things God is well pleased.<sup>446</sup>

The preceding list pulled Scriptural references from Exodus 20, outlining a virtual ten commandments of mercantile trade. Bland’s emphasis on a righteous trade seemed to bury any conjecture that his spiritual concerns existed as separate from business interests, somehow sealed off from the seemingly contradictory merchant vocation. The hypothesis that his puritan spirituality existed apart from his other practices never permeating professional realms, is not supported by his efforts to regulate his trade and calling by Biblical principles. His spiritual obedience was instead central to his merchant success and his eternal significance, the dismissal of which would have jeopardized not only his immediate financial security but also his providential hope.

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<sup>446</sup> Ibid, 56.

Ultimately, Bland's elevation of the merchant profession to a calling and his acceptance of order in government, economy, and religion differed significantly from a New England perspective on merchants as challenging established religious and political authority and encouraging chaos and individualism. Bland closed his pamphlet with a reminder "to submit ourselves to our Superiours, and no ways to dispise order nor government and to avoid having any hand in Rebellious practices, either for the destroying of Religion, which is Gods cause, or of our Princes, or Countrie, which Trade and Traders are not to intermeddle with."<sup>447</sup> Therefore, order—divine, political, and economic—were all one in the same. Bland's ability to practice trade within a peaceful environment depended on a political order which upheld authority and stability. His financial success and eternal significance were also dependent on spiritual order and God's ultimate blessing. Bland encouraged fellow merchants to "be righteous in all ways towards God and in our dealings towards one another." He exhorted merchants that they should be:

observing carefully and strictly that Golden Rule, Let us do to everyone and for everyone, as we would have them do to and for us, which is the summe of all that can be said or done: and if we resolve duly to observe but this alone, how happy would this Nation be in its Trade and Commerce, in its Peace and Plenty, in its Glory and Honour, which the Lord in mercy grant, to whom be all Glory, Honour and Praise for ever and ever, Amen."<sup>448</sup>

John Bland followed his original treatise with a 1661 publication entitled: *The humble Remonstrance of John Bland of London Merchant, on the behalf of the Inhabitants and Planters in Virginia and Mariland*. Bland appealed to the King regarding the recent act prohibiting the Dutch from trading with British colonies. While Bland's tendencies towards protectionist mercantile policies seem contrary to this proposal he

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<sup>447</sup> Ibid, 57.

<sup>448</sup> Ibid.

argued that the economies of Virginia and Maryland remained too fragile to close them off from foreign trade: “Seeing Virginia and Mariland have no such rich Commodities, nor ingenious people to produce them, nor plenty of any thing but what may be had every where, is it not them a madness to hinder Hollanders or any else from trading thither? Shall we, to put out one of their eyes, lose both our own?”<sup>449</sup> While restricting Dutch trade in the Chesapeake would have impacted foreign mercantile profits, Bland clearly thought it would also destroy the colonies ability to trade. Bland considered the Chesapeake colonies “the best and hopefulest Plantation that belongs to tis Nation” and feared that the recent trade restrictions would hinder their development. He believed that Virginia and Maryland were not yet capable of maintaining their own trade, and therefore it was not necessary or beneficial to bar foreign trade in those areas. Alluding to his earlier publication where he spoke out against the dual vocation of shopkeeper merchants, Bland continued by blaming the act which he so vehemently opposed on these same shopkeeper merchants, describing them as “no Merchants bred, nor versed in forein parts, or any Trade, but to those Plantations, and that from either Planters there, or Whole-sale Tobacconists and Shop-keepers retailing Tobacco here in England, who know no more what belongs to the Commerce of the World, or managing new discovered Countries such as Virginia and Mariland are, than children new put out Prentice.”<sup>450</sup> He argued that most of them had “never been farther than in their own Shops and Warehouses” making them unfit to speak on the “Laws for whole Nations.”<sup>451</sup>

Bland’s opposition to the act was based upon his belief that because Virginia produced commodities like tobacco, corn and cattle available from other colonies a

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<sup>449</sup> Bland, *To the Kings Most Excellent Majesty*, 1661, 2.

<sup>450</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>451</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

restriction on foreign trade would only force merchants to obtain the products elsewhere and damage Virginia's ability to compete on an Atlantic market. Without Dutch trade Bland argued "the Planters will have little encouragement to manure the ground, or trouble themselves to take so much pains as they do, for what, when obtained, they know not what to do therewith."<sup>452</sup> Not only would the Virginia planters have less incentive for which to grow their crops, and a smaller market to which they could sell, but also, if foreign trade were prohibited in the Chesapeake then those merchants would look elsewhere for the same products. Bland argued, "The Hollander began to plant Tobacco in his own Territories, as soon as the Act for their prohibition from Virginia and Mariland in the long Parliament was obtained, will he not proceed to plant greater quantities, and so totally supply himself by his own labour?" In finding profit so close to home the Dutch would then cease to travel to Virginia for the same product they could find nearby for a cheaper price. While some had argued that Virginia tobacco was of higher quality than that produced in Holland, Bland reminded his reader of how the higher quality Spanish tobacco had been quickly replaced by Virginia's product within the British market because of the cheaper price. In the same way, he suggested that the Dutch tobacco along with other varieties would eventually replace the Virginia weed causing the Chesapeake's value on the Atlantic market to plummet.

He continued by asking how Virginians might dispose of their tobacco if Hollanders were not permitted to trade with them. He explained, "the English will not buy it, for what the Hollander carried thence was a sort of Tobacco not desired by any other people, nor used by us in England but merely to transport for Holland."<sup>453</sup> Bland

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<sup>452</sup> Ibid.

<sup>453</sup> Ibid.

was also concerned with new restrictions preventing English ships from loading any goods in Virginia and Maryland to transport to territories outside of the British Empire. Instead, he argued that the English ships should be able to go where they wish from Virginia and Maryland's ports to avoid their goods from spoiling and to prevent unnecessary risks at sea from a longer journey. Even if they paid the same customs outlined in the new act but were permitted to travel outside of the empire, Bland believed it would be safer and more profitable. He summarized his argument in the following:

Therefore if the Hollanders go not thither, but plant Tobacco in their own Territories, whereby they will not need ours, we shall not send ships to Virginia and Mariland to fetch thence what we cannot again dispose of; so that we shall employ no more ships to those Colonies than will fetch as much Tobacco as will vend in England. How is it possible that this then can decrease or increase our ships, when as, when the Hollanders traded thither, we brought no less into England than we do now, nor when they trade not shall we bring the more?"<sup>454</sup>

Bland believed that "forein Nations trading into a Country make the people industrious, and their industry makes that Nation rich, and so by wealth comes Countries to be inhabited, which increases Trade, and the more trade the more need of shipping to manage it?"<sup>455</sup> He argued that the more freely foreign nations be permitted to trade within a colony, the greater the increase of navigation. If trade were limited, navigation would decrease and the trade would be ruined. Because England did not prefer the type of tobacco exported from Virginia and because its market could not absorb all that was produced, Bland believed it was necessary for foreign countries to trade within the Chesapeake.

He continued by explaining that the barring of Dutch trade would also reduce levies used for defense to support the colonists against Indian attack while building and

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<sup>454</sup> Ibid.

<sup>455</sup> Ibid.

repairing forts and public places. The Dutch had “paid upon every Anchor of Brandy, which is about 25 Gallons, 5s” and ten shillings for every Hogshead of Tobacco. Because foreigners were no longer being taxed Virginia’s planters were forced to absorb their own costs for defense which “hath so impoverished them, that they scarce can recover wherewith to cover their nakedness.”<sup>456</sup> According to Bland, foreign trade among countries with staple commodities stimulated wealth and growth and encouraged industry, and the building of societies and towns. Without that influx of cash flow and exchange the economy withered. Bland believed “except the Hollander be permitted to trade to Virginia and Mariland, it will never flourish or come to any thing, nor never have town or Village in any part thereof propogated or built; for our English trading thither send no more ships than they need to fetch thence what Tobacco our Nation Spends.”<sup>457</sup> Ultimately, while continuing to advocate for the same protectionist mercantile policy he had suggested two years earlier, Bland contended that the previous path of creating a monopolies on shipping and export, as Bennett had done thirty years earlier, would no longer work within the Chesapeake’s developing economy.

In the 1620’s when Bennett had fought for a tobacco monopoly to be held by the Virginia Company, the question at hand was whether the new colony could supply enough tobacco to meet English needs and discontinue Spanish imports. In later negotiations, advocates of the monopoly even suggested that perhaps Virginia could supply the majority of English tobacco while only a fixed percentage would be purchased from Spain. At the present juncture Bland faced a different dilemma. The colonies of Virginia and Maryland now produced a significant amount of tobacco and because of the

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<sup>456</sup> Ibid.

<sup>457</sup> Ibid.

quantity and the particular type of tobacco it could not be completely absorbed by the English market. Therefore, foreign trade became a necessary outlet for their product in order to avoid the prices falling from a surplus within the British economy. Furthermore, while the Chesapeake had come to develop a reputation for tobacco, even causing Cromwell to prohibit its growth elsewhere, these mandates did not regulate the foreign market. Closing off Chesapeake trade with the Dutch could force them to look elsewhere and grow their own tobacco that would eventually compete with Virginia's crops. While Bland supported protectionist mercantile theory, his economic policies also evolved with the developing Atlantic market.

In his first publication Bland did not advocate the complete closing off of trade to foreign nations; neither did he argue for a complete policy of free trade in his second treatise. He suggested instead that the Dutch pay a duty two to three times as much as they had previously paid in order to trade with the British colonies. To encourage English trade he suggested that English ships traveling to the colonies be freed of any custom. He saw the taxes as unnecessary because the proceeds of the goods sold abroad would “countervail at their return to England to Your Majesty twice the Custome that should have been paid, did they come directly from those Colonies to England.”<sup>458</sup> Coupled together, Bland's publications help to illustrate an Atlantic puritan policy towards trade also exhibited by the Bennetts, Gookins, and Sylvesters. In his first treatise Bland presented a number of scenarios to help grow and strengthen British trade, which would have likely stimulated his own profits as well. Similarly, in his second remonstrance Bland not only hoped to restore the previous level of profits to his trade, but also presented an argument by which he hoped to increase British trade and encourage the

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<sup>458</sup> Ibid.

fragile economy in the Chesapeake. His desire to increase the flow of bullion into the English treasury while pushing for British currency as the standard of trade coupled with his interests in reducing imports while growing the export market all aligned with the protectionist elements of mercantile theory.

Unlike their New England counterparts, Bland and his brothers aligned themselves with religious and political authority in hopes that imperial success would encourage individual profit. Their pursuit of mercantile interests was not fraught with the same penchant for conflict that had characterized New Englanders' debates against puritan spiritual and political authority eventually pushing the merchants into a civil court outside of religious jurisdiction. In that way the Blands and their Atlantic puritan colleagues could easily combine seemingly disparate pursuits of profit, piety, and politics into a Trinitarian whole. Their commercial pursuits were spiritualized through a religious lexicon that encouraged corporate bodies to mirror the spiritual body of Christ and the Church while outlining mercantile statutes that followed the Ten Commandments. Their spiritual roles became economic and political as well, as profit encouraged trade which allowed for political and therefore spiritual victory against advancing Catholic foes in within an empire focus on the Atlantic. Their merchant trades were also much more than a temporal hobby, but according to John Bland they were a calling, a spiritualized vocation central to the puritan's mission to be found among the elect and simultaneously encourage Christ's millennial return through the betterment of society. Whereas merchant activity in New England had been stained with the connotations of individualism, rejection of spiritual and political authority, as well as preference for the chaos of the marketplace over the spiritual and political authority of a community, the view of



merchant activity among Atlantic puritans was much different. It not only worked within political and religious authority, but embraced them under a larger preference for order as divinely ordained.

### Familial Conflict among Brothers

While the Blands' success was due to an expansive mercantile network built by brotherly bonds, their fraternal ties also brought the family to a difficult end. By the summer of 1671 Virginia's inhospitable conditions had claimed a third brother with Theodorick's death on April 23.<sup>459</sup> After his death the ties between the remaining family members became than amicable. John Bland sent his son Giles Bland to Virginia to reclaim property that he argued had merely been entrusted to his brothers Adam, Edward, and Theodorick, while Theodorick's widow, Anna Bennett Bland, fought for what she believed to be her late husband's properties.<sup>460</sup> John claimed that he had settled the plantations in Virginia and financed their supply under certain "Articles, Agreements, and Coversants" to the sum of ten thousand pounds. He had expected "proportionate Returns from them," but when his brothers died and Theodorick's widow sent word about the considerable estate remaining requesting someone to come and settle matters between them, John decided to send his son from Tangier to Virginia.<sup>461</sup>

While his father's connections landed him the position of customs collector upon his arrival in Virginia, Giles actions seemed to quickly erode at any reputation he had

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<sup>459</sup> Carlisle, *Collections*, 129.

<sup>460</sup> America and West Indies: May 1676', *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies, Volume 9: 1675-1676 and Addenda 1574-1674* (1893), pp. 389-399. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=70108&strquery=bland> Date accessed: 23 October 2014.

<sup>461</sup> British National Archives CO 1/36/67 (Virginia Colonial Records Project M317).

inherited from his father and Uncles. The main source of his trouble came from a skirmish he had with Thomas Ludwell, after a night spent drinking with Sr. Henry Chetley, Bland arrived at Ludwell's home and reacted to Thomas' supposed claim that Giles' father had "sent him wth: forged writings to cheate the Widdow [his aunt Anna Bennett Bland]." <sup>462</sup> After the argument "fell to Bloes" the two men exchanged gloves and planned to meet at the appointed place the next morning. After a sleepless night Giles Bland arrived at the meeting place of the Grand Assembly and nailed Thomas Ludwell's glove to the door. Ludwell sought reparations before the Governor and Council who ordered Giles to ask Ludwell's forgiveness and pay a fine of 500 weight of tobacco. for the damage done in nailing Ludwell's glove to the Assembly door. <sup>463</sup> Giles petitioned the King as did his mother, Sarah Bland, but their efforts came to nothing because Giles was soon wrapped up in a different conflict that took his life. Having sided with the rebels in Bacon's rebellion, Bland was sentenced to death by Berkeley on February 10, 1677. <sup>464</sup> With Giles' death, the dispute between Anna Bennett Bland and Giles Bland developed into a case between Theodorick's widow and John Bland's widow, Sarah Bland. Anna faced a formidable opponent, as John Bland's friend Samuel Pepys had even admired Sarah Bland's acuity for the merchant profession, being surprised to "hear Mrs. Bland talk like a merchant in her husband's business very well, and it seems she do understand it and perform a great deal." <sup>465</sup> While Anna won the case in Virginia, Sarah's appeal to London resulted in a more favorable result for her side of the family. Ultimately the familial bonds that had drawn the Bland brothers together and enabled them to create

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<sup>462</sup> Ibid.

<sup>463</sup> Ibid., CO 1/36/67.

<sup>464</sup> CO 1/39/65 (Virginia Colonia Records Project M319); "Remainder of the Account of Bacon's Rebellion, in the year 1676" February 23, 1769, *The Virginia Gazette*.

<sup>465</sup> *Pepys Diary*, 1422.

lucrative trading networks throughout the Atlantic were also the source of their demise, allowing the family to spiral into legal disputes as the brothers died and left behind their widows to carry on the battles.

Despite the troubles that occurred after the brothers' deaths, the Blands: John, Adam, Edward, William, and Theodorick had capitalized on the intersection of their faith, familial bonds, and commercial interests to expand and enhance already established Atlantic puritan networks. The brothers successfully stretched commerce into the Iberian Peninsula, the Canary Islands, and Tangier while also establishing bonds with important likeminded families like the Bennetts and Emperours. Their efforts not only worked to expand the reach of Atlantic puritan influence, but John Bland's publications coupled with the family's efforts, helped to articulate the larger vision of Atlantic puritan merchant activity. While the convergence of commerce and faith in New England still remained fraught with conflict and tainted with accusations of heresy, individualism, and disorder, the cooperation with faith and commerce among the Blands and their Atlantic colleagues explored a different understanding of merchant activity that enhanced their puritan faith.

John Bland articulated a belief at the heart of the puritan Atlantic, a vision of order where the spiritual, economic, and political aligned. Calling on his fellow puritan merchants to "submit ourselves to our Superiors" and in "no ways to dispise order nor government" to "avoid having any hand in Rebellious practices, either for the destroying of Religion, which is Gods cause, or of our Princes, or Countrie," Bland elevated order to the supreme attribute of his faith.<sup>466</sup> Because the need for order was divine, cutting across the spiritual, economic, and political realms, Bland could sanctify political pursuits and

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<sup>466</sup> Bland, *Trade Revived*, 57.

commercial endeavors considered contrary to puritan piety in New England. The common pursuit of order opened the door for a further overlapping between faith, commerce, and politics. Bland modeled merchant organization along Christ's metaphor for the church, pushing for corporations to be the economic body of the British economy. His guidelines for merchant behavior mirrored the Ten Commandments and the merchant profession became a calling, a purpose from God, rather than just a temporal vocation. Under the umbrella of order John Bland successfully aligned his religious, economic, and political pursuits, sanctifying the secular while permeating his faith with economic and political language.

For Bland, the penchant for doctrinal particulars and political idealism were to be avoided; the first had led to schism in the wake of the English Reformation, and the second to the Civil War. Instead, in a proto-Latitudinarian vein, the puritan merchant was to respect authority and work within proscribed boundaries, seeking not to upset or overthrow the establishment. As Virginia Company members, Parliamentary commissioners, Councilmen, and Burgesses, the Blands and their puritan colleagues adopted a top down approach to faith, economics, and politics. Against the chaos of free trade and open ports, Edward Bennett pushed for tobacco monopolies, while Bland called for higher import duties. Viewing economics within a contemporary mercantile vision of a fixed amount of global wealth, they adopted a protectionist approach that also permeated their religious and political views.

In avoiding the rebellious tendencies associated with rigid doctrinarians and political idealists, Bland and his Atlantic puritan colleagues also deemphasized the religious and political divisions that had scarred the European landscape. In an effort to

cope with unfamiliar yet shifting Atlantic world they redefined puritanism within the Atlantic, creating a community of likeminded believers, equally concerned with preserving order and maintaining community while comfortable with the cooperation across regional, political, and religious boundaries that the Atlantic demanded. Ultimately the value they placed on order, allowed John Bland and his brothers to fuse religion, politics, and commerce into a cocktail of Atlantic puritan faith. Uniting around shared beliefs, a common past in the Ancient church, and a mutual desire for religious, political, and economic order Bland and other Atlantic puritans helped to develop an expansive network of puritan merchants in the seventeenth-century landscape that has redefined the understanding of puritan faith and commerce previously rooted in New England historiography.

## CHAPTER 7

### FROM PURITAN TO QUAKER

In the late seventeenth century the Quaker message seemed to spread like wildfire among the prepared hearts of the puritan Atlantic. In their desire to follow the promptings of divine providence they had found wanting any hope of supreme assurance. Caught between the manifestation of their godly actions, an utterly depraved soul, and the unknowable reaches of God's will for their election, a number of Atlantic puritans began to embrace a more comforting inner light in George Fox's message. From the Chesapeake, up to Rhode Island, Shelter Island, and reaching to Barbados, many former puritans had come to exchange their faith for Fox's message of the inner light. Former sites of puritan communities emerged as centers of Quaker activity by the 1660s as key members of the puritan Atlantic including Nathaniell and Grizzell Sylvester, Anna Bennett Bland, Richard Bennett, Francis Emperor, and William Claiborne became prominent Friends in the emergent Quaker Atlantic. Within ten years of the first Quaker missionaries' arrival in the colonies, the locus of Atlantic puritan activity had shifted towards the Quaker faith.

Likely because of their own puritan antecedents, Quaker missionaries seemed alert to a propensity towards Quaker conversion among former puritan adherents, specifically targeting these communities as potential sites of evangelization. Their approach proved successful as early efforts among former puritans in Barbados, Virginia,

and Maryland reaped a harvest of souls. From the Chesapeake they moved northward to Rhode Island and Shelter Island gaining among their converts the William Coddington and Nathaniell and Grizzell Sylvester. Quaker efforts in the Massachusetts Bay colony were met with ardent opposition, which seemed an anomaly compared to the welcome that had previously received in former puritan settlements. The isolated example of persistent Quaker Martyrs in Boston's puritan stronghold paints an incomplete picture of seemingly futile efforts among their Calvinist opponents. Yet an Atlantic understanding of the breadth of Quaker missionary success on the heels of puritan settlements draws an extensive map, from the Caribbean up the Atlantic coastline, of fruitful efforts to convert puritan outposts. Rather than a foolish endeavor or an act of premeditated martyrdom by individuals like Mary Dyer, the attempts to convert Massachusetts puritans were merely the culmination of a successful missionary effort. While they likely expected some opposition to the Quaker message, the missionaries' success elsewhere portended at least a partial acceptance of their message in Boston. Ultimately, the expectation of finding Quaker converts among puritan adherents was far from peculiar, but rather a probable conclusion drawing from their previous efforts throughout the Caribbean and Atlantic.

An examination of the Atlanticization of seventeenth-century Quakerism also unites the scholarship on two artificially separated fields of study. With an over-reliance on the New England paradigm historians have often characterized the puritan Atlantic as emanating from Massachusetts and Connecticut with strong contacts in England and the occasional foray into African waters or the warmer Caribbean. While Karen Kupperman's examination of Providence Island has expanded the reach of the puritan Atlantic, many scholars still see little puritan activity beyond England and New England.

A separate field of scholarship, largely distinct from the puritan fold, has arisen to describe the impressive Atlantic journeys of Quaker missionaries and the resultant networks which emerged tying England to the mainland colonies and the Caribbean through regular correspondence. For example, Michael Kraus has argued that the Quakers exhibited “closer Atlantic ties” than any other religious organization, a belief which is confirmed by Ian Steele in his study of the Atlantic.<sup>467</sup> Following this argument Larry Gragg has demonstrated how Quakers, specifically those on the island of Barbados became “a critical part of an effective transatlantic network of Friends.”<sup>468</sup> While scholars have demonstrated the success of Quaker missionaries in their Atlantic approach highlighting the dual purpose of their religious and commercial networks, little work has been done to examine the antecedents of these Atlantic connections. In demarcating the study of Quakerism along the dates of its official existence, these historians miss the rich history of puritan networks which proved key to later Quaker success.

Limiting puritan historiography to New England and failing to follow the theological and historical culmination of puritan faith in Quaker conversion unnecessarily separates two bodies of scholarship that should rather exist in conversation. Little work has been done to connect these seemingly separate seventeenth-century Atlantic religious networks. In examining the full breadth of the puritan Atlantic while studying the widespread movement towards Quaker faith among former puritans my work argues that these two efforts were not isolated, but rather uniquely dependent on their corresponding failures and successes. An unearthing of the seventeenth-century Atlantic, coupled with a

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<sup>467</sup> Michael Kraus, *The Atlantic Civilization: Eighteenth Century Origins*, 2011; Ian Steele, *The English Atlantic, 1675-1740: an Exploration of Communication and Community* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

<sup>468</sup> Larry Gragg, *The Quaker Community on Barbados* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2009), 4.



resurrection of their theological similarities reveals a clear line between the building of puritan Atlantic networks which eventually transformed into the successful Quaker missionary ties. In combining the study of puritan and Quaker religious, social, and commercial networks during the seventeenth-century we see a continuum of contracts, bonds, and relationships previously separated by an arbitrary divide between puritan and Quaker doctrine. Following the natural theological progression from puritan to Quaker also reveals a necessary link between the networks that laid the groundwork to develop a puritan Atlantic and eventually transformed into the scaffolding of a powerful Quaker Atlantic network towards the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century.

In 1671 George Fox embarked on a journey to visit Quaker settlements throughout the Caribbean and on the American mainland. Traveling from Barbados to Jamaica, Virginia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, New England and back again, Fox's footsteps illustrate the extent to which the Quaker message bloomed upon the ashes of puritan teachings. Traveling from Bridgetown, Barbados, to Nansemond, Virginia, Severn and Patuxent, Maryland, to Shelter Island, New York, Fox's route draws a clear line between the former strongholds of the puritan Atlantic and what had become flourishing centers of Quaker movement. While Fox's journey occurred nearly twenty years after the initial conversions, his journal demonstrates the role that centers of seventeenth-century puritan activity eventually played in the creation of a Quaker Atlantic. Although many of the original puritan converts were deceased by the time of Fox's arrival, others still dot the pages of his American journal. Therefore, in following George Fox's colonial journey through the Atlantic as a geographical, yet not chronological roadmap, for this chapter I hope to illustrate the breadth of Quaker

conversions among the puritan Atlantic spurred on by the theological alignment between the puritan lack of assurance and the Quaker comfort of an inner light. Ultimately to show how Quaker success was built on an existing framework of puritan relationships which folded the end of puritan networks into the beginnings of a vibrant Quaker Atlantic.

While Quakerism and puritanism often occupy separate fields of historiography based primarily on the New England paradigm of strict puritan opposition to Quaker missionary efforts, their theological roots are quite similar. The Quaker historian Hugh Barbour argued that the division between Quakers and puritans stemmed not from great theological divergence, but a level of similarity that assumed the intensity of familial conflict.<sup>469</sup> Geoffrey Nuttall saw Quakerism as the end of the Reformation, negatively an exaggeration of the office of the Holy Spirit, but positively deemed “true Puritanism, purged of extraneous elements and carried to a conclusion not only logical but desirable and that in Quakerism, with its fresh perception of the implications of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, is the beginning of a new cycle, full of promise for the future.”<sup>470</sup> The accounts of Mary Dyer and William Robinson have drawn a sharp line between that practice of puritan and Quaker faith that seems to have backfilled our understanding of the theological distance between the two faiths. An Atlantic understanding of puritanism and the Quaker faith that followed suggests an alternate paradigm. Outside of New England, where puritan ministers were scarcer and colonial governing bodies did not always align with the puritan way, many puritans saw the practical ending of their faith in

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<sup>469</sup> Hugh Barbour, *The Quakers in Puritan England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1964), 2, 133-159.

<sup>470</sup> Geoffrey Nuttall, *The Holy Spirit in Puritan Faith and Experience* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 14.

Quaker conversion. Perhaps years of intermittent instruction, coupled with a dearth of religious resources and the weight of constant uncertainty of their election pushed a number of puritans to seek refuge in a Quaker message that offered the assurance they had sought for so long. While the sources seem silent on the impetus behind many puritan to Quaker conversions, tendencies towards antinomianism among merchants may have also precipitated the conversions.

While Fox and his followers spent little time discussing former puritan settlements as strategic missionary targets, their efforts suggest a more deliberate organization of the Quaker Atlantic along sites puritanism had once thrived. Early Quaker missionaries were first sent to Barbados, while the first Quakers arrived on mainland America in the Chesapeake. The Sylvesters and Middletons had previously participated in the puritan Atlantic from their plantations in Barbados, while the communities on the Severn in Providence, Maryland and south of the James River in Nansemond were still centers of Atlantic puritanism when Quaker missionaries arrived. George Fox's own theological journey from Quaker to puritan through an unleashing of the Holy Spirit seems to suggest that puritanism served as a natural precursor to Quaker faith and the puritan Atlantic organically into the Quaker networks of the eighteenth century.

### George Fox's American Journey

Nearly a month and a half after leaving London George Fox and his company had spotted dolphins on the horizon, flying fish breaking the surface of the ocean and "a bird

called Booby, as bigge as a wilde goose.” As their time at sea lengthened Fox and his followers began to notice a change in the water, perhaps the deep blue began to lighten into the paleness of Carlisle Bay, signaling their proximity to land. Shortly after John Hull reported that they “saw early in the morning the Iland of Barbados, and about the ninth hourse at night or tenth wee anchored in Carlile Bay.”<sup>471</sup> Shortly after their arrival in Barbados, John Rous brought Collonel Chamberlaine’s coach to deliver the group to Thomas Rous’ house, the home of John Rous’ father.

The connection between George Fox and the Rous family illustrates the larger link between Atlantic puritans and Quakers on the island of Barbados. An established Barbadian planter, Thomas Rous had been an original investor, alongside Thomas Middleton, Constant, and Nathaniel Sylvester in the Shelter Island venture. Having purchased the Island outpost from Stephen Goodyear paying “sixteen hundred pounds of good merchantable muscovado sugar” the four partners signed their “Articles of Agreement” in 1652 allowing Constant, Middleton, and Rous to return to Barbados while their fourth partner, Nathaniel, managed the provisioning plantation in New England. Their original contract stipulated that the pastures, orchards, gardens, estuaries, and mill on Shelter Island were all to be held in common among the partners and that no livestock was to be slaughtered for the first six years of the venture, except what was necessary for household consumption or if an animal had died.<sup>472</sup> While Rouse did not remain long a partner with the Sylvester brothers and Middleton, his business ties and participation within the puritan Atlantic provide an example of the path from puritan to Quaker in the Caribbean. Prior to his collaboration with the Sylvesters, Rouse had become a successful

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<sup>471</sup> “John Hull’s Account of the Voyage” *The Journal of George Fox*, edited by Norman Penny (New York: Octagon Books, 1973) 2:185-6.

<sup>472</sup> Shelter Island Historical Society, Middleton et al “Articles of Agreement” 1652.

merchant planter on the island of Barbados. In 1641 Rouse purchased “all that parte and pcell of ground or plantacon now in the occupation of the sd Walter Fenton scituate lying and being the pish of St. George in the Island of Barbados aforesd conteyning three score acres of land fallen & unfalne” for “the sume or quantity of seventeen thousand pounds of good merchantable and well cleared cotton by the sd Tho Rouse.”<sup>473</sup> Rouse purchased the land together “wth all houses edifices buildings thereupon or... any pte or pcell thereof Builded rayسد and erected and also all & all manner of woods underwoods Timber and Timber trees wth all yt is now standing growing and being upon or wt in the curcomferance & Limetts of the sd three score acros of land.” Along with the land, buildings, and resources upon it Rouse also received the “services of eight men servtantas wtall ye house hold stuffes utensells armes tooles & necessaries & all & evry the Severne dunghill fowles to the said plantacon.” Rouse’s considerable holdings as a planter, of cotton in the 1640s, and a merchant also made him a slaveholder, having purchased eight servants in December of 1641 including “John Brigden, William Godoby, George Oaker, Thomas Rutter, John Hall, Roger Lugne, Andrew Bockley, and Thomas Hatch.”<sup>474</sup> When drafting his will in May of 1693 Thomas Rous reported a considerable amount of property.<sup>475</sup>

Outside of the Rous family, the Quaker message had also reached other prominent individuals on the island. In his will, the planter Ronald Holton of Saint Phillips Parish left “to the poor people amongst them called Quakers in this Island,” he gave “seven acres of land being part of that my plantation at the foul bay to be laid out adjoining the

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<sup>473</sup> Barbados National Archives, RB3/1, 314-316.

<sup>474</sup> Ibid.

<sup>475</sup> Barbados National Archives, RB6/3, 169.

lands of Capt Thomas Rawlins for the space of ten years.”<sup>476</sup> Another Quaker, Henry Gallop, left the care of his children upon his widow’s death to “Richard Hoskins Thomas Clarke John Haight Richard Sutton and Robert Thorpe” and “should all of them die or decline and forsake the said truth which the people called Quakers do live in Then and in such cae I desire men and women friends fo the Spring meeting to take the whole and sole care of all my children.”<sup>477</sup> The widow Martha Hooton left instructions that “my body may have a decent and Christian Internment according to the manner & method of my friends, the People of God called Quakers.”<sup>478</sup> While the ownership of slaves was still common among Quaker planters in Barbados Hooton also gave instructions to “acquit Discharge Relase Manumitt and set free a negroe girl named Maria Two yeares after my decease from all manner of serviture and slavery.”<sup>479</sup> Elisha Mellowes also wrote in his will that “my funeral bee performed without any manner of formaility Church Ceremonyes, Priest black cloth scarfes or any other thing relating thereto but that it be excuted according to the usuall manner of the people of God called Quakers.”<sup>480</sup> He also gave “unto the poor of the people called Quakers of this Island forty pounds of current money.”<sup>481</sup>

When Fox docked in the blue waters of Carlisle Bay, the Rous family, both John and his parents Thomas and Mary, had been faithfully serving the Quaker cause for over fifteen years. The family was likely converted by the first Quakers to arrive on Barbados, Ann Austin and Mary Fisher. Henry Fell, another Quaker missionary on the island,

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<sup>476</sup> Barbados National Archives RB6/14 “Will of Ronald Holton” Entered July 24, 1680.

<sup>477</sup> Barbados National Archives RB6/14 “Will of Henry Gallop” Entered September 1, 1680.

<sup>478</sup> Barbados National Archives, RB6/16/188-189.

<sup>479</sup> Ibid.

<sup>480</sup> Barbados National Archives RB6/11/68-72.

<sup>481</sup> Ibid.

reported that Thomas Rous and his wife “are convinced & are very loving and truly he hath been serviceable.” Fell also developed an affinity for their son, John Rous who grew “very deare” to Henry Fell because of his desire to participate in the ministry traveling “among these friends here” to report by April of 1657 that they were having “four or 5 Meetings a weeke.”<sup>482</sup> Alongside Fox, the younger Rouse became a formidable resource for the Quaker cause with a particular passion for the apostasy of Barbados. In 1656 John Rous published a “Warning to the Inhabitants of Barbados Who live in Pride, Drunkenesse, Covetousness, Oppression and deceitful dealings.”<sup>483</sup> Rouse dismissed subtlety in his impassioned plea for conversion proclaiming “Barbadoes! Barbadoes! Who excels in wickedness, pride and covetousness, oppressing, cheating and cozening.” Rous warned, “the Lord who is a consuming fire and everlasting burning will render to every one of you according to your wayes.” Not sparing any from his indictment the recent convert singled out “you covetous ones, who strive to get you care not how; who enlarge your Estates by vilence, and increase your wealth by wickedness; the cry of the oppressed is entred into the ears of the Lord of Sabbath, who will Speedily come to pour forth his plagues upon you, you wicket ones.”<sup>484</sup> John Rous made a personal plea to those like himself, sons and daughters of wealthy planters, urging them not to follow in their father’s footsteps saying, “all you young men and young women, who have not yet acted in the same excess of wickedness, as you Parents have done” should “not do wickedly because your Elders do so; but in the time of your youth seek after the Lord.” In doing this, “you shall be examples to those that be old; and keeping to that which is just, in moderation and sobriety, you shall exceed those who have lived many yeers, and have

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<sup>482</sup> Gragg, 39.

<sup>483</sup> John Rous, *A Warning to the Inhabitants of Barbados* (London, 1656).

<sup>484</sup> Ibid.

spent their time in vanity.”<sup>485</sup> Along with his appeal to fellow citizens of Barbados, Rous also published a warning to New Englanders “a degenerate plant who having forgot their former sufferings” are now “famous among the nations in bringing forth the fruits of cruelty,” and a “word to foolish merchants.”<sup>486</sup>

Other individuals also expressed their Quaker leanings in their wills. George Foster gave “unto Friends Stock namely the people of God called Quakers six thousand pounds of Sugar to be paid yearely by one thousand pounds a yeare” leaving to “ye Judgement of my friends hereafter named to dispose of it either for the use of the people called Quakers here or to them in England were these shall be most need.”<sup>487</sup> Elizabeth Barnes gave twenty pounds sterling per year “to give and distribute to the use and benefit of the poor amongst the people called Quakers in this Island.”<sup>488</sup> She also gave the remainder of her estate “reall and personal to be given to the people called quaker to build and Allmshouse for poor aged friends men and women them to be maintained of the produce of the Estate forever.”<sup>489</sup> As expressed in these Quaker wills, a number of other citizens of considerable means in Barbados had come to the Quaker faith. The Rouses ties with the Sylvester family formed a unique bridge that perhaps precipitated Nathaniell’s eventull conversion. Ultimately connections such as these allowed for a largely successful effort of Quaker missionaries to convert former Atlantic puritans transforming the puritan Atlantic into a web of Quaker connections.

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<sup>485</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>486</sup> John Rous, *New-England a degenerate plant* (1659); John Rous, *The sins of a gainsaying and rebellious people* (1659).

<sup>487</sup> Barbados National Archives RB6/8, 330.

<sup>488</sup> Barbados National Archives, RB6/8/566.

<sup>489</sup> Ibid.



## From the Carlisle to the Chesapeake Bay

From Barbados, George Fox continued onto Jamaica “where wee travailed many hundreds of miles and sett up a matter of 7 meetings” and from their traveled to Maryland.<sup>490</sup> The party “sailed leeward toward the gulfe of fflorida where the same day wee were over against Alligator poind and Manatee valley.”<sup>491</sup> From there they “sailed a week backwards and forwards” before passing out of sight of Jamaica and then passed by the Caymen Islands, “by grand Caimanus the Islands of Turkles Alligators & sharks & Crockadills.”<sup>492</sup> After a vilent storm followed by “great ffogs & mists” they saw the land of Virginia, came to Cape Henry, and “cast Anchor in the bay of Petuxant River.”<sup>493</sup> On the banks of the Patuxent River, Fox encountered “James Prestons on Potoxen.”<sup>494</sup> Before arriving on land in Maryland, George Fox and his company suffered “a great Storme and a boat was cast upon us for shelter.” The result of the tempest was that “the boat was lost and 500 li worth of goods.”<sup>495</sup> Because Fox and his fellow travelers could not get to land they “had a fine meeting with them on the Sea.”<sup>496</sup> When they finally arrived on land “there was a meeting which helf 4 days & there came to it 5 or 6 Justices of peace and a speaker of Parliament & one of the councell and severall other considerable men of the world.”<sup>497</sup>

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<sup>490</sup> Fox, *Journal of George Fox*, 2:206-7.

<sup>491</sup> *Ibid.*, 207.

<sup>492</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>493</sup> *Ibid.*, 209.

<sup>494</sup> *Ibid.*, 232.

<sup>495</sup> *Journal of George Fox*, 2: 209.

<sup>496</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>497</sup> *Ibid.*, 209-210.

James Preston was the son of Richard Preston, who had traveled with his wife and family, alongside Richard Bennett and a number of other Nansemond puritans, after Berkeley's persecution and Governor William Stone's invitation. The patriarch, Richard Preston, had previously received two grants, one for 150 acres and other for 500 acres, in Norfolk County, Virginia. Settling alongside Richard Bennett, and other puritan sympathizers in 1639, the Prestons were likely of the puritan fold as well, especially considering their eventual migration to Maryland where Richard Preston claimed land on the north side of the Patuxent River. After William Claiborne and Richard Bennett used their power as parliamentary commissioners to depose William Stone as governor Richard Preston became one of the six Maryland commissioners. When Stone was reappointed Governor, Preston became part of the Council and was chosen to draft men for an expedition against the Indians.<sup>498</sup> Richard Preston and his son in law, William Berry, were later fined for harboring Josiah Cole and Thomas Thurston, two itinerant Quaker ministers who had been expelled from the colony. The Preston family, closely tied to the puritans who had once lived south of the James River in Virginia, had now become important figures in the Quaker community in Maryland. Having followed the invisible promptings of the Holy Spirit to leave persecution in Virginia and establish a community called Providence in Maryland, the Preston's and their fellow puritans had now followed the Spirit towards its consummation in Quaker conversion.

While George Fox was likely drawn to the shores of the Patuxent knowing that Josiah Cole, Thomas Thurston, and Elizabeth Harris had experienced a considerable success in convincing former puritans in the region, the original impetus for the arrival of Quaker missionaries to the northern reaches of the Chesapeake if not tied to the networks

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<sup>498</sup> Richard Preston, Sr. Puritan Quaker of Maryland, Grandfather of Samuel Preston, 211.

of puritan communication from Barbados to the Chesapeake, were likely tied to these relationships. Puritan networks had fostered the creation of a likeminded religious community stretching across the Atlantic, whose presence during the second half of the seventeenth century allowed for Quaker missionaries to easily track and trace potential outposts for likely conversion. Fox's arrival in Anne Arundel County, Maryland occurred nearly twenty years after the first Quaker missionary, Elizabeth Harris, had first landed in the colony. Her success in converting puritan leaders in the region, including Richard Bennett, laid the foundation for the Quaker stronghold Fox visited nearly twenty years later.

In 1656 Elizabeth Harris left her husband and infant son behind in England to evangelize the puritan remnant in Maryland.<sup>499</sup> Nicholas Wyatt was one of the first Marylanders to be convinced by Elizabeth and had previously resided in the Lower Norfolk Region, moving to Maryland in 1650.<sup>500</sup> Edward and Ann Dorsey, founders of the famous Dorsey family of Maryland, and also formerly Puritans of the Elizabeth River region, became Quakers under the instruction of Elizabeth Harris as well.<sup>501</sup> Also, among

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<sup>499</sup> For a long time historians believed that Harris had originally arrived in Virginia because of a letter written by Robert Clarkson to Fox about Harris. In the letter he referred to the area she ministered in as "Virginia." J. Worall Jr. supported the position that Harris arrived first in Virginia, but Rufus M. Jones and J. Reaney Kelly both argued that she arrived in Maryland first and traveled later to Virginia. They contended that Robert Clarkson, who wrote the letter, was from Maryland, and that many of the men and women convinced in her first trip also resided in Maryland. Also, in speaking of Virginia Clarkson could have been referring to the larger area of Maryland and Virginia, especially considering the fact that he references "two missionaries" probably Thurston and Coale saying they had not yet arrived where he was, presumably because they were still in Virginia, where they had landed, and had not yet come to the colony of Maryland. J. Worrall Jr. *The Friendly Virginians, America's First Quakers*, 2; Rufus M. Jones, *The Quakers in the American Colonies*, 266-68; J. Reaney Kelly, *Quakers in the Founding of Anne Arundel County Maryland*, 2.

<sup>500</sup> Letter dated the 20<sup>th</sup> of the 2<sup>nd</sup> month, 1658, from Thomas Hart, of London to Thomas Willan and George Taylor, embodying a copy of a letter from Robert Clarksonne of Severn to Elizabeth Harris in London dated ye 14<sup>th</sup> of ye 11<sup>th</sup> month, 1657." Swarthmore Collection, Friends Historical Library, London. Cited in Rufus M. Jones, *The Quakers in the American Colonies* (New York: Macmillan Co, 1923 [orig. publ. 1911]) hereafter referred to as the Hart-Clarkson-Harris letter.

<sup>501</sup> *Lower Norfolk County Virginia Court Records*, 71a, 126a, 133a, Hart-Clarkson-Harris Letter.

the former Virginians convinced was Thomas Marsh, one of the men that journeyed with William Durand in 1648 to the Severn area. Settling on “Marsh’s Seat” his family became Quaker and his daughter Elizabeth Taylor became a prominent Quaker on the Eastern Shore after Marsh’s death.<sup>502</sup> Richard Owens, who was mentioned together with Thomas Meers, Edward Lloyd, Thomas Marsh, and John Norwood as nonconformists of the Nansemond region, also became Friends along with his wife Mary Norwood, who had traveled with her husband to Maryland in 1650.<sup>503</sup> Other Maryland converts of the Puritan settlement in Nansemond included Richard Galloway and Anne Chew. Chew had been the only daughter of William Ayres of Nansemond and after the death of her husband she devoted the rest of her life to the ministry of the Society of Friends.<sup>504</sup>

Not only was Harris’ influence significant in the amount of converts, but also in her ability to reach the leadership of the colony. Among those in authority Harris convinced the former commander of the Puritan forces at Severn, William Fuller, who at the time was serving on the Governor’s Council.<sup>505</sup> She also touched the spiritual leadership in William Durand, who had worked as a lay minister while the remnant remained in Virginia serving as a conduit for John Davenport’s sermons and at the time served beside Fuller on the governor’s council.<sup>506</sup> Harris also convinced Henry Catlyn, one of the first commissioners of Anne Arundel County, and a former vestryman of the Elizabeth River Church in Virginia.<sup>507</sup> Anne and James Warner, some of the earliest settlers of the Severn area, also became Friends, James having been a churchwarden in

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<sup>502</sup> Anne Arundel Wills, Hall of Records, Annapolis, 10 ff., 82, 1ff., 494-497 cited in J. Reaney Kelly, *Quakers in the Founding of Anne Arundel County Maryland* (Baltimore, Maryland: Maryland Historical Society Press, 1963), 47.

<sup>503</sup> Kelly, *Quakers in the founding of Anne Arundel*, 27.

<sup>504</sup> Ibid, 43-44.

<sup>505</sup> Hart-Clarkson-Harris letter.

<sup>506</sup> Ibid.

<sup>507</sup> Hart-Clarkson-Harris letter; Kelly, *Quakers in the founding of Anne Arundel*, 21.

Virginia before coming to Maryland.<sup>508</sup> Richard Bennett also joined the Society of Friends, though some debate has arisen over exactly when his conviction occurred.<sup>509</sup> Regardless of the debate, Bennett remained a friend of the Quakers for the remainder of his life, and practiced as a Quaker on his deathbed willing 2,000 pounds of Tobacco to each of four of his Nansemond Quaker neighbors. Bennett's daughter Anne also became a Quaker.<sup>510</sup>

Although Harris did not remain long in the colony, her legacy persisted in Maryland as both her husband, William Harris, and their son Will emigrated from England after the death of Elizabeth's father to live in Anne Arundel County. While Elizabeth remained in jail through the end of her husband's life, she moved to their settlement "Harris' Mount" in 1672. Later that year she greeted George Fox who had come to the colonies to give structure and organization to the newly formed Quaker communities.<sup>511</sup> While Harris' work planted the initial seeds of Quakerism within the colony, efforts were continued by a number of other Quaker missionaries.

Thomas Thurston and Josiah Coale, the first Quaker missionaries in Virginia also traveled through Maryland. George Rofe, an English Quaker who had spent much time

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<sup>508</sup> Kelly, *Quakers in the founding of Anne Arundel*, 22.

<sup>509</sup> The debate arises over a letter that was written by Gerard Roberts to George Fox in July of 1657 (Hart-Clarkson-Harris letter). In the letter he talks of Elizabeth Harris saying "The Friend who went to Virginia is returned in a pretty condition. There she was gladly received by man who met together, and the Governor is convinced." Rufus M. Jones argued that in saying "Governor" Roberts used it in a "loose and untechnical sense" and thus he was referring to Robert Clarkson who was a citizen of Maryland and a Burgess for Anne Arundel County. (*The Quakers in the American Colonies*, 266-7) Jay Worrall Jr. disagrees with Jones in saying that the governor convinced could only be Richard Bennett. This seems probable considering that Bennett still owned tracts of land in Nansemond and the Severn region to which he might have returned at the end of his term as governor, on April 1, 1655. Also, both areas were regions where Harris ministered on her journey. Jay Worrall Jr., *The Friendly Virginians, America's First Quakers*, 6; J. Reaney Kelly provides a third interpretation of the letter saying that the "Governor" might have referred to Captain William Fuller as he was often called by the name of Governor and served as leader for the colony in 1658. J. Reaney Kelly, *Quakers in the Founding of Anne Arundel County Maryland*, 18.

<sup>510</sup> J. Worrall Jr., *The Friendly Virginians, America's first Quakers* (Athens, GA: Iberian Publishing Co., 1994), 6-7, convinced by William Edmundson, Kelly, *Quakers in the founding of Anne Arundel*, 7.

<sup>511</sup> Worrall, 9,10.

behind bars as a result of his sectarian faith, also ministered throughout the South and Maryland. Writing of his ministries to a fellow Quaker he rejoiced that:

God hath prospered my soul according to my desire and hath blessed His work in my hands; and hath made me an instrument of good to many through these countries... The truth prevaieth through the most of all these parts [Barbadoes], and many settled meetings there are in Maryland and Virginia and New England... through all which places I have travelled in the power of the Spirit and the great dominion of the truth, having a great and weighty service for the Lord.<sup>512</sup>

The missionary work of the Quakers did not end with their personal ministry to the Marylanders but was supported with encouragement through letters and the sending of Quaker books. The newly convinced Robert Clarkson wrote, “We have disposed of the most part of the books which were sent, so that all parts where there are Friends are furnished and every one that desires it may have benefit of them; at Herring Creek, Rhoad River, South River, all about Severn, the Brand Neck, and thereabouts the Severn Mountains and Kent.”<sup>513</sup> According to Clarkson’s testimony, the former Puritan settlement of the Anne Arundel region served as the locus of Quaker faith within the Maryland region. The new believers worked outward from this central location to spread the message through the dissemination of Quaker tracts.

By the year 1658 the Quaker faith had expanded enough in the colony of Maryland so effectively that the government began to take notice. In 1658 the upper house reported an “alarm” from “the increase of the Quakers” in the region of Patuxent.

<sup>514</sup> In the minutes of their proceedings they wrote, “Upon information that Thomas Thurston and Josiah Coale had refused to subscribe to the engagement by the Articles of

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<sup>512</sup> Quoted in Jones, *Quakers in the American Colonies*, 274, George Rofe to Stephen Crisp, Crisp Collection of MSS. No. 102. Jones also notes other laborers in the field of which few details have been preserved. He mentions Elizabeth Hooton, Joan Brocksoppe, Joseph Nicholson, John Liddal, and Jane Millard.

<sup>513</sup> Quoted in Jones, *Quakers in American Colonies*, 268. Swarthmore Collection iii. 7.

<sup>514</sup> W.H. Browne ed. and others, *Archives of Maryland*, vol. 3, (Annapolis, MD: State of Maryland), 347.

the 24<sup>th</sup> March [involving an oath] a warrant was issued to the Sheriffs to bring them to Court.”<sup>515</sup> Clearly the two missionaries had brought their message to the region which had upset the local governing authorities considerably and resulted in their imprisonment in Anne Arundel for “seducing the people and dissuading the people from taking the engagement [on account of the oath].”<sup>516</sup> Among those convinced from their work in the area was Michael Brookes of Calvert County, the former Puritan and father of the Harvard Scholar Charles Brookes, who later refused to swear an oath and was fined for his disobedience.<sup>517</sup> Through the missionary work of Thurston and Coale the message of the Quaker inner light had been planted within the Patuxent region and had begun to spread amongst the former Puritan community. Following their work the missionaries William Robinson, Christopher Holder, and Robert Hodgson also visited the colony in 1659 and their work resulted in a “large convincement.” Concerning his newfound Friends in Maryland Coale later wrote in February of 1661, “As concerning Friends in the Province of Maryland, I left them generally very well and fresh in the truth.”<sup>518</sup> The considerable amount of conversions alongside the recent political attention focused at the Quakers demonstrated Harris and her fellow missionaries’ widespread success in convincing former puritans in Maryland.

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<sup>515</sup> Ibid, 347.

<sup>516</sup> Ibid., 348.

<sup>517</sup> Ibid., 358.

<sup>518</sup> Quoted in Jones, *Quakers in American Colonies*, 279, MS. Letter of Josiah Coale to George Fox, 1660. A.R. B. Collection No. 53.

## Fox's Journey to New England

Leaving from Maryland, the group hired Indian guides to lead them through the wilderness to New Jersey, and from there to Oyster Bay where Fox wrote, “we we stayed for a winde to goe to Rhode Island.”<sup>519</sup> On March 28<sup>th</sup> the winds were favorable and they set sail for Rhode Island, about 200 miles by water, arriving on March 30<sup>th</sup>.<sup>520</sup> John Stubbs wrote to Margaret Fell about their time in Rhode Island, saying that William Coddington had hosted a four day men’s meeting preceded by the general meeting and followed by the women’s meeting.<sup>521</sup> Coddington also hosted a marriage at his home and later wrote to John Winthrop saying, “George Fox being at my house (who saw thee in England) spake to me to write thee, viz. that Samuel Winthrop, thy brother, was with him at Barbadoes, came hither to visit him, and G.F. could wish that thou was like him, and that thou wouldst stave off persecution...”<sup>522</sup>

George Fox’s time spent with Coddington and his family, for the meetings and wedding, draw a further connection between the puritan Atlantic and its Quaker followings. William Coddington had arrived in Boston, Massachusetts in 1630 sympathizing early with the dissenters and defending Anne Hutchinson against her accusers. In 1638 he left Boston to lead a dissenting group to Aquidneck, the island portion of Rhode Island, where he was the Judge or Governor from 1640 to 1647. Coddington later founded Newport, and it was on a trip to England to secure another charter for Rhode Island, placing himself at the helm, that Coddington met and married

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<sup>519</sup> Ibid., 212.

<sup>520</sup> Ibid.

<sup>521</sup> Ibid., 205.

<sup>522</sup> Fox, *Journal of George Fox*, 377; Quoted by Fummere in *Quaker in the Forum*, 1910, 92.



Grizzell Sylvester's elder sister, Anne Brinley in 1650. The following year Coddington took his new wife back to Rhode Island, and also her younger sister, the then Grizzell Brinley, along with them in hopes that she would find a suitable husband in the colonies.<sup>523</sup> Coddington and his family had become Quakers before 1665, slightly later than his fellow Atlantic puritans in Barbados and the Chesapeake. Their ties to the Sylvesters, across the Long Island Sound on Shelter Island, and their subsequent ties to Barbados and the Chesapeake through their membership in the puritan Atlantic, further illustrate the role that outlying puritan settlements played in the creation of a Quaker Atlantic.

When it was still daylight, Fox and his party left Rhode Island taking the sloop and passing by "point Juda, & by blocke Iland, & from thence to ffishers Iland as before.

Fox wrote:

wee went at night upon the shore, & wee were not able to stay for the Muscatoes, soe wee went in the sloop again, & putt off from the shore, & cast Anchor, & stayed all yt night; and ye next day we went into the Sound, & our sloop was not able to live in ye water & wee turned in againe, for we cold not passe, & soe came to Anchor agine at fishers Iland 2: nights, & there was Exceedinge much raine, whereby wee were much wett being in an open boate; and we passed over the 2: horseraces waters (soe called) & by Garners Iland & ye Gulls Iland, & soe came to Shelter Iland which was 27: leagues from Roade Iland.<sup>524</sup>

George Fox and his company had arrived on Shelter Island to visit the Sylvester family, but Fox was also concerned about the local Manhasset population. He reported that he "had a Meetinge at Shelter Iland amonge the Indians, & the Kinge & his Councell, with about 100: more Indians with him." Fox continued describing how "they sate about 2: hourse & I spoke to them by an Interpreter, that was an Indian, yet could speake English very well." He was pleased with the Manhasset response as "they appeared very

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<sup>523</sup> Griswold, *The Manor*, 120-122.

<sup>524</sup> *Ibid.*, 224.

Loveinge, & they saide all was truth, & did make a confession after ye Meetinge of it.”<sup>525</sup>

Fox’s success in preaching to the Natives allowed him to “set up a meetinge amonge them once a fortnight and a friend Joseph Silvester is to reade the Scriptures to them.”<sup>526</sup>

Fox’s travel to Shelter Island was fruitful and “on the first day after there was a great Meetinge, being at Shelter Iland & many of ye world, & Preists people yt never heard friends before, was there, & they was very much satisfield.” Fox wrote, “I could not goe away until they had seene mee, & spoke to mee after the Meetinge, and I went downe to them, & they was taken with ye truth, & great desires there is, & a great love & satisfaction were among the people.”<sup>527</sup>

Like Barbados and Maryland, Shelter Island had become a prominent center of Quaker activity, uniquely positioned across the Long Island Sound from New Haven and relatively close to the Massachusetts Bay colony. Dating back to 1654, Nathaniell Sylvester seemed to have begun exhibiting Quaker sympathies as recorded by the local government. Records show that he made statements offensive to the local government concerning the Sabbath.<sup>528</sup> In 1660 the court responded to a letter from Nathaniell Sylvester, “written with his owne hand...professing to be a Quaker.”<sup>529</sup> The court accused Nathaniell of being a “frequent harbourer to give entertainemt to yt cursed sect, who fro his island have frequently taken opportunity to come amongst or people, soweing the seeds of their pnitious doctrines, & sometimes by grosse affronts, publiquely to make disturbances at Southold.” As punishment for his actions the court ordered “100 li of ye said Nathaniels estate within this jurisdiction be attached & seised, & not to be released

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<sup>525</sup> Ibid.

<sup>526</sup> Ibid.

<sup>527</sup> Ibid., 224-225.

<sup>528</sup> Hoadly, *New Haven Records*, 93.

<sup>529</sup> Ibid, 364.

untill this court of magistrates have received satisfaction from him for these & such like offences.” Nathaniell Sylvester was also summoned to a court of magistrates to be held in New Haven October 17<sup>th</sup>, 1661.<sup>530</sup> Nathaniell was called a total of three times to present himself to court, but never appeared.<sup>531</sup> The accusations of Nathaniell’s tendency to harbor Quakers on Shelter Island, seem to have been correct as the Quaker missionary John Taylor first arrived on the island in 1659. He wrote of his experience saying:

I came late into an Indian Town, where my Fuide led me into a Wigwam or House; such kind of Hutts that they live in, which are round, made like Arbours with small Polls, &c. And being received kindly, and directed to my Lodging upon some Matts and Rushes, I laid down to Sleep. This was a great man’s House next to the King, and he was very Ill; but by and by, came in a great many lusty proper Men, Indians all, and sat down, and every one had a short Truncheon Stick in their hands pretty thick, about two foot long. So they began to Pow-wow as they called it.<sup>532</sup>

The Manhasset Indians asked Taylor to cure the sick man and although he was unable to do so himself he sent someone back that could care for the man. When Taylor returned that way the man was once again well and the other Indians were “exceeding joyful to see me” and so he “had an opportunity to declare the Truth to them, and to turn them from Darkness to the Light of Christ Jesus... and they heard me soberly, and did Confess to the Truth”<sup>533</sup> Taylor stayed in Shelter-Island until his ship was loaded and ready to sail for Barbados. He wrote, “and there came several Friends from other Parks in New-England, to see us: One was Mary Dyer, who afterwards was put to Death by the Cruel Persecutors and Professors of New-England.”<sup>534</sup> Taylor described Dyer as “a very Comely Woman and a Grave Matron” who “shined in the Image of God.” The two held

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<sup>530</sup> Ibid.

<sup>531</sup> Ibid, 412.

<sup>532</sup> John Taylor, *An Account of Some of the Labours... By Sea and Land of John Taylor* (London: 1710), 6.

<sup>533</sup> John Taylor, *Ibid.*, 6-7.

<sup>534</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

“several brave Meetings there together, and the Lord’s Power and Presence” came to meet them there. Dyer left for Boston before Taylor began for Barbados. Taylor wrote of the departure, “And when we were all ready, I, in much Love and tenderness took leave of Nathaniel Silvester, his Wife and Family, and all Friends there, leaving them to the Grace of God, and ingrafted Word, that is able to save their Souls.”<sup>535</sup>

While Taylor’s visit clearly strengthened the Sylvesters’ faith, it was likely that their conversion occurred before his arrival because of their warm welcome. Taylor wrote that he and his company “after a long and tedious Voyage, wherein we pass’d through many Storms and Tempests” arrived at Shelter Island “where we were received very kindly by one Nathaniel Silvester, a Captain in the Country on the main Land; for this Island was his own.”<sup>536</sup> The Quaker missionary Joan Brocksopp had also visited Shelter Island and her husband wrote of the “tender love and fatherly care” given to his wife while visiting the Island.<sup>537</sup> Lawrence and Cassandra Southwick, Quaker exiles from Salem, Massachusetts, fled to Shelter Island as well where they died a little over a year later.<sup>538</sup> Nathaniel and Grizzell Sylvester’s conversions further demonstrate the relationships between puritan Atlantic networks and the growth of Quaker faith throughout the Atlantic. As Fox traveled from Barbados to Maryland, Rhode Island, and up to Shelter Island he did so knowing, like the Quaker missionaries before him had known, that former puritan settlements were ripe for Quaker conversion, and the ties between those settlements would likely precipitate conviction. Thomas Rouse’s former business connections with Nathaniel Sylvester had now blossomed into shared

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<sup>535</sup> Ibid.

<sup>536</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>537</sup> Griswold, *The Manor*, 205.

<sup>538</sup> Ibid.

religious convictions. While it is not clear if either Thomas Rous or John Rous reached out to the Sylvesters to encourage their conversion, their relationship and subsequent conversions were probably not coincidental.

Mary Dyer's short stay on Shelter Island, after being exiled from Boston and returning again to her eventual death, seems to bring both the puritan and Quaker Atlantic into deeper conversation. While her return to Boston is often painted as an act of martyrdom rather than a belief that her actions would solicit heartfelt conversion, an understanding of Quaker conviction throughout the puritan Atlantic suggests an alternate interpretation. Although Dyer likely knew that her unwelcome arrival in Boston could result in death, her stay on Shelter Island also laid the hope for a different outcome. As puritans turned Quaker, the Sylvesters' conversion, alongside the conversion of their former puritan colleagues in Barbados, Virginia, Maryland and Rhode Island, suggested that a want of assurance among puritans often led to their fulfillment in the Quaker faith. Far from a foolish mission or a predetermined martyrdom, Dyer's actions were likely laced with a hope for conversion among Boston's puritan population, if only because she had witnessed similar spiritual awakening among the Sylvesters.

### George Fox's Return to Virginia

George Fox's arrival on Shelter Island and his successful ministry among the Indians and Europeans unravels a deeper web of puritan contacts which eventually birthed the Quaker Atlantic. Rather than sailing from New England, Fox and his party traversed back towards the Chesapeake along a land route through Maryland and on "ye

5<sup>th</sup> day of ye 9 moth wee sett sayle towards Virginia, the 6 day wee Rowed & sailed about 80: miles, the weather beinge stormie, & winde & ffoggs and raine, and at night wee putt to the shore, & in ye woods we made us a fire with much adoe, all things being wett, and there stayed all night by it.” When they woke the next morning Fox wrote “wee went on ye water, & sailed all ye day.”<sup>539</sup> That night in the dark and rain they came upon a ship from Plymouth and stayed. They began sailing again at daybreak and “came to Nancemum a friends house ye widow Wrights about 200: myles as they account from Maryland” on the seventh day of the ninth month.<sup>540</sup> Fox’s journey to Nansemond, Virginia placed him near the home of Richard Bennett, and many of the original puritan settlers to arrive in the colonial Chesapeake. When Fox visited the then Quaker settlement, Bennett was likely a more fragile shell of the puritan commissioner and governor he had once been. Although he had traveled with fellow puritans from Virginia to Maryland following Berkeley’s persecution, he had returned to Virginia sometime after considering that his will, written on March 15, 1674, referred to himself as “Richard Bennett of Nansemond river in Virginia.”<sup>541</sup> In her writings Elizabeth Harris reported that a governor had been convinced, more than likely referring to Bennett, who had been appointed Governor by Cromwell in 1652, serving until 1655. Bennett also owned tracts of land in the Lower Norfolk region of Virginia as well as along the Severn River, the two main loci of Harris’ missionary efforts. Furthermore, as difficulties arose between the Commonwealth government, the newly settled puritans in Maryland, and Richard Bennett and William Claiborne, Bennett exercised a considerable amount of influence, albeit beyond his direction from Cromwell, on the puritan community in Maryland. This

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<sup>539</sup> Ibid, 233.

<sup>540</sup> Ibid.

<sup>541</sup> “The will of Richard Bennett” in *Seventeenth Century Isle of Wight County, Virginia*: A, 286.

may have also led a number of the puritans turned Quakers in the region to still refer to Richard Bennett as Governor, even though he had been named the Governor of Virginia.

Bennett's 1674 will reveals further Quaker ties, as he bequeathed two thousand pounds of tobacco to four of his Quaker neighbors, including Thomas Jordan of Chuckatuck Creek, the same Jordan who had hosted Fox on his visit in 1672.<sup>542</sup> Fox's travels through the Lower Norfolk region brought him to the homes of many former puritans in the colony. Passing through the "woods, & over many boggs & swamps" Fox and his company came to Bennett's Creek, "& there wee lay [at his house], and the woman of ye house lent us amatt, & wee lay on it by ye fire side."<sup>543</sup> From Richard Bennett's Fox traveled to the home of Nathaniel Basse, who recounted the story of "a weoman that had beene sicke a long time, and all the Phisitions had left her, & could not heale her," but George Fox had asked a friend to "lay his hands on her, & pray by her" and "ye woman woman was healed yt time." Basse retold the story to Fox, and spread it throughout with had prepared the way for a meeting to be held "& the people was taken with ye truth."<sup>544</sup> Fox later wrote of Nathaniel Basse and Richard Bennett explaining how he had left an epistle to be read by Basse to the Tuscaroras' emperor and Kings.<sup>545</sup>

Prior to Fox's arrival, the former puritan stronghold had become a center of Quaker activity attracting a considerable amount of Atlantic attention. Elizabeth Harris' arrival there in the late 1650s, coupled with the work of Thomas Thurston, Josiah Coale, and Will Robinson resulted in a number of early conversions. Coale, speaking of Thurston's ministry in Virginia wrote: "The living power of the Lord goes along with

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<sup>542</sup> Ibid; Fox, *The Journal of George Fox*, 233.

<sup>543</sup> Fox, *Journal of George Fox*, 234.

<sup>544</sup> Ibid.

<sup>545</sup> George Fox, *Epistles* (1698), 336.

him, and there is like to be a great gathering.” Other missionaries followed Thurston and Coale to the lower Norfolk Region. These early Quakers included William Robinson, Christopher Holder, and Rober Hodgson. Robinson spoke of their missionary work saying, “there are many people convinced, and some in several parts are brought into the sense and feeling of truth.” Coale similarly remarked “I left Friends in Virginia generally very well and fresh in the truth. I believe I shall be in Virginia again.” George Rofe, also spoke of his missionary work within the colony of Virginia, that God had made him “an instrument of good to many through these countries”<sup>546</sup>

The work of Quaker missionaries quickly garnered the attention of Governor Berkeley who established a commission, on June 27, 1663, that “the abominate seede of ye Quakers spread not.”<sup>547</sup> While some of the Puritans of Lower Norfolk readily accepted the Quaker faith, others stood firmly against the sect, and in line with the colonial government. Longtime resident and High Sherriff of Nansemond, John Hill, set about eradicating Quaker activity in the region. Hill identified a number of Quakers meeting secretly, or those sympathetic to Quaker belief such as Benjamin Forby who held the dissenters in his home. Quakers were also fined 200 pounds of tobacco a piece for their “unlawful meetinge” and arrested at the home of Richard Russell.<sup>548</sup> The Quaker message had spread throughout the former puritan regions of Lower Norfolk, Virginia until the once puritan threat to Anglican establishment had become a Quaker challenge to authority. Berkeley’s legal actions further demonstrate the success of Quaker

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<sup>546</sup> Quoted in Jones, *Quakers in the American Colonies*, 273- 274, letter in Bowden, il 343; Letter of William Robinson, 1659; Coale’s Letter in A.R.B. Collection, Nol 44; George Rofe to Stephen Crisp, Crisp Collection of MSS. No. 102. Jones also notes other laborers in the field of which few details have been preserved. He mentions Elizabeth Hooton, Joan Brocksoppe, Joseph Nicholson, John Liddal, and Jane Millard.

<sup>547</sup> *Lower Norfolk County Antiquary*, 3:78.

<sup>548</sup> *Ibid*, 79-110, 109, 36.



convincement to warrant government action as an attempt to combat the threat of religious and political disorder. These widespread conversions, coupled with the convincement of the previous leadership among Virginia Quakers including the Bennett family, the Emperors, Claiborne, and the Basse family, illustrate how the seed of Quaker message seems to have flourished puritan soils parched for want of assurance.

Considering both Bennett and Claiborne still held property and ties to Maryland, the connections between Nansemond and the settlement around the Severn River remained strong as both communities shifted towards the Quaker faith. Other families south of the James River also maintained ties with their relatives and business partners throughout the Atlantic, like the Emperor family who remained split between Virginia, Maryland, and Barbados. While Quaker conversion allowed for the continuation of relationships between fellow puritans turned Quaker in many cases, it also divided some families and communities. For example, while Richard Bennett and his daughter Anna Bennett Bland became Quakers, Elizabeth Bennett Scarborough, who had married Charles Scarborough on the Eastern Shore of Virginia never finished the journey into the Quaker faith, as the Scarborough family became synonymous with the persecution of Virginia Quakers. Similarly, while Nathaniell and Grizzell Sylvester became Quakers and devoted Shelter Island to a religious refuge, Constant Sylvester never did embrace the Quaker message. Neither did Daniel Gookin or the entire Bland family become Quakers. Despite this

John Perrot, who had formerly traveled to Rome in hopes of converting the Pope, made his way to the settlement in Lower Norfolk to raise controversy concerning Quaker form and ceremony, specifically the wearing of hats and the holding of meetings. Earlier

Quaker missionaries lamented his arrival as a distraction to the new converts. Mary Tomkins and Alice Ambrose admitted, “he has made our travels hard and our labours sore. What we have borne and suffered concerning him has been more and harder than all we have received from our enemies.”<sup>549</sup> The missionary John Thurston even succumbed to the teachings of John Perrot as he became “lost to the truth” and “a vagaband as to his spiritual condition.”<sup>550</sup> The founders of Quaker faith soon followed early missionaries to the Nansemond region. John Burnyeat arrived in 1665 to discover the “bewitchment” of John Perrot, who had encouraged Quakers to “forsake their meetings” and to become “loose and careless.” Burnyeat quickly went to work restoring the Nansemond area to its original Quaker ideas. He reported that soon “Friends were revived and refreshed, and raised up into a service of life through the Lord’s goodness and renewed visitation.” William Edmundson followed Burnyeat to Virginia where he held “powerful meetings,” “settling men’s minds in the truth.”<sup>551</sup>

The fruits of their combined missionary efforts had resulted in the conviction of a number of former puritan leaders of the community. Along with Richard Bennett, Captain Francis Emperor, and his wife Mary Emperor, had also become Quakers, like their relatives the Oistins in Barbados.<sup>552</sup> While Captain Francis Emperor was no longer living at the time of Fox’s arrival, his widow likely attended one of Fox’s meetings. The

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<sup>549</sup> Quoted in Jones, *Quakers in the American Colonies*, 239, Letter of Mary Tomkins and Alice Ambrose to George Fox (Swarthmore Collection, iv. 239).

<sup>550</sup> John Barclay, ed., “Journal or the Travels, &c. of John Burnyeat Journal” In *A select series, biographical narrative, epistolary, and miscellaneous: chiefly the productions of early members of the Society of Friends: intended to illustrate the spiritual character of the gospel of Christ* (London: Darton and Harvey, 1835), 187, 188-9.

<sup>551</sup> William Edmundson, *The journal (abridged) of Wm. Edmondson, Quaker apostle to Ireland and the Americas, 1627-1712*, edited by Caroline Nicholson Jacob and Henry J. (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, 1968), 58-59.

<sup>552</sup> G. Andrews Moriarity, Jr. “The Emperour Family of Lower Norfolk” *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 21, No. 4 (October, 1913): 419.

Captain Nathaniel Basse mentioned by Fox had also been a prominent puritan in the region. Basse had been one of Christopher Lawne's original backers in 1619 and after Lawne's premature death the patent was conferred to Basse and the other investors who were given until "midsomer 1625 to make yp the number of their said psonns menconed in their former patents."<sup>553</sup> Basse eventually travelled to Virginia himself, settling a plantation near Bennett. Bennett's former colleague William Claiborne had also entered the Quaker fold when George Fox passed by his home "where wee hade service" on his travels from Maryland to Virginia.<sup>554</sup> During the latter half of the seventeenth-century

George Fox's arrival in Virginia, completed a journey to strengthen new Quaker settlements throughout the colonies. Venturing briefly into North Carolina and then traveling back through the Caribbean to England, Fox had legitimated colonial Quaker communities through his arrival while cementing their ties to the central leadership in London. Although Fox and his faithful cadre of missionaries skillfully employed correspondence, itinerancy, and meeting organization to create a religious community closely tied London, the extensive network of Atlantic and Caribbean Quaker swas not merely the result of their isolated efforts. Fox's journey from Barbados to Maryland, Rhode Island, Shelter Island, and Virginia drew a line between communities that were once the centers of a previously vibrant puritan Atlantic. The ashes of the Ancient Church had scattered throughout the Atlantic and Caribbean creating a foundation for puritan networks that would eventually give way to Quaker conversion. Richard and Edward Bennett's efforts in Virginia and ties to Amsterdam, England, and Maryland coalesced with the Bland brothers' ventures in Spain, Tangier, and the Chesapeake. At the same

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<sup>553</sup> Kingsbury, *Records of the Virginia Company*, 1:414, 255.

<sup>554</sup> Fox, *Journal of George Fox*, 242.

time the Sylvesters' interests in Barbados and Shelter Island crossed paths with John Winthrop, Jr. and William Coddington in Rhode Island. Fox and his Quaker followers were not the first to create a fruitful web of networks centered upon shared convictions. Whether knowingly, or by surprise, they stumbled upon an already present community of Atlantic puritans whose previous contacts facilitated Quaker missionary efforts allowing the message of the inner light to spread among former puritan converts as well as through the mouths of Quaker itinerants.

### Conclusion

A study of the puritan Atlantic dissolves arbitrary barriers constructed on the historiographical landscape to reveal instead an interconnected world of colonial faith, commerce, and politics. What began as a small congregation on the southern banks of the Thames in London became a vibrant network of likeminded believers that stretched from Barbados, to the Chesapeake, and into the Long Island Sound. Family served as the nucleus of the puritan Atlantic. In assuming the basic institutions of puritan society, the household took on a public role connecting itself to other individuals and purposes. As such, kinship became the language of commerce and spousal and sibling ties balanced on the nexus of faith, profit, and politics. Families like the Bennetts, Gookins, Sylvesters, Blands, and Emperours were not a reflection of a larger puritan ethos, nor did they passively participate in these networks, but rather they worked together to create the puritan Atlantic.

In following the guiding hand of providence, Atlantic puritans demonstrated an alternate understanding puritanism apart from their New England counterparts. Through an elevation of order as the supreme attribute of their faith, individuals like Bennett, the

Sylvester brothers, Gookin, and Bland created a Trinitarian fusion of faith, commerce, and politics. Understanding trade as tied to state sponsored monopolies, parliamentary regulation, and British mercantile theory these puritans' participation in the marketplace embraced political authority aligned comfortably with their spiritual obedience. Their temporal interests were linked to spiritual pursuits as they interpreted material blessing as a sign of their obedience. Just as mercantile theory permeated their spiritual lexicon, a puritan understanding of the marketplace was also colored by Scripture and puritan doctrine. Existing within the fluidity of an emergent Atlantic world, these puritans were at ease overlapping identities and a blurring of political, commercial, and religious categories while their devotion to divine providence remained constant.

In revealing a different puritan community, existing largely outside of New England, and stretching across the Caribbean and Atlantic my dissertation also suggests an alternate errand into the wilderness. The contemplative introspection of New England puritans is juxtaposed against a faith through action. The lack of devotional sources and commonplace books among Atlantic puritans coupled with their participation in Atlantic trade and politics suggests an alternate display of piety rather than its absence. Atlantic puritans' application of puritan doctrine to mercantile theory exhibits an attempt to follow the Apostle's Paul's instruction not to conform to the pattern of the world, yet be as the disciple John, in the world but not of it. Richard Bennett, Daniel Gookin, and Nathaniel Sylvester's attention to providential guidance in dictating their mercantile endeavors is further example of the centrality of puritan faith as displayed through involvement in secular pursuits rather than separation from them. The wealth of surviving literature recording the inner spiritual struggles of New England's faithful has previously drowned

out competing versions of contemporary puritan faith. In considering a puritan piety expressed in action rather than word we may suggest that puritanism flourished in both contemplative and active forms, neither of which should serve as the standard for puritan piety.

The culmination of Atlantic puritan networks in widespread Quaker conversion finally brings into conversation two previously separated historiographies. In following George Fox's journey through the Caribbean and Atlantic colonies we see a line drawn connecting former centers of puritan activity and eighteenth-century loci of Quaker faith. While the New England narrative of Quaker persecution within the Massachusetts Bay colony created an artificial divide between intimately related theologies, general Quaker conversion among Atlantic puritans suggests a different interpretation. In viewing Quaker conversion as an exaggeration of the office of the Holy Spirit and a natural end to puritan faith devoid of assurance, we identify continuity between the seventeenth-century puritan networks and Quaker conversion in the eighteenth century. Tracing the antecedents of the puritan Atlantic reveals not only alternate expression of the puritan faith outside of New England, revising traditional puritan historiography, but also a fuller understanding of widespread Quaker acceptance throughout the Caribbean and Atlantic.

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