The Shadow of Change:

Politics and Memory in New England's Historic Burying Grounds, 1630-1776

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Abstract

This dissertation recovers the political histories of New England's historic graveyards. From their early rejection of English burial practices to their modern incarnation as tourist attractions, New England's historic graveyards have been public forums for political posturing and debate. Far from the tranquil sanctuaries of later imagination, burying grounds of the colonial era were places where both the powerful and the relatively powerless could make shows of their strengths and air their grievances.

The Shadow of Change is an interdisciplinary study that interprets the material evidence of New England burying grounds through the lens of political history. This analysis is grounded in fieldwork in seventy historic graveyards in Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and Maine, which resulted in an archive of over 5,000 photographs of gravestones and landscapes. The dissertation combines close readings of these objects with more traditional archival research in order to build a rich, chronologically-specific context for understanding how New Englanders deployed the material culture of death to consolidate and contest power among the living.

The political contests that unfolded in New England's colonial graveyards took many forms. In the mid-seventeenth century, Anglo-American settlers rejected the sacred churchyards of their homeland and replaced them with unconsecrated burying places that were administered by civil governments, not churches. Later in the century, their children and grandchildren signaled their allegiance or resistance to the Dominion of New England government by participating in or protesting against the funeral rituals of the Church of England. Disenfranchised people, including Quakers and slaves, found that graveyards offered them a public forum for challenging ruling orthodoxies. By the time of the American Revolution, proponents of the revolutionary cause recognized burying places as accessible arenas for political debate, and deployed the material culture of death to represent themselves as wholly innocent victims in the face of imperial tyranny. Much of this contentious history was obscured by nineteenth-century "preservationists" who imagined graveyards as sanctuaries "upon the border of two worlds," beyond the reach of historical change. This dissertation reestablishes the New England graveyard as a worldly place.

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Figure 1: Timothy Dwyt stone, 1692, Granary Burying Ground, Boston, MA
photo by author

When Professor David D. Hall of Boston University addressed the first meeting of the Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife on June 19, 1976, he suspected that the audience might not like what he was about to say. "I am really here as a fundamental nay sayer," he warned.[1] As a scholar of New England religious history, Hall was skeptical of the topic described in the seminar's title: "Puritan Gravestone Art." He conceded that he was no expert on art, but was deeply invested in the seminar's claims regarding Puritanism. During the 1960s, respected scholars like James Deetz, Allan Ludwig, and Peter Benes had argued that the gravestones of New England's historic burying grounds should be interpreted as symbols invested with religious meaning. In particular, they argued that the evolution of gravestone imagery — death's head to cherubs to neoclassical urns and willows — was related to the decline of orthodox Puritanism, and that gravestones in general were expressions of common

[1] David D. Hall, "The Gravestone Image as Puritan Cultural Code," in *Puritan Gravestone Art*, ed. Peter Benes (Boston University, 1976), 23-32.

people's irrepressible need to experience direct access to the divine within an austere system of formal Puritanism. The seminar comprised nineteen lectures, most of them showcasing local research conducted within the basic "Puritan Gravestone Art" framework.

Hall was not persuaded. "My dissent is quite simply that these stones are *not* connected to Puritanism," he argued. Protesting that Puritanism was neither a stable, coherent system nor a uniquely grim nor authoritarian style of religious practice, Hall chided the scholars for "invok[ing] a stereotypical Puritanism." Furthermore, he claimed, their arguments made little chronological sense, given the fact that only a tiny number of the stones they studied were made before 1670:

> Just when Puritanism was at its most intense, in the early and mid-17th century, or in England, among English Puritans, who were also subject to these same anxieties, we should get the stones. But of course we do not.

Hall praised the "boldness of the interpreters," but nonetheless cautioned scholars who had gone off "in pursuit of meanings . . . not to read too much meaning" into the gravestones. In the end, he concluded that "Puritan Gravestone Art" did not exist. Instead, the objects on display in New England's many burying grounds were minor symptoms of the broad Western tradition of *memento mori*: "the stones are simply there as are emblems, warning us of our earthly vanities, that we are flesh, that we will perish, and that we must prepare for the end."[2] This critique did not derail the discipline to the extent that Hall might have hoped; the subject was so popular that the Dublin Seminar staged "Puritan Gravestone Art II" in 1978.

Hall was half right. Early studies of New England's material culture of death tended to muddy or ignore historical chronology and were overly concerned with establishing gravestones as expressions of a unique vernacular culture. But Hall went too far in downplaying the usefulness of the material evidence. New England's historic graveyards certainly participated in

[2] Hall, 30.

the grand sweep of the Western culture of death documented by Philippe Ariés, but a close analysis of these landscapes and their monuments reveals that they are not merely iterative emblems. Rather, graveyards were places where people of different races, religious traditions, and social ranks communicated with one another. If the "Puritan Gravestone Art" approach did not sufficiently account for the objects' historical context, Hall's "emblem" approach missed the transformative possibilities of evaluating non-literary texts. Without a rigorous chronology, material evidence is vulnerable to unfounded speculation; without the material evidence, traditional religious and political history is vulnerable to privileging ideology over lived experience. The purpose of this dissertation is to bridge that gap.

Until the folk art revival of the 1960s, most of what was written about New England's burying grounds was set down by local historians and antiquarians. With painstaking pride, they transcribed epitaphs, scoured town records, and preserved local histories and legends. Their efforts are invaluable resources, particularly where they preserve gravestone inscriptions that have since crumbled or worn away. A few early works attempted more scholarly approaches, notably Harriette Merrifield Forbes's *Gravestones of Early New England and the Men Who Made Them, 1653-1800* (1927). Based on extensive fieldwork and archival research, Forbes was the first to undertake a comprehensive study of New England's early stonecarvers and their works, upending the prevailing assumption that New England gravestones had been imported from England. Forbes' work spurred a wave of local interest in documenting and preserving historic graveyards.

Academic writing about New England graveyards hit its heyday in the 1960s and 1970s, during the height of interest in American "folk" cultures. Landmark studies like Allan I. Ludwig's *Graven Images* (1966), Ann and Dickran Tashjian's *Memorials for Children of*

Change: The Art of Early New England Stonecarving (1974), and James Deetz's work on iconographic seriation in *In Small Things Forgotten: The Archaeology of Early American Life* (1977) were exemplars of the "Puritan Gravestone Art" approach.[3]

One of the most ambitious works of this era was David E. Stannard's *The Puritan Way of Death: A Study in Religion, Culture, and Social Change* (1977). Drawing on methods from anthropology and psychology, as well as cultural and social history, Stannard argued that New England's mortuary culture underwent a profound crisis in the middle of the seventeenth century. Prior to the 1650s, the death rituals of New England Puritans were translated directly from their English counterparts. Funerals characterized as "antagonistic to ritual and iconography" were the "rule and practice" in both old and New England under the influence of Puritan iconoclasm. During the 1650s, New England's death culture began to diverge from the English example. As the emigrant generation began to die off and the Restoration dealt a heavy blow to their hopes for reforming England, New Englanders faced "a profound sense of tribal vulnerability" as their "sense of failure and isolation grew." Relying heavily on anthropological methods, Stannard argued that the material and ritual culture of death grew increasingly complex in the latter half of the seventeenth century because "the most elaborate funerary customs generally appear when

3 These authors were substantially concerned with the relationship between Puritan art and Puritan religious practice. Deetz argued that particular motifs corresponded with broad developments in religious belief: death's heads dominated the period before 1750 due to the grim outlook of Puritan orthodoxy; cherubs blossomed in the middle of the eighteenth century in response to the First Great Awakening; neoclassical urns and willows marked a turn toward Unitarianism in the decades after the Revolution. Ludwig argued that elaborate gravestones provided an emotional outlet for seventeenth-century New Englanders who "found their need for imagery so great that not even their storied fear of idolatry could come between them and the thousands of stone images they carved." Tashjian & Tashjian disputed this account, arguing that Puritan culture had never been as hostile to imagery as Ludwig supposed. Citing extensive "cultural continuities between old and New England," the Tashjians explained gravestones as "memorial[s] of the past for this transplanted culture" that created meaning out of "a fusion of aesthetic sensibility and religious faith." Despite their disagreements, these authors agreed that the gravestones were the most important feature of early New England graveyards and that the meaning of those stones lay in the connection between art and religion. Allan I. Ludwig, *Graven Images: New England Stonecarving and its Symbols* (Wesleyan University Press, 1966), 5; Dickran Tashjian and Ann Tashjian, *Memorials for Children of Change: The Art of Early New England Stonecarving* (Wesleyan University Press, 1974) 5, 234.

societies are most unsettled and unstable." In this telling, New Englanders introduced novel funerary practices in response to an amorphous, but deeply felt, decline in Puritan cultural hegemony.[4]

These accounts were part of a larger scholarly and popular interest in "folkways" during the second half of the twentieth century. While popular culture expressed this fascination in celebrations of folk music, folk art, and folk crafts, historians partook by tracing American culture to its roots in British folk cultures. A flood of intensely local studies argued that nearly every aspect of life in colonial New England, from "birth ways" to "food ways" to "marriage ways" to "death ways," could be traced to regional variations in English culture. Works like David Grayson Allen's *In English Ways: The Movement of Societies and the Transferal of English Local Law and Custom to Massachusetts Bay in the Seventeenth Century* (1981) paired specific American towns with their English antecedents, finding English precedent for practices as varied as land distribution and the average marriage age. These works were heavily invested in rebutting the frontier thesis of Frederick Jackson Turner, which held that the experience of the American "frontier" liberated Euro-Americans from their ancestral habits and allowed them to become distinctively American. As Allen argued, "In their most vital functions New England institutions were adapted from the English backgrounds of each town's inhabitants . . . New England settlers were able to perpetuate old English practices."[5]

The argument for continuity culminated in David Hackett Fischer's monumental synthesis, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (1989), a text that continues to be widely cited in the popular press, despite its mixed legacy among historians. Fischer argued that

[4] David Stannard, *The Puritan Way of Death: A Study in Religion, Culture, and Social Change* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 109, 103, 122, 124, 128.
[5] David Grayson Allen, *In English Ways: The Movement of Societies and the Transferal of English Local Law and Custom to Massachusetts Bay in the Seventeenth Century* (University of North Carolina Press, 1981), 5.

regional cultures in the United States derived ultimately from the cultures of the various English regions that provided the bulk of emigrants. Thus, New England's "folkways" were transplanted from East Anglia, while Virginia's "Cavalier" culture derived from the south of England and the "upcountry" of America's western frontier reflected the concerns that Scots-Irish immigrants carried with them from the northern borderlands.

While many historians dismissed the generalities of Fischer's work, the foundational premise — that American culture was, at its heart, British culture transplanted — was widely influential during the peak of scholarly interest in New England gravestones. This approach characterized the Anglo-American settlers as fundamentally conservative. They replicated age-old customs, usually without much conscious thought. In the rare instances where the colonists deviated from longstanding tradition, they did so because of their extreme distance from the metropolitan center, like a colony of island-dwelling birds evolving separately from the mainland population. Many twentieth-century scholars of gravestone art celebrated this isolation, tracing the development of regional styles of vernacular folk art and deemphasizing the influence of European print sources on New England carving traditions.

In the years since David Hall aired his skepticism about Puritan gravestone art, a new generation of scholars has tackled the question of death in the Atlantic world, showing how a diverse array of actors used the rituals of death to exercise power over the living. Rather than focus primarily on the artistic merits or religious meanings of mortuary culture, books like Vincent Brown's *The Reaper's Garden: Death and Power in the World of Atlantic Slavery* (2008), Erik R. Seeman's *Death in the New World: Cross-Cultural Encounters, 1492-1800* (2011), and John Wood Sweet's *Bodies Politic: Negotiating Race in the American North, 1730-1830* (2007) have interpreted the funerals, graveyards, and monuments of the early-modern

Atlantic in political terms. In these tellings, burying places and the material culture of death were tools wielded by the powerful to affirm their authority and by the relatively powerless to challenge it. Yet, in their focus on cross-cultural encounters, these works speak only briefly and indirectly to the earlier scholarship of Anglo-New England gravestones and burying grounds. Anglo-New England graveyards certainly were sites of cross-cultural encounter: in addition to playing host to the funerals of New Englanders of all ethnicities, they were key sites in settler claims to Native American land. But burying grounds were also important to the internal politics of the English settlers in a way that these recent studies have not fully explored. The work of interpreting the gravestones and graveyards of "Puritan Gravestone Art" within the more recent understanding of burying grounds as political spaces remains unfinished.

Therefore, this dissertation will explore the political dimensions of the New England burying ground, both as it was experienced during the colonial period and as it was remembered and reinterpreted by later generations.[6] In contrast to the art-historical and anthropological approaches that have dominated past investigations of these places, this project is interested in the ways that commemorative landscapes have been deployed to consolidate or contest political power. In this context, "politics" should be interpreted broadly to encompass both the formal high politics of kings, legislatures, and magistrates, and the informal politics of family life, relationships of servitude, and control over local resources. In short, "politics" concerns any action that either solidifies or alters the power that living people hold over others. In contrast to studies that focus on their aesthetic or theological significance, this dissertation is primarily

[6] In this dissertation, I use the terms "burying ground," "burying place," and "graveyard" more or less interchangeably. The term "cemetery" is not an apt description of the municipal burying grounds of the 17th and 18th centuries, so it is used to describe only those burying places created or altered by the rural cemetery movement of the early 19th century. The significance of these terms is discussed at length in Chapter 1.

concerned with interpreting Anglo-New England graveyards in terms of their role as public spaces used by various groups to establish, maintain, or undermine political power.

Beginning with the arrival of the Winthrop Fleet in 1630, New Englanders used graveyards and grave markers to make political arguments. The emigrant generation was deeply invested in an anti-sacramental program that sought to secularize rites of passage such as burial and marriage in an effort to purge their lives of vestigial Catholicism. They were legal innovators and reformers, and the burying places they established were unlike anything known in their native England. Owned and administered by the town, not the church, New England's common burying places were purposefully profane. No rituals dedicated them as holy places, no ministers presided over their funerals, and the Book of Common Prayer was banished from their boundaries. As municipal spaces held in common, colonial-era graveyards were routinely used as enclosures for animals and sometimes as training grounds for the local militia. Trees and shrubs were nuisances to the gravediggers, not desirable decorations. All of these features were pointed rebuttals of the Church of England's own counter-reformation campaign, which sought, in part, to reaffirm the sacredness and separateness of churchyards. In short, the emigrant generation specifically rejected the concept of the burying place as a holy sanctuary from the world, beautifully cultivated and immune to the pressures of worldly politics.

Over the next two centuries, New England's graveyards continued to serve as arenas for worldly struggles. In the 1680s, the children of the Great Migration fought for control of their burying places against the encroaching power of the Anglican Dominion of New England government. Nearly a century later, another imperial crisis spawned theatrically political funerals and public monuments that defined the violence of the 1770s in terms of crimes against civilians, rather than war between armed combatants. In the meantime, graveyards hosted a variety of

more local demonstrations. Quakers challenged Massachusetts' religious establishment by marking the graves of executed dissidents. Black residents of Newport, Rhode Island, both slave and free, used municipal graveyards as stages for carefully planned funerals and monuments that lay claim to respectable gentility and the integrity of family ties that were not recognized by law. Gravestones marked significant events in town histories, defined the ideal structure of families, and preserved personal grudges.

Some of the political statements on display in colonial New England's burying grounds were unconsciously embedded in the landscape, but many were deliberate arguments, consciously planned and executed in a manner calculated to heighten their public profile. Graveyards were not quaint relics that embodied ancient customs; they were dynamic spaces created by people whom David Hall has called "the most advanced reformers of the Anglo-colonial world."[7] The emigrants who replaced the churchyards of their native England with the municipal burying places of New England were enacting purposeful reforms that pushed the boundaries of English law. The Quakers who ignored the Massachusetts General Court's orders forbidding them from marking the graves of their Friends were consciously constructing a narrative of martyrdom. The imperial officers who chose to build King's Chapel in the midst of Boston's ancient burying ground, rather than on a more neutral location, were asserting their right to re-establish the Church of England's supremacy over the objections of the locals. The newly free Newporters who wrote exacting rules dictating the order and conduct of funerals were making a deliberate effort to control their public image in the face of ridicule from their white neighbors. The Whig partisans who staged elaborate funerals and erected public monuments to colonists killed by British Regulars were calling their neighbors to arms and defining themselves

[7] David D. Hall, A Reforming People: Puritanism and the Transformation of Public Life in New England (New York: Knopf, 2011), preface.

as victims, rather than provocateurs. All of these arguments were staged in New England's graveyards, places that were no more separate from worldly cares than newspapers or legislative chambers.

The chronology of this project spans several centuries, but its geography is limited to the colonies of southern New England: Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth, Rhode Island (including Providence Plantation), Connecticut, and New Haven. As Vincent Brown argued in *The Reaper's Garden*, his pioneering study of mortuary politics in eighteenth-century Jamaica, highly politicized death rituals were not unique to any particular region of the Atlantic world. "Even where demographic conditions were least destructive," Brown notes, "the meaning people made of death and the dead formed a crucial part of their political lives."[8] The New England colonies shared neither Jamaica's catastrophic disease environment nor the specific demographics of a society constructed around slave labor and industrial monoculture. Yet, their mortuary culture was no less politically charged. This dissertation aims to elaborate on Brown's point by reimagining New England graveyards as political landscapes that participated in local, inter-colonial, and intra-imperial power struggles.

Furthermore, this dissertation recognizes the importance of discontinuity and deliberate innovation in early American mortuary culture. While many modern studies have characterized deathways as inherently conservative and slow-changing, a different story emerges when that culture is situated within a well-defined political chronology. As Drew Gilpin Faust has shown in her enormously influential study, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (2008), cultural practices can undergo rapid shifts in order to accommodate political needs. Deathways may appear to be stable because of the universality and finality of death, but both the

[8] Vincent Brown, The Reaper's Garden: Death and Power in the World of Atlantic Slavery (Harvard University Press, 2008), 257.

experience of death and the commemoration of the dead are ever-changing. According to Faust, the Civil War and its "harvest of death" presented nineteenth-century Americans with a "sharp and alarming departure from existing preconceptions" about the "Good Death" — a constellation of longstanding assumptions about who should die, as well as where (at home) and how (with Christian resignation). In response to this upheaval, Americans had to create new institutions and explanations to help them make sense of the "dramatically altered world the war had introduced."[9]

Yet, this dissertation will argue that the Civil War was not a singular event in the history of American culture, but a heightened example of a recurring process. Beginning in the early decades of the seventeenth century, American deathways underwent many dramatic transformations in response to pressing political demands. Though Faust highlights the cataclysm of the Civil War by emphasizing the continuity of assumptions about the "Good Death" in preceding centuries, the truth is that Americans of the mid-nineteenth century had novel expectations about the proper treatment and memorialization of the dead. Many of the cherished assumptions overturned by the war — that the dead should have permanent and identifiable resting places, that individuals should be commemorated in perpetuity and by name, that burying grounds should be sacred retreats for tranquil contemplation — were recent innovations that would have been all but unrecognizable to the Civil War generation's grandparents, let alone to their grandparents' grandparents. This dissertation aims to show that American mortuary culture has actually been surprisingly nimble, changing rapidly to serve immediate needs, rather than stolidly preserving ancient traditions.

[9] Drew Gilpin Faust, This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War (New York: Vintage, 2008), preface.

New England's colonial-era graveyards make particularly attractive subjects for this study because their political lives extend beyond their founding, through the re-interpretive reforms of the nineteenth century and into the historical tourism industry of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Though the rural cemetery movement neither began nor ended in Boston, the public intellectuals of antebellum New England were national trendsetters in both burial reform and the memorialization of America's colonial past. Sesquicentennial celebrations in Massachusetts, including the groundbreaking for the Bunker Hill Monument in 1825, were part of a broader effort to define New England, rather than Virginia, as the cradle of American values. Popular authors like Nathaniel Hawthorne and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow flooded the antebellum literary marketplace with stories of colonial New England. In their fiction and poetry, New England graveyards functioned as portals linking the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries. The historic graveyard preservation movement of the antebellum era relied on this illusion of immediacy to re-imagine colonial-era graveyards in ways that imbued their reforms with the moral weight of tradition. As historian Joseph Wood has argued in his studies of "historical-geographical fantasies" of New England villages, the "invention of tradition was a vehicle of modernization" whereby nineteenth-century reformers reified their own values.[10] This process continues into the present, in which historic graveyards and villages that exist in radically altered forms and contexts present a deceptive face of perfect preservation to Americans eager to draw direct lines of continuity between the past and the present. When the Founding Fathers' graves seem immediately familiar, so do the people who made them. How strange to find them strange.

[10] Joseph S. Wood, *The New England Village* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 180.

Chapter 1:
The Burying Place

On March 28, 1623, Adam Winthrop, aged 75 years, died in the tiny village of Groton in Suffolk County, England. Adam had been an important man in Groton. His family had been Lords of the Manor there since the days of King Henry VIII. In life, Adam's father had adjudicated the squabbles of the local peasantry; in death, he lay in a place of honor in the chancel of the fifteenth-century church at the heart of the community.[1] As a younger son, Adam Winthrop did not rate a grave under the sacred altar, next to his father. He had never been Lord of the Manor in his own right, but he had administered the estate from 1596 until 1613, when the estate passed from his absentee older brother to Adam's son, John.[2] Out of regard for his position, the parish buried Adam in a stone tomb nestled alongside the chancel's outer wall. This was a mark of respect; the entire churchyard was sacred space, but proximity to the chancel and the grave of his father conferred additional gravitas to Adam's interment.

Most of the village probably turned out for the funeral. In the holy churchyard, surrounded by the bones of their ancestors, they would have heard the Reverend Thomas Nicholson intone the familiar words of the Order for Burial out of the Book of Common Prayer: "we therefore commit his body to the ground, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, in sure and certaine hope of resurrection to eternall life."[3] With these hopeful prayers, the parish laid

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[1] The Groton parish church (originally St. Margaret's) was rededicated to St. Bartholomew in the nineteenth century. See Francis Bremer, *John Winthrop: America's Forgotten Founding Father* (Oxford University Press, 2008), notes to chapter 3. Since 1958, the building has been listed as an English Heritage Building (List Entry #1037284). A small portion of the church tower was built in the 13th century, but the bulk of the structure dates from the fifteenth century.

[2] Though the tombstone commissioned by his daughter calls him "Lord of the Manor," Adam Winthrop never held that title in his own right. Between his elder brother's ignominious departure for Ireland in 1596 and the inheritance by his son John in 1613, Adam administered the estate as a sort of acting Lord of the Manor.

[3] Although Adam and John Winthrop were in sympathy with the Protestant reform movement, Reverend Nicholson was not particularly aligned with the nonconformists. He had been appointed as rector of Groton church many years

Adam Winthrop in consecrated ground, where he could await the judgment day with the holy protection of the Church of England. His family paid for a monument inscribed with a lengthy epitaph in Latin.[4] "Thus is he gone before," his son, John Winthrop, wrote to his own son, John Jr., "and we must go after, in our time."[5]

John Winthrop would follow his father in death, but not, precisely, in burial. On the day of Adam Winthrop's funeral in 1623, John expected that his own funeral would be held inside the old stone church. As his uncle's heir, John was Lord of the Manor and merited a grave inside the chancel, alongside his forebears. Two of John's wives — Mary Forth (d. 1615) and Thomasine Clopton (d. 1616), along with Thomasine's infant daughter — were buried in the chancel already, and John had declared a "desire to be laid by my godly and loving wives, if conveniently it may be," in a will he drafted in 1620.[6] If he had lived out his days as a minor baron in rural England, it would have been so.

But John Winthrop did not remain in Groton. In the years immediately following Adam's death, reform-minded Protestants became increasingly uneasy in England and, by 1629, John and many other nonconforming Christians felt compelled to emigrate. Over the next twenty years,

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earlier (before 1596) by Adam's brother, John, who was not a Puritan. In fact, Francis Bremer characterizes the elder John's lifestyle as "an affront to the values of the godly." By 1626, the future governor John Winthrop was eager to replace him Nicholson a more Godly minister (William Leigh). Only the radically nonconformist ministers dared defy Canon Law by eschewing the Book of Common Prayer and its sacramental rites. Nicholson, no radical, probably complied with canon law by reading the Order for Burial from the Book of Common Prayer at Adam Winthrop's funeral.

[4] A full transcription of the epitaph can be found in *Life and Letters of John Winthrop, Volume 1, Second Edition*, ed. Robert C. Winthrop (Boston: Little, Brown & Co, 1869), 4. The monument was certainly in place before 1697, when it was mentioned in a letter from Charles Downing to his cousin, Fitz-John Winthrop; see *The Winthrop Papers* vol. 1 series V (1871), 173.

[5] John Winthrop to John Winthrop, Jr., June 26, 1623, in *Life and Letters of John Winthrop, Volume 1, Second Edition*, ed. Robert C. Winthrop (Boston: Little, Brown & Co, 1869), 180.

[6] Last Will and Testament of John Winthrop, 1620, in *Life and Letters of John Winthrop, Volume 1, Second Edition*, ed. Robert C. Winthrop (Boston: Little, Brown & Co, 1869), 151. There is some confusion in the nineteenth-century accounts regarding the exact burial places of Winthrop family members, some of whom are buried inside the Church of St. Bartholomew and some of whom are buried in the churchyard. In John Winthrop's own account of Thomasine Clopton Winthrop's death, he specifies that she "was buried in Groton chancel by my other wife, & hir childe was taken up, & laid with hir." see Winthrop's long essay on Thomasine's death in *Life and Letters of John Winthrop, Volume 1, Second Edition*, ed. Robert C. Winthrop (Boston: Little, Brown & Co, 1869), 88.

John Winthrop would dedicate himself to the project of planting a Godly colony in New England, serving twelve terms as Governor of Massachusetts Bay. There were no stone churches, nor churchyards, in New England. When the illustrious Governor died in 1649, he was laid to rest with "great honor and solemnity," in the unconsecrated dirt of Boston's common burying ground, a barren municipal lot behind the city jail.[7] John Winthrop could not be buried near a holy altar because the meetinghouse had none. In place of a minister reading the familiar Common Prayer service, Boston honored Winthrop with a salute from the city's artillery company that consumed a barrel and a half of gunpowder.[8] His neighbors did not skimp on the civil honors due to him, but they no longer considered burial a sacrament to be presided over by the Church.

The differences between Adam's burial in Groton in 1623 and John's in Boston in 1649 were the result of a deliberate program of reform undertaken by the first generation of emigrant New Englanders. Between 1630 and 1670, they rejected many of the burial customs of their homeland, including burial in consecrated ground, communal prayer at funerals, burial in proximity to the church building, and ecclesiastical control over graveyards. The colonists deliberately altered English "death ways" that they found too redolent of ceremony, sacramentalism, and latent Catholicism. Instead of consecrating churchyards, they established civil burying grounds owned and maintained by municipal governments. Instead of interring the dead in or near church buildings, they laid out graves in unused lots in marginal locations. Instead of reading the legally mandatory Order of Burial from the Book of Common Prayer, they buried their dead in silence. These changes were not accidental, nor were they expedient solutions to frontier problems. Rather, the rejection of churchyard burial was a purposeful

[7] Nathaniel Morton, *New England's Memorial*, 1669. For a map of Boston shortly after its settlement, see the 1645 map derived from Book of Possessions by Annie Haven Thwing, 1914.
[8] General Court Records as quoted in *Life and Letters*, 397.

statement of the New England colonists' position on one of the crucial political questions of their day.

In the second quarter of the seventeenth century, the sanctity of graveyards was a controversial topic that served as a proxy for the deep divide between radical Protestant reformers and High Church advocates in England.[9] The Church of England is an official arm of the English government and the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw drastic swings in public policy caused by the vagaries of royal religious preferences. Theology and politics were inextricable. Disagreements over the official doctrines and ceremonies of the established Church of England, including the sacramental burial of the dead, were at the heart of the political conflict that erupted into open war in the years after 1639.[10] In choosing civil burial for their dead, Anglo-New Englanders made a bold, public show of their opposition to the High Church program pursued by James I, Charles I, and Archbishop William Laud. Where counter-reformationists hoped to reinvigorate the Church by restoring its ceremonies and its splendor, New Englanders chose stark simplicity. Where Laud and his allies attempted to bring all Englishmen together in unified, conforming parishes, New Englanders chose to bury all corpses in unconsecrated ground rather than imply that all were equally worthy of membership in their churches. Where High Church reformers sought to rekindle reverence for every parish altar and

[9] In this chapter, I have used many terms to refer to the radical Protestants: "hot Protestants," "the Godly," "Protestant reformers," "nonconformists," and "dissenters." I have used the term "Puritan" sparingly for three reasons: First, to use the common practice of British and some American historians, who have moved away from the term, preferring to use the names the Godly used for themselves; second, to emphasize the reformers' mission within the Church of England, rather than setting them as a sect apart; third, to keep a tight focus on the political concerns of the Civil War era, which were not just about spiritual purity, but about the political power struggles over conformity and dissent. Where "Church" is capitalized, it refers to the Church of England.

[10] Here, I am agreeing with British historians who have moved toward a more inclusive view of the English Civil War that recognizes conflicts in Scotland and Ireland as part of the same constellation of wars. These Wars of the Three Kingdoms encompass most of the fighting that took place in England, Scotland, and Ireland between 1638 and 1660, including the Bishop's War, the Irish Rebellion of 1641, the Scottish Civil War, and all three English Civil Wars. see Trevor Royle, *The British Civil War: The Wars of the Three Kingdoms, 1638-1660* (London: Little, Brown, 2004).

holy churchyard, New Englanders pastured their cattle in the plot they called, "the burying place."

These were not solely abstract theological debates. What began as disputes over sacraments, vestments, and prayers ended with a series of bloody wars that upended the English government and inaugurated the golden age of English political philosophy. Anglo-New Englanders may have exiled themselves to the periphery of the English-speaking world, but they still participated in the great political foment of their age. Though many historians have claimed that the New England colonists merely followed prevailing English practices, the changes they made to sacraments like marriage and burial were actually much more radical than anything their English allies were able to achieve. In the 1630s and 1640s, English nonconformists were still resisting sacramental burial by quietly omitting parts of the required ceremony on an ad hoc basis, but their colonial cousins established brazenly non-parochial, non-sacramental burying grounds. It would be decades before any Englishman in England could choose respectful interment in an unconsecrated burial place and more than two centuries before non-churchyard cemeteries were common. By the early nineteenth century, the divergent traditions of England and New England were so long established that the rural cemetery reformers forgot that they had ever been controversial. "The cities of the living are subject to all the desolations and vicissitudes incident to human affairs," Joseph Story argued at the dedication of Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1831, but "the cities of the dead enjoy an undisturbed repose, without even the shadow of change."[11] In fact, the graveyards of New England were not timeless sanctuaries, wholly aloof from worldly concerns. They were political treatises made manifest.

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[11] Joseph Story, "An Address Delivered on the Dedication of the Cemetery at Mount Auburn" (Boston: Buckingham, 1831), 10.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the dead of England were folded into the bosom of the established Church. Every parish had its consecrated churchyard, where the godly and the impious alike were buried according to the service set out in the mandatory Book of Common Prayer. Churchyards were a holdover from England's Catholic history, holy places consecrated by formal rituals and prayers. In many villages, parish churchyards held the bones of generations upon generations of local families, unrecorded until the advent of parish registers in the sixteenth century. Particularly eminent members of the community, like John Winthrop and his grandfather, might be buried inside the church itself, but the distinction honored their social status, not their piety. Common people were laid to rest in the churchyard, wherever time and decay had rendered a spot vacant enough for reuse. This arrangement of graves was simultaneously hierarchical and comprehensive, dividing the dead by rank, but uniting them as parishioners of the established Church of England.[12]

English canon law, revised and renewed in 1604, required that, "No minister shall refuse or delay . . . to bury any corpse that is brought to the Church or Churchyard," except in cases where the deceased had been excommunicated for "some grievous and notorious crime" such as suicide or murder.[13] Even people who had "lived and died most profanely, more like a very atheist and a gross infidel, than like any Christian at all," were afforded sacramental burial. Church officials permitted ministers to use their "wisdom and discretion" in tempering some of the more effusive prayers in the Common Prayer burial service in these cases, but even the wicked could expect to end their days in a sacred churchyard.[14]

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[12] Norman John Grenville Pounds, *A History of English Parish: The Culture of Religion from Augustine to Victoria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
[13] see Canon 68 in The English Church Canons of 1604: With Historical Introduction and Notes, ed. Charles H. Davis (London: H. Sweet, 1869), 66.
[14] Archdeacon Thomas Sparke, Brotherly Persuasion to Unity and Uniformity (1607).

Exceptions were rare. There were no burying grounds for nonconforming Christians anywhere in England before the Civil War, leaving few options for respectful burial outside of the ceremonies of the Church. In a few cases, particularly notorious dissenters were denied churchyard burials. When the Baptist polemicist Samuel How died in 1640, no minister would bury him, so "his Friends were forced to lay his Body in the High-way, as one which was numbred amongst the Transgressors."[15] Other dissenters were buried in London's New Churchyard, a burial place established on the grounds of the infamous Bethlehem Hospital (Bedlam) in 1569 to receive overflow from the city's parish churchyards in plague years. Though New Churchyard (sometimes called Bethlehem Churchyard) was originally commissioned by the city government in response to the plague of 1563, it was consecrated ground, governed by canon law and administered by the Church of England, with burials conducted by priests according to the Book of Common Prayer rites. Still, as one of the few non-parochial churchyards in the kingdom, some dissenters considered it preferable to both the parish churchyard and the ignoble highway grave. In 1590, the Court of High Commission, the highest ecclesiastical court, passed an act to keep London's clandestine Nonconformist congregations from using New Churchyard, but this was largely unenforceable.[16]

In the decades after Charles I's execution in 1649, religious nonconformists established a few burial places outside of the churchyards. English Jews had been allowed their own cemeteries before their expulsion in 1290, and re-established separate burying places after they

[15] William Kiffen in a postscript to the 1683 edition of Samuel How's *The Sufficiencie of the Spirits Teaching, Without Humane Learning* (1640).
[16] Vanessa Harding, *The Dead and the Living in Paris and London, 1500-1670* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 98. See also Patrick Collinson's description of the funeral of the Scottish minister Joseph Lawson at Bedlam in 1584. Collinson argues that this was an opportunity for the multinational Reformed community of London to make a public show of strength. Collinson, *Godly People: Essays on English Protestantism and Puritanism* (Hambledon, 1983), 245. The High Commission order is recorded in Vicar General Stanhope's minute book (volume 1) in manuscript at the London Metropolitan Archives.

were re-admitted to England by the Interregnum government in 1656.[17] When the city government of London established an emergency overflow graveyard at Bunhill Fields during the plague year of 1665, nonconformist Christians seized the opportunity and buried their dead there, even after the crisis had passed. The ground was never consecrated, and those interred at Bunhill Fields — including author John Bunyan, theologian John Owen, hymnwriter Isaac Watts, and Susanna Wesley, the "Mother of Methodism" — were buried without the Common Prayer rite.[18] London Quakers buried their dead, including progenitor George Fox, in a plot adjacent to Bunhill Fields.[19] After the Great Fire of 1666, Sir Christopher Wren proposed the construction of other non-churchyard cemeteries in his plan to rebuild London, but the scheme was rejected, reaffirming the Church of England's authority over most burials.[20] While Bunhill Fields represented a slight shift from the parish churchyard model, the Church of England was largely successful in resisting widespread reform. Most English people — conforming and nonconforming alike — were buried in parochial churchyards until the advent of the rural cemetery movement in the second quarter of the nineteenth century.

In contrast, the New England colonists of the seventeenth century built burying places that embodied new ideas rather than replicating the churchyards of their ancestral villages. Nonconformist Englishmen were hard pressed to find a satisfactory alternative to sacramental burial in 1640, but their colonial cousins established non-parochial burial sites in every town from New Haven to Maine. In doing so, the colonists cut the knot of ancient law and custom that

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[17] Joachim Jacobs, *Houses of Life: Jewish Cemeteries of Europe* (London: Frances Lincoln, 2008), 47-8.
[18] Sharon Achinstein, *Literature and Dissent in Milton's England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
[19] The Quakers actually purchased this burying ground in 1661, so it pre-dates the nonconformist burying ground at Bunhill Fields. The site of the Quaker/Nonconformist burying grounds had been used since the mid-sixteenth century as a dumping ground for bones from the charnel house at St. Paul's Cathedral, thus it's name: Bone-hill.
[20] see discussions in James Stevens Curl, "The Architecture and Planning of the Nineteenth Century Cemetery" in *Garden History* vol. 3 no. 3 (Summer 1975), 15; Harold Mytum, "Public Health and Private sentiment: The Development of Cemetery Architecture and Funerary Monuments from the Eighteenth Century Onwards" in World Archaeology vol. 21, No. 2 (October 1989); Vanessa Harding, *The Dead and the Living in Paris and London, 1500-1670* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 99-100.

stymied burial reform in the metropolitan center. With their principal political opponents an ocean away, New England's emigrant generation made radical changes, arguing among themselves only when the transformations were not extreme enough to appease the insatiable fringe. The unconsecrated burying grounds of provincial settlements like Boston, Newport, and Hartford were just what the "hot Protestants" of cosmopolitan London wanted for themselves, but would not achieve for decades.

The New England burial reforms were part of a much larger program of transformation. Beginning in the mid-sixteenth century, Protestant reformers campaigned to purge the Church of England of the vestiges of Catholicism, including all sacraments and ceremonies not specifically commanded by the Bible. This included the familiar rites of sacramental marriage and burial, along with traditions such as the "churching" ceremony that cleansed women after the birth of a child.[21] Reform-minded clergy of the sixteenth century lobbied to abandon all rites save baptism and the Lord's Supper, and those were to be stripped bare and severely restricted. In addition to opposing ceremonial trappings like the wearing of vestments and the ritual use of the cross in baptism, critics questioned the efficacy of sacraments. Leading reformers like John Hooper argued that sacraments were outward signs that helped people remember God's works, but did no work themselves. Since Christ never taught a doctrine of transubstantiation, the celebration of the Lord's Supper was merely a signifier of unity with Christ, not a consummation of that union.[22] Hooper's vocal criticism of Catholic sacramentalism earned him a death at the stake under the reign of Queen Mary in 1555, but the reform movement could not be quelled. Queen Elizabeth attempted to appease the Godly by outlawing the Catholic Mass in her Act of

[21] John Field and Thomas Wilcox, *Admonition to the Parliament* and *A View of Popish Abuses Yet Remaining in the English Church* (1572). These were originally two separate tracts, but were published together as a single book.
[22] *Early Writings of John Hooper*, ed. Samuel Carr (1843), 196. "No sign, insomuch as it is a sign, can be the sign of the thing meant by the sign . . . So these signs in the sacraments, because of God's promise and contract made with his church, are tokens that God will give the thing signified by the sacraments."

Uniformity in 1559, but reformers protested the Act's reinstatement of the Book of Common Prayer and its requirement that "church ornaments" like chalices, altar cloths, and clerical vestments should remain in use.[23]

Reformers complained that prescriptive ceremonies emphasized practice over belief, making them more Catholic or Jewish than properly Protestant. In their widely influential *Admonition to Parliament* in 1572, reform-minded ministers John Field and Thomas Wilcox objected that traditional blessing rituals "smelleth of Jewish puryfication." The sacrament of marriage was a "Popish forme" that led man to "make an idol of his wife: saying with this ring I thee wedde, with my body I thee worshippe." Rather than the simple burials described in scripture, the Church of England practiced an elaborate ceremony riddled with "foolish and superstitious" rites, from the donning of mourning clothes ("which if it be not hypocritical, yet it is superstitious and heathenish") to the use of burial sermons ("whereout spring many abuses, and therefore in the best reformed churches are removed"). Field and Wilcox complained that the Church's attention to ritualistic details — "the place of burial, which way they must lie, how they must be fetched to church, the minister meeting them at church stile with surplice, with a company of greedy clerks, that a cross white or black must be set upon the dead corpse, that bread must be given to the poor, and offerings in burial time used, and cakes sent abroad to friends" — were irreligious fripperies meant to keep the people "as blind and ignorant as ever they were."[24] Elizabethan authorities regarded this type of criticism as a direct threat to the peace and safety of the kingdom. After the *Admonition* was published, Queen Elizabeth ordered all

[23] For an in-depth treatment of this material, see Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (1967).
[24] Field and Wilcox, *Admonition*.

copies confiscated. The books proved elusive, but both Field and Wilcox were arrested and imprisoned for their defiance of the Act of Uniformity.[25]

Beyond their general objections to "Popish" sacraments, Godly reformers quibbled with the specific implications of the funeral service set out in the Book of Common Prayer.[26] First, it transformed an office that was properly "the duety of every christian" into a rite controlled by priests.[27] Thus usurped, burial became an opportunity for pseudo-Catholic elements within the Church of England to imply that the prayers of the living could influence the fate of the dead. Protestants since the time of Martin Luther had objected to the Catholic practices of indulgences and masses for the dead, both because they made acts, not faith, the foundation of salvation and because they funneled enormous sums of money to a greedy ecclesiastical establishment. The Book of Common Prayer did not offer explicit prayer meant to release the deceased from purgatory, but reformers worried that it was still too close to the Catholic funeral mass.

Furthermore, the rite made no distinction between the saved and the damned. In its 1552, 1559, and1604 editions, the nine-part funeral rite detailed in the Book of Common Prayer required the priest to recite a formal prayer at the graveside:

> Foreasmuch as it hath pleased almightie God of his great mercie to take unto himselfe the soule of our deare brother here departed, we therefore commit his body to the ground, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, in sure and certaine hope of resurrection to eternall life.

Hot Protestants balked at the promise of "sure and certaine hope of resurrection to eternall life," and advocated for changes that would replace such unfounded optimism with a statement of

[25] Francis J. Bremer and Tom Webster, eds., Puritans and Puritanism in Europe and America: A Comprehensive Encyclopedia, Volume 1 (2006), 295.
[26] For a comprehensive discussion of theological objections to the burial rite in the Book of Common Prayer, see Peter Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead in Reformation England* (2002), particularly chapter 3, "The Regulation of the Dead."
[27] Field and Wilcox, *Admonition*.

belief in, "a resurrection of the just and unjust, some to joy, and some to punishment."[28] In short, English reformers considered burial with the Book of Common Prayer too encouraging for use among the general population and too sacramental for use among the Godly. When they came to power in the wake of the first English Civil War, Protestant reformers in Parliament abolished the Book of Common Prayer, replacing it with the *Directory for the Publick Worship of God* (1645), which explicitly criticized prevailing funeral norms as "superstitious . . . [and] in no ways beneficial to the dead, and have proved many ways hurtful to the living." Thus, the old ways should be "laid aside" and bodies buried "without any ceremony," though "civil respects or deferences" should be allowed.[29]

Before the adoption of the *Directory* in 1645, some zealous dissenters did resist ecclesiastical burial. If a parish minister was in sympathy with the Godly reformers' program, he might have defied the Elizabethan Settlement by refusing to use the Book of Common Prayer in funerals, though vanishingly few dared to bury beyond the boundaries of the churchyard. But, too often, historians have read accounts of simple burials before 1645 as descriptive, rather than aspirational. For example, David Stannard, in his landmark study, *The Puritan Way of Death* (1977) quotes the radical separatist minister John Canne, who, writing from exile in Amsterdam in 1634, described the principles of a Godly funeral:

> Concerning burials, this [Nonconformists] say: all prayers either over or for the dead, are not only superstitious and vain, but also are idolatry, and against the plain scriptures of God . . . and thus do the best and right reformed churches bury their dead, without any ceremonies of praying or preaching at all.

[28] Bremer and Webster, 334.
[29] *Directory for the Publick Worship of God* (1645). This document is also known as the Westminster Directory. The Book of Common Prayer was reinstated to its former glory in the Act of Uniformity of 1662. After the Glorious Revolution, the Act of Toleration (1689) allowed Protestants to worship freely in England, meaning that the Book was still the official liturgy of the Church of England, but that Nonconforming Protestants would not be forced to adhere to it.

From this, Stannard concludes that unceremonial burial was "the rule and practice" for Nonconformist funerals in England and practiced "to a less extreme extent by non-Puritans as well." Thus, New England funeral practices were continuations of English custom.[30]

The problem with this argument is that Canne, an avowed separatist, vehemently denied that the Church of England was a "right reformed church." His description of Nonconformist funerary principles in the book he titled, *A Necessitie of Separation from the Church of England*, is a lengthy paraphrase of the grievances aired in the *Admonition to Parliament*, not an eyewitness account of funerals he witnessed. Whatever a radical theorist like Canne may have hoped, Common Prayer Burial was still the law of the land, at least prior to 1645, and burial outside of churchyards was both unusual and ignominious. [31]

In fact, most Englishmen and -women seemed largely content with sacramental churchyard burial.[32] Only those living and dying in London had any semblance of choice, and the evidence indicates that the population preferred burial in their parish churchyards over any alternative. The non-parochial New Churchyard at Bedlam was considered fit for servants, paupers, foundlings, and strangers, and was the designated burying place for the unclaimed bodies of inmates from Newgate prison.[33] In addition to its unfortunate location, New Churchyard's fees were lower than those charged for burial in parochial churchyards, a policy that was supposed to entice frugal Londoners, but ended up providing a cheap way to dispose of

[30] Stannard, 103-110.
[31] Stannard does quote some sources that purport to be observations of Nonconformist burials, including Pierre Muret's *Rites of Funeral* (1677), but most of there were written many decades after the English Civil War, and were interested in comparing English customs to elaborate sacramental burials in Catholic countries.
[32] In *The Dead and Living in Paris and London, 1500-1670* (2002), Vanessa Harding argues that the rhetoric of simple funerals far outstripped the practice: "The paradigm shift ought, perhaps, to have entailed a complete interruption to traditional funeral and burial practices . . . Though there was certainly a Protestant discourse of simplicity and anti-ritual, many Protestant societies retained a good deal of traditional practice, if not of liturgy," 180.
[33] Harding, 96.

marginal persons. While a few prosperous dissenters were buried there, most people who could afford to be buried in their parish churchyards disdained New Churchyard.[34]

There is little question that some pre-1645 Nonconformists attempted to strip their burials of ceremony, but they did so in open defiance of English law. The canons of 1604 explicitly state that those who opposed the Book of Common Prayer and its sacraments would be excommunicated:

> Whosoever shall hereafter affirm, That the form of God's worship in the Church of England, established by law, and contained in the Book of Common Prayer and Administration of Sacraments, is a corrupt, superstitious, or unlawful worship of God, or containeth anything that is repugnant to the Scriptures; let him be excommunicated *ipso facto*, and not restored, but by the Bishop of the place, or Archbishop, after his repentance, and publick revocation of such his wicked errors.[35]

In the years before 1645, any minister who buried his parishioners without the rites prescribed by the Book of Common Prayer implied exactly what the canons forbid and risked his own excommunication.[36] This explains John Weever's observation from 1630, quoted by Stannard as evidence of the ubiquity of simple funerals, that,

> wee see daily that Noblemen and Gentlemen of eminent ranke, office, and qualitie, are either silently buried in the night time, with a Torch, a two penie Linke, and a Lanterne, or parsimoniously interred in the daytime.

Why did nonconformists bury their brethren in the dead of night? Not because scripture required secrecy, but because the laws of England formally banned funerals conducted without Common Prayer ceremony.

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[34] Harding, 55.
[35] Constitutions and Conons Ecclesiastical (1604), canon IV.
[36] In 1645, after the conclusion of the first English Civil War, Parliament replaced the Book of Common Prayer with the *Directory for Publick Worship*, which was more amenable to Nonconformist practice. Charles I denounced the Directory, but was not in a strong position to compel the use of the Book of Common Prayer, being on the run after the Siege of Oxford and a prisoner of the Scottish Presbyterian army until 1647. The chronology of these events is beyond the scope of this paper, but interested readers will find Mark Kishlansky's *A Monarchy Transformed: Britain, 1603-1714* (1997) a useful introduction.

In New England, the Godly could hold their funerals in the light of day. Between 1630 and 1670, the emigrant generation embraced a sweeping program of reform that cut both marriage and burial free from the moorings of English law and long-established custom. They rejected churchyards in favor of municipal burying grounds. They abandoned the Book of Common Prayer. They replaced sacramental marriage with civil marriage. Even their churches were de-sacralized; "meeting houses" were used for civil, as well as sacred purposes, and were not formally consecrated.[37] While these changes were rooted in academic and theological arguments, their effects were both practical and political.

Civil marriage was the norm in all of the New England colonies, though colonial leaders dithered for over a decade before passing laws that explicitly banned ministers from performing marriages. "To make a law that marriage should not be solemnized by ministers is repugnant to the laws of England," wrote John Winthrop in 1636. Nevertheless, he found a loophole: "to bring it a custom by practice for the magistrate to perform [marriage] is by no law made repugnant." Some of the first marriages in Massachusetts Bay reflected this ambivalence. In August of 1630, just two months after his arrival in the colony, Governor Winthrop co-officiated the wedding of Captain John Endicott and Elizabeth Gibson alongside John Wilson, the pastor of the First Church of Boston.[38] This reluctance to outlaw sacramental marriage lasted until 1646. Emboldened by Protestant successes on the battlefield and in the chambers of Parliament, the Massachusetts General Court declared that, "no person whatsoever in this Jurisdiction shall joyn any persons together in Marriage but the Magistrate." Between 1647 and 1650, similar laws were passed in New Haven, Rhode Island, and Connecticut, codifying practices that had little

[37] David Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England* (Harvard, 1990), 167: "The colonists perceived their meetinghouses and cemeteries as civil space, not sacred. The very ground was drained of ritual significance."
[38] John Winthrop, *History of New England*, entry dated 18 August 1630.

precedent in English folk life.[39] New England's civil marriage laws far outstripped the dictates of the Nonconformist Parliament's 1645 *Directory for Worship*, which affirmed that "marriage be no sacrament," but nonetheless judged it "expedient that marriage be solemnized by a lawful minister of the word."[40] The contrast was stark: in New England, ministers could not perform marriages, while their English counterparts were the only officials empowered to do so. England would not institute civil marriage until 1836.[41]

These were not dead-letter laws. In 1647, the Massachusetts General Court prohibited Hingham minister Peter Hobart from preaching at the wedding of one of his parishioners in Boston. Though Hobart planned only to preach, not to officiate, the magistrates were, "not willing to bring in the English custom of ministers performing the solemnity of marriage, which sermons at such times might induce." Such a revealing statement bears repeating: the Massachusetts magistrates regarded marriages performed by ministers as a specifically "English custom" and they were "not willing to bring [it] in" to New England. Besides, they had reason to suspect that Hobart might not support the new civil marriage laws; Winthrop reported that, "his spirit had been discovered to be averse to our ecclesiastical and civil government, and he was a

[39] *The book of the general lauues and libertyes concerning the inhabitants of the Massachusets* (1648), 38. Indeed, New England's requirement that any official perform the marriage was a radical innovation. English law recognized unwitnessed, "clandestine" marriages until Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act of 1753. In a clandestine marriage, a man and a woman exchanged vows, often in the presence of an itinerant clergyman, rather than following the formal process of publishing banns and marrying in front of witnesses in their home parish. R.B. Outhwaite, *Clandestine Marriage in England, 1500-1850* (Bloomsbury, 1995).

[40] Directory for Publick Worship (1645)

[41] Prior to 1836, marriage in England was governed by canon law. Until 1753, the Church of England recognized the validity of so-called clandestine marriages, but marriage was still the Church's domain. In 1753, Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act did away with clandestine marriage, requiring that marriages be solemnized by a minister of the Church of England. Marriages performed by ministers of other Christian denominations (including Catholic priests) were not legally valid. This state of affairs continued until the passage of the 1836 Marriage Act, which legalized other types of Christian marriage and allowed local Registrars to certify civil marriages. Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (London: Penguin, 1979).

bold man, and would speak his mind." When the magistrates learned that Hobart had traveled to Boston for the wedding, they "sent to him to forbear."[42]

The General Court continued to enforce the anti-sacramental marriage laws for the next four decades, making no exceptions for cultural outsiders. In 1685, several hundred Huguenot refugees arrived in Boston after being expelled from their homes in France, bringing with them their language and customs.[43] Though they were Protestants, not all Huguenots shared the New Englanders' particular brand of anti-sacramentalism, and had no qualms about letting their minister solemnize their marriages. When the Boston magistrates discovered that the French minister, Reverend Laurence van den Bosch, had violated Massachusetts law by performing "private Marriages," they "gave [him] some Orall Rebukes."[44] Van den Bosch "promis'd the Court he would do no more such things," but was discovered performing another marriage in September of 1685. When the wedding came to the attention of the Court, van den Bosch decamped for New York, prompting Increase Mather to observe, "the guilty Knaves have run away."[45]

As with marriage, so with burial. The emigrant generation in Massachusetts Bay abandoned the churchyards of their forebears in favor of civil burying grounds that were legally owned and maintained by town governments. In addition to this legal change, they adopted anti-sacramental burial customs that were in line with Godly reformers' aspirations. The emigrant generation preached no funeral sermons over the body of the deceased, erected few permanent

[42] John Winthrop, *History of New England*, entry dated 6 August 1647.
[43] Jon Butler, Huguenots in America: A Refugee People in a New World Society (Harvard, 1983).
[44] Laurence van den Bosch is also known in 17th-century sources as Laurent du Bois, Laurentius Van den Bosch, Laurence Vandenbosk, Mr. Vanderbush, Mr. Vardenbosch, and many other variants.
[45] Samuel Sewall Diary, entry dated 23 September 1685; [Increase Mather], *A Vindication of New England* in *The Andros Tracts: Being a Collection of Pamphlets and Official Papers, etc. Volume 2* ed. William Henry Whitmore (Boston: Prince Society, 1869), 37. All quotations from Samuel Sewall's Diary are taken from *The Diary of Samuel Sewall, 1674-1729*, ed. M. Halsey Thomas, (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, Inc., 1973), hereafter abbreviated as "SS" with the date of the entry.

monuments, and, most importantly, disavowed the Book of Common Prayer. In all its particulars, burial reform in New England far surpassed the limited successes of contemporary reformers in England.

Beginning in the early 1630s, most New England graveyards were the property of towns, not churches. In many places, scattered burying grounds grew up out of necessity in the first sickly seasons, but towns soon took official responsibility. In 1633, Dorchester's town meeting ordered "that there shall be a decent burying place bounden in" by civil officials, and purchased a public bier to carry the dead to their graves.[46] In 1634, Cambridge's "ould burieing place" was still "without the Comon Pales," but less than a year later, the town appointed several men to fence it in, with leftover costs covered "at a publik Charge."[47] In Hartford, Connecticut, the earliest wave of colonists had buried their dead on land claimed by one Richard Olmstead; in 1640, the town purchased the land from Olmstead and paid to re-locate his house to another lot so that the public burying ground could continue to grow.[48] When Boston's first burying place (now King's Chapel Burying Ground) became too crowded in the 1650s, it was the civil government, not the churches, which decreed that, "the old burying place shall be wholly deserted for some convenient season, and the new places [Granary and Copp's Hill Burying Grounds] appointed for burial only made use of."[49] Both were set up on public land: Granary

[46] Dorchester Town Records, entry dated 3 November 1633 in *Records Relating to the Early History of Boston* (1880), vol. 4, 4.
[47] The Records of the Town of Cambridge (Formerly Newtowne) Massachusetts, 1630-1703 (Cambridge City Council, 1901), 15.
[48] Hartford Town Records as quoted in Henry King Olmstead, *Genealogy of the Olmstead Family in America* (New York: De la Mare, 1912), 187.
[49] Boston Town Records, entry dated November 5, 1660 in *Records Relating to the Early History of Boston*, vol. 2 (1877), 158.

was carved out of the eastern corner of Boston Common and Copp's Hill was established on a plot purchased by the town in 1659.[50]

Municipal graveyards were not created or maintained by the instruction of the General Court, but by local authorities making local decisions.[51] Town records from the early decades are full of resolutions and votes relating to civil burying places, mostly concerned with the construction and upkeep of fences. Graveyard fences were not flimsy boundary markers, but substantial structures intended to keep roaming hogs and dogs from rooting up corpses. In 1642, Watertown paid the substantial sum of £6.10.0 for "a sufficient fence about the Burying Place with a 5-foot pale & 2 railes well nailed." Dorchester also ordered a "double raile pale" and the Boston selectmen directed a caretaker to "see that the Graves be digged five foot deep" and make sure "the Gates be fast." Sound fences as high as a man's nose were neither cheap nor easy to build. Roxbury paid £6 for their fence in 1648, at a time when over 40% of Roxbury taxpayers had personal estates worth less than £6.[52] Some towns, like Cambridge, spread out the work, enlisting half a dozen men to take responsibility for rod-long sections.[53] Other towns avoided paying for their fences by ordering lawbreakers to build them as a form of community service.

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[50] see John Bonner's map of Boston (1722); also William Henry Whitmore, *A Sketch of the Origin and History of the Granary Burial-Ground* (1879). For Boston's land purchase from John Baker and Daniel Turell, see Suffolk Deeds, lib. 53, fol. 154 (dated 20 February 1659) in *Records Relating to the Early History of Boston* (1884), vol. 5, 44.

[51] This system caused some confusion among lawyers of later generations, who struggled to reconcile New England's municipal burying places with English law. In 1760, the young lawyer John Adams mused on the problem in his diary, wondering, "In whom is the Fee, and Freehold of our burying Yard? What Right has any Man to erect a Monument, or sink a Tomb there, without the Consent of the Proprietors?" He knew that, "in England, the Church Yards are the Places of Burial," and thus under the jurisdiction of the ministers. But in New England, the official status of the burying place was muddled, in part because towns let private citizens do pretty much as they pleased. "My Father never knew License given nor asked of Town, nor Precinct to sink a Tomb, nor to [raise a] Monument," Adams confessed. He continued, "Suppose my Father, Wife, Child, friend died, and I order the sexton, or on his Refusal my own servant to open any Tomb in our burying Yard, and without further Ceremony deposit the Corps there, can the pretended Proprietor have any Action, or Remedy against me?" In the end, he pronounced the whole inquiry "a matter of uncertainty." John Adams diary, 28-9 November 1760, Massachusetts Historical Society.

[52] For the sake of comparison, over 40% of Roxbury taxpayers (29 of 70) had personal estates worth less than £6 in 1642. Only 30% of taxpayers (21 of 70) had personal estates worth £10 or more. *Roxbury Town Records*, 4-5.

[53] *Records of the Town of Cambridge*, 15. A rod is a unit of measure of 5.5 yards. The Cambridge selectmen ordered a total of nine rods of fence in 1635, (148.5 feet).

When Thomas Clarke of Ipswich was caught "felling trees of the Common, contrary to order" in 1642, he persuaded the town selectmen to forgive the usual fine, "provided that he pay 20s in worke, in fencing the burying place."[54] The records fail to mention where he harvested the wood.

Strong fences kept destructive animals out, but they also created gathering places for tamer beasts. As early as 1637, Dorchester was using its graveyard as an enclosure for goats, which would have eaten grass and brambles, but would not have disturbed the bodies of the dead. By 1653, the townspeople were using the fenced area as a cowpen. At half an hour past sunrise every morning, one of Dorchester's two duly appointed keepers of cows would blow his horn through the northern end of town, collecting the local cattle in front of the meeting house. At the same time, the other keeper would, "goe up to the burying place and take the Cowes and such other cattell not p[ro]hibited that are their left for them," and distribute them through the Common for a day's grazing.[55] Other towns granted grazing rights in the burying place to individuals. In 1651, Richard Lord of Hartford, Connecticut was granted "use of the burying place, to put in horses and calves . . . until the town shall desire to take it into their own hand." Evidently, the town had no such desire, as Lord was still grazing his horses and cattle in the graveyard in 1664, when the town reminded him, "at no time to suffer hogs to come in to the said burying yard."[56] The records of Roxbury, Massachusetts do not specify the type of livestock that John Alcock intended to keep when they granted him "liberty to fe[e]d the burying place" in 1654, but they did demand that he keep the fence and gate in good order.[57] Captain Thomas Savage of Boston got an even better deal in 1657, when he was granted a 20-year appointment as

[54] Ancient Records of the Town of Ipswich: Volume 1, from 1634 to 1650 (Ipswich, Mass.; G.A. Schofield, 1899), 24-5.
[55] Dorchester Town Records, entry dated 27 March 1653 in *Records Relating to the Early History of Boston* (1880), vol. 4, 61.
[56] Hartford Town Records, entries dated 22 February 1651 and September 29, 1664 in *Historical Notes of Connecticut* (Hartford: William S. Porter, 1842), 34.
[57] Roxbury Town Records. entry dated 29 January 1654.

caretaker of the burying ground fence, in return for which he would "enjoy title and use of said ground."[58] These practices continued for many decades. Aaron Bordman, the Harvard College steward from 1687 until 1703, kept a flock of the College's sheep in the Cambridge burying ground, a privilege granted him in return for his promise to keep the gate in good repair.[59] In addition to pasturage, New England towns allowed other profane uses, for example, Salem's 1637 decision to grant John Horne, "a pece of grownd for a winde mill upon or nere the burial place."[60] When Boston established its now-famous Granary Burying Ground in 1660, the town selectmen chose a plot of land abutting the almshouse that had been used as the local pound since 1637. The graves were neighbors to every "tresspassinge beast or horse . . . every trespassing Calfe, goat, [and] hogg" for sixty years, until the pound was relocated to Park Street in 1720. The town was no more sentimental in 1737, when the selectmen voted to build the public granary twelve feet from the graveyard wall. [61]

The shift from parish-owned churchyards to town-owned burying places was a fundamental change, but secular use of graveyards was not unique to New England. In England, churchyards had sometimes been used as pastures, fair grounds, and markets over the centuries.[62] Neither rural villagers nor anti-sacramental reformers saw much harm in putting churchyards to pragmatic uses. After all, they were open, relatively uncluttered fields with prime locations at the

[58] Thomas Savage may have been cutting the burying ground grass for fodder, rather than pasturing animals there. In 1676, when his son, Ephraim, was granted a 14-year lease on the burying ground, the town specified that those rights were "herbage," presumably as opposed to pasturage. It is also possible that the Savages pastured animals in the burying ground anyway — in 1680, the town selectmen warned "those to whom the buryinge places are leased out, to take care that the fences of them be kept well repaired & yt noe Cattle be suffred to feed in them." The selectmen probably would not have warned against the practice if it were not happening (as it undoubtedly was in other towns, where leases gave explicit grazing rights).
[59] *Records of the Town of Cambridge*, 337, entry dated 10 March 1701.
[60] Town Records of Salem, 54.
[61] *Historical Sketch and Matters Appertaining to the Granary Burial-Ground*, Cemetery Department of the City of Boston (1902), 5. The pound was relegated to the northeastern corner of the burying ground. For a graphic representation, see *Map of the Town of Boston, 1676* by Samuel C. Clough (1920) in the collections of the Massachusettts Historical Society.
[62] Norman John Greville Pounds, History of English Parish: The Culture of Religion from Augustine to Victoria (Cambridge University Press, 2000).

center of village life, and both ministers and congregants were eager to pocket the profits. Before the 1630s, oversight from the church hierarchy on this point was lax in many localities. When George Abbott, Archbishop of Canterbury, directed his bishops to conduct audits of parishes under their jurisdictions in 1616, his instructions mentioned churchyards only in passing, requiring that the churchyards, "be well fenced and kept without abuce."[63]

In the 1630s, the ecclesiastical hierarchy adopted a radically different attitude toward the profanation of church buildings and churchyards. In 1633, Archbishop Abbott was replaced by Archbishop William Laud, a High Church reformer who saw it as his duty to protect the Church of England from the irreverence of Puritans and peasants alike. In America, Laud and his allies are remembered as persecutors of the Godly forefathers, but their primary goal was not to trample the consciences of dissenters. Rather, the High Church reformers sought to restore dignity and ceremony to a church caught between the fervent anti-sacramentalism of hot Protestants and the widespread indifference of "horseshed Christians." Furthermore, they hoped to keep the Church of England broadly inclusive, offering religious instruction and sacraments to all, in direct contrast to the Godly reformers' exacting, exclusionary standards.

In Governor Winthrop's hometown of Groton, the changes began in earnest in 1635. The permissive Bishop of Norwich died and was replaced by Matthew Wren, one of Archbishop Laud's zealous allies. Bishop Wren set to work immediately, issuing a lengthy set of orders intended to make every parish church a place of holy awe. The minister must wear "his surplice and hood whensoever he is in public to perform any part of his priestly function." The baptismal font must "be filled with clean water, and no dishes, pails, nor basons be used in it, or instead of it." The Lord's Supper must be a dignified sacrament, with "no wicker bottles or tavern pots

[63] For examples, see *Articles of Enquiry*, Salisbury, 1616. Each bishop issued his own Articles at the direction of the Archbishop of Canterbury — the version quoted here was circulated by Archbishop Abbott's brother, Robert Abbott, the Bishop of Salisbury.

[brought] unto the communion table." Ministers like Groton's Reverend William Leigh, who had been installed by Winthrop in 1626 as a Godly replacement for old Reverend Nicholson, could no longer rely on the freedom of benign neglect. Those who had quietly stripped down the required ceremonies and sacraments were now threatened with excommunication if they did not pass inspection on points ranging from the position of the minister's reading desk (it must "not stand with the back towards the chancel, nor to remote or far from it") to the proper number of godparents ("two godfathers and one godmother for a male child, and two godmothers and one godfather for a female"). Ordinary parishioners did not escape scrutiny; Wren's orders detailed proper conduct by the masses, including the requirement that "every one of the people do kneel devoutly" during church services, as well as during "christenings, burials, marriages, etc." Parish ministers were encouraged to police their congregations and were warned that "the bishop will require an account."[64]

Where old Archbishop Abbott's instructions to his bishops in 1616 had focused largely on policing the qualifications and behavior of the clergy and church officers, the inquiries conducted under Laud emphasized the importance of treating the church and its grounds as sacred spaces. In 1638, Bishop Wren sent another document to the ministers in his diocese: an audit comprising several hundred questions that probed every aspect of parish practice. The inquiry devoted an entire section to "the Churchyard and other consecrated appendages to that holy place." This chapter began with an epigram from the Book of Joshua — "Put off thy shoe from thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground" — and ran to fourteen paragraphs on the proper uses of churchyards. The consecrated ground was, "not to be profaned by feeding and dunging of cattel," nor was it to be disrespected by allowing trash heaps, dunghills, or other "impious

[64] Bishop Wren's Orders and Directions Given in the Diocese of Norwich, 1636, reproduced in *Documentary Annals of the Reformed Church of England*, ed. Edward Cardwell, 1839, 200-7.

nuisances" to grow up within smelling distance. Congregants whose houses abutted the churchyard were not to "soil and profane" the ground by dumping chamberpots or washwater into the area. Neither should the clergy allow the churchyard to be, "unhallowed with dancings, morises, meetings at Easter, drinkings, Whitson-ales, Midsummer-merrymakes, or the like, nor by stool-ball, foot-ball, wrastlings, wasters, or boyes sports." Finally, Bishop Wren required a report on the effects of iconoclasm in each parish. If anti-sacramentalists had "defaced, ruined, . . . purloined, [or] sold" any monuments, gravestones, inscriptions, stained glass windows, or crucifixes in the church or churchyard, the local minister should draw up a report that named names.[65]

The Godly inhabitants of Suffolk were alarmed by these orders and their insistence on sacramental orthodoxy. Fretful letters arrived in Boston from Governor Winthrop's sister, Lucy Winthrop Downing, who feared that the new edicts would force nonconforming ministers from their pulpits. Groton was "very like to lose Msr. Le[igh]." In fact, Reverend Leigh was indeed excommunicated by Bishop Wren in 1636, but quickly welcomed back into the fold when he promised to comply with Wren's orders for ceremonial garb and sacramental worship. Hearing of this betrayal, Governor Winthrop advised his sister to cut her ties to Leigh and any others who might bend to the Bishop's orders.[66] Some of her neighbors resisted the changes, but not without consequences: "Msr. Gourden is questioned for not bowinge and knellinge att burial prayers," Lucy reported in the spring of 1636.[67]

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[65] Richard Montagu, Articles of Enquiry and Direction for the Diocese of Norwich (1638), EEBO #STC (2nd ed.) / 10300.

[66] See Leigh's letter to Governor Winthrop in *Winthrop Papers* vol 1 series 5 (1871), 226: "It cutt me to ye heart, when you bad [your sister Lucy] to take heed to her soule, least by me she should be ledd into by paths . . . Know I am not more zealous of ceremonies this day, than when you first called me to Groton. I then wore the surpliss, lesse frequentlie for yor sake; now more frequentlie for my ministries sake." for more, see Tom Webster, *Godly Clergy in Early Stuart England* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), Chapter 10: Juxon, Wren, and the Implementation of Laudianism

[67] Letter Lucy Winthrop Downing to Margaret Winthrop, 1636, *Winthrop Papers* MHS 1871 p. 11.

At precisely the same time, anti-sacramental nonconformists in New Englanders were profaning their graveyards on purpose. Beyond keeping hogs and dogs from eating the corpses, the emigrant generation showed little solicitude for their burying places. Insofar as the fenced land was useful, it was put to use, and if no midsummer merrymakers or Morris dancers tromped over the graves, it was not out of special concern for the sanctity of consecrated ground.

Even in their language, New Englanders traded the sacred for the mundane. Terms like "churchyard" and "holy ground" were universally abandoned in favor of the flatly prosaic "burying place." Synonyms like "graveyard" and "burial ground" did not enter the Anglo-American lexicon until the eighteenth century, while poetic euphemisms like "cemetery" were rare before 1750 and not in common usage until the nineteenth century.[68] In town records, personal correspondence, and journals, first-generation Anglo-New Englanders were resolute in their use of the term "burying place" and its close cousin, "burial place."

This unlovely language had the virtue of accuracy, at least in Massachusetts, because the emigrant generation did not bury their dead near their churches. Since common burying grounds were neither consecrated ground nor the property of the church, there was little reason to locate them next to meeting houses. In most Massachusetts towns established before 1670, the graveyard and the church were nowhere near one another. John L. Brooke's study of early Massachusetts town layouts found that 87% of pre-1670 towns in Middlesex County located their municipal burying grounds at least 400 yards from the local meeting house.[69] This physical

[68] The earliest published uses of these terms in America are as follows: graveyard: the OED places the first usage in 1767, the earliest American example I can find is 1792; burying ground: 1699, *God's Protecting Providence . . . the Inhumane Cannibals of Florida* by Jonathan Dickinson, Philadelphia; burial ground: OED says 1803, but I have an American example from 1750 (*Meditations and Contemplations* by James Hervey).

[69] John L. Brooke, ""For Honour and Civil Worship of Any Worthy Person": Burial Baptism, and Community on the Massachusetts Near Frontier, 1730-1790" in *Material Life in America, 1600-1860,* ed. Robert Blair St. George (Northeastern University Press, 1988). Brooke argues that the layout of New England towns changed dramatically between the earliest settlements (pre-1670) and the 1730s. In the case of graveyards specifically, earlier towns buried their dead at the periphery of settlement was a "radical departure from the traditional English pattern of the

distance was recognized in resident's mental maps of their towns, as in the case of the Dorchester cowkeeps, who regarded the meeting house and burial ground as natural gathering points for livestock from opposite ends of the town.

The geographical separation of early meeting houses and burying places is often masked by later alterations to the landscape. Second-generation New Englanders and their descendants were less concerned with the radical politics of the Civil War era than with creating cohesive communities. As they moved into the interior and founded new towns, many New Englanders embraced a modified version of the churchyard model, electing to establish their municipal burying places adjacent to their meeting houses. In contrast to the emigrant generation's towns, the majority of towns founded after 1670 followed this pattern.[70] Even in older towns, the pseudo-parish model of the eighteenth century altered the existing landscape. For example, when Middleboro, Massachusetts (est. 1669) needed a "new burying place" in 1734, the town appropriated a parcel of land "near the old meeting house."[71] Cambridge's old burying ground is adjacent to the current edifice of the First Parish Church, but the original meeting house (built 1632) was a quarter mile south of the current location, near the intersection of modern Dunster and Mount Auburn Streets. The meeting house removed to Harvard Yard in 1652 and did not move to its current location until 1833.[72] Sometimes, eighteenth-century town founders disagreed over the issue of adjacent or non-adjacent burying grounds. In Hopkinton, Massachusetts (est. 1715), three factions tussled over the location of a new meeting house in

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consecrated churchyard surrounding the parish church" and signaled "Puritanism's departure from the sacramentalism of the Anglican establishment." In the eighteenth century, New England towns took a turn toward "inclusive, territorially defined" congregations, and burial grounds in towns founded after 1730 were commonly located adjacent to the churches.

[70] Brooke, "For Honour and Civil Worship."

[71] Middleboro Town Records as quoted in Thomas Weston, *History of the Town of Middleboro, Massachusetts* (Boston: Houghton Miffling, 1906), 309.

[72] Note that the Anglican Christ Church (1761) was built immediately adjacent to the old burying place to mimic an English churchyard.

1724: one argued for a spot adjacent to the pre-existing burying-ground, one advocated a non-adjacent spot, and a third argued for a location that was convenient to the supply of timber. Unable to compromise, the town meeting drew lots and ended up with an accidental churchyard.[73]

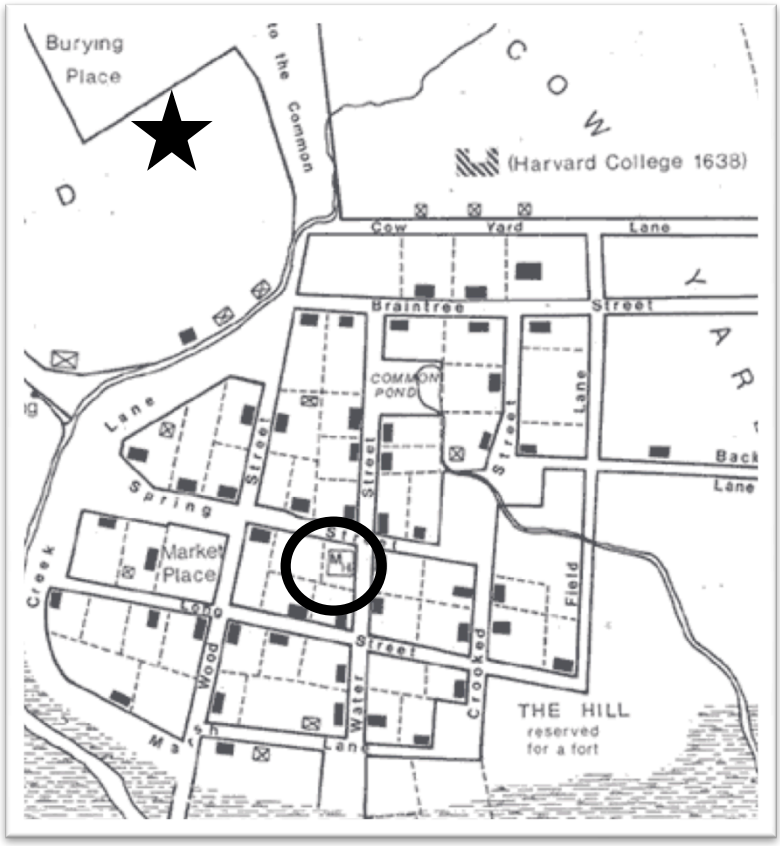

Figure 2: Cambridge (Newtowne), Massachusetts, circa 1635
burying place at upper left
circle = original location of First Church of Cambridge, 1632
star = current location of First Parish Church of Cambridge (UU), built 1833
map by Cambridge Historical Commission

Boston provides a useful example of this geography and its evolution. The town's original burying ground (established c.1630) was a quarter of a mile from the First Church of Boston. In 1639, when the First Church debated the construction of a new edifice, both of the

[73] Duane Hamilton Hurd, *History of Middlesex County, Massachusetts, Volume 3* (Philadelphia: J. Lewis, 1890), 794. Note that adjacency does not imply a legal relationship — the burying ground was still owned by the town, not the church.

sites under consideration were equally distant from the burying place, despite the ready availability of land on the nearby Common.[74] When the town established two new burying grounds in 1660, they were even more remote; the Granary Burying Ground is several hundred yards further from the First Church than the first burying ground, and Copp's Hill Burying Ground was half a mile from the Second Church (1650), on the opposite side of the North End. In 1669, a rift in the First Church spawned the Third Church of Boston, which broke ground for its own meeting house in 1670, a third of a mile from the nearest burying ground.[75] The illusion of churchyards in Boston was created later, first by the aggressive construction of the Anglican King's Chapel on top of the ancient burying ground in 1686, and later by the erection of the New North Church (1723) near Copp's Hill Burying Ground and the Park Street Church (1810) next to the Granary Burying Ground. In fact, the deliberate re-creation of churchyards by building churches on top of pre-existing graveyards was part of the Anglican strategy for subduing New England, a process that will be more fully explored in Chapter 2.

[74] Hamilton Andrews Hill and Appleton Prentiss Clark Griffin, *History of the Old South Church (Third Church) Boston, 1669-1884* (1889), pages 136-9 for a discussion of these debates. Hill and Griffin reproduce a petition submitted in 1639 (manuscript in the possession of the Boston Public Library) showing that the principal deciding factors were, 1) the site with the best air quality and climate, and 2) the likely impact on the marketplace that had grown up near the original site. In the end, the First Church decided to rebuild on their original site (near the Old State House) rather than moving to the southern site. In 1670, the Third Church built on this second site.

[75] See John Bonner's 1722 map of Boston. Contra Bonner's legend, the Third Church was built in 1670. See Everett Watson Burdett, *History of the Old South Meeting House* (1877).

Figure 3: Map of Boston Churches and Burying Places
adapted from John Bonner, "The Town of Boston" (1722)
Courtesy of the Massachusetts Historical Society

All of the New England colonies rejected the parish churchyard model of burial, but their reformed burying grounds were not all exactly the same. The municipal graveyard – a town-owned lot usually located a considerable distance from the meetinghouse — was the dominant pattern in Massachusetts Bay and its offshoots in Connecticut. Other, smaller colonies implemented different flavors of reform, but each took specific steps to set their graveyards apart from the parochial precedent.

Roger Williams' Providence Plantation solved the problem of churchyard burial by abandoning public burial altogether. From 1638 until 1700, Providence had neither a meeting house nor a centralized burying ground, preferring to hold their meetings in private homes and

bury their dead in private gardens. In 1700, after nearly sixty years of private burials, the town meeting set aside a "Comon" parcel of land located about a mile from the meeting house site for "use of millitarey affaires for training of souldiers, etc.; & also to a place to be for the use of Buireing of the dead."[76] Unlike Englishmen in Virginia, who were buried on private land because their plantations were too widely dispersed for communal burial, the Providence colonists could have established a town burying ground to serve their close-clustered community. Their refusal to do so signaled their extreme rejection of English burial norms, even in the strictly reformed variation common elsewhere in New England.

New Haven followed Massachusetts and Connecticut in creating a municipal burying ground, but not in separating it geographically from the meeting house. The colony's graveyard, established in 1638, was part of an experimental town plan: a perfectly symmetrical nine-square grid based in part on descriptions of Israelite encampments found in the Book of Numbers and in part on contemporary Protestant utopian thought. Within the 1,500 square cubits of the grid, communal functions — burying ground, meeting house, market, and drill field — were clustered together in the central square. According to architectural historian John Archer, this Biblically-inspired town plan was of a piece with New Haven's Biblically-inspired town government, "a literal, graphic representation of those tribes in covenant with the Lord."[77] Needless to say, this was a substantial departure from ancient English "town ways." New Haven's burying ground may have been near the colony's meeting house, but it was not an English-style churchyard. Like the other New England graveyards, it was unconsecrated and municipally owned and

[76] Providence Town Meeting, 10 June 10 1700 as reproduced in *The Early Records of the Town of Providence*, p. 2. Rhode Island's seventeenth-century burying places were notably heterodox, incorporating Massachusetts-style municipal graveyards like Newport's Common Burying Ground (1640), officially recognized burying grounds for Quakers (Clifton Cemetery in Newport is 1675) and Jews (Touro Synagogue Cemetery, 1677), and family plots on private land.

[77] John Archer, "Puritan Town Planning in New Haven," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, vol 34, no 2. (May 1975), 140-9.

administered. More importantly, it was not a Catholic remnant, but a creation of seventeenth-century Protestant reform, steeped in scripture, not sacraments.

Figure 15: Plan of the City of New Haven, 1748, James Wadsworth
Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale

This pattern of burial innovation on the colonial periphery would repeat in later centuries. The rural cemetery movement was popular among intellectuals in both France and England as early as the 1750s, but did not bear fruit until the early decades of the nineteenth century. Reformers dreamed of non-denominational, landscaped cemeteries on both aesthetic and public-health grounds, but struggled to overcome the inertia of entrenched customs and translate their theories into practice. The first cemetery built on the rural cemetery model was not in France or England; the garden-style South Park Street Cemetery in Kolkata was established by multinational European colonists in 1767. It would be decades before Paris would dedicate its

iconic Père Lachaise Cemetery (1804) and London its Kensal Green Cemetery (1832).[78] Without the burden of Europe's medieval palimpsests, colonial agents could establish new institutions that reflected cutting-edge thinking about urban planning.

Though reformed burial practices in the several New England colonies were variations on a theme, the colonists were unified in their rejection of the Book of Common Prayer. Even before the arrival of the Winthrop Fleet, authorities in both Salem and Plymouth cracked down on Common Prayer worship. In 1629, Governor John Endicott expelled brothers John and Samuel Brown, both "men of Estates, and men of Parts," from Salem because they had formed an unauthorized worship group "and there sundry times the Book of Common-Prayer was read unto such as resorted thither."[79] The Book also played a part in Plymouth colony's arrest and banishment of the adventurer Thomas Morton in 1628. Though Governor William Bradford argued that Morton was expelled for selling guns to his Wampanoag trading partners, Morton maintained that the Plymouth authorities persecuted him because he "indeavoured to advance the dignity of the Church of England" and used "the sacred book of common prayer . . . in a laudable manner amongst his family, as a practice of piety." In his own account, Morton testified that the Plymouth colonists held, "the booke of Common prayer [to be] an idol: and all that use it, Idolaters."[80]

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[78] Robert Travers, "Death and the Nabob: Imperialism and Commemoration in Eighteenth-Century India," *Past and Present*, No. 196, August 2007; Mytum, "Public Health and Private Sentiment"; Elizabeth Buettner, "Cemeteries, Public Memory, and Raj Nostalgia in Postcolonial Britain and India," *History and Memory*, vol. 18 no. 1 Spring/Summer 2006), 5-42.

[79] Morton, *New-Englands Memoriall* (1669), 76. Morton goes on to explain that the Brown brothers were given an opportunity to desist, but they believed that Salem had turned Separatist and defied Governor Endicott, vowing, "but for themselves, they would hold to the Orders of the Church of England."

[80] Governor William Bradford maintained that Morton was a danger to Plymouth because he provided Indians with guns and alcohol at his Merrymount trading post (near modern Quincy, Massachusetts), and that this, "lord of misrule . . . maintained (as it were) a schoole of Athisme." Bradford, *History of Plimoth*; Morton, *New English Canaan* (1637).

The colonists who arrived in Massachusetts Bay in 1630 were not avowed separatists, but they did not love the Book of Common Prayer better than their brethren at Plymouth. John Cotton maintained that New Englanders "laid aside the Book of Common-prayer" after "serious meditation of the second Commandment, and not from the Writings of Separatists."[81] Despite the prevailing prejudice against it, copies of the Book were fairly common in New England, as it was often bound together with Bibles imported from England.[82] A few colonists even attempted to incorporate it into their worship, though not without consequences. In his *Bloudy Tenent of Persecution* (1644), Roger Williams claimed to know ordinary New Englanders who had been "faithfully admonished for using of the *Common prayer*," even though they were careful "to read only some of the choicest selected prayers."[83] But possession of the Book did not imply endorsement of its contents or use. In 1640, John Winthrop recounted a sign relayed to him by his son, John Winthrop, Jr.:

> Mr. Winthrop the younger, one of the magistrates, having many books in a chamber where there was corn of divers sorts, had among them one wherein the Greek testament, the psalms and the common prayer were bound together. He found the common prayer eaten with mice, every leaf of it, and not any of the other two touched, nor any other of his books, though there were above a thousand.[84]

It is quite possible that a minority of unorthodox New Englanders read their bound-in Common Prayer books and whispered its rites in secret ceremonies. Many more followed the example of the discerning mouse and considered the Book better fuel than reading material. Whatever the number of clandestine readers, the Book of Common Prayer was not widely accepted for public worship in New England. As late as 1686, during the crisis of the royalist Andros Government,

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[81] John Cotton, The Way of Congregational Churches Cleared (1648).
[82] Hugh Amory and David Hall, *History of the Book in America, Volume 1* (University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 84.
[83] Roger Williams, The Bloudy Tenent, of Persecution (1644), 23.
[84] Winthrop Journal, entry dated 15 December 1640.

Samuel Sewall noted with disgust the funeral of a local bodice-maker, who was, "the first I know of buried with the Common-Prayer Book in Boston."[85]

It is difficult to corroborate Sewall's impression of the rarity of Common-Prayer funeral. Very few descriptions of early New England funerals survive, perhaps because there was not much to see. The handful of extant accounts describe funerals of the pre-1670 era as stark. Some military honors, like the volleys fired at Governor Winthrop's funeral in 1649, were permissible, but the colonists did not often spend gunpowder on ceremonial observances. Customs such as the giving of rings and gloves were not widely practiced until the eve of the eighteenth century and were wholly unknown before 1675.[86] While ministers were generally included in the burial party, they participated as fellow-mourners, not officiants. With no prayers, no songs, and no sermons, there was little need for an ordained leader. In the rare instance when an early witness used the phrase "buried by," he generally referred to a magistrate or prominent landowner, as in Governor Winthrop's account of the thirty smallpox victims "buried by Mr. [Samuel] Maverick in Winesemett in one day" in 1633.[87] Maverick was the proprietor of Noddle's Island, not a minister.

The most complete account of funerals during the early decades comes from Thomas Lechford, a lawyer who lived in Boston for several years (c. 1637-1640) before returning to England. In his *Plaine Dealing or News From New-England* (1642), Lechford offered a composite sketch:

> At Burials, nothing is read, nor any Funeral Sermon made, but all the neighbourhood, or a good company of them, come together by tolling of the bell, and carry the dead

[85] SS, 5 August 1686. Mr. Harrison's funeral was conducted under he auspices of the Andros regime, a subject that I review at length in chapter 2.
[86] Steven Bullock, "Often Concerned in Funerals: Ritual, Material Culture, and the Large Funeral in the Age of Samuel Sewall" in *New Views of New England: Studies in Material and Visual Culture, 1680-1830*.
[87] Winthrop Journal, entry dated 5 December 1633. Samuel Maverick was an independent trader who arrived in Massachsuetts around 1624 and operated a palisaded trading post near the mouth of the Mystic River. As far as I can discover, he was not closely related to John Maverick, the pastor of the church at Dorchester.

> solemnly to his grave, and there stand by him while he is buried. The Ministers are most commonly present.[88]

Nearly every study of New England "death ways" quotes Lechford's description of Boston funerals, but few explain the political dimensions of his argument. Lechford was a lawyer, not an anthropologist, and he was convinced that the New England colonists had abandoned English law. His description of Boston funeral practices comes at the end of a paragraph concerned with New England's abandonment of English marriage and probate laws, in which he argues that these functions "have been anciently by the good lawes of England, committed to the Clergie, upon better grounds than many are aware of." According to Lechford, New England's innovations in civil and ecclesiastical law were cause for great alarm: "How can any now deny this to be Anarchie and confusion?" Furthermore, Lechford argued that New Englanders' strict church membership standards and lack of public catechizing would, "instead of propagating the Gospel, spread heathenisme." He feared the emergence of an unbaptized, uncatechized, lawless majority that would either, "goe among their fellow-heathens the Indians, or rise up against the Church, and break forth into many grievous distempers among themselves." To Thomas Lechford, simple burials were a sign of impending mayhem.[89]

The New England colonies' innovations in burial practices stood in sharp contrast to colonies like Virginia, where magistrates and clergy made explicit efforts to retain as many English practices as possible. Between 1607 and 1622, English colonists in Virginia struggled to maintain English burial customs in the face of extreme mortality and widely dispersed settlement. Archaeological evidence from the Jamestown Rediscovery Project indicates haphazard burials during the colony's earliest years, with many bodies dumped into shallow,

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[88] See Lechford, *Plain Dealing or News from New England* (London, 1642), 39. Even without minister-officiants, New Englanders did retain one church-related observance at funerals: the tolling of the bell. "The Passing-bell sounds harsh unto the ear / Of all that do the *King of Terrors* fear," wrote Philip Pain in 1666. *Daily Meditations*, 3.
[89] Thomas Lechford, Plaine Dealing or News From New England (1642).

multiple-occupancy graves while fully clothed and unshrouded.[90] Still, the Jamestown colonists did practice conventional churchyard burial when they could. Excavations at the church used between 1608 and 1617 have revealed burials inside the chancel, and other seventeenth-century burials are clustered around the site of the church built in 1617.[91] John Smith conveyed both the aspirations and the difficulties of worshipping in Jamestown when he recounted, "Wee had daily Common Prayer morning and evening, every Sunday two Sermons, and every three moneths the holy Communion, till our Minister died." [92]

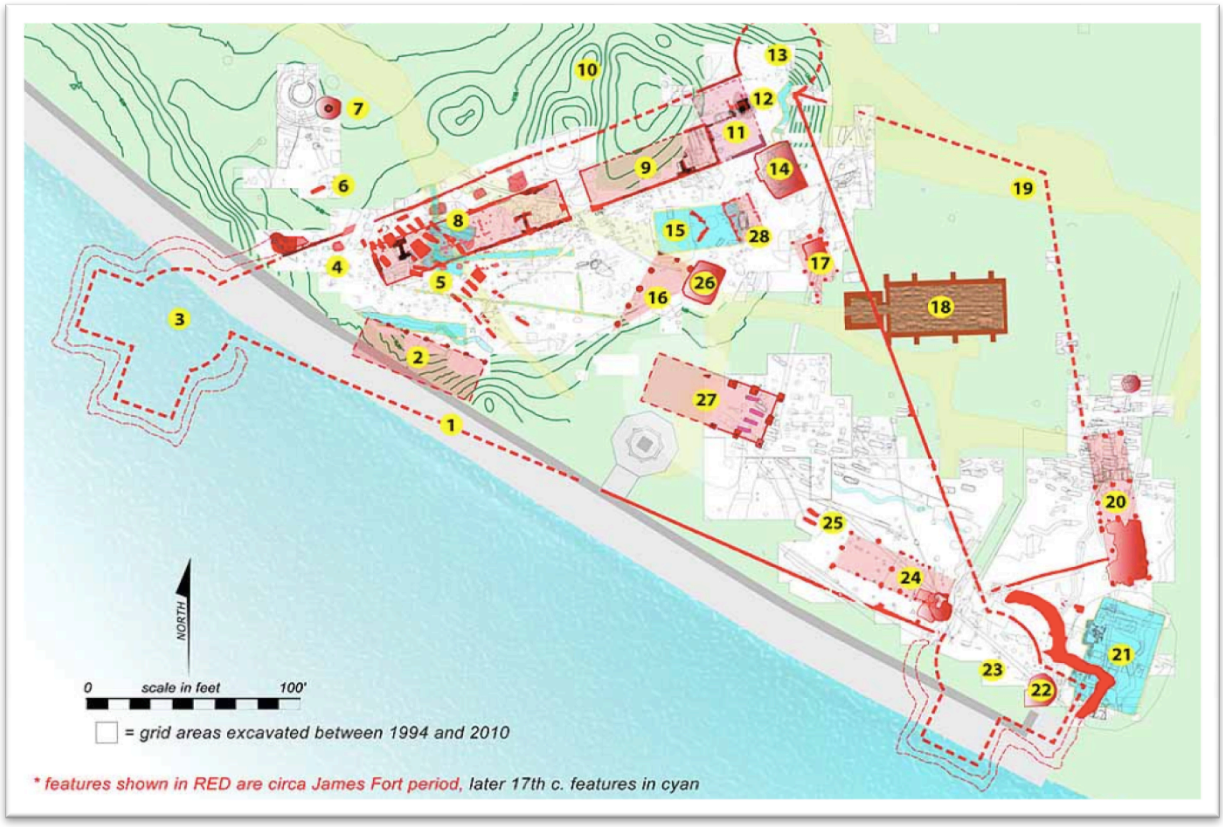

Figure 16: excavation map from the Jamestown Rediscovery Project

[90] see William Kelso, *Jamestown: The Buried Truth* (University of Virginia Press, 2008), 164-5. Kelso is the chief archaeologist for the Jamestown Recovery project.
[91] see Historic Jamestowne Dig Update, September 2012 (http://www.historicjamestowne.org/the_dig/) and apva.org. Jamestown's first church was an improvised building used before the construction of a more permanent structure in 1608. In 1617, the colony built a new church about 100 feet northeast of the 1608 church. Subsequent church buildings were built over and around the 1617 structure. A brick tower belonging to one of these subsequent structures is the only extant seventeenth-century building at Jamestown. Excavation of the burials around the church are ongoing as of the summer of 2012.
[92] John Smith, Advertisements for the Unexperienced Planters of New England, or Anywhere: or, the Pathway to Erect a Plantation (1630).

note the four burials marked in red at #27 (the church built in 1608)[93]

As colonists moved upriver and dispersed onto plantations, they built few official churches and began practicing private burial on private land, rather than transporting corpses long distances through the tidewater heat to the church at Jamestown. Beginning in 1624, the Virginia General Assembly passed a series of laws aimed at taming these chaotic worship and burial practices. They ordered that every plantation should designate a house or room for worship, which should "not be for any temporal use whatsoever," as well as a fenced spaces "sequestred only to the buryal of the dead." Furthermore, the Assembly declared that their churches should be unified in adhering "as neere as may be to the canons in England" and punished ministers who left their flocks untended for too long.[94] The Book of Common Prayer remained a staple of worship in Virginia through the entire seventeenth century. Though there were many clashes over the Book between High Church and Nonconformist Virginians during the tumultuous 1640s, conformity to the Book prevailed.[95] When Virginia formally surrendered to Oliver Cromwell's Interregnum government in 1652, the General Assembly negotiated special permission for the colonists to continue to use the suspended Book, "Provided that those things which relate to kingship or that government be not used publiquely."[96] Though the dispensation was supposed to last for only one year, many Virginians continued to worship according to the Common Prayer ceremonies throughout the Interregnum.[97]

[93] The large number of burials visible at #5 are the 1607 graves.
[94] Laws and Orders Concluded by the Virginia General Assembly, 5 March 1624.
[95] Edward L. Bond, Damned Souls in a Tobacco Colony: Religion in Seventeenth Century Virginia (2000).
[96] Articles of Surrender of the Countrie (1652) as reprinted in William Waller Hening, Statutes at Large, Being a Collection of all the Laws of Virginia from the first session of the Legislature, in the Year 1619, Vol. I, 364. Though the Articles stipulated that this special dispensation would last only one year, Edward L. Bond argues that the use of the Book continued relatively unmolested during Cromwell's rule, due in great part to Cromwell's general indifference toward the colonies.
[97] So argue Edward L. Bond in Damned Souls in a Tobacco Colony (2000) and Carla Pestana in The English Atlantic in an Age of Revolution (2007).

Conditions on the ground allowed private burial to flourish in Virginia, but the Assembly's efforts to establish sacred spaces and preserve precedent are very different from New England's pointed reforms. Similarly, in Barbados, English colonists made concerted efforts to replicate English ways in their church architecture and burial practices.[98] Even after the execution of Charles I in 1649, Barbadians continued to celebrate Anglican holidays and resisted Parliament's suppression of the Book of Common Prayer, sometimes by physically assaulting the officials sent to impound the Book.[99] Congregations in Virginia and Barbados faced many challenges in upholding Church of England worship — a lack of ordained ministers, absence of oversight by bishops, a population dispersed on scattered plantations — but they did what they could to approximate what they had left behind. New England could have done the same, but chose instead to create something new in the name of reform.

One of the surest ways of marking a graveyard as sacred ground is by erecting enduring monuments to the dead. In England, prominent men like Adam Winthrop were commonly honored with permanent tombstones carved with heraldic symbols, eschatological imagery, and elaborate epitaphs. Most graves went unmarked, but there were enough monuments for Queen Elizabeth to issue a stern proclamation in 1560 admonishing those who had "spoiled, broken, and ruinated" memorial markers out of ignorance, malice, or greed. These monuments were intended "onely to shew a memory to the posterity of the persons there buried . . . and not to nourish any kind of superstition." Therefore, any person caught "breaking or defacing of anie parcel of anie monument, or tombe, or grave, or other inscription and memorie of anie person deceased" was subject to arrest, imprisonment, and a fine that would include the "restitution or reedification of

[98] see forthcoming work by Katherine Reid Gerbner
[99] Carla Pestana, The English Atlantic in an Age of Revolution (2007), 125-6.

the thing broken."[100] In later years, High Church reformers like Bishop Wren would also take a hard line on this sort of iconoclasm. Though anti-Puritan clerics sometimes exaggerated the extent of monument-breaking in order to indict their theological opponents, extremists within the Protestant reform movement did indeed destroy many religious images during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. They regarded the trappings of High Church worship — statues, crosses, religious paintings, stained glass windows, vestments, altar furnishings, and monuments to the dead — as idolatrous. Sometimes, particularly during the tumultuous wars of the 1640s, bands of iconoclasts would raid English churches in order to destroy whatever idols they could find, including gravestones.[101] Within this context, it is hardly surprising that gravestones were rare in the municipal burying places of New England for the first half-century after the arrival of the Winthrop Fleet.

Historians have long debated the prevalence and meaning of New England's colonial-era gravestones. Some, like Allan Ludwig, have found substantial continuity between the New England carving tradition and the death iconography of medieval and early modern Europe. Others, like James Deetz, have traced a decline in Puritan orthodoxy in iconography that changed gradually from grim skulls to cherubic soul effigies to neoclassical urn-and-willow designs. These observations, however fascinating, are irrelevant to the pre-1670 period for the simple reason that hardly any extant New England gravestones were carved during that period. In any discussion of the "Puritan" nature of early New England gravestones, it is worth remembering that the actual Puritans — the emigrant generation of reform-minded Protestants that left England as adults — were not responsible for carving the stones that survive in historic

[100] Declaration of Queen Elizabeth in John Weever, *Antient Funeral Monuments of Great-Britain* (1631), lii-liii.
[101] For an overview of the historiography of Puritan iconoclasm, see Julie Spraggon, *Puritan Iconoclasm During the English Civil War* (Boydell Press, 2003).

graveyards. Only after 1670, when their children and grandchildren were struggling to redefine the New England mission, did permanent gravestones appear in any significant numbers.

Permanent memorials are not the only indicator of sacred space. Yet, it is necessary to linger a bit on this point because it has been misunderstood in much of the literature on New England graveyards. Available evidence suggests that vanishingly few gravestones were erected in New England before 1670. A survey of Boston-area gravestones bearing dates of 1689 or earlier finds fewer than a dozen dating from the entire pre-1670 period (most of these from the mid-late 1660s). After 1670, the prevalence of surviving stones increases dramatically, with 22 stones dating from 1670-1674, 65 from 1675-1679, 103 from 1680-1684, and 101 from 1685-1689.

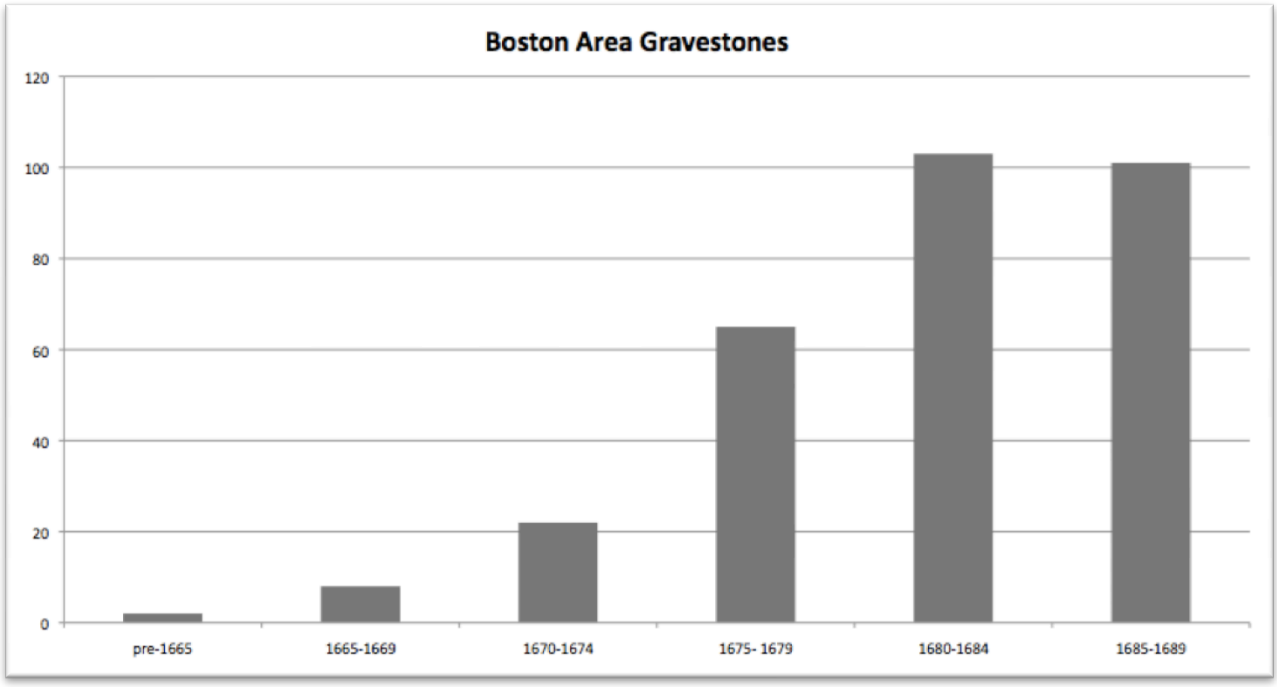

Figure 4: Boston Area Gravestones, 1665-1689

The possibility of survival bias — that is, the older the stone, the more likely that it has been destroyed in the intervening years — can hardly account for such stark differences between 1670 and 1680. The towns surveyed (Boston, Cambridge, Charlestown, Malden, Watertown) did not suffer physical devastation during King Philip's War, nor did they endure extreme weather

events that might have destroyed substantial numbers of earlier stones while leaving stones from the 1680s unharmed. Furthermore, the earlier stones are different in kind, as well as in quantity: nearly all of earlier stones have text, but no imagery. After 1680, most stones have some kind of iconography or embellishment beyond text. [102]

Figure 5: Rebekah Hooper stone, 1675, Copp's Hill, Boston, MA
photo by author

[102] This survey includes 301 stones with dates of 1689 or earlier found in the following graveyards: King's Chapel (Boston), Granary (Boston), Copp's Hill (Boston), Phipps Street (Charlestown), Harvard Square (Cambridge), Bell Rock (Malden), Mt. Auburn Street (Watertown). I have chosen to exclude the West Roxbury Burying Ground because it was established in 1683, and would therefore weight the data in favor of a proliferation of gravestones in the 1680s, which is precisely what I am trying to show. Though I identified many of these gravestones during visits to the burying grounds, I also culled data from nineteenth-century collections of epitaphs. These records are invaluable because they identify many stones that have not survived or are no longer legible. Some of these works include Bridgman on Copp's Hill, etc. While it is possible that survival bias artificially depresses the number of pre-1675 stones, I do not think that this is enough of a factor to explain the extreme jump between 1670 and 1680. Stones that can be convincingly proven to be backdated have been excluded. Some of the stones counted as early markers may also be backdated, but that designation is not obvious. Three stones in the Eliot Street Burying Ground in Roxbury bear dates in the 1650s and are probably authentic (one is just a boulder with the initials S.W. and "1653" on it).

A handful of gravestones in the oldest graveyards in Massachusetts bear dates in the 1650s, but many of these are backdated, that is, carved long after the deaths they commemorate. For example, the Ann Erinton stone of Cambridge, which bears a date of 1653, is often cited as one of the oldest gravestones in the Boston area. Yet, its lettering and fan-like tympanum design are almost identical to several stones with much later dates, like the Marcy Allin stone of Malden (1678), the Hannah Gibson stone at the Granary (1678) and the Cutler children stone of Charlestown (1680). Even those scholars who believe that the Ann Erinton stone really was carved in 1653 concede that, "we have to jump a period of nearly twenty years before we find other work by the same hand."[103] It is highly unlikely that a skilled carver produced the Ann Erinton stone in 1653, then took a quarter-century sabbatical before returning to carve nearly identical stones in the late 1670s. It is much more likely that the Erinton family purchased a stone for their matriarch many years after her death, perhaps in 1677, when her son, Abraham, died. He is buried near his mother, under a stone carved by the same hand (though without the embellished tympanum).

[103] Hariette Merrifield Forbes, Gravestones of Early New England and the Men who Made Them, 1653-1800 (Houghton Mifflin, 1927), 22.

Figure 6: Ann Erinton stone, Cambridge, MA
carved by "The Old Stone Cutter"
dated 1653, probably carved c. 1678
photo by author

Figure 7: Marcy Allin stone, 1678, Malden, MA
carved by "The Old Stone Cutter"
photo by author

Figure 8: Abraham Erinton stone, 1677, Cambridge, MA
probably carved by "The Old Stone Cutter"
photo by author

In fact, many New England stones bearing seventeenth-century dates were carved decades after the deaths they commemorate. When James A. Slater and Ralph L. Tucker attempted to write a comprehensive catalogue of the works of the master carver John Hartshorne, an Essex County carver who produced dozens of gravestones with dates as early as 1668, they found extensive probate records indicating that all of Hartshorne's carvings were made after 1700. This was an important and controversial finding because Hartshorne's idiosyncratic style had been one of the principal pieces of evidence offered by art historians who argued that New England carvers had developed a vernacular style distinct from English styles as early as the middle of the seventeenth century. Slater and Tucker's work on Hartshorne upended that chronology. Their analysis of both the documentary and material record led them to conclude that "there is no substantive evidence to believe that Hartshorne stones were carved earlier than

1700. The twenty-four stones dated in the 1600s were almost certainly back-dated."[104] Thus, historians must be cautious about conflating a death date with the creation of a monument, particularly when evaluating seventeenth-century gravestones.

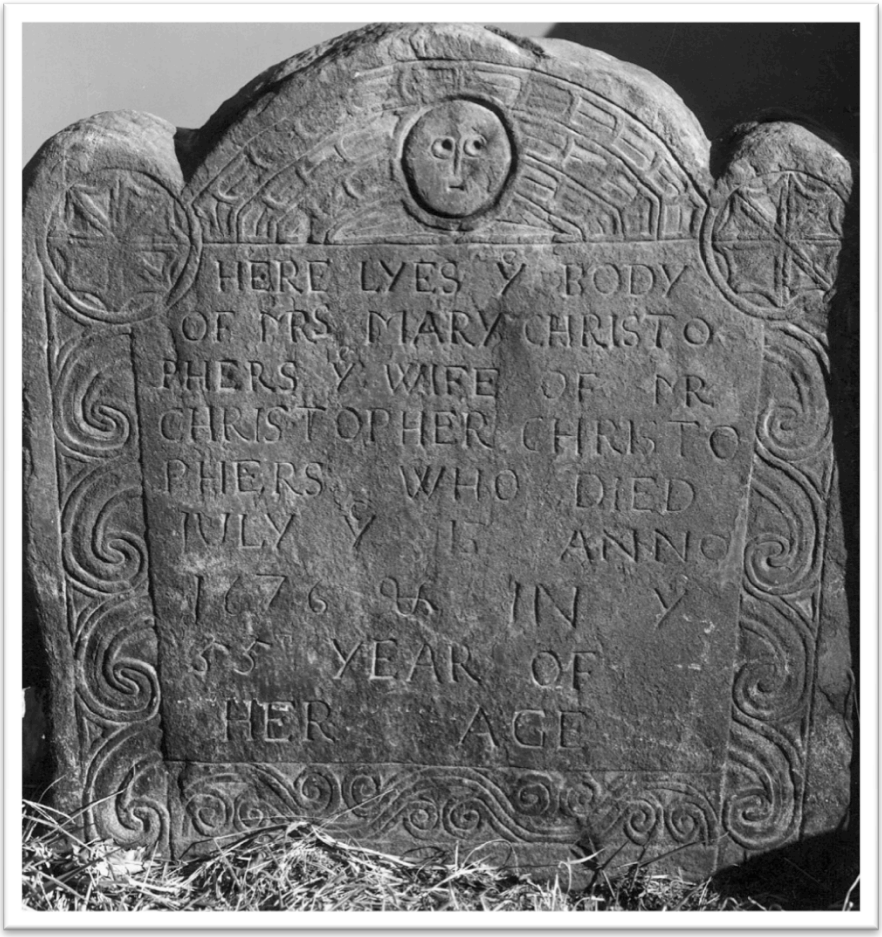

Figure 9: Mary Christophers stone, New London, CT
carved by John Hartshorne
dated 1676, but carved after 1720
photo from Farber Collection, AAS

Many historians, antiquarians, and public history interpreters have been invested in upholding the earliest possible dates for New England gravestones because they have explained gravestone imagery in terms of a specifically "Puritan" eschatology. In this telling, the grisly iconography of death — skulls, bones, coffins, imps, skeletons, hourglasses, scythes, etc. — and

[104] James A. Slater and Ralph L. Tucker, "The Colonial Gravestone Carvings of John Hartshorne in *Puritan Gravestone Art II*, Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife, 1978), 118.

correspondingly bleak epitaphs found on early New England gravestones illuminate the grim outlook of the original colonists. Scholarly and popular authors alike have called attention to a particularly gloomy epitaph, assuring readers that it "and its variants are the most common ones found on Colonial New England gravestones":

> Remember me as you pass by,
> As you are now, so once was I,
> As I am now, so you must be,
> Prepare for death and follow me.[105]

In fact, this verse is not "a common seventeenth-century epitaph," at least not in New England, where it cannot be found on a single seventeenth-century gravestone.[106] The "innumerable stones that bear [this] legend" do not exist and thus cannot, as some scholars have claimed, be evidence of Puritan didacticism.[107] Though variants can be found in medieval England and seventeenth-century Scotland, the verse was extremely rare in New England before 1750 and only became widely popular as part of a gothic revival after 1770.[108] Similarly, many of the most striking examples of grim imagery on display in New England graveyards can be found on medieval-revival stones from the latter decades of the eighteenth century, like the Susanna Jayne stone in Marblehead, MA (1775) and the Sarah Revere stone in Boston's Granary Burying Ground (1773). This is not to say that there are no skeletons or death imps on gravestones carved at the end of the seventeenth century. Still, the association of grim iconography with "Puritan" theology is greatly attenuated when the evidence shows that this type of imagery was used on

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[105] Douglas Keister, Stories in Stone: A Field Guide to Cemetery Symbolism and Iconography (Gibbs Smith, 2004), 132.
[106] This claim has been repeated by many, including James Deetz and Patricia Scott Deetz in *The Times of Their Lives: Love, Life, and Death in Plymouth Colony* (New York: Anchor, 2000), 170.
[107] Dickran and Ann Tashjian, 9.
[108] The earliest example I have been able to find in New England dates from 1736 (Captain John Fisher, Needham). It is possible that an earlier example exists, but I have not yet uncovered it. In addition to my own research, I have conferred with James Blachowicz, author of *From Slate to Marble 1770-1870:* Gravestone *Carving Traditions in Eastern Massachusetts* (Graver Press, 2006), who found the 1736 example in his notes, but no earlier example. The Benjamin Scudder stone in Westfield, New Jersey, is sometimes cited as an early American example (1708), but the stone actually dates from 1798 — the earlier date seems to have been a transcription error.

grave markers throughout the colonial period, with the notable exception of the period 1630-1670, when the emigrant generation of committed Puritans was at the height of its power.

Figure 10: Susanna Jayne stone, 1776, Marblehead, MA
carved by Henry Christian Geyer
photo by author

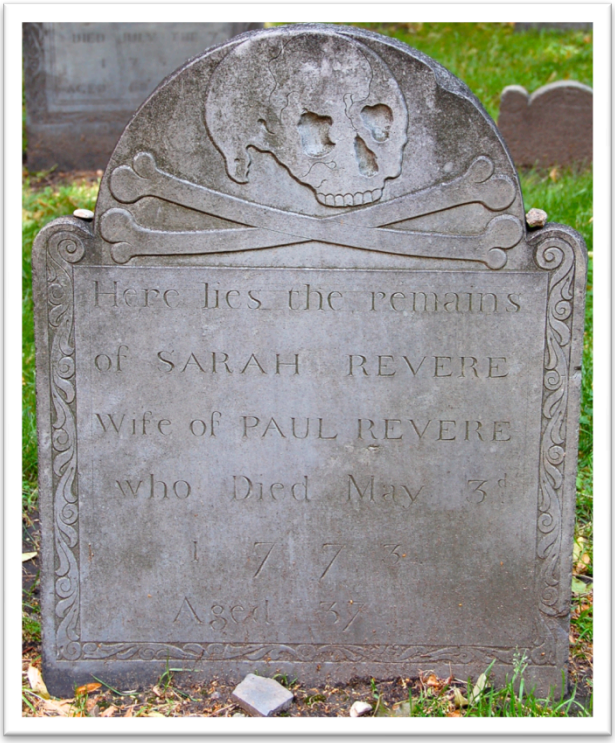

Figure 11: Sarah Revere stone, 1773, Granary Burying Ground, Boston
carved by John Homer
photo by author

It is possible that the paucity of embellished gravestones in the pre-1670 period can be partially explained by a lack of skilled carvers in the colonies. In some places, like Newport, Rhode Island (incorporated in 1639), the creation of lasting gravestones can be traced to the arrival of a single competent craftsman. Sometime around 1715, a carver known only as the "Boston Master" arrived in Newport and began carving stones and influencing the local stonemason and self-taught carver John Stevens I.[109] But this explanation does not apply to all of New England. In Byfield, Massachusetts, doorstones, boundary markers, and mile markers carved with symbols and figures bear dates as early as 1636, demonstrating that some early Anglo-New Englanders knew how to wield a chisel.[110] In Boston, other text-producing crafts like silversmithing and printing were established in the 1640s and 1650s, suggesting that someone could have produced rudimentary gravestone inscriptions if he had been motivated to do so. Indeed, formal training in stonecarving was clearly not a barrier to creating gravestones, as evident from the many rough-hewn, incompetently-lettered monuments dating from the post-1670 period found in many rural graveyards. Typical early stones like the Ann Watson stone of Cambridge (1676) and the Samuel Lee stone of Malden (1676) are unevenly lettered, haphazardly formatted, and undecorated, suggesting that they were the work of local amateurs with a background in masonry or engraving, rather than newly-arrived, highly-skilled professional stonecarvers.

[109] Vincent Luti, Mallet and Chisel: Gravestone Carvers of Newport, Rhode Island in the 18th Century (NEHGS, 2002).
[110] Robert Blair St. George, *Conversing by Signs*, 170-6.

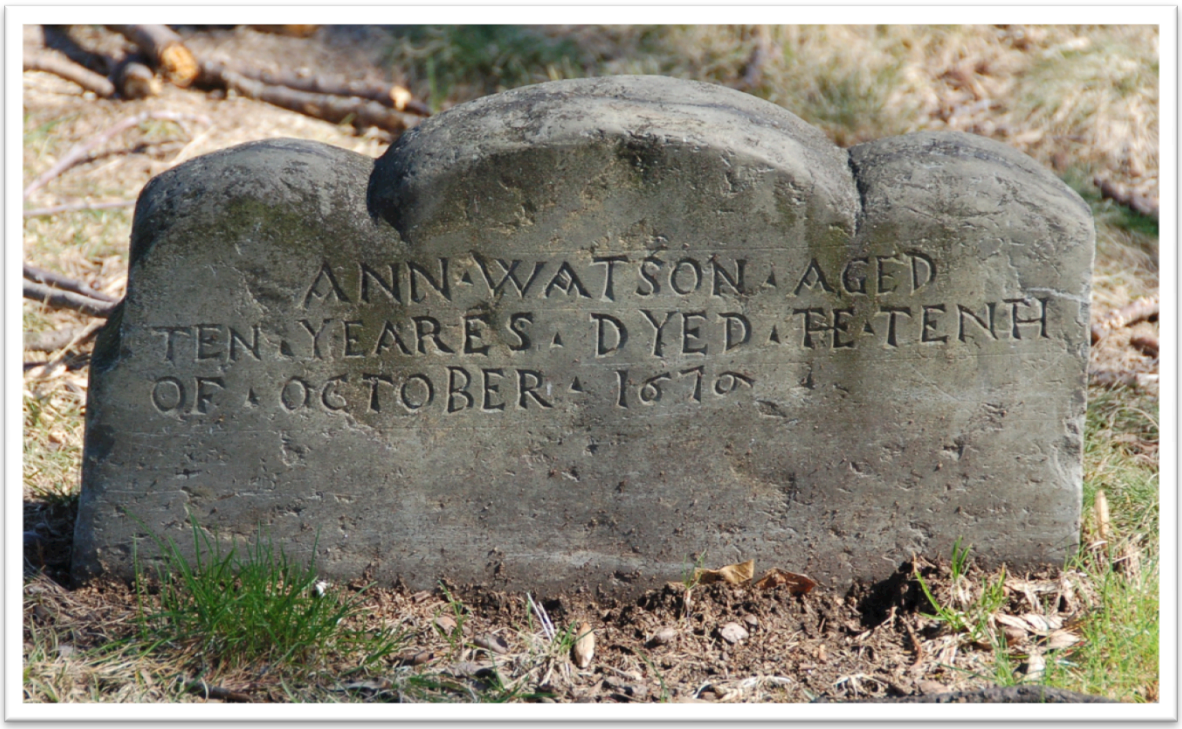

Figure 12: Ann Watson stone, 1676, Cambridge, MA
photo by author

Figure 13: Samuel Lee stone, 1676, Malden, MA
probably carved by "The Old Stone Carver"
photo by author

One prolific local carver, William Mumford, was born in 1641 and was identified as a mason on a 1668 Suffolk County deed and as a "stonecutter" in a letter dated 1681.[111] Yet, his earliest surviving gravestone bears the date 1681. In that year, he carved a tombstone for Major Thomas Savage that bears detailed heraldic imagery and embellished lettering. Surely, a 40-year-old craftsman who could carve the intricate foliage of the Thomas Savage stone in 1681 could have scratched some initials into a rock a decade earlier, when he was already a recognized mason. Mumford's skill is indisputable, but there seems to have been little demand for his talents before 1670.

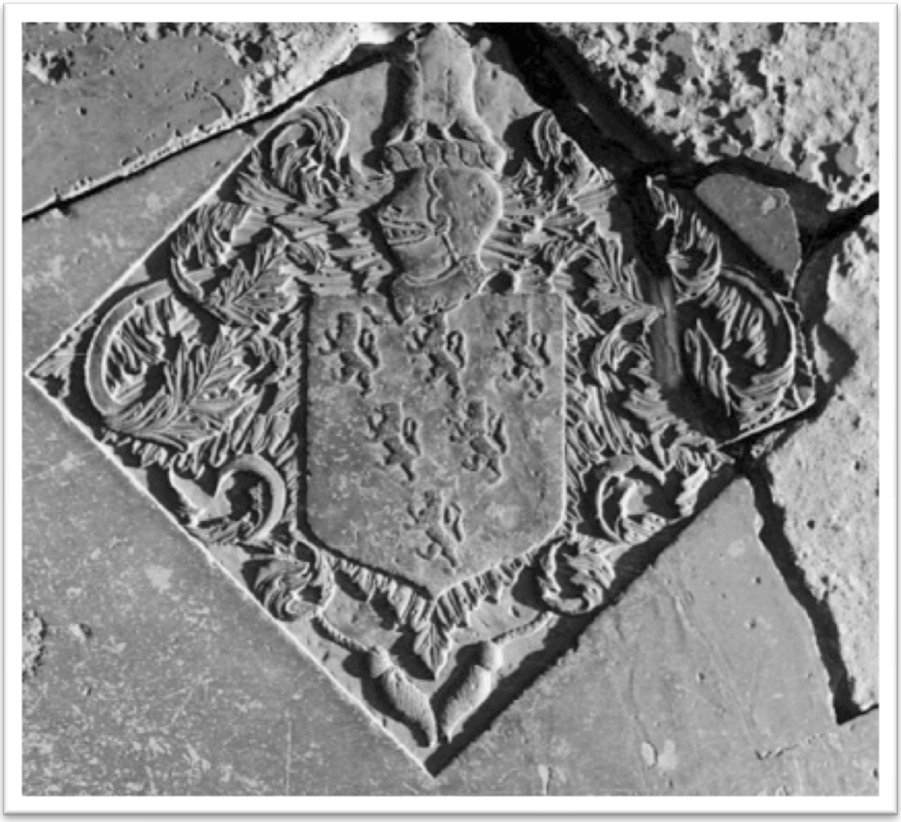

Figure 14: detail of the Thomas Savage stone, 1681, King's Chapel Burying Ground, Boston, MA
carved by William Mumford
photo from Farber Collection, AAS

[111] Suffolk County Deeds, Book 5, #546-7. see also HMForbes, 29. Forbes cites the Mary Mumford stone at Copp's Hill as an early example of Mumford's work. but the date she assigns to it (1677/8) is evidently an error — I have inspected the stone and it reads "1687/8."

The dramatic change during the 1670s, not just in the number of gravestones produced, but in the widespread use of images in conjunction with text, may be partially explained by the publication and distribution of Samuel Mather's *A Testimony from the Scripture Against Idolatry and Superstition* (1672), in which he argued that the second commandment did not apply to "Images for Civil use."[112] "The Civil use of Images is lawful for the representation and remembrance of a person absent, for honour and Civil worship to any worthy person," he wrote, clarifying that, "the scope of the Command is against Images in State and use religious."[113] Since the municipal burying place was explicitly under the control of the civil authorities, this reading of the second commandment allowed for the use of images on gravestones.[114] Samuel Mather was a powerful authority. As the eldest son of Dorchester's minister, Richard Mather, Samuel had tremendous influence over his younger brother, Boston's eminent Rev. Increase Mather and nephew, young Cotton Mather. He was also one of New England's most accomplished sons. After graduating from Harvard in 1643, he travelled back across the Atlantic to continue his education, eventually becoming a senior fellow of Trinity College, Dublin. Early colonists may have felt uneasy about carving images on the gravestones in their civil burying places, but their children had the blessing of a theological heavyweight.

[112] Samuel Mather was the eldest son of Rev. Richard Mather and older brother of Increase Mather. His Testimony was originally delivered as a pair of sermons in Dublin, Ireland in 1660, but was not published in New England until 1672.
[113] Samuel Mather, A Testimony from the Scripture Against Idolatry and Superstition (1672).
[114] Text-only gravestones remained common through the 1670s, despite the fact that competent carvers were ready and willing to carve embellished stones. This may have been, in part, a matter of cost, but not entirely. Some text-only stones were purchased by families that also purchased embellished stones, as in the case of John and Mercy Allin of Malden, a married couple who died in 1678 (Mercy's stone is decorated with an acanthus leaf, while John's is text-only). Others were purchased by prominent families, as in the case of the Ruth Upham stone (text only, 1676) in Malden — her father, Lieutenant Phineas Upham, was an officer who died of wounds he received in King Philip's War and her grandfather, John Upham was one of the leading citizens of the area (represented Weymouth in the General Court, was Commissioner of the Supreme Court for settling small claims in Malden, moderated town meetings, Deacon of the church for many years).

There is some evidence that the emigrant generation used ephemeral gravemarkers before 1670, though the extent and chronology of the practice is uncertain.[115] Historian Peter Benes has found several references to wooden "grave rails" in Massachusetts probate records from the seventeenth century and argues that these "the sixteen known instances of the use of posts or rails may be conservatively translated into a probable total in the several thousands." Whether or not this extrapolation is actually conservative, Benes is undoubtedly correct in suspecting that a great many unrecorded grave rails may have existed. He is on shakier ground when extending his chronology. Though Benes finds sixteen references to grave rails between 1657 and 1675, more than two thirds are from the second half of that period (five references pre-1665, eleven references post-1665). Benes finds no mention of grave rails in the quarter-century prior to 1657.[116] This does not mean that wooden grave rails were not used in the 1630s, 1640s, and early 1650s, but their use is not attested in any surviving source.

In any case, wooden grave rails did not last long. They are rarely mentioned in early sources, but a slightly later source suggests that a typical grave rail probably decayed within a few decades. On a 1702 visit to Barnastable, the diarist Samuel Sewall visited the grave of Rev. Thomas Walley, whose wooden grave rail was, "broken off, and tumbled about," making it difficult to read the "worn letters." Walley died in 1677. His grave rail survived barely 25 years.[117] The few pre-1670 documents that do consider the visual aspect of the burying place, the authors speak only of "graves," not grave rails or grave stones. "How often have I viewed the graves, and gone / Unto that place, and yet returned home," mused Philip Pain in 1666. Perhaps Pain used "graves" as shorthand for visible markers of some sort, but, at face value, his visual

[115] Peter Benes, "Additional Light on Wooden Grave Markers," in *Essex Institute Historical Collections* (January 1975), 53-64.
[116] Peter Benes, Puritan Gravestone Art I, 1976.
[117] SS, 4 April 1702.

experience of the burying place was limited to the graves themselves.[118] In Hartford, a 1640 order of the town entrusted Thomas Woolford with "ringing the bell, making the grave, and keeping of it in seemly repair, so that it may be known in future time."[119] Markers are not specifically mentioned, though the goal of recognizing graves "in future time" seems to indicate that someone wanted to remember their location, if only Thomas Woolford with his spade. If so, these markers must have been either stones (carved or uncarved) that do not survive or temporary markers that were not expected to last long under the abuses of Robert Lord's grazing horses and calves.

Since the 1960s, scholarly and popular interest in New England graveyards has been largely focused on the gravestones, not on the geography or legal status of the burying places themselves. And why not? Gravestones make alluring subjects for studies of both folk art and local history. But, given the paucity of evidence regarding markers from the pre-1670 period, all such studies must be careful in making claims about the relationship between the stones and the "Puritan" reformers of the founding generation. Indeed, the emigrant generation did create meaning through material in their burying places, but the material they chose was the ground itself, not stone monuments.

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When John Winthrop died in 1649, he was laid to rest in a family tomb in Boston's municipal burying place. He was joined there by John Jr. in 1676 and by John Jr.'s own son, Fitz-John, in 1707. All three men had served as governors of New England colonies and were counted among the luminaries of their generations. "One of the *Seven Wonders* of the world was

[118] Philip Pain, *Daily Meditations, or Quotidian Preparations of Death and Eternity*, (Cambridge: Marmaduke Johnson, 1668). Though not published until 1668, the meditations are dated July 1666.
[119] Hartford Town Records, as quoted in *Historical Notes of Connecticut* (Hartford: William S. Porter, 1842), 35.

a TOMB. This may be esteemed One of the *American* world," Rev. Cotton Mather told mourners in 1707. "There is not such another TOMB to be seen in all *America*."[120]

In some respects, Mather was right. A dynasty of long-lived political leaders represented a degree of continuity and stability that was unusual in the Anglo-American colonies. The Winthrop family — three generations of men chosen "by the Election of the People [to be] GOVERNOURS over a People of God" — was truly "something very *Peculiar*" in seventeenth-century America.[121] But the tomb itself was another matter. The unconsecrated tomb in the town-owned burying ground was a common form in New England, an English seed that had sprouted in American soil. The hapless pilgrim, promised a sight unequalled by any "to be seen in all *America*" might take exception to Cotton Mather's rhetorical flourish when confronted with an unadorned stone slab in a lot that was still leased out to local bidders as a hay field.[122] Even the existence of a stone slab is hypothetical; no seventeenth-century account mentions any sort of monument at the Winthrop tomb.[123] In the mid-nineteenth century, observers far removed from the Protestant reform mission of 1630-1670 complained that it was "a blot on the fair fame of Boston that 'no stone marks the resting-place of the FATHER OF NEW ENGLAND.'"[124] By the

[120] Cotton Mather, *Winthropi Justa* (1708), 8. This was a published funeral sermon, a form which was introduced to New England in the 1670s and had increased in popularity by the beginning of the 18th century.
[121] ibid.
[122] see Boston Selectmens' Records; 4 June 1708: "The Select men have Lett unto James Williams the grass in the old burying place for this Summer he paying for the Same 30./"; 17 July 1710: Voted, a grant to Capt. Ephraim Savage of the Grass in the Old burying place for this Sumer he paying for the Same the Sume of fifteen Shillings."
[123] If any sort of monument was erected or inscription carved on the tomb after the death of the first John Winthrop, it is not mentioned in any surviving letter, diary, probate file, or other written record. The first mention of an inscription "written in Latin on the Winthrop tomb" can be found in an undated manuscript in the Winthrop Papers at the Massachusetts Historical Society that includes an English translation of the "epitaph" composed by Cotton Mather after the death of Waitstill Winthrop in 1717. It is easier to imagine that the translator was confused by Mather's poetical use of the term "Epitaphum" for his printed elegy than that the seventy-odd lines of its ponderous text were ever actually chiseled into stone. Such a necessarily gigantic monument would have been remarkable in New England in the early eighteenth century. The fact that no one thought to mention it on paper must cast doubt on its existence. A brief inscription may have been in place in 1853, as mentioned in Thomas Bridgman's collection of King's Chapel epitaphs ("John Winthrop 1649"). However, given Bridgman's tendency to include imagined epitaphs and coats of arms for people known to be buried a particular ground, even this evidence is uncertain.
[124] Abner Dumont Jones, *American Portrait Gallery*, (1869).

beginning of the twenty-first century, visitors to John Withrop's grave beheld a scene more reminiscent of 1623 Groton than 1649 Boston: a dignified tombstone inscribed with the names of eight generations of Winthrops standing beside a stone church in what Nathaniel Hawthorne called "the old church-yard of King's Chapel."[125]

[125] Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), Chapter 1.

Chapter 2:
Mr. Cotton's Land

On March 28, 1688, Boston judge and diarist Samuel Sewall marked his thirty-sixth birthday. Sewall was not in the habit of celebrating his "Natalis" with any particular ceremony or merriment. Like many other Godly Protestants in colonial New England, he disapproved of "Holy Dayes," and frowned on festivities rooted in England's age-old culture of sociable merrymaking.[1] Every Christmas, Sewall kept watch for unseemly celebrations among his neighbors, noting with satisfaction that those few who "somehow observe the day" were "vexed" to find that "the Body of the People profane it, and blessed be God no Authority yet to compel them to keep it."[2]

But birthdays were a bit different. There were no parties or celebratory meals, but Sewall sometimes acknowledged the day with reflection, recounting special providences that held meaning for him. "I was born at Bishop Stoke, March 28, 1652 . . . a little before day-break," he reminisced, "so that the Light of the Lord's Day was the first light that my Eyes saw."[3] A birthday was a day like any other, with morning psalms to sing and regular work to do, but it was also a day to take stock of spiritual progress. "The Lord grant me a holy godly Life without End," Sewall had prayed in his diary two years earlier, on the day he turned thirty-four.

Sewall's thirty-sixth birthday was fraught with trouble. Early in the day, he spoke with Captain Benjamin Davis, a twenty-nine-year-old apothecary and longtime associate, if not

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[1] Puritan disapproval of holidays grew out of a general program that sought to reform the traditional culture of merrymaking and sociability that existed in early modern England. These reforms targeted laxness within the Church of England, but extended to social reforms, including overhauls of educational and prison systems and the eradication of poverty, drunkenness, and domestic violence. For an in-depth discussion of Puritan social reform, see David Underdown, *Fire from Heaven: Life in an English Town in the Seventeenth Century* (1992), which focuses on the city of Dorchester, Dorset, England, not far from Samuel Sewall's birthplace.

[2] Samuel Sewall Diary, 25 December 1685. All quotations from Samuel Sewall's Diary are taken from *The Diary of Samuel Sewall*, 1674-1729, ed. M. Halsey Thomas, (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, Inc., 1973). Hereafter, this source is abbreviated as "SS" with the date of the entry.

[3] Samuel Sewall, autobiographical letter, 21 April 1720, reproduced in *The Diary of Samuel Sewall*, xxiii.

exactly a friend. Sewall and Davis had known one another for years, serving side-by-side in the colonial militia and praying together as members of the Third (Old South) Church. They had eaten at one another's tables and carried coffins together at the funerals of their families and friends, but the events of recent years had strained their relationship. In 1684, an English court had revoked the Charter of the Massachusetts Bay colony, allowing King Charles II to dissolve the colony's independent government and install a Royal Governor in its place. Over the next several years, the King's men began to arrive in Boston: Edward Randolph, the customs informer whose letters to the Lords of Trade had inspired the charter revocation; Parson Robert Ratcliffe, a young Anglican clergyman zealous for the re-conversion of New England's wandering sheep; and Royal Governor Edmund Andros, who would arrive in Boston as the King's own hand in 1686 and leave as a prisoner of war in 1689. By the spring of 1688, Benjamin Davis had allied himself with this cadre of newly-arrived imperial officials.[4]

Now, Davis had a request. The Andros faction wanted to buy a parcel of Judge Sewall's land in order to build a chapel for proper Church of England services. Since Parson Ratcliffe's arrival in Boston two years earlier, the Anglicans had been in search of a place to worship. They had made several attempts to take over Boston's three congregational meetinghouses, but had been stoutly opposed by the members of those churches. The previous March, Sewall, Davis, and four other members of the Third Church had met with Governor Andros to argue that their meetinghouse was private property, "built by particular persons," and thus was not at the government's disposal for Church of England services. They presented a deed to "shew that the

[4] In 1686, when Samuel Sewall and several other militia officers resigned their militia commissions to protest the Andros regime, Davis accepted a promotion. Like other influential Bostonians who courted Andros' favor, Davis may have hoped to mitigate the harshest effects of the new government by participating in it. Instead, he found himself distrusted by his neighbors and manipulated by his new friends On Benjamin Davis as a crony of Joseph Dudley, see Richard Johnson, *Adjustment to Empire: The New England Colonies, 1675-1715* (Rutgers University Press, 1981), 386.

Land and House is ours, and that we can't consent to part with it to such use."[5] As a member of the Third Church committee, Captain Davis may have believed that providing the Anglicans with their own chapel would keep the meetinghouses safe from incursion. If he had hoped that Sewall would agree, he was disappointed. When Davis brought up the subject of "Land to set a Church on," Sewall dismissed him.[6]

The Anglicans did not back down. Later in the day, Edward Randolph invited Sewall to his house to show him "the Landscips of Oxford Colledges and Halls."[7] Sewall obliged, only to find himself trapped alone in Randolph's house with Parson Ratcliffe. Ratcliffe renewed Davis' request, asking, "for Land at Cotton-Hill for a Church which [the Anglicans] were going to build." Sewall refused again, arguing first that the land was entailed, but emphasizing that he could not sell the land even if it had been unencumbered. He "would not set up that which the People of N[ew] E[ngland] came over to avoid," Sewall told Ratcliffe.[8] The Godly forefathers had endured so much to reform the Church of England, and Sewall could not tarnish their memory by inviting unreformed sacraments into their city.

The land in question — Cotton Hill — was a knoll rising west from Tremont Street. It had once been the homestead of the venerable John Cotton, teacher of the First Church in Boston.[9] His house still stood on the hill's southern slope, overlooking the ancient burying place, where his bones rested. After Cotton's death in 1652, his son had sold the land to John Hull, the colony's mint master, who eventually passed it to his daughter, Hannah Hull Sewall, the wife of

[5] SS, 23 March 1687.
[6] SS, 28 March 1688.
[7] The book that Randolph offered to show Sewall was David Loggan's *Oxonia Illustrata* (1675), a folio with 40 engravings of Oxford.
[8] SS, 28 March 1688.
[9] In the seventeenth century, Massachusetts churches employed two ministers: a pastor and a teacher. According to the *Cambridge Platform of Church Discipline* (1648), "The pastor's special work is, to attend to exhortation, and therein to administer a word of wisdom; the teacher is to attend to doctrine, and therein to administer a word of knowledge."

Samuel Sewall.[10] Sewall had never met Cotton, being not quite nine months old when the esteemed teacher died.[11] Still, he thought of the tract as "Mr. Cotton's Land," and abhorred the idea of erecting an Anglican chapel in the great Puritan's dooryard. The idea that a Church of England minister, resplendent in his surplice and vestments, might read the Book of Common Prayer, celebrate "Holy Dayes," and employ "the Cross in Baptism" on this particular plot of land seemed like a profound betrayal. Samuel Sewall, who prayed for a "holy godly Life," could not make himself an accomplice. When he sat down to compose his birthday entry that night, the habitually mild diarist recorded his emphatic reply to the Anglican proposition: "[I] could not, would not, put Mr. Cotton's Land to such an use."[12]

* * *

Since 1951, many millions of tourists have visited the sixteen official sites on Boston's famed Freedom Trail, including "King's Chapel Burying Ground," a name that surely would have furrowed Samuel Sewall's brow. The graveyard itself is as old as the city, but its association with King's Chapel is an artifact of Godly Boston's weakness in the battle over public memorial culture in the 1680s. When Sewall refused to sell "Mr. Cotton's Land" in 1688, Royal Governor Edmund Andros exercised his civil authority over public lands and seized a piece of the municipal burying ground for a building site. Instead of building a church in John Cotton's dooryard, the Anglicans placed their chapel beside his grave. Though Boston's congregationalist majority resisted the incursion, their objections eventually faded into historical oblivion. By the 1830s, their grandchildren's grandchildren would elide the conflict by referring

[10] Estes Howe, "John Hull and Samuel Sewall," *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, vol. 1 second series (188405), 312-326; citing Suffolk County Deeds, book 6, 227.
[11] Sewall was born in England. He arrived in Massachusetts in 1661, when he was nine years old.
[12] SS, 28 March 1688.

to the graveyard as "King's Chapel Burying Ground" with complete equanimity.[13] Two centuries later, few visitors realize that a distinction ever existed between chapel and burying place.

Like many historical sites, King's Chapel Burying Ground's status as a perpetual monument tends to obscure its contentious history. The illusion of perfect preservation is particularly insidious at burial sites, which combine the timeless finality of death with the sanctity of reliquaries. This aura of stability makes it easy to forget that the experience of death and its commemoration are not universal constants, but ideas with histories. The pitched battle that transformed Boston's Ancient Burying Ground into the King's Chapel Burying Ground so familiar to twenty-first-century tourists is a striking example of how political factions in colonial New England deployed the material culture of death. During the years of the Dominion of New England government (1686-1689), the funerals and burying places of Boston conveyed specific political arguments as congregationalists and Anglicans vied for control of New England's past, present, and future.

The cultural historians who have written about New England "deathways" in the seventeenth century have ascribed the elaboration of funeral rituals in the mid-1680s to cultural dissolution and decline. In his landmark study, *The Puritan Way of Death: A Study in Religion, Culture, and Social Change* (1979), David E. Stannard argued that the increasing complexity of New England funerals in the latter decades of the seventeenth century was a symptom of "tribal vulnerability" among Puritans who were increasingly isolated and powerless.[14] Turning to anthropological models that predicted that, "the most elaborate funerary customs generally appear when societies are most unsettled and most unstable," Stannard described New England

[13] One of the earliest recorded uses of "King's Chapel Burying Ground" comes from William Binham Tappan's 1839 poem, "Horticultural Graveyard." Tappan was a great-great-great nephew of Samuel Sewall's sister, Hannah. After 1754, the graveyard was sometimes called the "Stone Chapel Burying Ground."
[14] David Stannard, The Puritan Way of Death: A Study in Religion, Culture, and Social Change (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 122, 133.

in the late seventeenth century as a community in crisis. With the passing of the emigrant generation, he argued, the colonists experienced a growing "sense of fear and isolation" and responded by "ritualiz[ing] death as only the most non-Puritan of pre-Restoration Englishmen would have dared to do"[15]

Stannard observed a real phenomenon. Written sources from the mid-1680s record the re-introduction of long-abandoned funeral practices like graveside prayers, the use of the Book of Common Prayer, and funeral sermons preached over the body of the deceased prior to burial. But Stannard's turn toward anthropology and psychology left the political context of this change unexplored. He argued that the funeral prayers that begin to appear in Samuel Sewall's diary in 1685 and 1686 "may well not have been offensive or uncommon practice by that time."[16] Sewall certainly did not agree; he fretted constantly over the increasing frequency of Common-Prayer funerals. But Stannard does not perceive Sewall's growing anxiety because he does not align the changes in funeral practice with a political chronology. Without understanding that prayerful funerals were tangled up in imperial politics, he paradoxically ascribes an increase in prayer to a decline in piety. Other historians have made similar arguments, attributing the elaboration of material deathways to the dereliction of the second and third generations of colonists. This narrative relies on a strictly Protestant definition of piety, counting any deviation from a Puritan utopian ideal as a decline in religious fervor, allowing little room to consider Church of England rites as spiritually meaningful or fulfilling. In order to explain the changing funeral culture of the last decades of the seventeenth century, studies like Stannard's attribute cultural change to nebulous anthropological or psychological causes, rather than exploring their political context and meaning.

[15] Stannard, 124, 177.
[16] Stannard, 115.

On the other end of the historiographical spectrum, political histories of the 1680s show scant interest in the fight over sacramental reform that animates the pages written by Sewall and his contemporaries. Studies that take the Dominion of New England seriously typically focus on legal wrangling over *quo warranto* and *scire facias* writs, coercion and defiance through Acts of Parliament and Resolutions of the General Court, and impassioned recriminations in petitions and pamphlets.[17] Their main interest in this period has been in casting the Glorious Revolution as an intellectual antecedent to the American Revolution. Historians like Bernard Bailyn and David S. Lovejoy have used the writings of lawyers and government officials to trace a century of debate over the colonists' legal standing in the British Empire, concluding that the position articulated by Massachusetts' leaders in the 1680s, including "a desire to be treated equally with Englishmen when it came to the laws of Parliament, and a complaint against taxes on their imports without their consent," was "not much different from the one Massachusetts and other colonies adhered to in 1774."[18]

For colonial Bostonians, the advent of sacramental funerals in 1686 was inextricable from the establishment of the Dominion of New England and vice versa. Many of the Dominion's powers were somewhat abstract; after all, the town of Cambridge did not cease to exist in fact just because the Dominion government declared it null and void in theory. In contrast, the introduction of sacramental ceremonies was tangible and immediate. American-born colonists who had never witnessed a Church of England baptism, wedding, or funeral now found the Anglican rites celebrated in the forefathers' own meetinghouses and burying places. Many, like Samuel Sewall, vowed to resist. Others found the rituals disturbingly seductive. In either case, they understood that what happened in the burying ground had profound implications for

[17] The definitive synthesis of American political history during the 1680s is David S. Lovejoy's *The Glorious Revolution in America* (Wesleyan University Press, 1972).
[18] Lovejoy, 141.

the future of the colony. Between 1686 and 1689, Boston's funerals and burying places became public arenas in which both elite and ordinary New Englanders proclaimed their partisan loyalties and embodied their spiritual commitments. The ritual trappings of death — a funeral prayer, a whiff of incense, a churchyard grave — were imbued with political significance. A graveside reading from the Book of Common Prayer seemed like a public repudiation of the emigrant generation as well as a religious ceremony

By the 1680s, the Great Migration was slipping out of living memory. Nearly all of the adults who had left England in the 1630s had died, leaving their children and grandchildren to sustain their bold program of sacramental reform. The emigrant generation had achieved enormous success in formally stripping sacramentalism out of social necessities like marriage and burial, far outpacing similar efforts by reformers in England. Godly New England had a right reformed church, if they could keep it.

The second generation soon found that they would have to fight for the survival of their colonies, as well as their churches. The cataclysmic violence of King Philip's War (1675-1676) wrought devastation on English and Indian alike. While the English colonists, along with their Mohegan, Pequot, and Christian Indian allies, managed to inflict crushing ruin on the opposing Algonquian coalition, their own losses were staggering. More than half of the English towns in Massachusetts had been at least partially destroyed, their inhabitants killed, their houses burned, and their livestock mutilated. More troubling than the physical losses were the ways in which the war had imperiled the colonists' identity as Englishmen. Indian attacks had been purposefully calculated to violate the material markers — houses, livestock, clothing, bodies — that defined Englishness in New England. In addition, the colonists worried that their own behavior during the war had made them more like the Indians they deplored. Though Philip's coalition had not

succeeded in driving the English back into the sea, the war left Massachusetts both physically shattered and spiritually vulnerable.[19]

In the wake of King Philip's War, Massachusetts faced another terrible blow: the loss of its Charter. Beginning in August of 1676, the very month of Philip's death, King Charles II brought a series of legal actions against the Massachusetts Bay Company for various infractions. These included claiming lands beyond the boundaries of their patent, executing the King's subjects over religious differences, violating the Navigation Acts of 1660 and 1663, harboring regicides, and forming themselves "into a commonwealth" outside of the bounds of English law.[20] In the words of the Edward Randolph, an official sent by the Lords of Trade to report on the situation in Boston, the Massachusetts government was guilty of "unparralell'd misdemeanors & contempts & even in their daily arbitrary actings amounting to no lesse than High Treason."[21] After decades of benign neglect during the English Civil War and Cromwell's Interregnum, Charles II and his successor, James II, hoped to bring the American colonies under closer control. Part of this plan involved consolidating the New England colonies under a single Royal Governor who could ensure their compliance with both royal and parliamentary regulations. Before a new, more tractable government could be established, the old government had to be wiped away, a task which Charles' lawyers accomplished by a sustained attack on Massachusetts' foundational legal document. On October 23, 1684, after years of legal sparring, the Court of Chancery in London confirmed a judgment vacating the Charter that had been

[19] Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity* (Random House, 1999), particularly the introduction, Chapter 3, and page 175.
[20] Edward Randolph, "Representation of the Bostoneers," 1680, as published in *Edward Randolph: Including His Letters and Official Papers*, ed. Robert Noxon Toppan and Alfred Thomas Scrope Goodrick (Prince Society, 1899), vol. 3, 78. This volume hereafter abbreviated as "ER".
[21] Edward Randolph, "Praying a Quo Warranto Against the Government of Massachusetts," 6 April 1681, ER, vol. 3, 90.

granted to the Massachusetts Bay Company in 1629.[22] In legal terms, the colony no longer existed.

If war with the Indians had threatened colonists' Englishness by removing the outward markers of their identity, the Charter revocation struck at their very hearts by decimating their claim to the legal rights of Englishmen. In order to bring the colony under direct royal control, the judgment against the Charter dissolved the General Court, Massachusetts' legislative body, subjected all its acts and resolutions to review, and rendered all land deeds held by individual colonists null and void. Barely a decade before, resolute colonists had chosen to die in their homes rather than abandon them. Now, an English court had accomplished what Philip had attempted: the obliteration of colonists' rights to American land, the disestablishment of English towns, and the dissolution of the Massachusetts Bay colony.[23] In his first speech to the General Court, which was still meeting extralegally eighteen months after the Charter revocation, interim Royal Governor Joseph Dudley made the point very plain. "We may not deal with you as a Governor and Company any more," he told the assembly. "We may take you now only for such as you *are*, (viz.) *considerable Gentlemen* of this place, & *Inhabitants* of all parts of the Countrey."[24] No longer a recognized government, the members of the General Court were neither freemen nor representatives of recognized towns, but merely "Inhabitants" of a nameless and unorganized "Countrey."

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[22] For a detailed narrative of these legal proceedings, see David S. Lovejoy, *The Glorious Revolution in America* (Wesleyan University Press, 1972), particularly chapters 7 and 8.

[23] The colonists treated towns as if they were legal entities, but this recognition had no validity under English law. As a chartered corporation, the Massachusetts Bay Company had no legal right to create other legal corporations and the individual towns were not independently chartered. Institutions like the town meeting and each town's election of representatives to the General Court had no basis in English law and were not recognized by the Dominion of New England government.

[24] Joseph Dudley, *The Speech of the Honorable Joseph Dudley, etc.*, 17 May 1686, Archive of Americana, America's Historical Imprints, series 1, no. 39235.

These twin catastrophes coincided with a challenge from within the Godly community: some native-born Anglo-New Englanders found the simple marriages, burials, and conditional baptisms of their forebears insufficient to fulfill their spiritual needs. Perhaps they had always existed; brides of 1640 who longed to be married by a minister, or parents of 1650 who whispered the incantations of the burial service over their children's graves. As the emigrant generation passed away, these sacramental dissenters came forward with their own demands, pushing for incremental counter-reforms like the expanded baptism offered under the 1662 Halfway Covenant. These changes were limited and heavily contested within churches that remained broadly committed to reform. Ministers who embraced the Halfway Covenant still refused to perform marriages or Common-Prayer funerals. They did, however, recognize that the runaway successes of Godly reform had left some of their flock yearning for the inaccessible sacraments.

Then, in 1686, the ceremonial landscape changed all at once with the arrival of Parson Robert Ratcliffe. The Anglican minister in Governor Andros' retinue was sent not just to serve imperial officials, but to bring Church sacraments to the common people of New England.[25] Any New Englander who wanted a Church wedding or an unqualified baptism or a prayerful funeral had only to present herself to Parson Ratcliffe in Boston. Many did, much to the dismay of some of their neighbors. As ostensibly law-abiding Englishmen, New England's committed congregationalists could not run Church of England adherents out of the colonies as if they were Quakers or Baptists. But neither could they condone the assault on the founders' reforms. When

[25] "Anglican" is something of an anachronistic term. Though it was sometimes used in the 17th century as a poetic adjective in describing the Church of England and its adherents, its modern usage surged in the 18th century, particularly relating to the Anglican/Episcopal split in the Church of England after the American Revolution. I have chosen to use the term in this dissertation because it provides necessary clarity. Nearly all Anglo-New Englanders were nominally members of the Church of England, but this chapter deals with the split between factions within that community. The terms "Anglican" and "congregationalist" are not meant in their modern, sectarian usage, but as terms that distinguish the faction that worked to re-introduce the liturgy and rituals of the Church of England that had been so specifically reformed by the emigrant generation from those who fought to keep those rites at bay.

the Anglican faction offered to buy "Mr. Cotton's Land" from Samuel Sewall, they were asking him to abet their efforts to make unreformed sacraments more widely available. Sewall "could not, would not" cooperate.

Even before the arrival of the Dominion government's officers, Boston's memorial culture began to change in response to the revocation of the charter. On June 17, 1685, a small group of Quakers petitioned the lame duck governor, Simon Bradstreet, for "leave to enclose the Ground the Hanged Quakers are buried in under or near the Gallows [on Boston Common], with Pales."[26] Between 1659 and 1661, four Quakers – William Robinson (d.1659), Marmaduke Stephenson (d.1659), Mary Dyer (d.1660), and William Leddra (d.1661) – had manipulated Massachusetts authorities into executing them under circumstances that established the condemned as martyrs within their own community.[27] Now, their brethren hoped to honor them by transforming the piece of land that held their bodies into a recognizable graveyard. Though Massachusetts graveyards were not formally consecrated, the colonists did make distinctions between those who deserved burial within established burying grounds and those who should be excluded, particularly those who had died by suicide or execution.[28] Governor Bradstreet brought the Quaker's request before his Council, which "unanimously denied it as very inconvenient for persons so dead and buried in the place to have any Monument."[29]

The Quakers, who were well practiced in the art of deliberately disrupting death rituals for political ends, fenced in the graves anyway. Weeks later, Samuel Sewall was riding to the Thursday lecture in Dorchester when he noticed, "a few Feet of Ground enclosed with Boards

[26] SS, 17 June 1685.
[27] David Hall, Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England (Harvard University Press, 1990), Chapter 4: The Uses of Ritual.
[28] Samuel Sewall notes the burials of several suicide victims. In April of 1688, the wife of Samuel Marion hanged herself, but was "buried in the burying place" after "two or three swore she was distracted, and had been for some time" (SS, 4 April 1688). In contrast, an Indian servant named Thomas who hanged himself later that same year was buried "by the highway with a Stake through his Grave" (SS, 5 October 1688).
[29] SS, 17 June 1685.

which is done by the Quakers out of respect to some one or more hanged and buried by the Gallows." Sewall was annoyed by their defiance, objecting, "the Governor forbad them, when they asked Leave."[30]

To Sewall and like-minded neighbors, this makeshift graveyard offered a nettlesome critique of Massachusetts' colonial government. On its face, the fenced-in burying ground argued that the executed were people worthy of honor, rather than justly condemned criminals. Marking the graves of the "Boston Martyrs" was a powerful protest, particularly in the context of the judgment against the Charter and the Restoration more generally. When Charles II came to the throne in 1660, past executions in England had come under new scrutiny. The regicides who had signed Charles I's death warrant — including Henry Vane, erstwhile governor of Massachusetts — found the axe turned against them, and several deceased leaders of the Commonwealth, including Oliver Cromwell, were exhumed from their graves and posthumously beheaded for their crimes.[31] The leaders of Massachusetts Bay did not fear violent Quaker reprisals, but they could hardly ignore the implication that their revered ancestors had acted outside the bounds of acceptable law. At a time when similar accusations had cost them their Charter, this was a sharp reproof.

Moreover, the Quaker burial ground highlighted the impotence of Massachusetts' un-Chartered government. Apart from concerns over Boston's illegal trading practices, the question of religious toleration had been one of Charles II's chief grievances against the colonial government in the legal proceedings against the Charter. Although he was no great friend to Quakers, Charles had overridden the colonial government's power to execute them shortly after the Restoration. His letter to Governor John Endicott (9 September 1661) instructed

[30] SS, 5 August 1685.
[31] For a brief overview of the Restoration, see Mark Kishlansky, *A Monarchy Transformed: Britain 1603-1714* (Penguin, 1996).

Massachusetts' government to "forbear to proceed" against "any of those people called Quakers amongst you, now already condemned to suffer death or other corporal punishment" and to send them back to England for trial.[32] Such royal interventions on behalf of religious dissenters had been in the vanguard of blows to Massachusetts' self-government.

The King was not alone in his criticism of the Quaker executions. George Bishop, a Quaker propagandist in England, made the mistreatment of Quaker bodies a highlight of his 1660 book, *New England Judged by the Spirit of the Lord*:

> [T]heir naked bodies [were] cast into a hole that was digged in the earth without any covering. And when some Friends came, and desired that their bodies be put into coffins, and so into some enclosed ground, where beasts might not turn them up, your executioner suffered them to wrap them in linen, and put them in again. But he suffered them not to take them away, saying "he was strictly charged to the contrary."

When a Quaker "caused pales to be brought, to fence the place into which they were cast," the executioner rebuffed him and, "left their bodies together in a pit, in an open field, which was soon covered with water." In this treatment, the Massachusetts government was "worse than Pilate, who gave Joseph the body of Jesus when he desired it."[33] When the Quakers fenced in the graves in the summer of 1685, they knew that the Governor and General Court were uncertain in their authority. Awaiting the arrival of their Royal Governor, the old government could not afford to pick a fight with the maddeningly disobedient and vocal Quakers. In 1660, the government had been strong enough to prevent a graveyard fence, but in 1685, they could not forestall the Quakers' open defiance.

Godly Boston's objections to honoring executed criminals were political, rather than principled. Barely three months after Sewall noticed the unacceptable "Monument" to the

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[32] This letter from King Charles II is dated 9 September 1661 and was read into the records of the General Court of Massachusetts on 27 November 1661. It was printed in its entirety in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, vol. 9 series 4 (1871), 159-160. At the time of publication (1871), the letter was in the possession of Samuel L. M. Barlow of New York.

[33] George Bishop, New England Judged by the Spirit of the Lord (1660), 104.

hanged Quakers, Boston's Congregationalist elite paid public tribute to Lady Alice Beckenshaw Lisle, who had been executed for treason in Winchester, England on September 2, 1685. Lady Alice was lawfully, if not tactfully, condemned for providing food and shelter to two fugitives who had supported the Protestant Duke of Monmouth's unsuccessful rebellion against his Catholic uncle, James II, shortly after his ascension in February.[34] For this, she was sentenced to burn at the stake. Though the King showed mercy enough to have her beheaded rather than burned, Boston received news of Lady Alice's death with horror. Not only were local leaders in sympathy with Monmouth's cause, they were well acquainted with Lady Alice's daughter, Bridget, widow of the late Harvard president Leonard Hoar and wife of Boston merchant Hezekiah Usher.[35] A few days after news of Lady Alice's death arrived, Bridget Usher and her family attended Cotton Mather's public Thursday lecture "in Mourning."[36] If their attire did not adequately represent Boston's sympathies, Mather's text, Matthew 25, filled in the gaps:

> For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me . . . Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.[37]

After the sermon, the congregation sang a selection from the 79th Psalm: "Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee; according to the greatness of thy power preserve thou those that are appointed to die." With the black-clad Usher family in their sight and these words on their lips,

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[34] The two men were John Hickes, a non-conformist minister, and Richard Nelthrope, a lawyer who had taken part in the Rye House Plot.

[35] Hoar died on 28 November 1675. Bridget married Hezekiah Usher on 29 November 1676. In his 1723 funeral sermon for Bridget Lisle Hoar Usher, Rev. Thomas Foxcroft (minister of the First Church and son of the Anglican Colonel Francis Foxcroft) remarked that she was, "from her youth up, sober, virtuous and religious . . . [having] the character of an holy, blameless, close walker with God." see Thomas Foxcroft, *The Character of Anna, the Prophetess, Considered and Applied*, 25 May 1723. Eulogies are not the most reliable assessments of character, but it seems evident that Madam Usher was held in high esteem by Boston's Godly community. Her father-in-law, Hezekiah Usher, Sr. was a founding member of the Third (South) Church.

[36] SS, 19 November 1685.

[37] According to Sewall (SS, 19 November 1685), Cotton Mather preached from two texts that day: Numbers 25:11 and Matthew 25. Numbers 25:11 concerns the actions of Phineas, a grandson of Moses' brother Aaron, who saved the Israelites from God's wrath by proving his zealousness. The text quoted here is from Matthew 25, KJV.

the congregation could hardly have overlooked the implication that Lady Alice was a righteous martyr, rather than a criminal. She may have been condemned by the law of the land, but, in November of 1685, Godly Boston publically mourned her as one of their own.

These two incidents show how different factions in Boston manipulated memorial culture to protest government actions. In the months following the public homage to Lady Alice, these machinations would take on an increased urgency as imperial officials acted out their bid for political power in Boston. Though the Charter had been revoked in October of 1684, little had changed in the colony eighteen months later. Until the spring of 1686, the General Court continued to meet and pass resolutions, despite the loss of its legal authority. The congregationalist majority continued to enforce moral order, resolutely keeping shops open on Christmas to "profane" the day, and harrying Francis Stepney, the unfortunate dancing master who had encouraged "mixt Dances" and was fined £100 in February of 1686 for blasphemy and "Reviling the Government."[38] The dissolution of the colonists' legal power was largely theoretical and unenforceable until the King's men began to insist on their authority in tangible ways. A decree from a far-away court could be ignored, at least for a time, but displays of power over Boston buildings, people, and rituals were another matter entirely.

When the HMS *Rose* dropped anchor in Boston harbor on May 15, 1686, it threatened to nullify all that the *Arbella* had instigated 56 years before.[39] The *Rose* carried commissions for interim Royal Governor Joseph Dudley and a new Council. Most Bostonians had no love for Dudley, a Roxbury native who was suspected of betraying the colony's Charter to advance his own career during his time as a provincial representative in London. They liked his commission

[38] SS, 12 November 1685, 29 January 1686, 4 February 1686.
[39] The *Arbella* was the flagship of the Winthrop Fleet. When it arrived in Massachusetts in 1630, its notable passengers included Governor John Winthrop, Simon and Anne Bradstreet, Thomas Dudley, Sir Richard Saltonstall, and the much-fought-over colonial Charter.

even less. Here was proof at last that the evisceration of the colonial government was not an abstract threat, but a reality. In addition to Dudley's commission, the *Rose* also delivered one of the most unwelcome persons ever to set foot in Boston: Parson Robert Ratcliffe, New England's first Anglican minister. Though he wielded no formal political authority, Ratcliffe was no less crucial to the implementation of imperial policy in the colony than the new Royal Governor. Over the next three years, he would grate on every raw nerve in the city as he reintroduced the sacraments to the children and grandchildren of the Great Migration.

Imperial officials found the religious climate in New England unacceptable. Edward Randolph complained to his London patrons that Anglicans were discriminated against in colonies that were, at least nominally, under the protection and control of English law. Faithful members of the Church of England were "constrained under a ffine to attend their Congregational meetings," and excluded from the Lord's Supper.[40] Equally troubling, Massachusetts law restricted freemanship to church members, meaning that loyal Anglicans could neither vote nor hold office. The formal charges brought against the Charter alleged that Massachusetts had "made Lawes absolutely repugnant to the Lawes of England," effectively outlawed the Church of England, and punished religious dissenters with fines, whippings, and execution. In short, the colonists "pretend[ed] to an absolute Authority without any Dependance on His Majesty."[41]

The ongoing catastrophes in English politics at home had shielded New England congregationalism from scrutiny for half a century, but the post-Restoration Church of England was eager to re-gather any lambs left wandering in the wilderness. Randolph wrote to the Henry Compton, the Bishop of London, in 1682, upon hearing whispered rumors that the Church might

[40] Edward Randolph, "The Ill Treatment the Church of England Receives in Boston," 15 January 1678, in ER, vol. 3, 35.
[41] "Abstract of the Proceedings of King Charles The First Against the Massachusetts," in ER, vol. 5, 19.

to send an ordained Anglican minister: "the very report hath given great satisfaction to many hundreds whose children are not baptized, and to as many who never, since they came out of England, received the sacrament [of Communion]."[42] Randolph even proposed supporting an Anglican minister by diverting funds from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, judging the needs of under-served members of the Church of England to be more urgent than hopes for the conversion of the Indians.[43]

Randolph's concerns were nothing new. As early as 1642, Thomas Lechford — who was both Massachusetts's first lawyer and its first disbarred lawyer — had complained that Massachusetts law excluded many people from religious observances. In England, everyone had access to "set forms and Scriptures read," as well as "the Creeds and publique catechizings," but in New England, the dense sermons and expectation that people would pray on their own tended to, "dull, amaze, confound, [and] discourage the weake and ignorant, (which are the most of men)." Lechford argued that the limited sacraments offered by the New England churches would "spread heathenisme" among the unbaptized and those barred from the Lord's Supper, predicting that New Englanders would eventually, "goe among their fellow-heathens the Indians, or rise up against the Church."[44]

These accusations were serious, but were eclipsed by the Church of England's much more serious troubles during the English Civil War and the Interregnum. Ecclesiastical governance in the colonies was a low priority until 1675, when Henry Compton, one of the Lords of Trade, became Bishop of London. Inspired by reports like Lechford's and Randolph's, Compton took an active role in advising the Lords of Trade on colonial Church policy and eventually transferred most of the authority over the American Church to the Bishop of London's

[42] E Randolph to Bishop of London, 14 July 1682, in ER vol 3, 178.
[43] E Randolph to Bishop of London, 29 May 1682 in ER, vol 3. 148.
[44] Thomas Lechford, *Plain Dealing, or News From New England* (1642), 57, preface.

office.[45] By 1679, when Virginia's Royal Governor, Thomas Culpeper, received official instructions from London, they included provisions declaring that, "The Book of Common Prayer is now established, read each Sunday and Holy Day, and the Blessed Sacrament administered according to the rules of the Church of England," and requiring that all ministers and ecclesiastical officers have, "a Certificate from the Lord B[isho]p of London, of his being comfortable to the Doctrine of the Church of England."[46] When Edmund Andros was commissioned Royal Governor of Massachusetts in 1686, he was similarly instructed to take special pains that religious observances "comfortable to the rites of the Church of England be particularly countenanced and encouraged." Though he was directed to allow "liberty of conscience" in matters of religion, Andros was charged with encouraging, "virtue and good living, that by such example, the infidels may be invited, and desire to partake of the Christian religion." [47] The document is ambiguous as to whether the term "infidels" applied only to Indians or to all inhabitants of New England.

Before the revocation of the charter in October of 1684, official attempts to enforce adherence to the Church of England and its sacraments had met with abject failure. In New Hampshire, Royal Governor Edward Cranfield arrested Rev. Joshua Moodey of Portsmouth in February of 1684, "he being convicted of administering the sacraments contrary to the laws and statutes of England, and refusing to administer the sacraments according to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England." Moodey spent his six-month prison sentence sifting through adoring letters from churches as far away as New Haven, all of them begging him to

[45] David S. Lovejoy, *The Glorious Revolution in America* (Wesleyan University Press, 1972), 26-8.
[46] Instructions to Thomas Lord Culpeper, 6 September 1679 as quoted in *Arthur Lyon Cross, The Anglican Episcopate in the American Colonies* (New York: Logmans, Green & Co., 1902), 335.
[47] Commission to Governor Edmund Andros, 1686, as reprinted in the *Records of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations*, ed. John Russell Bartlett (1858), vol. 1, 217.

consider "removing thither."[48] Upon his release, he accepted the unparalleled honor of leading of the First Church of Boston.

Rev. Moodey's move from Portsmouth to Boston placed him at the geographical center of the storm brewing over the future of sacramental reform in New England. With the arrival of Parson Robert Ratcliffe in May of 1686, the Dominion government took a new approach, bypassing the Godly ministers instead of forcing them into conformity. Ratcliffe was twenty-nine years old, alight with zealous confidence, and, even in the grudging estimation of his theological opponents, "an Extraordinary good Preacher."[49] Congregationalist Bostonians seldom failed to refer to him as "Parson," a vaguely pejorative term for the Anglican clergy that connoted the bumbling ministrations of an uneducated clod. But Ratcliffe wore the title well. A century later, William Blackstone's legal commentary would define "parson" as "the most honorable title that a parish priest can enjoy; because such a one, . . . and he only, is said *vicem seu personam ecclesiae gerere* ('to carry out the business of the church in person')." From his first days in Boston, Parson Ratcliffe embodied this definition, applying his abundant energy to carrying out the business of the church in person.

On May 18, 1686, three days after his arrival in Boston, Ratcliffe defied Massachusetts law by performing a sacramental double-wedding. Since 1647, ministers had been formally prohibited from solemnizing marriages in the colony and it had been less than a year since the General Court had reprimanded a French Huguenot minister for ignoring the law. Now, the General Court's power had been eviscerated and Ratcliffe openly dared the deposed colonial

[48] Arrest Warrant and Letter of Rev. Moodey to Increase Mather (20 March 20 1684) in *History of First Church*, ed. Arthur Blake Ellis and George Edward Ellis (Boston: Hall and Whiting, 1881), 141-2

[49] John Dunton, *Letters Written From New England, A.D. 1686 by John Dunton*, ed. William H. Whitmore (Boston: Prince Society, 1867), 138. Dunton was not a native New Englander, but he was a prominent non-conformist and married to the daughter of Dr. Samuel Annesley, a famous non-conformist minister. He was in sympathy with Godly Boston.

elite to admonish him. The "great Wedding" of May 18, was conducted "according to the Service-Book" and caught the attention of nervous congregationalists. Samuel Sewall noted that one of the grooms, the son of a prominent family from the town of Milton, had "Borrowed a Ring," conforming to part of the Common-Prayer rite that the Godly regarded as particularly idolatrous.

With interim Governor Dudley at the helm, the new government stood behind Ratcliffe, overturning long-established law to accommodate the sacraments. On May 29, Dudley issued a proclamation "For the Orderly SOLEMNIZATION of MARRIAGE" that would "Authorize and Impower the several *Ministers* and Justices of the Peace, *all* and *every one* of them" to perform marriages. The printed version, complete with italic emphasis on the words "Ministers" and "all and every one," appeared on broadsides that could be posted around town.[50]

That same week, Ratcliffe raised the stakes again by asking interim Governor Dudley's Council to grant him "one of the 3 [Meeting]Houses to preach in."[51] Godly members of the Council were aghast at the prospect of turning over their churches for Anglican worship. Undeterred, Ratcliffe set out his surplice and candles, his chalice and Common-Prayer Book in the "Library chamber" of the Town House.[52] Over the next several months, Parson Ratcliffe baptized a backlog of hundreds, performed more weddings, administered the Lord's Supper to anyone who would take it, led Wednesday and Friday prayers, and preached twice a day to the faithful and the curious alike.[53] His services were "so great a Novelty to the Bostonians" that he

[50] "A Proclamation by the President and Council for the Orderly Solemnization of Marriage" (29 May 1686), Archive of Americana, America's Historical Imprints, series 1 no. 411.
[51] SS, 26 May 1686.
[52] Minutes of Anglican Parish Meeting, 4 July 1686, in the records of King's Chapel, as published in *Annals of King's Chapel, from the Puritan Age of New England to the Present Day*, eds. Henry Wilder Foote, John Carroll Perkins, Winslow Warren (Boston: 1882), 45-6. This volume is hereafter abbreviated as *Annals of King's Chapel*.
[53] "The Common Prayer Worship and Baptism with the Cross publickly practised in Boston in the Towne-house," Increase Mather complained in his diary on June 6 (Increase Mather, *Diary of Increase Mather*, ed. Samuel A. Green (Cambridge: Wilson & Son, 1900), 53). In September, Ratcliffe performed a marriage ceremony for David

regularly attracted "a very large Audience."[54] While Edward Randolph's estimate of 400 regular congregants is likely an overestimation made to impress the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Anglicans soon "found [the library] so strait" that they moved their services to the Exchange — the spacious first floor of the Town-House.[55]

Ratcliffe's success in attracting colonists to his services alarmed congregationalist Bostonians. An Anglican church catering to recently-arrived imperial officials, soldiers, and English merchants would have been bad enough, but Ratcliffe's nascent congregation included worshippers who were connected with the best congregational families. One of these was Anthony Haywood, whose wife, Margaret, was the daughter of a founding member of the Mathers' Second (North) Church. Margaret's father, Michael Powell, had been renowned for his godliness, blessed with such "peculiar gifts" that the congregation had considered appointing him as their Teacher, the same position occupied by John Cotton in the First Church. Denied the post by the General Court because of his lack of education, Michael was nonetheless a stalwart of the Godly church and was appointed to the lay position of "Ruling Elder."[56] Another early member of the Anglican congregation was Colonel Francis Foxcroft, whose wife, Elizabeth, was the daughter of Thomas Danforth of Cambridge, a pillar of the Godly community and Deputy Governor under the old government.[57] Elizabeth had been baptized as an infant at the church in

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Jeffries and Elizabeth Usher, granddaughter of Hezekiah Usher, the founder of Samuel Sewall's beloved Third Church who left a silver cup to the congregation at his death in 1676; SS, 15 September 1686. On frequency of prayer, see SS, 30 May1686.

[54] Dunton, 137.

[55] Letters from ERandolph to Archbishop of Canterbury, 7 July 1686 and 27 October 1686 in ER, vol. 3, 88 and 131. In the 17th century, the Town House consisted of the "Exchange" on the first floor, and smaller rooms, including the library, on the second floor.

[56] Chandler Robbins, *A History of the Second Church, or Old North, in Boston* (Boston: Wilson & Son, 1852), 8-9.

[57] Thomas Danforth was a member of the First Church of Cambridge, a judge of the superior court, and an advocate of Massachusetts' charter rights — in short, a well-established leader of orthodox Boston.

Cambridge, where her parents were "both [members] in full Comm[union]."[58] Her son, Daniel, born in 1686, is absent from the baptismal rolls of the Godly churches of Boston and Cambridge.[59] Another was Samuel Ravenscroft, a congregant of Samuel Sewall's own Third (South) Church who had married Diyonisia Savage, the daughter of founding member Thomas Savage. Yet, within a month of the *Rose*'s arrival, Ravenscroft had abandoned congregationalism to take a leadership role in the nascent Anglican parish of Boston.[60] His eldest daughter had been baptized at the Third Church in 1682, but his four younger children were not.[61] Haywood, Foxcroft, and Ravenscroft had been well-integrated into pious Boston's families and congregations for years, but now they were leading the grandchildren of Godly men like Michael Powell, Thomas Danforth, and Thomas Savage into Anglican apostasy.[62]

The appeal of Church of England worship extended beyond the upper echelons of Boston society. When Edward Randolph surveyed the crowd at Parson Ratcliffe's services, he observed that "some [attendees] are tradesmen, others of mechanick professions."[63] While some of these men may have attended Anglican services as a novelty, others were serious enough to contribute money toward the construction of an Anglican chapel. John Parmenter, a housewright,

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[58] Records of the Church of Christ at Cambridge in New England, 1632-1830, ed. Stephen P. Sharples (Boston: Eben Putnam, 1906), 6.

[59] King's Chapel's surviving baptismal records begin in the early years of the 18th century.

[60] *Annals of King's Chapel*, 44. Ravenscroft was among the 12 founding members who were present at the first meeting of the Church of England in Boston on 15 June 1686. He was also a member of the Honorable Artillery Company — he had been admitted the same year as Samuel Sewall (1679). see also Oliver Ayers Roberts, *History of the Military Company*. Note that Ravenscroft's father-in-law was Thomas Savage, the fourth member of the artillery company, who had been one of the followers of Anne Hutchinson (she was his mother-in-law). Savage was a founding member of the South Church and a General Court representative.

[61] Dyonisia (b. April 12, 1681), Samuel (b. April 12, 1682), George (b. March 20, 1683), Sarah (November 20, 1686), Thomas (June 29, 1688). Dyonisia (or Dionysia) was baptized at Third Church in 1682; *An Historical Catalogue of the Old South Church (Third Church) Boston*, ed. Hamilton Andrew Hill and George Frederick Bigelow (Boston, 1883), 208.

[62] In the end, most of these children came back to congregationalism. Foxcroft's son, Thomas (b. February 26, 1697), eventually became a Congregationalist minister. Thomas Foxcroft graduated from Harvard in 1714 and was called to serve as the pastor of the First Church in Boston in 1717, a position he held until his death in 1769. Francis Foxcroft remained an active member of the King's Chapel congregation until his death in 1727.

[63] Letters from E Randolph to Archbishop of Canterbury, 7 July 1686 and 27 October 1686 in ER, 88 and 131. In the 17th century, the Town-House consisted of an open-air market under the arches of the ground floor, the "Exchange" on the first floor, and smaller room, including the library, on the second floor.

contributed one pound and one shilling, as did the silversmith John Coney; James Mears, a feltmaker, and Thomas Mallet, a linen draper, each gave six shillings; Joseph Cowell, a cooper, gave nine shillings toward the construction of pews. Several of the early wardens of King's Chapel shared similarly humble backgrounds: Savil Simpson was a cordwainer, John Indicott was a cooper, and Giles Dyer had been the keeper of clocks at both the First and Second Churches since 1673.[64]

With so many bad examples to follow, staunch congregationalists worried about the seductive power of sacramental worship. On May 30, 1686, the first Sabbath of Parson Ratcliffe's tenure at the Towne House, Samuel Sewall deemed Psalm 141 "exceedingly suited to this day":

> Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practise wicked works with men that work iniquity: and let me not eat of their dainties . . . Keep me from the snares which they have laid for me, and the gins of the workers of iniquity. Let the wicked fall into their own nets, whilst I withal escape.

Though Sewall did not attend the service, he kept his ear to the ground, reporting, "it seems many crouded thether" and singling out a fellow judge, Charles Lidget of Charlestown, as a notable transgressor.[65] Though some in the crowd protested that they attended out of simple curiosity, their loyalties became suspect. John Dunton, a suspected Monmouth conspirator who attended an Anglican service while hiding out in Boston in 1686, complained that, "it was told about Town, as a piece of Wonder" that he had "turn'd Apostate."[66]

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[64] See subscription lists in *Annals of King's Chapel*, 89, 117. Savil Simpson first served as a warden in 1691, John Indicott (as far as I can discover, not a relative of Governor John Endecott) in 1698, and Giles Dyer in 1690. For a biographical sketch of Giles Dyer, see Oliver Ayer Roberts, *History of the Military Company of the Massachusetts Now Called The Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company of Massachusetts, 1637-1888, Volume I* (Boston: Mudge & Son, 1895), 260.

[65] SS, 30 May 1686.

[66] John Dunton was married to Elizabeth Annesley, whose father, Samuel Annesley, was a leading nonconformist minister during the English Civil War period. Elizabeth's sister, Susanna, married Samuel Wesley and became known as the "Mother of Methodism" after her sons, John and Charles Wesley, launched the Methodist movement (she is buried at Bunhill Fields).

Reverend Increase Mather, the renowned minister of the Second Church, deemed private prayer and whispered rumors insufficient to combat "Popish and Heathenish" worship. Shortly after Ratcliffe's arrival, he published a *Brief Discourse Concerning the Unlawfulness of the Common Prayer Worship* (1686).[67] In it, he chastised colonists who attended Anglican services casually:

> It is vain for men to please themselves that though they joyn in the Common prayer worship, they do not approve thereof . . . he that shall Joyn with a few Prayers in the Common prayer Book, does really profess his subjection to the whole order of worship prescribed in that Booke .

Arguing that it was "unlawfull to be present at the Common Prayer worship or any part thereof," Mather upbraided his fellow colonists. Their interest in Church of England services was shameful. "Should I once go to hear Common Prayer," he ranted, "I Seriously profess I Know not how I should bee able to look my Father in the Face in the other world."[68]

Mather's use of the phrase "my Father" in this passage is striking for its ambiguity. Would he be ashamed before God or before his biological father, the renowned Puritan minister Richard Mather, and, by extension, the rest of the emigrant generation? Elsewhere in his published works, Mather typically used the phrase "my father" when discussing relationships between flesh-and-blood fathers and their children, preferring to call God "the Lord," "God," and, on very rare occasions, "Heavenly Father."[69] Mather's readers could scarcely miss the double meaning. By attending sacramental services where the Book of Common Prayer was used, they were betraying their forebears. For anyone who mistook his meaning, Mather added a finishing jab: "Gal. 2. 18 [For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.] Is of weight with mee."

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[67] Increase Mather, A Brief Discourse Concerning the Unlawfulness of the Common Prayer Worship (1686), 1.
[68] *ibid.*, 11, 16.
[69] Mather's typical usage of the words "my father" can be seen in sermons like "Pray for the Rising Generation" (1678): "thou art the God of my Father, the God of my Grand-father, oh! be my God also."

Godly Bostonians could stall and keep Parson Ratcliffe and his vile ceremonies out of their meeting houses for a little while, but they could not banish him from their public burying grounds. On August 5, 1686, Samuel Sewall made a note in his diary, remarking that William Harrison, a bodice maker, was "the first that I know of buried with the Common-Prayer Book in Boston."[70] In November, two more funerals — one for a gentleman named Robinson, recently arrived from Antigua, and the other for bookseller John Griffin — followed suit. The former was particularly flamboyant in its departure from New England norms. Where most New England funerals processed directly from the "House of Mourning" to the grave, Robinson's coffin was first carried to the Town House, where it was "set before the Pulpit" for the duration of a sermon by Mr. Buckley, the Anglican chaplin of the *Rose*.[71] Sewall was troubled by these sacramental funerals, and was on high alert for news of others conducted according to the Book of Common Prayer. Griffin's was "the third funeral of this sort, as far as I can learn," but Sewall feared that more would follow.[72] Even ambiguous anomalies in established ritual were cause for suspicion, as in the case of James Whitcomb, who was buried on November 29 in a coffin decorated with "a St. Andrew's Cross made with what intent I can't tell."[73]

These Common-Prayer funerals were affronts to the founding principles of Massachusetts Bay. The burial service, based on the Pope's "Idolatrous Mass Book," undermined the emigrant generation's sacramental reforms.[74] "The office for Burial is a Lying, very bad office; makes no difference between the precious and the vile," Sewall complained.[75] Increase Mather elaborated:

> When any man is buried, the Priest must say at his grave, Almighty God has taken to Himselfe the Soul of this dear Brother, Perhaps the most wicked wretch on the Earth, and

[70] SS, 5 August 1686.
[71] Francis William Pitt Greenwood, *A History of King's Chapel* (Boston: 1833), 25. The *Rose* was the ship attacked by Bostonians in 1689.
[72] SS, 12 December 1686.
[73] SS, 29 November 1686.
[74] Increase Mather, A Brief Discourse Concerning the Unlawfulness of the Common Prayer Worship (1686), 1, 4.
[75] SS, 1 September 1708.

> then his body is Committed to the ground in sure and certain hope of a Resurrection to Everlasting Life; Though hee did never truly, nor so much as visibly to the Judgment of Rational Charity, repent of his Sins. What Minister can do this with a good Conscience?[76]

To Godly New Englanders, whose forebears had rejected the inclusive, parish model of the Church of England, the Book of Common Prayer and all its "unscriptural ceremonies" represented both the intrusiveness and the vapidity of the state church.

Consternation over the first round of Common-Prayer funerals had barely dissipated when the Anglican invasion took another dire turn. Five days before Christmas, 1686, Sir Edmund Andros, the new Royal Governor, stepped onto Boston's Long Wharf in "a Scarlet Coat Laced."[77] Unlike the Roxbury-born Dudley, Governor Andros had no loyalty and little sympathy toward Boston's Godly community. He was a firm supporter of the Church, and its success was at the top of his agenda. On the afternoon of his arrival, immediately after his swearing-in, Andros called the ministers to the Towne House library to renew Parson Ratcliffe's request for the use of a meetinghouse.[78] A hasty council of leading members of Boston's three churches rebuffed him, declaring that they "could not with a good conscience consent that our Meeting-Houses should be made use of for the Common-Prayer Worship."[79] Parson Ratcliffe read that year's Christmas services in the Towne House, with the Governor and his red-coated bodyguards in attendance.[80]

By Eastertime, whatever little deference Governor Andros had mustered in December had evaporated. In March of 1687, he seized the keys of the Third Church's meeting house and commanded the sexton to "Ring the Bell and open the door" for Anglican services.[81] Leading

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[76] Increase Mather, A Brief Discourse Concerning the Unlawfulness of the Common Prayer Worship (1686), 8.
[77] SS, 20 December 1686.
[78] ibid.
[79] SS, 21 December 1686.
[80] SS, 25 December 1686: "Governour goes to the Town-House to Service Forenoon and Afternoon, a Red-Coat going on his right hand and Capt. George on the left."
[81] SS, 25 March 1687.

members of the Third Church, including Samuel Sewall, Benjamin Davis, and Deacon Theophilus Frary, complained that the building was private property, and thus should not be seized for public use when a municipal building like the Town House was available. "The Land and the House is ours," they argued, showing the governor a deed bearing the names of the church founders, and protesting that they "can't consent to part with it to such use."[82] Governor Andros ignored them. For the next two years, Parson Ratcliffe and his congregation used the South Meeting House as they pleased, regularly preempting the congregationalist services by lingering over the sacraments and giving extra-long sermons.[83]

In taking over the South Meetinghouse, Governor Andros had acquired not only a place to hold regular Sunday services, but also a site for conducting the much-loathed Common Prayer funerals. In May of 1687, the funeral of Thomas Hamilton, captain of the HMS *Kingfisher*, transformed the meetinghouse into a makeshift cathedral. To their horror, Sewall and his friends found their "Pulpit cover'd with black cloath" and decorated with showy escutcheons. The *Kingfisher*'s chaplain preached a funeral sermon over the body — the first such occurrence in any of Boston's three congregational churches. Sewall noted in dismay that the "House [was] very Full," and that many prominent citizens stayed for "the Common Prayer and Sermon."[84] Godly Bostonians had lost control of their meetinghouses, but they showed their displeasure when they could. A week after Hamilton's funeral, Joseph Phips of Boston caused a

[82] SS, 23 March 1687.
[83] Bostonians were generally willing to share their churches with their Congregationalist neighbors in times of distress. For example, when the First Church burned down in October of 1711, both the South Church and the Brattle Street Church, "kindly invited the two Ministers of the Dispersed Congregation, to Preach, & Administer the Sacraments among them by turns" in a show of "Christian Love, Union and Communion" (see Benjamin Wadsworth, *Five Sermons* (1714), preface). This act of charitable church-sharing was an expression of brotherly love, and Wadsworth's congregation was appropriately humble and thankful.
[84] SS, 17 May 1687. It is unclear from this entry whether Sewall was in attendance himself, though his general attitude toward Common-Prayer funerals suggests that he probably heard about the details second-hand.

"disturbance" at the funeral of a British soldier by "standing with 's hat on as the Parson was reading Service."[85]

The brazen celebration of Common-Prayer funerals in the South Meetinghouse was an affront to congregationalists. Even more upsetting was the possibility that the Anglicans seemed intent on expanding their claims over Boston's dead. In the first week of January 1688, Parson Ratcliffe nearly came to blows with Deacon Theophilus Frary, one of the founding members of the Third Church, at the funeral of Edward Lillie. Lillie, a wealthy cooper, had drawn up a hasty will during his last illness, in which he left the details of his funeral up to his widow, Elizabeth, and his eldest son, Samuel.[86] Though very near death, Lillie had strength enough to demand that his estate contribute £3 toward the construction of a permanent Anglican chapel in Boston. Such a gift indicates that Lillie was probably one of Parson Ratcliffe's flock. While no definitive list of early King's Chapel congregants survives, Lillie appears on the roll of the ninety-six original subscribers to the chapel construction project. Lillie's gift of £3 placed him in the top quarter of contributors; most patrons gave £2 or less.[87] Increase Mather may have been correct in arguing that "Several Non-Conformists gave towards [the construction] (as the Indian worshipped one whom he feared else would hurt him)," but there is little reason to suppose that Lillie would have left such a generous deathbed bequest to a cause he reviled.[88]

Edward Lillie's religious sympathies put him at odds with his relatives. His son, Samuel, was a member of the Mathers' Second Church, having been admitted in 1682 at age 19, a year before his marriage to Deacon Frary's daughter, Mehitable. Despite his father's Anglican

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[85] SS, 26 May 1687.
[86] Edward Lillie's will is dated 24 December 1687. It was proved on 7 January 1687/8.
[87] *Annals of King's Chapel*, 89. Of the 96 subscribers, 6 gave more than £10, 21 gave £3-£7, 44 gave £1-£2, and 25 gave less than £1.
[88] Increase Mather (attributed), A Vindication of New-England (1689) in The Andros Tracts: Being a Collection of Pamphlets and Official Papers issued During the Period Between the Overthrow of the Andros Government and the Establishment of the Second Charter of Massachusetts, ed. William Henry Whitmore (1869) vol 6, 45. This volume is hereafter abbreviated as Andros Tracts.

sympathies, Samuel Lillie organized an orthodox New England funeral for him. He asked his father-in-law, Deacon Frary, to pray at the house before the funeral procession and forbad Parson Ratcliffe from reading the burial service from the Book of Common Prayer at the graveside. Ratcliffe ignored this request and turned up at the burying ground "with Gown and Book."[89] When the parson began to read the service, Deacon Frary interrupted and ejected him from the graveyard.

Unable to perform the sacrament, Ratcliffe complained to several influential members of his congregation. Boston was a congregational city, but the Anglicans were men of high office and had the power to punish those who "hindred and Obstructed their Parson in Discharging of his Duty and Office."[90] When they heard of the confrontation at Lillie's funeral, three high-ranking Anglicans — Judge Charles Lidget, Colonel Francis Foxcroft, and Doctor Benjamin Bullivant — issued a formal citation to Deacon Frary for his unruly behavior and "covented and bound [him] over with sureties" for his good behavior for a period of one year.[91]

The suggestion that the Church of England could bury a New Englander with the Common-Prayer service, against the wishes of the living heirs, appalled Boston's congregational leaders. Rev. Joshua Moodey, minister at the First Church and hero of the anti-sacramental movement, declared Frary's reprimand "A fearfull reproach and snare," and bewailed the implications in a letter to Increase Mather:

> What does the proclamation for liberty of Conscience doe, if such impositions are allowed! This is a very tremendous thing to us . . . Now when the deceased did not desire it and left the burial to the Executors and they forbade it, methinks it should not be imposed, and what a case are wee all in.[92]

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[89] *ibid*., 66.
[90] *ibid*., 65.
[91] Joshua Moody to Increase Mather, 8 February1688, in *Andros Tracts*, 65.
[92] ibid.

Mather found the episode so troubling that he included it in his *Narrative of the Miseries of New-England, By Reason of an Arbitrary Government Erected there Under Sir Edmond Andros* (1689). He resented the suggestion that Boston was a "Barbarous Country" in need of the civilizing ministries of the Church "for their Edification," and deplored the imposition of Church rites when the family "Unanimously informed [Ratcliffe] that it would be very Offencive to them to be so Imposed upon."[93] Neither Moodey nor Mather mentioned Edward Lillie's bequest to the King's Chapel building project. His religious affiliation mattered less than the alarming precedent set at his funeral.

Parson Ratcliffe had been thwarted at Edward Lillie's funeral, but he soon found an opportunity to reassert the sprawling privilege of the Church. Five weeks after the Lillie fiasco, Governor Andros's wife, Lady Marie Craven Andros, died after only four months in Boston. Her funeral, a sumptuous affair conducted at public expense in the South Meetinghouse on February 10, 1688, was an ecstatic assertion of Anglican power under the Andros government.

Everything about Lady Andros' funeral was calculated to maximize the dramatic effect. Whereas most Boston funerals took place in the early evening, before sunset, Lady Andros' procession stepped off at dusk, requiring that the ceremony be held by torchlight. A hearse pulled by six black-clad horses carried the corpse from the Governor's house along streets lined with red-coated soldiers. When it arrived at the South Meetinghouse, the coffin was "set in the Alley before the pulpit, with Six Mourning Women by it" while torches and candles illuminated an interior "cloudy" with incense. A black mourning cloth covered the pulpit, whence Ratcliffe delivered his funeral sermon on the text, "Cry, all flesh is Grass."[94] Disgusted at the sight of his

[93] *ibid.*, 66.
[94] SS, 10 February 1688.

beloved South Meetinghouse festooned in mourning, Samuel Sewall stormed out before the sermon.

Despite the insult of Lady Andros' funeral, members of the South Church were reluctant to reclaim their meetinghouse by abetting the construction of a permanent Anglican church. The violation of their meetinghouses was exasperating, but it was temporary, whereas a permanent church would be the first step in establishing an American bishopric. At first, Andros, Randolph, and other prominent Anglicans proposed that Boston's congregations should give money toward the support of the official Church, as they would have been expected to do in England. When Boston's Godly objected that their forebears "came from England to avoid such and such things," Andros berated them for their "backwardness to give and the unreasonableness." In a meeting with Samuel Sewall and Deacon Frary, Andros upbraided them for their maddening stubbornness, raving, "if any stinking filthy thing were in the House we would give something to have it carried out, but would not give to build them an house."[95] Clearly, Andros was aware that his seizure of the South Meetinghouse was provocative, and had hoped to offend Bostonians enough that they would bend to his will just to be rid of him. Still, the orthodox refused to contribute. Moreover, they resisted attempts to purchase land for the project out of the Anglicans' own funds. When Benjamin Davis, Edward Randolph, and Parson Ratcliffe pressured Samuel Sewall to sell them a building site on Cotton Hill six weeks after Lady Andros' funeral, he issued his steadfast refusal to betray the founder's memory: "[I] could not, would not, put Mr. Cotton's Land to such an use."[96]

Exasperated by the limits of persuasion, the Anglican faction used their political power to achieve their ends. As the King's hand in New England, Governor Andros had broad powers

[95] SS, 23 June 1688.
[96] SS, 28 March 1688.

over the distribution of land, up to and including the power to dissolve land grants made by the unchartered town governments. It was well within his power to seize a piece of public land for the construction of a chapel of the legally-established Church. He could have chosen any piece of public land — a tiny piece of the vast, underdeveloped Common would have been a diplomatic choice, or perhaps a corner of one of the royal forts, or a barren stretch of Boston Neck — but Andros had long ago stopped trying to appease Bostonians. Instead, he seized the western corner of the oldest burying ground in the city and directed his fellow Anglicans to build their church there.[97] If New Englanders insisted that burying grounds and meeting houses were civil, unconsecrated spaces, Andros would throw their ideological commitments in their faces. He would dig his foundations in the ancient burying ground where Boston's Godly had buried John Winthrop, John Cotton, and their other revered fathers, and shadow their graves with an Anglican spire.

A construction contract in the Suffolk County Judicial Court files, dated July 21, 1688, describes the plan for the original edifice of King's Chapel. Framed with "good sound timber," it would be fifty-four feet by thirty-six feet, slightly shorter than the Towne House but just as

[97] Records from the Andros administration are imperfect, so I have been unable to find the specific document granting this land to King's Chapel. In 1833, Rev. F.W.P. Greenwood, the Junior Minister at King's Chapel, was unable to find any clues among the congregational records while writing his History of King's Chapel: "How the land was procured, or of whom, when the building was dedicated, or by whom, there is no record, or if there be one, I have not met with it" (67). In 1882, Henry Wilder Foote argued in his Annals of King's Chapel that the Governor and Council granted the land to the congregation "with due regard to legal forms," but the original deed must have been carried back to England after the rebellion in 1689 (81). He bases this argument on three observations: 1) that the Governor and Council were "the only lawful authorities at the time, and had the right to convey a piece of public land in 1688; 2) that no one in Boston ever made a legal challenge to King's Chapel's ownership of the land on which it stood, even after Governor Andros was deposed; 3) oral history within the congregation, as codified by Judge Peter Oliver in the 18th century, affirmed that Andros granted the land and made the Rector of King's Chapel an independent corporation. In light of the disdain that most Bostonians held for the project, it is unlikely that the town selectmen decided to hand over the burying ground out of charity. Therefore, I am inclined to accept Foote's reasoning and argue that Governor Andros granted the burying ground land to the Church. In this, I am in agreement with David S. Lovejoy — see *The Glorious Revolution in America*, 193. Though the available sources do not give a specific date for the grant, I have narrowed the range to sometime between July 21, 1688 and October 16, 1688, probably in the earlier end of that range. The July 21 building contract on file with the Suffolk County Judicial Court (file no. 2598) notes that the specific "spott of ground" will be identified at a later date. The completion of the foundations is noted in Sewall's diary on October 16.

wide.[98] The congregation's agent, Major Anthony Haywood, directed the builders to add a belfry that would rise twenty feet higher than the roof and be "of sufficient strength for a bell of five hundred weight." Five windows on either side and two on each end would be glazed extravagantly with "good square glasse & iron casemts," rarities in a colony where even the smaller, less fragile, diamond-glass panes were a considerable luxury.[99] By mid-October of 1688, the foundations were finished and the wooden walls under construction.[100]

Boston's Godly had opposed the project on any site, but the incursion on the burying ground rankled particularly. The sawdust had not settled before the new Anglican chapel came under physical attack from its neighbors. The half-finished church found its "Windows broke to pieces" and the "Doors and Walls daubed and defiled with dung and other filth in the rudest and basest manner imaginable."[101] In a pleading treatise addressed to the King, the Anglican congregation complained that the chapel had been "greatly hurt and damnified, and daily threatened to be pulled down and destroyed" by the "rage and fury" of their congregationalist neighbors.[102] Though many of the early records of King's Chapel have been lost or destroyed, the surviving financial records tend to underscore the precarious situation. Two of the largest expenditures for the year 1689 are "Cash paid for mending Church windows" and "prison fees."[103]

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[98] The Town House was sixty-six feet by thirty-six feet.
[99] Walter Kendall Watkins, "Three Seventeenth-Century Contracts," in *Old-Time New England, the Bulletin of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities*, vol xii, no. 1, July 1921, p. 32
[100] SS, 16 and 17 October 1688. Sewall followed the construction closely, noting on October 22, "Can't see that anything has been done towards raising the Church since Wednesday."
[101] *New England's Faction Discovered* by "C.D.," likely Edward Randolph, in *Andros Tracts*, 212.
[102] Samuel Myles, Francis Foxcroft, and Samuel Ravenscroft, Wardens of King's Chapel, to King William c. 1689, *Andros Tracts*, vol. 2, 28.
[103] *Annals of King's Chapel*, 100. £5.10.00 for the windows, £2.00.00 "for old goody Tomlin for prison fees." The windows were the second-largest expenditure listed after Mr. Myles' room and board. A payment of £5 was also made for "Larkin's wife passage to England." The windows proved to be a constant source of trouble over the next decade, having to be repaired many times.

Anglican pamphleteers used vivid colors to paint a these incidents, but at least some of their charges were true enough that eminent Bostonians justified, rather than denying them. In his biting *Narrative of the Miseries of New England* (1688), Increase Mather acknowledged that the King's Chapel had suffered many broken windows at the hands of schoolboys during its construction. What did the Anglicans expect when they "built their Chapel in a Publick burying-place" next to a school? "A few Quarels of the Windows" had indeed suffered, "some by *Accident*, some by *Frolick*, and some perhaps in *Revenge* for disturbing their Relations Graves by the Foundation of that Building."[104] Mather's acid concession on this point betrays the sting of a well-aimed blow. Over the next several decades, expansions and renovations of the church would continue to disturb graves, much to the ongoing annoyance of local families.[105]

The emigrant generation had been deliberate in their decision to separate burying grounds from meeting houses. In building their house of worship directly adjacent to the burying ground, Boston's Anglicans recreated a parish churchyard, gathering the remains of the fugitive generation back into the embrace of the Church they had fled.

Neither Governor Andros nor Edward Randolph ever attended a service at King's Chapel. The building was still unfinished on April 18, 1689, when the colonists revolted against the Andros government in the aftermath of the Glorious Revolution. Bostonians assumed that King William III would take their side against Andros and grew impatient when the overburdened new monarch showed no interest in their plight. Taking matters into their own

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[104] Increase Mather (attributed), *A Narrative of the Miseries of New England*, in *Andros Tracts*, 64. Since Mather's pamphlet was printed in December of 1688, attacks on the chapel must have started while it was still under construction.

[105] In 1710, when the town ceded "Fifteen feet of the old burying place Northward, and Ten feet Eastward" for the expansion of King's Chapel, the town clerk "made some Opposition, because the graves of his ancestors would be thereby hidden." In 1722, when Capt. John Bonner created his famous map of Boston, he labeled the Granary Burying Ground and Copp's Hill Burial Ground in large letters reading, "Burying Place," but did not mark the ancient burying ground at all, despite the fact that it was still an active burying place. When King's Chapel was rebuilt in stone in 1749, several more tombs and graves of earlier generations were excavated and the remains reinterred elsewhere. SS, 14 August 1710 and *History of King's Chapel*, 118.

hands, a mob imprisoned Andros and most of his cronies, including Randolph, Foxcroft, Ravenscroft, Lidget, Bullivant, and at least a dozen other members of Parson Ratcliffe's congregation. Randolph continued to send dispatches to England, informing the King's councilors that the colony had fallen into the hands of "a furious rabble animated by the ministers," and that he feared for the safety of his fellow prisoners. The colonists' "guilt and their fear of deserved punishment is such," he warned, that a single misstep could inspire them to "massacre us and throw off their allegiance to the Crown."[106] In secret letters delivered to the prisoners by a sympathetic tavern-keeper, London officials referred to Boston as "N[ew] Algeires in New England," casting the townspeople as Barbary pirates.[107]

The rebels left Parson Ratcliffe free, but frightened. In an anonymous account that several historians have attributed to Ratcliffe himself, an observer reported that the "poor Church of England Men" were afforded "neither mercy nor common justice." After years of simmering tensions, colonists were free to vent their hostilities toward the Anglican congregation without fearing reprisals from the lawful government. The anonymous witness reported that "one of the Preachers was for cutting the throats of all the Established Church" and that respectable people openly avowed that if any colonist had been hurt during the revolt, "they would have spared none of that Communion." When a fire broke out in the North End on May 16, 1689, the narrator claims that colonists refused to help a widow with two small children because she was a member of Ratcliffe's congregation. Though she "prayed the help of people to save her goods," her

[106] Randolph to Board of Trade Nov 6, 1689 in Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, America and West Indies, 1689-1692, ed. J.W. Fortescue (London: Mackie & Co., 1901), 101.
[107] William Blathwayt to Edward Randolph, July 20, 1689 and letter from Edward Randolph to William Blathwayt, June 4, 1689. The tavern keeper was George Monck "at the Sign of the Blew Anchor." Randolph instructed Blathwayte, who was the clerk of the King's Privy Council, to send letters "under a cover to [Monck] which may passe them to me unsuspected." see ER, vol. 30, 288-9.

neighbors allegedly replied, "Hang the Popish whore, let her and her goods perish."[108] Whether these stories are factually accurate does not matter as much as the fact that they testify to a feeling of fear among Boston's Anglicans in the weeks after the revolt.

With his friends captured and his congregation reviled, Parson Ratcliffe made plans to sail for England, carrying letters from the imprisoned Randolph to the King's Privy Council.[109] On June 5, he transferred money that he had collected "towards the buying of Communion plate" to those few congregants who remained free. The date of his departure is uncertain, but he seems to have left before June 30. On that date, a small but defiant group gathered in the partially-finished chapel to hear a service read by Samuel Myles, an unordained Harvard graduate (class of 1684) and former Charlestown schoolmaster who was denounced by Increase Mather as "an Unfledged Bird who thus defiles the Neast in which he was Hatcht."[110] With no ordained minister to preside, the inaugural Church of England service at King's Chapel was conducted without the sacrament of Communion.

With the principal Anglicans locked up, driven away, or cowed, congregationalists could once again assert control over public space and public rituals. In October of 1689, they staged a funeral that reprised the Edward Lillie's, but corrected the ending. In this case, the deceased was Major Anthony Haywood, who had served as the Anglican congregation's agent during the construction of King's Chapel. The congregation's imperfect records paint him as an enthusiastic member; only three of the ninety-six donors to the chapel building gave more than Haywood's £10. According to Randolph, Haywood had written a will declaring "that he was of ye

[108] [attributed to Robert Ratcliffe] "A Particular Account of the Late Revolution" (1689) in *Narratives of the Insurrections, 1675-1690*, ed. Charles McLean Andrews (Scribner, 1915), 207.
[109] A letter of Randolph's dated June 4, 1689 was carried by Ratcliffe and delivered in London on July 27. ER, 288.
[110] Annals of King's Chapel, 97; [Increase Mather], A Vindication of New England in The Andros Tracts: Being a Collection of Pamphlets and Official Papers, etc. Volume 2 ed. William Henry Whitmore (Boston: Prince Society, 1869), 72.

Communion of the Church of England" and had made fellow Anglicans Francis Foxcroft and Charles Lidget his executors. Foxcroft and Lidget "had a Grave made in ye Buriing place by our church & intended to bury him there & have the Office of the Buriall read."[111]

But, in the eyes of some congregationalists, the ancient burial ground was no longer a fit place to bury their kin. Before Haywood's friends could carry out his last wishes, his widow and Rev. Joshua Moodey stepped in.[112] The widow, Margaret (Powell) Haywood, was the daughter of one of the honored elders of the Second Church, home of Increase and Cotton Mather. Just seven months before her husband's death, on March 10, 1689, Margaret had been admitted as a full member to the Mathers' church.[113] Now, she overrode her dead husband's stated wishes. On the advice of Rev. Moodey, she arranged for an alternative grave to be dug at Copp's Hill Burying Ground. According to Randolph, who can only have heard of the incident second-hand from his jail cell, Moodey threatened to "have men enough ready in the street to shew them the place of his burial." Less than two years earlier, Moodey had complained of the treatment shown to Edward Lillie, arguing that Parson Ratcliffe should have "left the burial to the Executors," but now that the shoe was on the other foot, he saw little reason to abide by Anglican wishes. Anthony Haywood's gravestone still stands at Copp's Hill. "Thus Imperious are the Godly people of N:England," scoffed Randolph, "who will take upon them to dispose of the dead as well as they do the living."[114]

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[111] I have not been able to locate this will. Anthony Haywood (also sometimes known as Howard, Heywood, Hayward, Haward, etc.) was a man of substantial wealth who owned a wharf and land in Boston, so the fact that his will is not preserved in the Suffolk County records is suspect.
[112] Rev. Moodey of the First Church advised Margaret Haywood in this matter, rather than Increase Mather of the Second Church, because the latter was in England at the time, fighting for the reinstatement of the charter.
[113] Chandler Robbins, A History of the Second Church, Or Old North, in Boston (1852), 252. "Margarit Hayward"
[114] Letter of E Randolph to the Bishop of London, 26 October 1689 in ER vol. 4, 309.

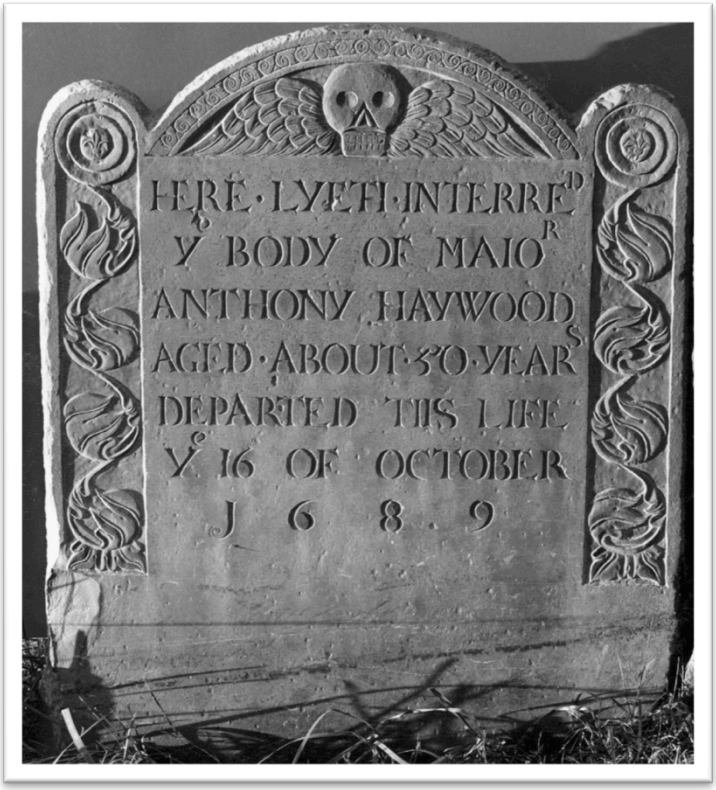

Figure 17: Anthony Haywood stone, 1689, Copp's Hill Burying Ground
Farber Collection, AAS

In the end, Boston's congregationalist majority prevailed, but their victories proved hollow. Governor Andros was deposed and sent back to England, but, far from being punished, he was congratulated by King William and rewarded with the governorship of Virginia. A delegation led by Increase Mather and Samuel Sewall secured a new royal charter in 1691, but the document conferred few of the far-ranging powers of the charter they had lost. Parson Ratcliffe was gone, but his brief presence seems to have awakened a popular appetite for religious ceremonies that elite congregationalists could not easily extinguish.

In the wake of Ratcliffe's departure, Boston's congregationalist ministers began performing weddings that were not quite sacramental, but which would have been unthinkable five years earlier. The town records for the marriage of Josiah Franklin and Abiah Folger, parents of Benjamin Franklin, show that they were "married by the Rev. Sam. Willard" of the

Third Church on November 25, 1689. Samuel Sewall and his fellow magistrates continued to marry many couples, but the town marriage records from the 1690s are peppered with weddings performed by Joshua Moodey, Cotton Mather, and the other congregationalist ministers who had been so opposed to church weddings as recently as 1685. Increase Mather was one of the last hold-outs, but even he capitulated eventually, officiating at the wedding of his daughter, Hannah, on January 28, 1692.[115]

Funerals, too, had changed. Though Samuel Sewall maintained an aversion to attending Common-Prayer funerals until his dying day, his peers came to regard his attitude as an anachronism. The 1708 funeral of Sarah Taylor shows how much the stakes had mellowed in twenty years. Mrs. Taylor, a "dissenter" married to an Anglican, was to be buried in the tomb of Governor William Stoughton (d. 1701), who had been a nonconforming minister before he turned to law and politics. Samuel Sewall was "much surpris'd and grieved" when the Anglican lay-minister, Samuel Myles, read the Common-Prayer service at the graveside, counting it "an affront done to Mr. Stoughton and his Friends." Offended, Sewall "went not into the burying place," but most of the other mourners were unperturbed. Sewall was particularly annoyed to see Major General Waitstill Winthrop, grandson of the esteemed founder, John Winthrop, in the throng. The two men had served together for many years as justices of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, including a decade under the leadership of Chief Justice Stoughton. As Sewall stewed outside the burying ground entrance, Winthrop approached him and spoke a gentle word, saying, "Mr. Stoughton heard them not."[116]

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[115] *Boston Births, Baptisms, Marriages, and Deaths, 1630-1699*, ed. William H. Whitmore and William S. Appleton, (Boston Municipal Printing Office, 1908), 236.

[116] SS, 28 August 1708. Soon after, Sarah Taylor's sister died. Sewall took pains to avoid her funeral: "Remembering what I had met with at her Sister's Buriel at Dorchester last Satterday, I slipt from the Company up to my daughter's, and so went home, and avoided the Funeral. The office for Burial is a Lying, very bad office; makes no difference between the precious and the vile. Jer. XV. 19 They ought to return to us, and not we go to them, by sinfull Compliances." SS, 1 September 1708.

Chapter 3:
This Stone Was Cut By Pompe Stevens[1]

Figure 18: Cuffe Gibbs stone, 1768, Newport, RI
carved by Pompe Stevens
photo by author

At Christmastime in 1768, a 40-year-old slave named Cuffe Gibbs died in Newport, Rhode Island.[2] Beyond these facts, little of the man's life or death can be reconstructed with certainty. The meager surviving sources cannot tell us precisely when he was born, nor where,

[1] Parts of this chapter were first published in a much truncated version in the online journal *Common-place* in 2013. see Caitlin Galante-DeAngelis Hopkins, "Object Lessons: Pompe Stevens, Enslaved Artisan," *Common-place*, vol. 13, no. 3, Spring 2013.

[2] This chapter will refer to enslaved people by the most complete name attested in surviving documents. Where a surname is present, it will be used. Where it is absent, it will not be added, even when a probable surname can be inferred from other evidence. Therefore, Cuffe Gibbs will be called Cuffe Gibbs because that is what he is called on his gravestone, but Peg, who is called "Peg a Negro Servt to Henry Bull" on her gravestone, will not be called "Peg Bull." The use of slaveowners' surnames was one of the many ways in which enslaved families were separated from one another, and this chapter will not append a slaveowner's surname without textual confirmation that the individual was known by that name. Neither will it alter the given surnames of married slaves whose gravestones give them separate surnames. In a few cases, the interests of clarity demand that a surname be used to differentiate between individuals with the same given name. In these cases, the slaveowner's surname will be written in brackets, e.g. Pompey [Lyndon].

nor anything about his personal qualities. The evidence of Cuffe's surname indicates that he was probably owned by George Gibbs, the wealthy grain merchant who owned more slaves than 93% of the slaveowners in that slavetrading city, but cannot tell us what sort of work Cuffe did.[3] The historical record of birth, marriage, and death records, tax lists, ledgers, letters, diaries, and probate documents that speak so eloquently of the lives and lineages of white Newporters never mention Cuffe.[4] In the paper world of white Newport, he is a ghost.

And yet, it is possible to know a bit about Cuffe Gibbs and his family. A small gravestone in the northwest section of the Newport Common Burying Ground attests his existence, as well as his place in a family that existed in fact, though not in theory. The crumbling, low-quality slate is not particularly beautiful nor especially well-preserved. The iconography is utterly ordinary and the letters are wearing away at an alarming rate.[5] It is just barely possible to discern the extraordinary epitaph:

This Stone was
cut by Pompe
Stevens in Memo
ry of his brother
Cuffe Gibbs, who
died Decr. 27th. 1768,
Aged 40 Years.

Cuffe Gibbs was a slave, but he was also a brother. He was an uncle as well; a tiny gravestone to left of his grave memorializes a toddler named Princ[e], "Son of Pompe Stevens & Silva Gould,"

[3] The 1774 census of Newport counts six slaves residing in George Gibbs' household. Of the 456 slaveholders listed, only 32 owned six or more slaves. Since Gibbs' business was in shipping, it is quite possible that he owned other slaves who were not enumerated in the census because they were not residents of Newport at the time of the census. A 1770 runaway notice placed by a George Gibbs for a ship-hand "named Cyrus, but calls himself Simmons" suggests that Gibbs may have had slaves serving on ships that traveled to grain-rich areas like Pennsylvania. It is possible that this was a different George Gibbs, but the common name of the ship (*Philadelphia*) makes it difficult to track. *Pennsylvania Journal,* 15 Nov. 1770.

[4] Cuffe died before the census of 1774. If he had lived, he would have been included as a nameless integer in the last column devoted to his master's household.

[5] An undated rubbing of the Cuffe Gibbs gravestone in the Farber Collection (probably made some time between 1960 and 1980) is significantly more legible than the existing stone.

who died 1759. These relationships were never sanctified by the legal regime that codified and supported free families, but they were real.

The only reason that Cuffe Gibbs' name survives is that his brother, Pompe Stevens, was a skilled artisan, trained in the craft of stonecarving. The available evidence suggests that he carved for many years in the workshop of his owner, William Stevens, signing at least two gravestones, but probably contributing to hundreds of others. The Cuffe Gibbs stone is Pompe Stevens' most significant work. In addition to memorializing his brother, the unusual epitaph is a bold claim of authorship. Many gravestone carvers signed their work, but their signatures are generally inconspicuous, hidden in elaborate floral borders or relegated to a lower corner. In contrast, Pompe Stevens wrote himself into the very text of the epitaph, creating a monument to himself and his skill, as well as to his family.

Most of New England's colonial-era graveyards hold the bones of slaves. This is true not only of the urban graveyards of Boston and Newport, but also of the sleepy little cemeteries nestled among the clapboard churches and old stone walls in rural villages from Norwich, Connecticut to Jaffrey Center, New Hampshire.[6] Unlike the African Burial Ground in New York, which was formed after blacks were banned from Trinity Churchyard in 1697, most New England municipalities maintained unified burying places that segregated black and white graves within a shared boundary. The vast majority of slaves' graves are unmarked, but a few have archetypical New England gravestones. In Cambridge, Massachusetts, two diminutive markers stand less than 100 yards from Harvard Yard, commemorating the short lives of Harvard-affiliated slaves: 15-year-old Cicely (d. 1714), who was owned by the Reverend William Brattle, a longtime Fellow of Harvard's Corporation; and 22-year-old Jane (d. 1741), who worked

[6] Angelica Kruger-Kahloula, "Tributes in Stone and Lapidary Lapses: Commemorating Black People in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century America," *Markers* (1989): 32-89.

alongside her mother, siblings, and half a dozen other slaves at the command of Andrew Bordman, the Harvard College steward.[7] Other slaves' gravestones are scattered across the region, alone and in small clusters: John Jack (d. 1773), a "Native of Africa," in Concord, Massachusetts; Fillis (d. 1760) and Sambo (d. 1776) in Middletown, Connecticut; and Nero (d. 1776), Flora (d. 1778), and Thomas (d. 1782), slaves of Governor Moses Gill who are buried in Princeton, Massachusetts. Many more graves may have had ephemeral markers — uncarved stones, wooden slats, glass bottles, or other tokens — but enduring gravestones for New England slaves are rare.[8] More than 6,000 black Bostonians were buried in the city's historic graveyards in the century before the American Revolution, accounting for 1 in every 6 burials.[9] A handful of these graves once had gravestones that have since disappeared.[10] Only one survives, a small slate

[7] William Brattle (Class of 1680) was pastor of the First Church in Cambridge, an instructor at the College in his youth, and a Fellow of the Corporation from 1703 until his death in 1717, during which time he also served as the College Treasurer (see Sibley's *Harvard Graduates: Volume 3, the Classes of 1678-1689* (1885)). Several generations of Andrew Bordmans served as steward of Harvard College in the 17th and 18th centuries. Jane's owner was Andrew Bordman II (1670-1747), who held the post from 1703-1747. The Bordman Family Papers in the Harvard University Archives mention several slaves belonging to the Bordman family, including Jane's mother, Rose, and three of her siblings: Flora (b.1723), Jeffrey (1731-1739), and Cesar (b.1733). Andrew Bordman also owned slaves named William Brown (who successfully sued Bordman for his freedom in 1716), Cuffee (purchased from Martha Daille for £40 in 1717), Peter (who married a slave named Jane in 1758), and Lucy (who may have been an Indian). Though I have not found any record of the specific duties performed by these individuals, it is reasonable to infer that they had a hand in performing the steward's duties, including cooking meals, cleaning residence halls, laundering clothes, and maintaining the grounds for the benefit of Harvard students. see Bordman Family Papers, 1686-1837, Harvard University Archives (HUG 1228). A brief discussion of the slaves owned by the Bordman/Boardman family can be found in Sven Beckert and Katherine Stevens, *Harvard and Slavery: Seeking a Forgotten History* (2011), for which this author provided research support.

[8] Surviving examples of uninscribed grave markers made from local stone can been seen in the Langdon family slave cemetery in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Mark Sammons and Valerie Cunningham, *Black Portsmouth: Three Centuries of African-American Heritage* (UPNE, 2004), 40-42.

[9] The weekly records of burials in Boston's four municipal graveyards (King's Chapel, Granary, Copp's Hill, and Central) show 35,679 burials between 1700 and 1774. Of these, 5,265 were black Bostonians. Prior to 1704, the statistics were not separated by race, so it is difficult to tell how many black residents were buried in the city during the 17th century. Between 1704 and 1720, burials of black Bostonians averaged about 60 per year. Allowing for the probability that there were fewer blacks in Boston prior to 1700 than after 1700, I have offered a low estimate for the total number of burials prior to 1700. These burials record the vast majority of Boston deaths, as there were no formally established private cemeteries in the city before 1774. Rich and poor alike were buried in the municipal graveyards in the tradition of civil burial established by the city's Puritan founders. It is possible that a small number of people were buried secretly or privately.

[10] Some 19th-century collections of epitaphs contain references to gravestones for black Bostonians that no longer exist. For example, Thomas Bellows Wyman's *The Graveyards of Boston: First Volume, Copp's Hill Epitaphs* (1878) records epitaphs for Jane and William, the wife and son of "Onesimus," both of whom died in 1727. Onesimus was the name of a slave belonging to Cotton Mather who is known to history for his crucial role in

marker at the Granary Burying Ground memorializing Frank (d. 1771), a slave belonging to John Hancock.

The largest collection of slaves' gravestones from the colonial era is in the slavetrading hub of Newport, Rhode Island, in a section of the Newport Common Burying Ground known to modern visitors as "God's Little Acre." Nearly three hundred eighteenth-century gravestones dedicated to black Newporters have survived into the twenty-first century. Many of these are cracked or in pieces, but the names are still visible: Cape Coast James, Hurricane Dunbar, Cujo Lopez, Judith Rodriguez Rivera, and others from every point on the circum-Atlantic compass. Others have been removed, destroyed, or defaced, either by accident or by malice.[11] A handful of these gravestones display the airy, detailed carving that made Newport's master stone carvers famous, but most are prosaic lumps of coarse, gray-brown slate adorned with unremarkable winged faces and indifferent lettering; not ugly, but ordinary. The oldest stones, carved in the 1720s, huddle near the fence along Farewell Street, fifty yards north of the internal road that separates God's Little Acre from the graves of white Newporters. In 1720, when "Hector Butcher, Negro, late Seruant to Ms. Ann Butcher of Barbadoes" was buried along the road, an open field separated black graves from white. Unlike the other sections of the Newport Common Burying Ground, God's Little Acre is still relatively uncrowded by permanent gravestones, with wide expanses of grass covering the unmarked graves of thousands.

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persuading Mather of the efficacy of smallpox inoculation during the smallpox epidemic of 1721-2. I have searched Copp's Hill Burial Ground, but cannot find these stones. If they do survive, they may be too far eroded to be identified. A few gravestones dating from the Early republic commemorate black Bostonians (for example, Prince Hall's gravestone near his modern monument at Copp's Hill).

[11] The John Stevens Shop at 29 Thames Street in Newport is a gathering place for broken gravestones and fragments. The shop has been in operation since 1705 and is still an active stone-carving workshop. When I visited in April of 2009, the shop had a pile of broken 18th-century gravestones out in back near a shed, including gravestones for black Newporters like Lonnon and Hagar (d. 1727) and Lucy Ayrault (d. 1793), whose gravestone is very similar to the stone carved by John Stevens III for Silva Gardner. Shop owner Nick Benson informed me that visitors who find broken stones often bring them to the shop, not knowing where else to bring them.

Figure 19: pile of broken 18th-century gravestones and stone fragments at the John Stevens Shop, Newport, RI, 2009 including stone for Lonnon and Hagar, 1727
photo by author

Pompe Stevens knew this graveyard well. His carvings, both signed and unsigned, stand on both sides of the divide, marking the graves of black and white Newporters alike. He had seen the many monuments that eulogized slaves as "Trusty," and "Beloved" dependents of benevolent patriarchs, emphasizing mutual affection with stock phrases like, "He was faithfull and well Beloved of his Master."[12] The Cuffe Gibbs stone undercut that narrative. Instead of defining his brother in relation to the man who owned him, Pompe Stevens named him as a member of his natural family. Instead of letting his own carving be subsumed anonymously into the larger body of work attributed to William Stevens, he emblazoned his name across the epitaph. In doing so,

[12] For examples, see the gravestones dedicated to Newport Easton (1759), Phillis Lyndon Stevens (1733), Present Warner (1772), Pompey Lyndon (1765), Hercules Brown, and Edward Collins (1739), all in the NCBG. These descriptions are not necessarily transparent fictions, as slaveowners may have made the strategic choice to commemorate only those relationships that best fit the patriarchal ideal.

Pompe Stevens joined with other members of Newport's Atlantic African community in using the burying ground as a public arena in which to assert his masculinity. By purchasing, creating, and displaying the material trappings of death, black men living in Newport defined themselves as the heads of their families and as virtuous citizens ennobled by craft-mastery and self-mastery.

* * *

The epitaphs of God's Little Acre reveal a power struggle between those who defined black Newporters as members of white households and those who recognized them as members of black families. In the decades before the Revolutionary War, slaves of all ages and sexes were frequently identified in terms of their relationship to a white household head. Typical gravestones memorialize "Mark Servant to Mr. William Wanton" (d. 1769) and "Sam a Negro servant to Wm Barker" (d. 1739).[13] These public statements extended slaveowners' power over slaves in perpetuity. Messy relationships were simplified and black families were denied altogether. As permanent monuments in the public square, gravestones had the last word in defining the dead long after those who knew and loved them were dead. When Pompe Stevens carved his stone for Cuffe Gibbs, he immortalized a different story. Among the nearly three hundred extant eighteenth-century gravestones in God's Little Acre, Cuffe Gibbs' is the only epitaph dedicated to an adult black man that names any member of his family.[14]

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[13] The 1739 gravestone is broken in such as way that the deceased person's name is only partially legible. The S and A are very clear, but the next letter is only partially visible and any subsequent letters are lost entirely. From the spacing and the partial letter, my best guess is that the name is Sam, but it could also be Sara or another short name beginning with Sa-.

[14] In this context, family members include wives, parents, siblings, children, or any other biological relatives (excluding white slaveowners who may have been biologically related to their slaves). I have documented fifty-three monuments dedicated to African-American men over the age of 18 who died between 1720 and 1800. Other than the Cuffe Gibbs stone, only Adam Miller's (d. 1799) could be said to name a family member (Miller's wife, Belinda), while 19 (36%) explicitly name a slaveowner. However, Miller's monument is actually a nineteenth-century cenotaph, rather than an eighteenth-century gravestone — he died at sea in 1799, and the monument was erected after Belinda's death in 1807. In addition, this is a double stone, meaning that it commemorates both Adam and his wife, but their epitaphs are separate. Thus, Adam is not explicitly identified as Belinda's husband in the same way that Cuffe Gibbs is identified as Pompey Stevens' brother: "In Memory / of / ADAM MILLER / who died at Sea, 1799

White women and children were also commemorated in ways that foregrounded their dependency. Throughout New England, white women's graves from the colonial era almost always specify that the deceased was the "wife of" a husband, while white children's graves nearly always name the parents, though it is not uncommon for the mother's name to be omitted. The phrase "husband of" is so rare in colonial New England epitaphs that it is hardly worth mentioning.[15] Other types of public records, including censuses, make the point even more starkly, naming only the heads of households while anonymously enumerating their unnamed dependents, black and white. In some rare instances, gravestones follow this pattern of erasing the individual identity of a deceased white dependent, as in the case of "Mr Simeon Wartermans Wife and Child" (d. 1764) of Norwich, Connecticut. The death of Jane Dummer Sewall of Newbury, Massachusetts, is commemorated in a footnote to the death of her husband, Henry Sewall, in 1700:

HIS FRUITFULL
VINE, BEING THUS DISJOIND,
FELL TO YE GROUND JANAUARY
YE 13, FOLLOWING, AETAT 74.[16]

/ aged 45 years. / Also, BELINDA his Wife, / a faithful Servant of SAMUEL FREEBODY, Esq. & / esteemed as a worthy / Member of the Second / Baptist Church in this / Town who died / April 9th / 1807 aged 60 Years. / J. Stevens"

[15] The only "husband of" stones I have found were carved by Obadiah Wheeler and Jonathan Loomis in northeastern Connecticut. Examples: "Thomas Huntington Esqr & Husbband to Mrs Elizebeth Huntington," 1732, Windham Center, CT (Wheeler); "Decn Shubael Dimmuck Husband to that Worthy Gidly Woman Mrs joannah Dimmuck," 1732, Mansfield, CT (Wheeler); "Capt Jon- Websters who was the loveing Consort of Mrs Elisabeth Websters," 1735, Lebanon, CT (Wheeler); "Mr Thomas Barrows Const to Mrs Esther Barrows," 1776, Mansfield Center, CT (Loomis). The most elaborate is the William Moore stone in Windham Center (by Wheeler): "Here lies ye Body of Mr William Moore who had been ye Husband of three Wifes Mrs Mary Moore & Mrs Mary Moore & Mrs Tamazon Moore Who died April 28 1728 & 77 year of his age." Other examples may exist, but they are exceptionally rare.

[16] Jane Dummer Sewall's name is mentioned earlier in the epitaph, but only as one of Henry Sewall's many lifetime accomplishments. A list of his conquests includes the line "Married Mrs. Jane Dummer," just below the section recalling how Sewall supplied the town of Newbury with "English servants, neat cattel, & provisions." This construction should not be taken as a lack of affection for Jane Dummer Sewall. In fact, Samuel Sewall (who probably composed the epitaph, which contains a reference to Psalm 27.10 ("When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up.")) took the unusual step of delivering an impromptu eulogy at her graveside. His longstanding opposition to funeral ceremonies prompted him to apologize to his fellow mourners: "I ask and hope that none will be offended that I have now ventured to speak one word in her behalf; when she her self

More typical was the series of gravestones dedicated to the household of Metcalf Bowler, a respected judge and Speaker of the Rhode Island Assembly: a 43-year-old slave named Adam was remembered as "Adam, Servt of Matcalf Bowler," in the same way that Ann Fairchild Bowler was, "Ann Bowler, Relict of the Hon. Metcalf Bowler, Esq.," and her adult daughter was, "Mrs. Ann Maria Lippitt, the beloved wife of Mr. John Lippitt, merchant, and daughter of the late Hon. Metcalf Bowler."[17] Metcalf Bowler's own epitaph identifies the judge as "The Hon. Metcalf Bowler, Esq.," an independent person whose identity was expressed through his professional titles, not his personal relationships.[18]

Enslaved men were denied this masculine prerogative. The gravestone commemorating 40-year-old Cato (d. 1763), "formerly Servt. to Mr. JOB ALMY & lately a Servt. to Mr. SILAS COOK" is typical in its erasure of Cato's natural family in favor of a chronicle of his legal subordination. Another Cato (d. 1774) has an epitaph that is unusual for its acknowledgement of his spiritual accomplishments as "a worthy Member of the BAPTIST CHURCH," but conventional in its insistence that those achievements be flanked by affirmations of his inescapable dependency:

IN MEMORY of
CATO, Servt to
MR. BRINDLY &
a worthy Member
of the BAPTIST
CHURCH under
the Pastoral Care
of the Revd GARDNER
THURSTON.

is become speechless. Made a Motion with my hand for the filling of the Grave. Note, I could hardly speak for passion and Tears." Samuel Sewall Diary, 14 January, 1701.

[17] Adam (d. 1777) is buried in God's Little Acre. Metcalf Bowler (d.1789) and Ann Fairchild Bowler (d.1804) are buried in St. John's Cemetery in Providence, RI. Ann Maria Bowler Lippitt (d.1812) is buried in Swan Point Cemetery in Providence.

[18] Those few adult white men whose epitaphs associated them with family members were usually the sons of very famous fathers (governors, prominent ministers, etc.) and/or young and unmarried, and thus not the heads of independent households.

Even when public memorials recognize a familial relationship between slaves, slaveowners' claims take precedence. When 28-year-old Dinah died in 1762, her epitaph cast her as doubly subordinate to both her master and a husband who was himself a dependent: "June 12th 1762 died Dinah aged 28 Years Servt. to John Tweedy Wife of Haman Servt. to James Tanner." Many slaveowners buried their slaves in household plots, where possibly unrelated persons were laid side-by-side, forced into the intimacy of siblings or lovers by their mutual servitude. Some even shared gravestones, as in the case of Frankey and Judey, "Two Negro Servants of Mr. Edward Banner" who died in 1732, and Mille and Katherine, slaves belonging to Henry Bull, who were 16 and 15 when they died in 1765 and 1766.[19] Perhaps they were spouses or siblings, but their epitaphs argued that their primary familial relationship was to their legal owner, rather than to any member of their natural families.[20]

Even stones that did not explicitly reference slaves' status implied a family bond between slave and slaveowner through their use of surnames. Pompe Stevens was not the legitimate son of his owner, William Stevens, but his use of that surname identified him as William Stevens' dependent, even as it obscured his biological relationship to Cuffe Gibbs. Epitaphs reading, "Flora Coggeshall, wife of Mark Tillinghast" or "Dinah Wigneron, the Wife of Cesar Wanton" cannot be found in the white section of the Newport Common Burying Ground, where unified

[19] In her 2008 dissertation from the University of Connecticut, Akeia Benard helpfully notes that "co-resident slaves may have formed familial (brother-sister) relationships with each other to replace cosanguineal relatives." She cites the low incidence of slaves from the same household marrying one another, even after emancipation, as well as the distribution of biological families over several households to suggest that "future research may demonstrate that in Newport specifically, family associations were based primarily upon relationships between slaves within the same household." Akeia A. F. Benard, *The Free African American Cultural Landscape: Newport, Rhode Island, 1774-1826* (PhD diss., University of Connecticut, 2008), 107.

[20] It is exceptionally difficult to determine who paid for any particular gravestone. Even in the rare event that a receipt for the gravestone exists (for example, in the records of the John Stevens Shop of Newport), only a few stones can be matched to the account book, which only includes details about the name or decoration on the stone in rare instances. There is, however, some evidence that slaveowners purchased gravestones for their slaves. The John Stevens account book contains an entry from 1729 noting that Dr. Norbert Wigneron was charged one pound for "one pair of grave stones for your Indian." This stone no longer exists.

family surnames attest the legal protection afforded free husbands and wives. Pompe Scott and Vilot Robinson had a long-term relationship, burying half a dozen children between 1750 and 1775, but were always identified on their children's gravestones by their separate surnames. A few epitaphs sever this connection by omitting surnames altogether, as in the cases of an eight-year old girl named Bell, "Daughtr of Rhode Island and Phillis" (d. 1756) and a toddler named Nancy, "Daughter of Sango and Vilate" who died in 1775, but these are unusual. In either case, enslaved families did not have their own unique surnames that all members could share.

Children's gravestones illustrate enslaved parents' inability to establish independent, legally-recognized families. Eleven-month-old Pompey Rogers (d. 1773), was the "Son of Prince Sanford," but was given his master's surname rather than his father's. A 1747 gravestone commemorating a 2-year-old girl calls her, "ANN A NEGRO CHILD BELONGING TO MR. ROBERT OLIVER, & DAUGHR. TO HIS NEGRO MIMBO." Some gravestones, like the one dedicated to 18-year-old Phillis, "a Negro Servant to Mrs. Ann Sabear & Daughter of Peg Collins," name a mother, but no father, a construction never seen in the epitaph of a free child. Six-year-old Peg (d. 1740) has no parent, her epitaph stating only that she is "a Negro Servt. to Henry Bull." Even in cases where enslaved parents are mentioned, slaveowners loom large. When 10-year-old Peter drowned in 1771, he epitaph lamented, "ye loss of his Parents & his M[aste]r. A[aro]n Lopez."

Figure 20: Ann stone, 1743, Newport, RI
photo by author

Figure 21: Peg stone, 1740, Newport, RI
photo by author

Epitaphs like Peter's argued that master-slave relationships were built on affection rather than coercion. By memorializing slaves as "faithful," "loyal," or "beloved," slaveowners cast themselves as magnanimous patriarchs who commanded loyalty by winning their slaves' love. Thus, both Newport Easton (d. 1759) and Phillis Lyndon Stevens (d. 1773) were praised as "faithfull," while Present Warner (d. 1772) was "Trusty" and two-year-old Pompey (d. 1765) was "a beloved Servt of Josias Lyndon." Both Hercules Brown and Edward Collins were eulogized with an epitaph that encapsulated the obedience slaveowners wished to remember: "He was faithfull and well Beloved of his Master." In nearby Providence, Rhode Island, an epitaph dedicated to "Yarrow, an African" paraphrased Matthew 25:23: "Well done good & Faithful Servant enter into the Joy of thy Lord." This is not a faithful transcription of the King James Version of this verse, which actually reads, "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord." A slaveowner could hardly approve of God's promise that Yarrow would be made "ruler over many things," so the middle of the verse was simply deleted. It is impossible to know the details of the individual relationships behind these epitaphs. Perhaps slaveowners only paid for gravestones for slaves whose behavior most closely approximated the masters' ideal. Perhaps the effusive praise covers up more complicated stories. In either case, the public face of these relationships was the same: a beneficent patriarch and a docile, happy dependent.

These gravestones reflect the ambiguities confronting enslaved families in colonial New England, but they were also instrumental in shaping those realities. Gravestones simplify and idealize relationships, replacing the complexities of lived experience with placid labels. A public graveyard full of monuments to affectionate, familial relationships between masters and slaves

concealed the essential violence of a system that undermined slaves' abilities to define and protect their natural families. Three centuries later, the extant stones present slaveowners' own account of slavery in New England, while competing viewpoints are largely invisible, buried beneath unmarked ground.

The placement of Cuffe Gibbs' gravestone is as significant as its epitaph. While many slaves in God's Little Acre are buried in household plots controlled by their owners, Cuffe Gibbs is buried in a family plot, beside Pompe Stevens' young son, Prince (d. 1759).[21] The stylistic similarities between Gibbs' and Prince Stevens' footstones suggest that Pompe Stevens may have carved both.[22] Whoever was responsible for burying Cuffe Gibbs beside his nephew — possibly Pompe Stevens himself — preserved and promulgated an extended male kinship network that would have existed in life despite slaveowners' efforts to make it invisible. Buried on Gibbs' other side is Primus Gibbs (d. 1775), who may have been a brother to Cuffe and Pompe. Since enslaved biological siblings did not often share surnames in the diffuse model of urban slavery practiced in New England, it is perhaps more likely that Cuffe and Primus were owned by the same master.[23] If they were brothers, this placement would argue for an emergent

[21] It is always a risk to assume that 18th-century gravestones have not been moved. Many have been realigned or moved to new locations to accommodate walkways, trees, lawnmowers, and the aesthetic expectations of 19th- and 20th-century caretakers. So far, I have not found any evidence suggesting that anyone cared enough to move the stones in God's Little Acre. If the stones have not been moved, they may show that some 18th-century slaves did attempt to construct family plots. The children of Pompey Scott and Violet Robinson were buried together between 1750 and 1779, as were the four children of Jack and Violet Carr (d. 1745-1754). No gravestones survive for any of these parents, and none of the children's epitaphs explicitly name a slaveowner, suggesting that the parents may have commissioned these stones for their children themselves. It is possible that some black families took control of plots that had previously belonged to slaveholders and turned them into family plots, thereby honoring non-biological kinship networks that developed during enslavement. For example, the Stevens household plot contains the grave of Prince (d. 1749, age 32), who was probably not biologically related to Zingo Stevens. Nevertheless, Zingo Stevens' three wives and several children are buried in the same plot, even though Phyllis belonged to Josias Lyndon and Violet died a free woman. Zingo Stevens' son-in-law, Cuffe Rodman (d. 1809), and daughter, Sarah Rodman (d. 1863) are also buried in the plot, thus bringing together a multigenerational extended family.

[22] In the eighteenth century, gravestones were sold in matched pairs: one headstone and one footstone. Both Cuffe Gibbs' and Prince Stevens' footstones are rectangles topped with lunettes, embellished with double-outlined rectangles, and lettered in Pompe Stevens' hand.

[23] Two slaveowners named Gibbs appear in the 1774 Rhode Island census: George Gibbs (6 slaves) and Elizabeth Gibbs (1 slave). Either could have owned Primus. Since Cuffe Gibbs died before this census was taken, he may have

family plot; if they were slaves of the same master, it may indicate the forging of familial bonds between co-resident slaves. In either case, this plot does not seem to have been controlled by the person who owned Cuffe and/or Primus. Instead, the pattern of burials indicates an extended African-American kinship group that encompassed slaves living in at least four separate households.[24] The first two observable burials (Prince Gould Stevens and Cuffe Gibbs) were obviously related to one another through Pompe Stevens, while the third (Jem Howard, 1771) was a child who may have been connected with Primus Gibbs. Jem Howard, age nine, is listed as "a Twin Brother of Quam & Son of Phillis." Though his father is not listed, a nearby stone memorializes Susey Howard (d. 1776), "the Daughter of Primus Gibbs." If Susey Howard and Jem Howard were siblings, this grave plot would seem to hold an uncle and nephew, along with a father and two children who were connected by blood, matrimony, or the bonds of common servitude.

belonged to any of the dozen Gibbs households listed, though George Gibbs' wealth and extensive slaveholding make him a likely candidate. It is entirely possible that Pompe, Cuffe, and Primus were siblings. Cuffe was born in 1728, while Primus was born around 1727. It is possible that all three were born into the Gibbs household and that Pompe was sold to William Stevens.

[24] The four slaveowner surnames mentioned are Stevens, Gibbs, Gould, and Howard.

Figure 22: Princ[e] stone, 1759, Newport, RI
probably carved by Pompe Stevens
photo by author

Figure 23: Cuffe Gibbs stone, 1768; Primus Gibbs stone, 1775, Newport, RI
photo by author

Pompe Stevens was not the only black Newporter to use the Newport Common Burying Ground as an arena to reconstitute his family in a public, permanent way. Beginning in the 1780s, the records of the John Stevens stonecutting shop begin to show entries for black men paying for gravestones for their own family members.[25] Among these customers was Occramar Marycoo, alias Newport Gardner, who had been captured in Africa at the age of 14, enslaved in Newport, and purchased his own and his family's freedom in 1791.[26] On September 28, 1790, while still a slave, he bartered ten bushels of potatoes for a pair of gravestones for his sixteen-month-old daughter, Silva.[27] He may also have paid for the nearby stone dedicated to his young sons, Charles Quamine and Abraham, who died in 1798 and are likewise commemorated as the "Sons of Newport Gardner and Limas his Wife." Both of these gravestones are utterly typical of the plainer style employed by John Stevens III in the 1790s, and Silva's stone is signed by him.[28]

Gardner was a respected member of Newport's Atlantic African community and a founding member of the Free African Union Society (founded 1780), the first formal black mutual aid society in the United States. [29] He served for many years as a church officer, teacher, and singing instructor, and became the first African-American to publish a musical composition. In 1826, Gardner led two dozen black Newporters on a missionary voyage to Liberia. [30] Before

[25] These records can be found in the manuscripts of the John Stevens shop, still in the collection of the John Stevens shop, Newport, Rhode Island, owned by Nick Benson.
[26] I refer to Newport Gardner by that name because it is the name he chose to use in most of his public interactions, including the gravestone he purchased for his daughter.
[27] The headstone, carved by John Stevens III, still stands in God's Little Acre. The potatoes were valued at 15 shillings.
[28] John Stevens III was a talented carver who liked to experiment. He went through several style evolutions during his career. The Gardner children's stones are typical of one of his later styles, featuring full-faced soul effigies topped with puffs of neatly coiffed hair, along with geometric borders. Silva Gardner's stone is signed "J.S." at the bottom center.
[29] There may be other civic organizations that predate the FAUS, though none are known to me. I'm satisfied with "early," but it may indeed be the first — I'm relying on the information in *Black Firsts: 4,000 Ground-Breaking and Pioneering Historical Events* by Jessie Carney Smith (2003).
[30] Edward E. Andrews, "The Crossings of Occramar Marycoo, or Newport Gardner" in Atlantic Biographies: Individuals and Peoples in the Atlantic World ed. Mark Meuwese, Jeffrey A. Fortin (Brill, 2013), 101-142.

his ship, the *Vine*, set sail for Liberia, Gardner led his companions and supporters in singing an anthem he composed for the occasion, based on the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 15. The story concerns Jesus's refusal to heal a Caananite child because he was sent only to help the Israelites and "it is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs." The Cannanite child's mother replies, "Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table." Persuaded by her argument and her faith, Jesus heals the child.[31] Newport Gardner cast himself and his fellow Africans in the role of the Cannanites, who could hope for salvation even when it had not been originally promised to them:

> Hear the words of the Lord, O ye African race, hear the words of promise.
> But it is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs.
> Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their master's table.
> O African, trust in the Lord. Amen.
> Hallelujah. Praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord. Hallelujah. Amen.

Figure 24: Silva Gardner stone, dated 1784, carved 1790, Newport, RI
carved by John Stevens III
photo by author

[31] KJV Matthew 15:22-28.

Though the FAUS records refer to Gardner as "Mr. Ocrmar Mirycoo, or Newport Gardner," the stone he commissioned for Silva calls her the "Daughter of Newport Gardner & Limas his Wife." This use of the name given to him by his master, rather than his original name, raises many questions about the gravestone as a vehicle for self-presentation. How much control did Gardner have over the carving of the epitaph? By 1791, did he think of himself as Marycoo/Gardner, or just as Gardner? Since the black community apparently knew him by both names simultaneously, does the use of his master-given name on Silva's gravestone indicate an effort to speak to a white audience, as well as a black audience? Biographer Edward E. Andrews has argued that Gardner's embrace of his English name was part of his process of fashioning "a complex identity that fused a continuing interest in Africa with a an increasing appropriation of Western culture and religion."[32] Like Pompe Stevens, Newport Gardner was a skilled producer of cultural artifacts that spoke to the Atlantic African experience through a Euro-American form. In expressing himself through the hymns he published, the Christian prayers he led, and the conventional gravestone he erected for his daughter, Gardner adapted the trappings of power to suit his own purposes. The gravestones of his children are virtually indistinguishable from the gravestones of children who were born white and free, and perhaps that was the point. Both the winged effigies and the description, "Daughter of Newport Gardner & Limas his Wife," would have been perfectly at home in any section of the Newport Common Burying Ground.

Gravestones like those dedicated to Cuffe Gibbs and Silva Gardner were an important venue for celebrating black families and black achievements in the first decades of emancipation.

[32] Edwards, 102. Edwards continues, "For Gardner this was no contradiction, but rather a double-consciousness, a key part of his emerging identity."

In 1780, Phillis Wheaton of Providence commissioned an epitaph for her husband that is similar to the one carved by Pompe Stevens in its dual commemoration of the mourned and the mourner:

In Memory of
Ceesar Wheaton,
who departed this
Life Feb. 20th, 1780,
in the 48th year of
his age this stone
is dedicated as a
Moniment of the
Regard for his Me
mory by Phillis
his Wife.

Gravestones also memorialized professional accomplishments. Dutchess Quamino of Newport (d. 1804), a noted baker and businesswoman, was remembered as "a free black, of most distinguished excellence: intelligent, industrious, affectionate, honest, and of exemplary piety." In Providence, Patience Borden's estate paid for a monument detailing her earthly and spiritual attainments:

PATIENCE BORDEN,
commonly called Sterry,
A free woman of Colour, and
humble disciple of JESUS,
She gave to the first Baptist
Church in this Town,
of which she was a member,
230 dollars, as a fund for
the relief of the Poor of Colour
of that Church;
She died
April 1st, 1811,
in the 53d year of
her age.

Meanwhile, Charles Haskell of Providence (d. 1833) was both a "man of colour" and "A soldier of the Revolution" who lived his life as "a faithful, industrious and honest man."

These gravestones were both revolutionary and fundamentally conservative. By portraying black New Englanders as pious, hard-working, and responsible, gravestones of the post-Revolutionary era rarely challenge the racist logic of whites who claimed to be willing to embrace blacks who conformed to an ever-changing set of expectations for personal conduct. As historian John Wood Sweet has argued, white New Englanders constantly moved the goalposts of "respectability" to exclude black people and Indians. When people of color adopted the cultural touchstones that were supposed to convey "civilization," such as embracing Christianity, whites "learned to draw new lines of difference." "Cultural convergence" resulted not in equality, but in a newly solidified ideology of racial difference.[33] Indeed, spiritual equality could be achieved only in heaven, and even then, only by a complete obliteration of blackness. This idea is on display in New England graveyards in epitaphs for slaves like "Cesar the Ethiopian" (d. 1780, North Attleborough, Massachusetts), who, "by the blood that Jesus shed is changed from Black to White."[34]

Ultimately, no amount of personal rectitude, piety, or achievement would destroy white racism. But, in the immediate aftermath of Rhode Island's 1784 emancipation law, leaders of Newport's Atlantic African community were still hopeful. In the latter decades of the eighteenth century, Newport's growing community of free black citizens claimed mastery over their dead as part of a larger project to demonstrate their civic virtue.[35] Their Free African Union Society (1780) was primarily a burial cooperative. Members' dues went to ensuring that they and their dependents would receive dignified burials conducted according to the Society's strict protocols.

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[33] Sweet, 106.
[34] Angelica Kruger-Kahloula, "Tributes in Stone and Lapidary Lapses: Commemorating Black People in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century America," *Markers* (1989): 32-89.
[35] The Rhode Island legislature initiated a program of gradual emancipation in 1784. All slaves born before March 1, 1784 would be slaves for life, while girls born after that date would be freed at age 18 and boys at age 21. In practice, many adult slaves either escaped during the Revolution or were freed after 1784. A 1774 census of Newport showed 1,074 slaves (11% total pop) and 151 free blacks living in the city; the 1790 census enumerated 223 slaves (3.3% total pop) and 417 free blacks; in 1800, there were 103 slaves (1.5% total pop) and 512 free blacks.

A 1790 resolution showed an overriding concern for orderliness and "decency" in FAUS funerals, viewing them as public displays that would attract attention from black and white audiences alike.[36] In exhorting members to "dress themselves and appear decent on all occasions," the FAUS hoped to imbue their public ceremonies with irreproachable gravitas, "that all the spectators may not have it in their Power to cast such Game contempt, as in times past."[37] Throughout British America, white colonists had long regarded Atlantic African funeral customs, which sometimes involved dancing, noisemaking, and traditions such as setting the coffin down in front of the doors of people who had wronged the deceased, as "uncontrolled manifestations of inherent savagery."[38] FAUS leaders were anxious to forestall this derision and establish themselves as virtuous citizens and sober Christians:

> And above all things, Dearly Beloved, That ye be sober, be vigilant because your adversary, the Devil, is a roaring lion walking about seeking whom he may devour. And now, brethren, we exhort you to warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.

To ensure that these stipulations were met, two FAUS members were specially appointed, "to order and regulate the said Members at all such buryings."[39]

Free black Newporters also demanded respect through the use of conventional, Euro-American gravemarkers. One modern survey of the Newport Common Burying Ground has identified a profound shift in the size of black Newporters' gravestones after the establishment of the FAUS: before 1770, gravestones carved for enslaved adults were similar in size to those

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[36] Even when black and white New Englanders held segregated funerals, they were observers of one another's rituals in the burial places they shared. Unlike New York's African Burial Ground, which was formed after blacks were barred from burial in Trinity churchyard in 1697, New England cities and towns typically maintained burial grounds that were internally segregated, but not actually separate. See Samuel Sewall's observation that "we met a Niger Funeral" in the Granary Burying Ground on October 20, 1721, during Boston's smallpox epidemic.
[37] *The Proceedings of the FAUS*, ed. William H. Robinson, 61-2. The FAUS stipulated that the pall bearers and corpse should lead, followed by the next of kin, then the Society president, officers, and other members.
[38] Vincent Brown, *The Reaper's Garden: Death and Power in the World of Atlantic Slavery* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University, 2008), 75.
[39] *Proceedings of the FAUS*, 61-2. These protocols were repealed in 1794 and replaced with new guidelines that revised the formal order of procession and specified a similar order for the recession.

dedicated to white children and smaller than those made for white adults; after 1800, the gravestones that free blacks commissioned for their own families mirrored white Newporters' stones in size.[40] They were also similar in iconography. Most of the gravestones in God's Little Acre are like Cuffe Gibbs' monument in that they use the same visual vocabulary of winged soul effigies, foliate borders, and neoclassical elements that are common to all gravestones in the Newport Common Burying Ground. While they differ in size and the quality of the slate, it is usually impossible to tell the difference between the gravestones of black and white Newporters based on iconography alone. The few exceptions are portrait stones carved by John Stevens III in which the artist used a similar technique to make lifelike representations of his clients, white and black. Indeed, the relentless sameness of the gravestones seems to repeat the FAUS's concern for conformity to Euro-American burial customs.

In the end, this strategy did not protect black Newporters from the "Game contempt" of their neighbors. By the time Newport Gardner set sail for Liberia in 1826, he had learned through hard experience that they could never win the game of respectability politics. "I go to encourage the young," he declared, "They can never be elevated here. I have tried sixty years. It is in vain. Could I by my example lead them to set sail, and I die the next day, I should be satisfied."[41]

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[40] Garman, James C. "'Faithful and Loving Servants': The Masking and Marking of Ethnicity in the Material Culture of Death." M.A. Thesis, University of Massachusetts, 1992. The only major discrepancy is in the size of black women's gravestones as compared to white women's gravestones. Although all groups saw an increase in size between the second and the third period, monuments dedicated to black women grew the least of any group (+3.43%), followed closely by black children (+8.39%). Black men made greatest percentage gain of any group (+35.58%; The second greatest gain was among white women at +18.66%). This may reflect the efforts of the male-dominated FAUS to commemorate its male members in a manner befitting free men, while lesser efforts were made to memorialize black women and children. Though gravestone size is only a tiny data point, these trends may indicate that one aspect of freedom in 19th-century Newport was the freedom for free black men to exercise patriarchal authority over their families in ways they could not have under slavery.

[41] Andrews, 121.

Figure 25: Pompey Brenton stone, 1772, Newport, RI
carved by John Stevens III
photo by author

The "cultural convergence" of surviving stones should not be interpreted as proof that African and West Indian cultural traditions had no influence over black Newporters' burials. It is possible, even probable, that the dead of God's Little Acre were buried with beads, shells, or other objects that modern scholars might identify as material traces of African cultural survivals. Any temporary, above-ground tributes to the dead have been lost, but that does not mean that they never existed. When archaeologists excavated the African Burial Ground in Manhattan (active 1690-1792), they found that a small minority of graves included grave goods like cowrie shells, African-made beads, and the components of conjuring bundles, suggesting at least some continuity of rites and beliefs. The vast majority of the graves showed the influence of Euro-American burial traditions, including the typically Christian East-West alignment of graves and

the use of coffins in over 90% of the burials.[42] The Newport Common Burying Ground has never been excavated, but the graves of God's Little Acre are probably similar to the graves of the African Burial Ground in their blend of circum-Atlantic cultural practices.

In a similar vein, the iconography of surviving gravestones should not be taken as conclusive proof that all black Newporters embraced Anglo-American Christianity. Although the underpinnings of soul effigy iconography were specifically Christian, the style became formulaic and widely shared among Christians and non-Christians alike. Several lovely soul effigies in Newport's Touro Synagogue Cemetery appear there not because of a shared Judeo-Christian eschatology, but because of shared expectations for respectable gravestone iconography. The Rebecca Polock stone (1764) has epitaphs in both Hebrew and English, carved by William Stevens under a fine example of his mature soul effigy design.[43] Maria Moravia (d. 1787/5547, stone by John Stevens III) and Isaac Lopez (d. 1762/5523, stone by John Bull) have both soul effigies and death dates given in the years and months of the Jewish calendar. Their epitaphs clearly show that Polock, Moravia, and Lopez were not Christians, yet, like the slaves buried across town, they are memorialized with conventional Protestant iconography. This sameness may stem from the prosaic limitations of the stonecutters' available stock of gravestones. Still, an inventive carver like John Bull or John Stevens III could have devised an unorthodox gravestone for a non-Christian customer, as indeed they did for Christopher Ellery in 1789.[44] Black and

[42] The results of the archaeological survey were released as *The New York African Burial Ground: Unearthing the African Presence in Colonial New York*, Howard University Press, 2009.

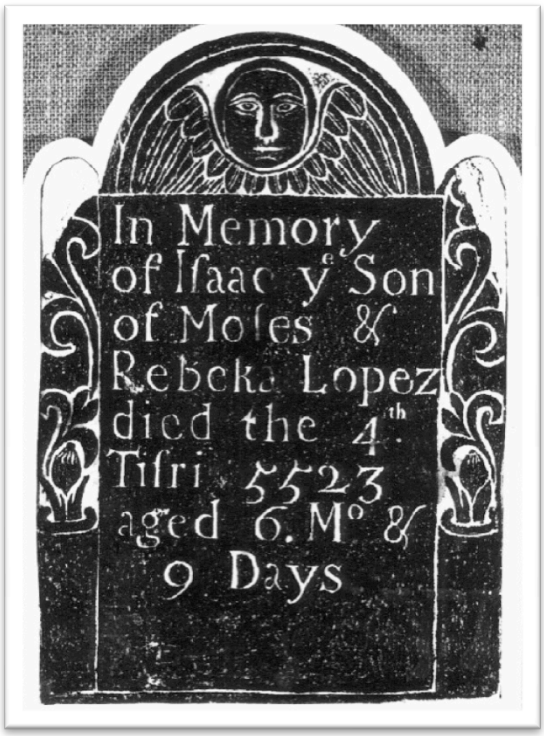
[43] Rebecca Polock's Hebrew and English epitaphs are different and reflect different traditions. For example, the Hebrew text names Rebecca's father, while the English text names her husband. The full Hebrew text reads, "Monument of the burial place of the honored woman Rivka daughter of Yehuda of blessed memory who departed this world on sabbath eve 28 Adar 1 5524 at age of 65 years 6 months 18 days. May her soul be bound up in the bond of eternal life." Thanks to Dr. Liora Halperin of the University of Colorado at Boulder for this translation.

[44] Christopher Ellery was a member of the Ellery family so famous in the history of Unitarianism (he was a great-uncle of William Ellery Channing). His gravestone in the Neewport Common Burying Ground is completely devoid of imagery, with the exception of a ruled outline of the epitaph, which reads, "The human form respected for its

Jewish customers who chose conventional gravestones tended to emphasize their respectable conformity, rather than their differences from their white, Christian neighbors.

Figure 26: Rebecca Polock stone, 1764, Newport, RI
carved by William Stevens
Farber Collection

honesty and known 53 years by the appellation CHRISTOPHER ELLERY began to dissolve in the month of February 1789."



Figures 27 and 28: Martha Moravia, 1787; Isaac Lopez, 1762, Newport, RI
Moravia stone carved by John Stevens III
Farber Collection

Figure 29: Christopher Ellery stone, 1789, Newport, RI
photo by author

The families, individuals, and artisans who commemorated their dead in God's Little Acre worked both within and against the strictures of slavery. Their resistance did not always take the form of overt rebellion or cultural retention.[45] By manipulating the symbols, objects, and ceremonies of Euro-American funerary culture to tell their own version of events, black Newporters appropriated burial places that had long served as forums for political action. If graveyards afforded slaveowners the opportunity to erect permanent, public monuments that praised and normalized the institution of slavery, they also allowed men like Pompe Stevens to speak back.

* * *

The Cuffe Gibbs gravestone is also a public demonstration of Pompe Stevens' skill as an artisan. Though it is neither the most beautiful nor the most innovative gravestone in the Newport Common Burying Ground, it is the work of a craftsman with extensive training and skill. Pompe Stevens' exceptionally bold authorial statement demands attention, both from his contemporaries and from modern scholars, curators, and educators, insisting that we redraw the boundaries that continue to deny enslaved artisans the recognition they deserve both as New England craftsmen and as creators of African-American art.

There should be little doubt that Pompe Stevens was a skilled artisan. When he claimed that he "cut" Cuffe Gibbs' gravestone, he meant that he carved the delicate features, not that he hewed the stone from a larger block. In eighteenth-century Newport, the skilled work of carving letters and detailed designs was called "cutting," while the task of preparing stone for carving was called "shaping" or "rubbing." The John Stevens shop records show dozens of charges for "cutting letters" in epitaphs at two pence apiece, as well as notations that slaves and apprentices

[45] John Wood Sweet, *Bodies Politic: Negotiating Race in the American North, 1730-1830*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 2003).

spent their days "rubing stones."[46] Master carvers like John Stevens III and John Bull regularly signed their work with the words, "Cut by John Stevens, junr." or "cutt by J:Bull," and called themselves "STONE CUTTER[s]" in the advertisements they took out in the *Newport Mercury*.[47] These signatures are most commonly found hidden away at the bottom of unusually elaborate or specific gravestones, like John Stevens' famous portrait stones and John Bull's 8-foot-long monument for the Langley children (1784). These stones were custom pieces with exceptionally fine carving, not pre-carved blanks with personalized epitaphs. The signatures demonstrate the carvers' pride in their work while simultaneously advertising their skill to potential customers. Any modern scholar who accepts that John Stevens and John Bull were substantially responsible for the gravestones they signed must extend the same credit to Pompe Stevens.

Figure 30: John Bull signature, Langley children stone, c.1785, Newport, RI
photo by author

Pompe Stevens signed at least two gravestones: one for Cuffe Gibbs (1768) and another for two-year-old Pompey [Lyndon] (1765). Little Pompey's stone is similar to Cuffe Gibbs' in

[46] John Stevens His Book, facsimile of the ledger of the John Stevens Shop, Newport, Rhode Island, 1705-1768. Houghton Library, Harvard University, call # f Typ 970.53.8088

[47] *Newport Mercury* 5/17/1773, 4. Please note that gravestone scholars generally refer to John Stevens (1753-1817) as "John Stevens III" to distinguish him from his grandfather and father, both of them prolific Newport carvers. Stevens often signed himself "John Stevens junr.," assuming that his contemporaries would not confuse him for his long-dead grandfather.

many ways, from the moon-faced, winged soul effigy on its tympanum to its competently carved, but misaligned letters. The border is slightly different, with two thistles added to the figs and lily buds of the Gibbs stone, but the curves of the lines are consistent. The most obvious difference is the signature — "Cut by P.S." — which is both more conventionally placed and more ambiguous than the forceful statement in Cuffe Gibbs' epitaph. There can be little doubt that the initials "P.S." belong to Pompe Stevens, as the only other known Newport carver with those initials was William Stevens' older brother, Philip, who was murdered in 1736.[48] The Pompey [Lyndon] stone is stylistically, chronologically, and geographically consistent with the Cuffe Gibbs stone, making the attribution as certain as any that ascribes a stone marked "JB" to John Bull on the basis of style, date, and location.

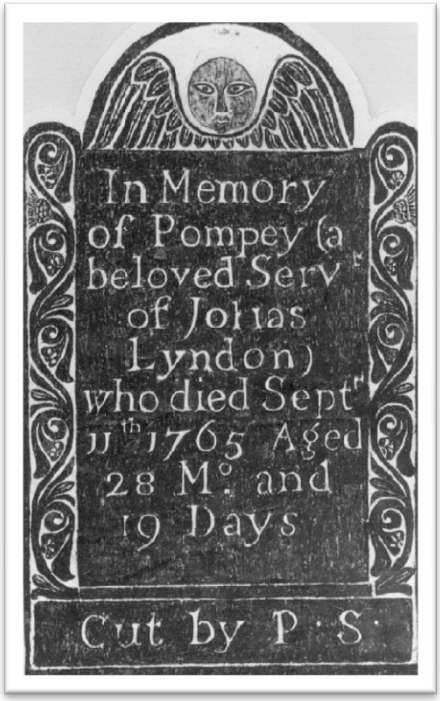


Figure 31: Pompey stone, 1765, Newport, RI
carved by Pompe Stevens
rubbing in the Farber Collection, AAS

[48] It is not impossible that William Stevens owned another slave named Prince or Portsmouth or Peter or Pompey who could have been trained to carve in a style very similar to Pompe Stevens'. No other male members of the white Stevens family had a name beginning with P, and no other identifiable carvers whose work shows up in Newport during this period had the initials P.S.

Pompe Stevens' two signed stones imply a vast body of unsigned work. The graceful, symmetrical curves of the floral borders and the delicate flourishes of the letters that adorn his signed pieces are the work of a competent craftsman who wielded a chisel with confidence and skill. Detailed stonecarving is no easy task. For proof, look no further than the work of William Stevens's own father, John Stevens I. John, originally a mason, began carving gravestones around 1705. Over a decade into his career, he was still producing sketchy, linear designs that were scratched into the surface of his stones, rather than deeply carved. If Pompe Stevens did "cut" all or part of the Cuffe Gibbs stone, as he claimed, he was no novice. Even if he carved some parts of the Cuffe Gibbs and Pompey Lyndon stones, but not others, the quality of each individual element — the borders, the letters, and the winged soul effigy — displays the proficiency of a carver with years of training and practice.

Figure 32: Josias Lyndon stone, 1709, Newport, RI
carved by John Stevens I
photo by author

Luckily, history provides an ideal comparison by which to measure Pompe Stevens' skill and training. Between 1747 and 1752, his master, William Stevens, taught a brilliant young apprentice named John Bull, who would grow up to be one of the most gifted carvers working anywhere in British America. During his five-year apprenticeship (truncated when Bull ran away to sea at age 17), Bull learned to carve letters, borders, and winged effigies very similar to those found on Pompe Stevens' signed work. These years of training represented a substantial investment for William Stevens, who later sued his young protégé for absconding just when he had learned enough to start earning his keep. Bull spent much of the next decade at sea, but he carved a few stones here and there. Like Pompey Stevens' signed stones, John Bull's early stones reproduce the basic stylistic elements common to the William Stevens shop, but the imagery is clumsy and the letters leaden. When Bull founded his own carving shop in 1764, he embarked on a wild career of innovation that eventually produced some of the most beautiful and ambitious stones in New England. His mature work is recognized among gravestone scholars for its fluid, painterly lines, exquisite detail, and fearless disregard for convention.[49] Bull's genius as a carver is beyond dispute; the point here is that after five years of study under William Stevens's tutelage, this undeniably talented carver produced nothing that surpassed the Cuffe Gibbs stone in elegance or technique. Only after an additional decade of practice and experimentation as master of his own shop could Bull demonstrate such dazzling skill.

[49] John Bull is particularly known for works that were bold in scale and iconography. The stone he carved for the six children of William and Sarah Langley in 1785 is made of a single piece of extraordinarily fine slate that is nine feet long. Another stone, carved in 1784 commemorates Wait and William Tripp, as well as their mother's amputated arm. An image of the arm is carved between the epitaphs dedicated to the children. His most famous work is probably the Charles Bardin stone (1773), which features God in the heavens, flanked by cherubs. Some scholars, like Ann and Dickran Tashjian, have argued that this not God among the clouds, but Moses parting the Red Sea. Their argument is generally little more than an assertion that a literal depiction of God would be too scandalous for any New England carver. They never explain why Bull neglected to omit Moses' iconic staff, nor why they believe that a runaway apprentice-turned-muntineer who carved amputated arms on gravestones would feel particularly bound by the conventions of propriety.

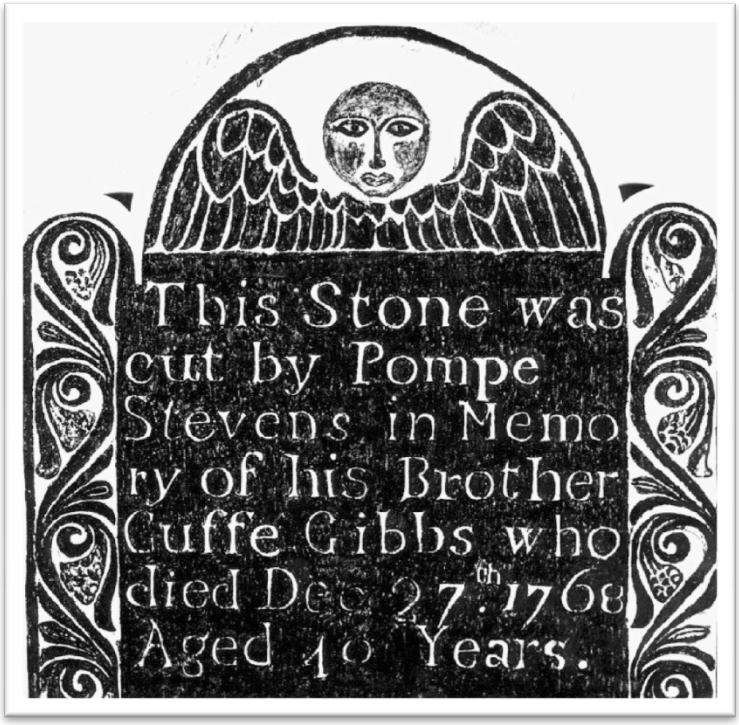


Figure 33: Cuffe Gibbs stone, 1768, NCBG
carved and signed by Pompe Stevens
rubbing in the Farber Collection, AAS

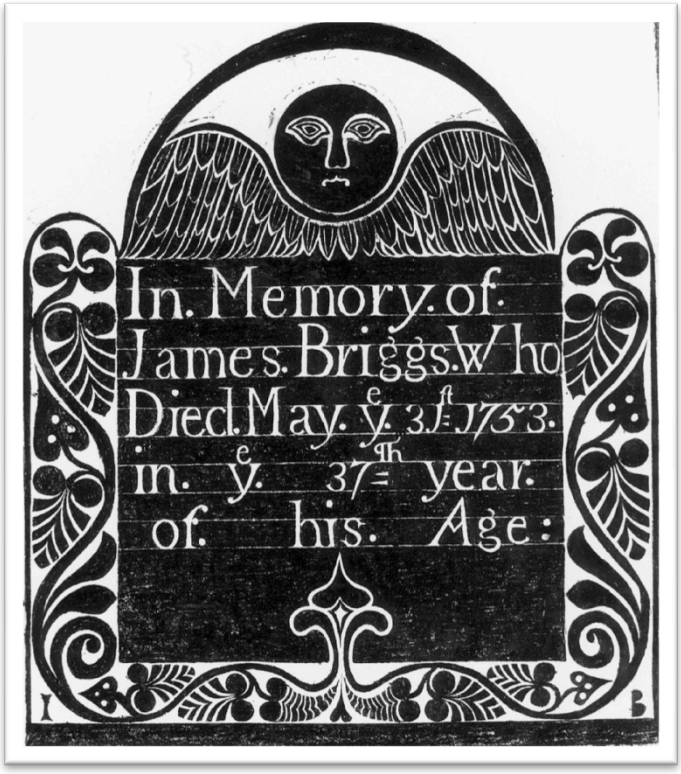


Figure 34: James Briggs stone, 1753, Dighton, MA
carved and signed by John Bull
rubbing in the Farber Collection, AAS

Figure 35:
details of the Charles Bardin stone, 1773, NCBG
carved by John Bull
photos by author

If a carver as talented as John Bull was still producing unremarkable stones after a five-year apprenticeship, it is unlikely that Pompe Stevens could have carved the Cuffe Gibbs stone without substantial training. The stylistic evidence of his signed work suggests that he had at least as much instruction as Bull, though not the freedom of experimentation that allowed Bull's genius to blossom. If so, his owner, the master carver William Stevens, made a sizeable investment of time and effort in teaching Pompe his craft. The only reason he would spend years teaching one of his slaves to carve gravestones would be to put him to work in the stonecutting shop. The investment paid off; between 1738 and 1775, William Stevens' shop was the most prolific stonecutting workshop in Newport, overshadowing the work of William's older brother

and mentor, John Stevens II.[50] Though William Stevens certainly carved many stones or parts of stones, he also spent much of his time importing and selling goods — sugar, chocolate, wine, rum, spices, and "many other Articles, too tedious to mention" — from his storefront on Newport's Long Wharf.[51] These other activities did not hinder his workshop's productivity because William Stevens was not the sole carver in residence.

Like many of his fellow master craftsmen, William Stevens's investment in slave labor placed him in the top third of Newport slaveowners. About a third of all white householders in Newport owned slaves, but most of these (67%) owned only one or two adults. Those who owned three or more adult slaves were generally wealthy merchants or master craftsmen like William Stevens or the famed furniture-makers John and Edmund Townsend. [52] It is impossible to know the exact skills of all slaves owned by artisans. Nevertheless, all artisan-owned slaved supported the productivity of their masters' shops, whether by feeding the workers, performing heavy labor, or making the final products themselves. A few, like Pompe Stevens, were artisans in their own right.

Despite his signed work, Pompe Stevens is largely unknown and unheralded among art historians, even those with a keen interest in early American sculpture and decorative arts. As an enslaved artisan working within a European craft tradition, Stevens is a liminal figure, belonging neither to the ranks of independent, American craftsmen nor to the lineage of African American art. Like Phillis Wheatley, who has been reviled as "Uncle Tom's mother" by twentieth-century scholars of African American literature, Pompe Stevens does not offer much to modern critics in

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[50] Vincent Luti, *Mallet & Chisel: Gravestone Carvers of Newport, Rhode Island, in the 18th Century*, (Boston: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 2002) chapter 5.
[51] Newport Mercury, 1/28/1765
[52] As the owner of four slaves, William Stevens ranked in the top quarter of Newport slaveholders. Of the 456 householders who owned slaves in 1774, 48% owned one slave, 19% owned two slaves, 12% owned three slaves, and 21% owned four or more. Only six Newporters owned 10 or more slaves, and the largest slaveholder in town owned 20. This count excludes slaves living elsewhere who were owned by Newport residents.

search of African cultural survivals to mark the authenticity of black artists.[53] His carvings are aesthetically indistinguishable from the thousands of others carved in New England during his lifetime, showing no overt African or West Indian influences. That Pompe Stevens lived and carved is beyond dispute. But what should we make of him?

In recent years, some scholars, journalists, and preservationists have tried to resolve the conundrum of Pompe Stevens by inventing a history of African survivals in the Newport carving tradition. In this telling, Pompe Stevens was a prolific master stonecarver who used African motifs in his work and, after his manumission, "changed his first name back to its African original, Zingo."[54] This story first appeared in print in Richard Youngken's 1995 pamphlet, *African Americans in Newport*, and has since been repeated in *The Providence Journal*, several dissertations and scholarly monographs, and the Newport Historic District's nomination as a National Historic Landmark (2008).[55]

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[53] Henry Louis Gates, Jr. recounted the all-out assault on Wheatley's work during the 20th century in his 2002 Jefferson Lecture in the Humanities, delivered at the Ronald Regan International Trade Center on March 31, 2002.
[54] Erik R. Seeman, *Death in the New World: Cross-Cultural Encounters, 1492-1800*, 223. Similar claims can be found in Paul Davis, "Strangers in a Strange Land: Newport's Slaves," *Providence Journal*, 14 March 2006.
[55] This conflation have begun as a simple misunderstanding. In her 1927 book, *Gravestones of Early New England and the Men who Made Them, 1653-1800*, Harriette Merrifield Forbes tentatively hypothesized that Zingo, whose name appears on the gravestones of his three wives, belonged to famed stonecarver John Stevens III and "perhaps . . . helped him in his work" (Harriette Merrifield Forbes, *Gravestones of Early New England*, 96). Though this speculation was both limited and reasonable, subsequent attributions have been less restrained. Keith Stokes and Theresa Guzman Stokes, who have led efforts to preserve God's Little Acre since 1984, state on their website that "[Pompe] Stevens was a slave and later free African stone cutter and when free, reverted back to his African name of Zingo," though they offer no documentary evidence in support of that claim. This argument was repeated by Richard Youngken, a colleague of the Stokes', in his 1995 pamphlet, *African Americans in Newport*, and became the basis of a *Providence Journal-Bulletin* article by Karen Lee Ziner in 1996 (Karen Lee Ziner, "Zingo Stevens: Newport Stonecutter," 1B. Luti, 297). The assertion that Pompe Stevens, "no longer a slave, . . . embraced his African name, Zingo," was repeated in a 2006 article by *Providence Journal* staff writer Paul Davis, and again on the official website of the John Stevens Workshop, which claims that Zingo Stevens not only carved gravestones, but signed them (Davis, "Strangers in a Strange Land, Providence Journal, 14 March 2006. http://www.johnstevensshop.com/carvedinstone2.html). Because these unsubstantiated claims are readily available on the internet, they have quickly become received wisdom, appearing, unchallenged, in several scholarly works including a 2008 dissertation by Akeia Benard of the University of Connecticut (*The Free African American Cultural Landscape: Newport, RI, 1774-1826*), another 2008 dissertation by Charles R. Foy of Rutgers University (*Ports of Slavery, Ports of Freedom: How Slaves Used Northern Seaports' Maritime Industry to Escape and Create Trans-Atlantic Identities, 1713-1783*), and Erik R. Seeman's *Death in the New World: Cross-Cultural Encounters, 1492-1800* (2010) Other authors have been more careful, relying on 18th-century evidence to draw a distinction

No documentary or material evidence from the eighteenth century supports the conflation of Pompe Stevens with Zingo Stevens.[56] What we know of Pompe Stevens' life — that he worked in the William Stevens workshop, that he had a son named Prince born to Silva Gould around 1758, and that he called himself "Pompe" as late as 1768 — does not fit the extraordinarily well-documented life of Zingo Stevens.[57] Most critically, Zingo Stevens is called Zingo in records written by both black and white authors as early as 1766, nearly two decades before he gained his freedom.[58] He is named repeatedly in the records of the First Congregational Church, where he was married to Phyllis Lyndon in 1767, and where he was baptized, along with his two oldest children in 1770.[59] In 1773, Rev. Ezra Stiles mentioned Zingo by name in his journal,

> This day died Phylis a Negro Sister of our Church: I hope she had chosen the better part. Her Husband Brother Zingo, upon becoming religious and joining my Chruch, has an earnest Concern for his Wife and Children, and labored greatly to bring her into a saving Acquaintance with her Redeemer; and I doubt not his Endeavours and prayers were blessed to her saving Conversion.[60]

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between Zingo and Pompe — see Marilyn Yalom's *The American Resting Place* (2008) and Nancy C. Curtis's *Black Heritage Sites: An African American Odyssey and Finder's Guide* (1996).

[56] For a concurrent rebuttal of the Zingo/Pompe conflation, see Vincent Luti, *Mallet and Chisel*, chapter 11: "The Case for a Black Stonecarver." Luti concedes at several points in his study that the work of unknown hands — apprentices or slaves — can be discerned in William Stevens' body of work, but makes no effort to trace Pompe Stevens' work using the systematic methodology he uses to illuminate the work of Newport's white carvers. I agree with Luti that the task of separating masters' work wholly from the work of apprentices and slaves is all but impossible. The difference is that I argue that this destabilized attribution implicates all of the workshop's productions, while Luti retains his commitment to single-maker attributions.

[57] I have not been able to determine a death date for Pompe Stevens, though it is possible that he was dead or absent by 1783, when Silva Gould married Cudjo Vernon (see Benard, 197). Pompe may have gone to Philadelphia when William Stevens and his family fled during the siege of Newport in 1778.

[58] In 1766, Zingo Stevens and his soon-to-be wife, Phyllis Lyndon, went on a picnic with friends. Cesar Lyndon diary, Rhode Island Historical Society, Ms 9004.

[59] Three wives of Zingo Stevens are buried in God's Little Acre: Phillis (c.1746-1773), Elizabeth (c.1741-1779), and Violet (c.1742-1803). Neither the gravestones nor Ezra Stiles' journal associate Zingo Stevens with Silva Gould, the mother of Pompe Stevens' son, Princ[e] (b. 1758). Unless Silva was exceptionally young when Princ[e] was born, she was probably several years older than Zingo Stevens' various wives.

[60] Stiles, 355. Stiles also tells us that Phyllis [Lyndon] Stevens " was brought hither out of Guinea 1759 aet. 13 or 14, and has lived in Gov. Lyndons Family ever since. She was always free from the common Vices — and especially since her profession has walked soberly & exemplarly. She expressed her Trust in the Merits of the Redeemer, & died with a good hope." Luti, 299, Sweet, 159, see also Phyllis Stevens gravestone and Sarah Stevens Rodman gravestone.

In 1774, he was named as "my Negro man Zingo" in the will of his owner, John Stevens II, brother of William Stevens, which specified that he would be set "free and at Liberty" seven years after his masters' death.[61] Clearly, Zingo was widely known as Zingo while he was still a slave, whereas Pompe elected to call himself Pompe when he had the greatest freedom to do so — on the gravestone he carved for his brother.[62] The claim that Zingo was the master stonecarver responsible for many of the portrait stones in God's Little Acre is similarly weak.[63] The story of a master carver throwing off his slave name and carving delicate portraits of his peers has romantic appeal, but its disregard for the available evidence muddies the important work of recovering and interpreting the work of colonial New England's black artisans.

There is not enough evidence to support the claim that Zingo Stevens was a skilled gravestone carver, but there is certainly enough evidence to include him in a broader discussion of enslaved artisans working in the Northern and Mid-Atlantic colonies. While a few enslaved craftsmen left evidence of their skill in the historical record, most slaves who contributed to artisan workshops during the eighteenth century did not. These workers can be divided into three categories: slaves who were owned by white artisans, but did not necessarily work in the master's shop; slaves who worked in artisan workshops, but whose specific skills and tasks are

[61] Luti, 299. see also Probate Records 1:405, Newport City Hall. The will was written in 1774 and executed after John Stevens II's death in 1778. It stipulated the Zingo should serve the Widow Stevens for seven years before being granted his freedom.

[62] Indeed, some enslaved Newporters did go by more than one name. Occramar Marycoo, alias Newport Gardner, was a teenager when he was brought from Africa around 1760, and is called "Mr. Ocrmar Mirycoo, or Newport Gardner," in the records of the FAUS (Proceedings of the FAUS, 58). Zingo Stevens was a member of the FAUS for many years and is always called Zingo in the society's records.

[63] Many of the portrait stones, including the Pompey Brenton stone (1772) and the Dinah Wigneron stone (1772), do indeed portray recognizably African subjects, but they are signed by John Stevens III, the son of Zingo's owner, and executed in a style wholly different from both Pompe Stevens' signed work and the work generally attributed to John II. Zingo Stevens probably did work in his master's shop in some capacity, learning the bricklaying and masonry skills he would continue to practice for the rest of his life. Like the many other slaves who worked in New England's artisan workshops, his labor must be acknowledged as a key component of his master's work, but, unless new evidence comes to light, he cannot be established as a trained stonecarver. For unsubstantiated claims that Zingo did carve the portrait stones, see Elizabeth Zuckerman, "Newport Holds One of the First African Burial Grounds," Associated Press, 2004. In this article, Zuckerman relies on interviews with both Keith Stokes and Prof. James Garman of Salve Regina University.

unknown; and slaves who can be identified as trained, skilled artisans in their own right.

The first group — slaves owned by white artisans — is by far the largest. Many prosperous craftsmen owned slaves, including women and small children, who contributed to the success of the master artisan's work by performing supporting tasks and by serving as liquid assets that could be exchanged for raw materials or sold to cover debts. Many performed domestic tasks, like the "Negro Woman fit for any household work" who was sold by Boston goldsmith John Edwards in 1717.[64] Others may have been employed in their masters' workshops, but surviving evidence is too vague to confirm their specific skills or tasks. When Samuel Edwards, the son and protégé of John Edwards, died in 1763, his estate sold a 30-year-old man, but the advertisement tells us only that he had "had the Small-Pox, and is Honest."[65] Perhaps he gained a reputation for honesty by laboring in a workshop full of precious metals, but the surviving evidence is too thin to say for certain. Even less is known about the slaves belonging to Boston silversmiths Daniel Henchman, William Homes, Samuel Minott, and John Coburn, who appear only as numbers on the 1771 Massachusetts Tax Valuation List. Some artisans, like Boston goldsmith Daniel Parker, sold recently-arrived slaves with their other "just Imported" goods, "cheap for Cash."[66] Sometimes, they listed slaves for sale among their other wares. In 1764, Edmund Milne, a Philadelphia silversmith and jeweler, advertised, "chased and plain ewers, urns, and milk potts," and "fluted and plain soopspoons" along with a "sound young negro wench with a child eight months old."[67]

Beyond the sale notices, tax lists, and runaway ads that testify to their economic value, artisan-owned slaves sometimes appear in documents that preserve bits of their personal histories

[64] Boston News-Letter, 29 July 1717.
[65] *Boston News-Letter*, 27 October 1763.
[66] *Boston Evening-Post*, 3 November 1766.
[67] *Pennsylvania Journal*, 18 October 1764.

and deeds. Tom, London, and Quash, slaves belonging to New York silversmiths Simeon Soulemain, Benjamin Wyncoop, and Charles LeRoux, were all arrested and tried during the rumored slave rebellion of 1741. Tom and London were both transported out of the colony, while Quash was returned to his master. Will, a slave belonging to watchmaker Anthony Ward, was burned at the stake on July 4, 1741, one of thirty black men executed during the hysteria.[68] Three weeks later, after news of the executions had reached Boston, a "Negro fellow" owned by Boston goldsmith Joseph Goldthwaite, "being in a sullen Frame, went into the barn and hanged himself."[69]

It is difficult to determine the skills of men like Tom, London, Quash, Will, and the unnamed man in Boston. They may or may not have labored in their masters' workshops. Without positive proof, they cannot be assigned to the second group: slaves who worked in artisan craft shops, but whose precise level of skill is unknown. This group includes men like Zingo Stevens, who was certainly a stone mason in the workshop run by John Stevens II and may have been a carver as well. Long before Zingo Stevens enters the Stevens shop records, a man named Sypeo worked side-by-side with John II and his brothers, William and Phillip. It is unclear whether Sypeo was owned by the Stevens brothers or if he was hired on a short-term basis, but he definitely aided them in their work, performing tasks like "Rubing stones" and "shaveing harths."[70] Other slaves flit in and out of the documentary record, accompanied by tantalizing hints. Who was Cuffee, a "pretty tall well shap'd Negro" who ran away from

[68] Jill Lepore, New York Burning: Liberty, Slavery, and Conspiracy in Eighteenth-Century Manhattan (Vintage, 2006), appendix.
[69] Boston Evening-Post, 27 July, 1741.
[70] John Stevens His Book, 1705

renowned Boston portrait painter John Smibert in 1737, and how came he to be wearing "a pair of Leather Breeches stain'd with divers sorts of Paints?"[71]

There is not enough evidence to assign Zingo, Sypeo, or Cuffee to the third group: identifiable artisans like Pompe Stevens. Slaves worked in a wide variety of trades — as blacksmiths, coopers, shoemakers, boat builders, sailmakers, leatherworkers, carpenters, and tailors.[72] An unnamed "Negro Fellow" listed for sale in Boston in 1750 was a "good Workman at the Whitesmith's trade," while another was an experienced woodworker, "very suitable for a Master Builder or Cabinet-Maker."[73] Some slavetraders sought premium prices by advertising slaves as "fit for a Tradesman rather than Household Business," "capable of learning any Trade," or indicating that a slave who had previously worked in service, "likes a more stirring Business."[74] Buyers in need of coopers, carpenters, and smiths expected that the enslaved artisans they purchased would be "Masters of their Business," capable of equaling their white counterparts in skill while undercutting their wages.[75] In some parts of British America, enslaved artisans were so numerous and their proficiency so threatening to white tradesmen that laws banned them from certain trades or limited their numbers.[76]

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[71] New England Weekly Journal, 18 October 1737.

[72] Blacksmiths were numerous and are a fixture in the runaway and sale ads. see *Boston Evening Post* 7/11/1748. Joseph was "a Ship Carpenter and Caulker by Trade, and underst[ood] Boat-Building" when he was sold at public auction in 1742 (*Boston Post-Boy*, 5/10/1742). An unnamed man who worked "at the Nailor's Trade" was advertised in the *Boston Gazette* 2/18/1752. Exeter, a tailor, ran way from Richard Billings in 1741 (*New England Weekly Journal,* 8/18/1741)

[73] *Boston News Letter,* 1 February 1750, *Boston Gazette,* 31 August 1767. A whitesmith was a metalworker whose materials were finer than the blacksmith's iron, but baser than silver and gold (usually tin and pewter). Other possible woodworkers: In 1765, the *New York Mercur*y advertised the sale of an unnamed 17-year-old who was "a tolerable good sawyer" who "understands something of the Cabinet Making Business" (9 December 1765). A 1763 advertisement in the *Pennsylvania Gazett*e sought, "A NEGROE Ship-Carpenter, who can be well recommended for his Workmanship, Honesty and Sobriety . . . A great Price may be had for a Negro Joiner or House-carpenter, who can be well recommended, as above" (21 April 1763).

[74] *Boston Gazette,* 4 November 1734; *Boston Gazette,* 5 July 1762; *Boston Post Boy*, 1 October 1744.

[75] Boston Evening Post, 10 June 1745.

[76] See Lepore, *New York Burning*, for a discussion of limits placed on black tradesmen in the urban North. Laws regulating black tradesmen protected white artisans. A Charleston, South Carolina law from 1755 banned slaves from operating their own workshops and required that masters strike a balance between training white apprentices and slaves: "nothing in this act shall be construed to hinder any handicraft tradesman in town, from teaching their

Many skilled slaves worked in the heavy media of iron and leather. Others, like Pompe Stevens, practiced trades that transformed Newport's wealth into luxury goods. In 1749, Newport goldsmith Isaac Anthony advertised a reward of five pounds for the return of a runaway slave named Newport who was "by trade a Goldsmith."[77] Colonial artisans used the terms "goldsmith" and "silversmith" interchangeably, but both designations were reserved for highly skilled workers. Four years later, the son of Newport goldsmith Samuel Vernon placed an advertisement in a Boston newspaper indicating that he wanted to sell an unnamed 35-year-old man, possibly the same Newport, who had "wrought at the Gold Smith's Trade ever since he was fourteen Years of Age."[78] Unlike Pompe Stevens, Newport did not leave any signed works. Still, these newspaper accounts speak to decades of work meriting recognition as a practitioner of the goldsmithing craft. Just as Pompe Stevens' unsigned works make up part of the larger body attributed to William Stevens, Newport's work probably survives in modern American museums and private collections under the imprints of his masters.[79]

Throughout the northern and mid-Atlantic colonies, many slaves worked as skilled craftsmen producing luxury goods. Noted New York silversmith Thomas Hammersley owned a

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own negroes or slaves the trades they exercise, so that they constantly employ one white apprentice or journeyman for every two negroes that they shall teach and thenceforth employ" (see Burton, South Carolina Silversmiths, 207-9). Sometimes, these laws were part of larger efforts to stem over-production of certain goods, as in the case of the 1732 Act of Parliament that prohibited anyone in the British colonies from training "any Black or Negro . . . in the Art of Hat or Feltmaking" (*Boston News-Letter*, 10 August 1732).

[77] *Boston Post-Boy*, 6 February 1749.

[78] Boston Evening Post, 7 May 1753.

[79] Curators and scholars of decorative arts have long known that master artisans employed journeymen and short-term contractors called "jobbers" in their workshops. Yet, it remains extremely rare for art museum catalogues and exhibits to identify the journeymen or jobbers who made or contributed to individual pieces. Even when the journeyman can be identified by name, objects are generally exhibited as the sole work of the master. In Boston, some immigrant silversmiths, like the Dutch journeyman William Rouse, worked for multiple shops, meaning that the impressive engravings on silver "by" makers like John Coney or Jeremiah Dummer is sometimes the work of a single journeyman's hand, even though the objects bear various masters' marks. Like other journeymen who had trained in Europe, Rouse was especially prized in the colonies because he brought the latest techniques and stylish patterns to America. Patricia E. Kane, author of one of the standard reference works on colonial American silver, has made a strong case for identifying Rouse's work, but exhibits of Coney's and Dummer's silver routinely omit any reference to Rouse, even when giving his work pride of place.

slave named Duke who worked "at the goldsmith's business" before he ran away in 1756. Duke was recaptured, but escaped again in 1764. He may have been the unnamed "NEGRO MAN . . . a Silver-Smith by trade" sold in New York in September 1764.[80] In Philadelphia, a 36-year-old man named Tom, "by trade a silversmith," escaped from master craftsman William Ball in 1778, seeking refuge with the British army. Ball valued Tom's labor enough to offer a reward of 100 dollars for his return.[81] In 1770, Annapolis clockmaker William Faris advertised the sale of an equally valuable slave, who was "by trade a Silversmith, Jeweller and Lapidary," adding that "there is very few, if any better workmen in America."[82] Sometimes, artisans in various cities worked together to capture and detain the enslaved craftsmen who were so valuable to their shops. When 40-year-old John Frances, "by trade a goldsmith," absconded from Ephraim Brasher's New York shop in 1784, advertisements in Philadelphia newspapers encouraged bounty hunters to deliver the fugitive slave to Brasher's fellow goldsmiths John Le Telier or Benjamin Halsted.[83]

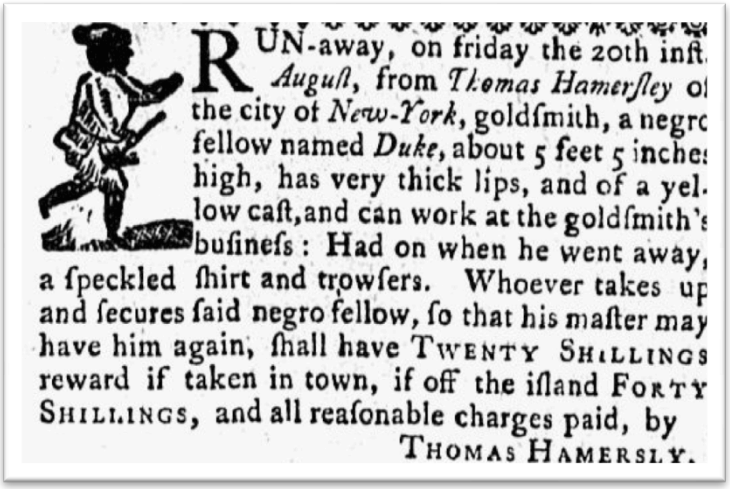
RUN-away, on friday the 20th inſt. *Auguſt*, from *Thomas Hamerſley* of the city of *New-York*, goldſmith, a negro fellow named *Duke*, about 5 feet 5 inches high, has very thick lips, and of a yellow caſt, and can work at the goldſmith's buſineſs: Had on when he went away, a ſpeckled ſhirt and trowſers. Whoever takes up and ſecures ſaid negro fellow, ſo that his maſter may have him again, ſhall have TWENTY SHILLINGS reward if taken in town, if off the iſland FORTY SHILLINGS, and all reaſonable charges paid, by THOMAS HAMERSLY.

Figure 36: *New York Mercury*, 30 August 1756
Archive of Americana, AAS

[80] *New York Mercury*, 30 August 1756; *New York Gazette*, 20 February 1764; *New York Gazette*, 17 September 1764.
[81] *Pennsylvania Packet*, 8 September 1778.
[82] *Maryland Journal*, 9 November 1778.
[83] Pennsylvania Packet, 4 May 1784.

In New England, slaves worked in the paper trades as well. In 1773, Boston newspapers carried advertisements for the work of Scipio Moorhead, an enslaved portrait painter of "extraordinary genius" who "takes Faces at the lowest Rates." Phillis Wheatley honored Moorhead in her poem, "To S.M., A Young African Painter, on Seeing His Works" (1773):

> How did these prospects give my soul delight,
> A new creation rushing on my sight!
> . . . Still may the painter's and the poet's fire,
> To aid thy pencil and thy verse conspire!

Moorhead was neither the only nor the first black artist in Boston.[84] Beginning in the 1730s, a slave named Peter set type, printed pages, and etched woodcut illustrations for Boston printer Thomas Fleet.[85] Like Pompe Stevens, Peter Fleet signed some of his work, emblazoning a bold "P.F" across the cover of *The Prodigal Daughter* (1736), a didactic chapbook embellished with four of Fleet's "*curious Cuts*."[86]

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[84] In the 19th century, several periodicals published anecdotes featuring a young Gilbert Stuart (1755-1828) marveling at the talents of Neptune Thurston, an enslaved cooper who drew caricatures on barrel heads on the wharves of Newport, Rhode Island. I have not been able to confirm this story using contemporary sources.

[85] Gloria McCahon Whiting, "Slavery, Craft, and Identity in Eighteenth-Century Boston," Material Culture Institute at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Alberta, on May 21, 2011. Peter's sons, Pompey and Caesar, also worked in the Fleet family's printing shop, churning out copies of the patriotic *Boston Evening Post.* In 1775, When the British army occupied Boston, Pompey Fleet escaped, taking passage first to Nova Scotia and eventually to Sierra Leone, where he died a free man.

[86] *The Boston Evening Post*, 5/31/1736. As with stonecarving and portrait painting, the engraving of woodcuts was a specialized skill. The minute details on display in Peter Fleet's signed work — the fine features of a minister's face, the flame of a candle set in a reflective wall sconce, the lace trim of a woman's garments — imply an extensive body of unsigned work. Isaiah Thomas, author of the *History of Printing in America* (1808) and founder of the American Antiquarian Society remembered Peter as "an ingenious man" who cut "all the pictures which decorated the ballads and small books of his master," suggesting that modern archives like the American Antiquarian Society, Harvard's Houghton Library, and the Library Company of Philadelphia all hold unheralded examples of Peter Fleet's art. Many of Fleet's imprints are single-sheets recounting the confessions and deaths of murderers, a theme in keeping with the cautionary tale of *The Prodigal Daughter*. Among these are an illustrated speech put into the mouth of "poor Julian," an Indian slave who was executed for killing a white bounty hunter in 1733, and a ballad "On Occasion of the untimely End of Mark and Phillis, Who were Executed at Cambridge, September 18th [1755] for Poysoning their Master." The woodcut on the latter ballad may have been a generic block cut by Peter and used for many similar ballads, as it depicts Mark's death by hanging, but not Phillis' execution by burning at the stake.

Figure 27: *The Prodigal Daughter Revived*, 1736
woodcut by Peter Fleet
Harvard Art Museum
[This image is protected by copyright, and can be viewed at www.harvardartmuseums.org]

Many twenty-first collectors, scholars, and curators have difficulty imagining slaves as skilled craftsmen, even when doing so would solve problems in their fields. A good example is the controversy surrounding Simon Edgell (1687-1742), the earliest Philadelphia pewterer whose signed work survives. For decades, experts have disagreed over the trajectory of Edgell's career, with some believing that he remained an active pewterer throughout his life and others arguing that he abandoned his craft for a career in importing and retail. If the former, most of the pewter bearing Edgell's mark was made in America; if the latter, it was probably made in England and merely stamped by Edgell when he sold it. Those who assign Edgell a long career as an artisan point to his probate inventory, which shows that he owned a vast array of pewterer's tools and raw materials at the time of his death. In the definitive article on Edgell, Jay Robert Stiefel argues, "there can be no question that, at the end of his days, [Edgell] possessed the necessary raw material ("Old Pewter"), personnel (himself) and equipment ("Sundry Brass Mold and Brassiers Toolls") with which to make pewter." Stiefel and others acknowledge that Edgell was a major importer and that he devoted increasing time and energy to his mercantile activities over the years, but protest against those who argue that he was "a 'pewterer' only in name."[87]

Neither Stiefel nor his interlocutors consider an alternate possibility: that Edgell may

[87] Jay Robert Stiefel, "Simon Edgell (1687-1742)—`To a Puter Dish' and Grander Transactions of a London-trained Pewterer in Philadelphia" in *The Bulletin of the Pewter Collectors' Club of America* (PCCA), (2002).

have kept his pewter-making business afloat for years after he turned his attention to other business by exploiting the labor of skilled slaves. Though Stiefel's article is impressively thorough in uncovering references to Edgell in a variety of documents, he overlooks a newspaper advertisement from the year of Edgell's death (1742):

> To be Let in Philadelphia, THE House which Mr. Simon Edgal, Pewterer, deceas'd, lately dwelt in, with a compleat set of all kind of Pewterers Tools and Instruments, and a working Shop, well-fitted, together with a Negro Man that understands the Business.[88]

In fact, the body of Stiefel's article contains no mention of the three adult, male slaves included in Edgell's probate inventory. They are consigned to endnote #109, in which Stiefel muses, "Perhaps, one or more of them, worked in the store or helped offload his goods from ships." Perhaps. But all available evidence suggests that Simon Edgell was a shrewd enough businessman to find more profitable employment for a slave who "understands the business" of pewter-making.[89]

Recovering the work of enslaved artisans is a daunting task. In most cases, the documentary record is insufficient, both because the daily life of the workshop was not recorded in a permanent way and because the structure of craft work deliberately obscured the work of slaves, apprentices, and journeymen. We do not know anything certain about the labor of the three slaves owned by Newport furniture maker Edmund Townsend in 1774, nor the three owned by his cousin and colleague, John Townsend.[90] Whether they carved the gleaming seashells that adorn the Townsend workshop furniture on display at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, or planed the secondary woods, or built fires to warm the master cabinetmaker's fingers on a chilly night, their work is part of the objects that bear their masters' names. So, too, is the work of domestic servants like Jane and her mother, Rose, two of the many

[88] *Boston Post-Boy*, 4 October 1742.
[89] Stiefel, endnote 109.
[90] 1774 Newport Census

slaves who assisted Harvard College steward Andrew Bordman in keeping Harvard's halls swept and its silver shiny, and Spaniard, a slave belonging to Increase Mather, who carried his master's letters, books, and manuscripts to other learned men in town.[91] The story of a silver tankard is not just a matter of the artisan who signed it and the European fashions he followed; it is also the story of the people who mined the silver, shipped it, shaped it, and polished the final product.[92]

In the absence of signatures or other outside evidence, it is nearly impossible to extricate the work of enslaved artisans from the work of their masters. This does not mean that slaves who were trained as cabinetmakers, stonecutters, and silversmiths never made desks, gravestones, or tankards, but it does make it difficult to ascribe particular objects to particular individuals. Stylistic considerations go only so far, allowing us to identify the shop that produced an object, but not the actual hand — master, apprentice, or slave — that held the chisel. Objects like the Cuffe Gibbs gravestone challenge the widespread assumption that slave-made objects should be aesthetically distinct from Euro-American artifacts. In her recent work, *African American Visual Arts: From Slavery to the Present* (2008), Celeste-Marie Bernier argues that this paradigm can "present a major stumbling block" for recognizing the work of modern black artists who "push the boundaries of formal experimentation to create abstract works bereft of an instantly recognizable, explicitly racialized content."[93] Similarly, African Americans working within a European craft tradition in the colonial era have too often been excluded from the history of African American art because their work does not push the boundaries of conventional Euro-American forms.

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[91] Harvard silver tankard w/ "A Bordman" scratched into base in Harvard silver collection. A 1713 imprint that once belonged to Samuel Sewall and now resides in the collection of the American Antiquarian Society bears a note in Sewall's hand indicating that the paper was, "Left at my house for me, when I was not at home, by Spaniard Dr Mather's Negro; March, 23. 1713/14" (Evans 1653).

[92] The MFA does acknowledge the human cost of mining silver in some of its publications: see *American Decorative Arts and Sculpture* by Gerald Ward, Nonie Gadsden, and Kelly L'Ecuyer (2006).

[93] Bernier, 8.

For Pompe Stevens, the stonecutter's craft provided extraordinary access to the public sphere. He had neither a printing press nor a pulpit, but he was able to create an enduring object that contradicted the definitions of black men and black families that white Newporters wrote into law, custom, and landscape. The gravestone that he cut for Cuffe Gibbs illuminates the distance between the reality of Pompe Stevens' daily life and the political structures that rendered his experience rhetorically impossible. Officially, Pompe Stevens was neither a brother nor an artisan. In the graveyard, he was both.

Chapter 4:
Cruelly Murdered

In the last weeks of April 1775, Boston was in chaos. On the night of April 19th, provincial militiamen pursued a battered column of British Regulars back into the city after spoiling their raid on Lexington and Concord. The emerging American army surrounded the city and began digging fortifications in Cambridge, Dorchester, and Roxbury. Over the coming weeks, reinforcements would pour in from all over Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire, locking Boston into a siege that would last for eleven months.

Boston's 15,000 civilians, who had chafed under British military occupation since 1768, were caught in the crossfire. As the exhausted redcoats limped back into the city, the population was "thrown into great Consternation."[1] "Every face gathering paleness – all hurry & confusion," lamented the Reverend Andrew Eliot in a disjointed letter to his son in Connecticut.[2] Desperate civilians searching for an escape found that "there was not a carriage of one kind or an other to be got for love or money," and military passes out of the city were nearly impossible to obtain.[3] John Andrews, a merchant, informed his family in Philadelphia that he observed, "parents that are lucky enough to procure papers, with bundles in one hand and a string of children in the other, wandering out of the town . . . not knowing whither they'll go."[4]

At first, General Gage, commander of the British troops, allowed civilians to leave with their personal effects, provided that they surrender their firearms. Thousands fled. Many more stayed long enough to pack their valuables, only to find that, "by the Word Effects, [Gage] meant

[1] John Boyle, "A Journal of Occurrences in Boston, 1759-1778," Houghton Library, Harvard University. Entry dated 20 April 1775. This source will be abbreviated as JBoyle with the date of the entry noted.
[2] Letter from Andrew Eliot, Sr. to Andrew Eliot, Jr., 23 April 1775, Massachusetts Historical Society. Quoted in *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, vol. 16 (1879), 182. Thanks to Natalie Panno for her research on Andrew Eliot's activities during the Siege of Boston.
[3] Sarah Winslow Deming journal, entry from April 1775, Historic Winslow House Association, Marshfield, MA.
[4] John Andrews to William Barrell, 5 May1775, in *Letters of John Andrews*, ed. Winthrop Sargent (Cambridge, Massachusetts: John Wilson & Sons, 1866), 93.

only Necessaries, such as Beding, Cloathing, &c. Not any kind of Merchandize whatever."[5] A few Bostonians stayed to protect their property from "the soldiery [who] think they have a license to plunder every one's house and store who leaves the town," but most bolted for the hinterlands.[6] By midsummer, about 14,000 civilians had deserted the city, leaving 6,500 colonists — most of them Tory refugees newly arrived from the countryside — and 13,500 British Regulars stewing in squalid conditions.[7]

The exiles fanned out across the countryside, seeking refuge wherever a garret or barn could be spared. In Braintree, Abigail Adams cleaned out her dairy to accommodate a friend's family. She informed her husband, John Adams, who was serving as a delegate to the Continental Congress in Philadelphia, that their neighborhood was overrun: "Belcher has two families with him. There are 3 in Veses house, 2 in Etters, 2 in Mr. Savils, 2 in Jonathan Bass'es," adding, "It would make your heart ake to see what difficulties and distresses the poor Boston people are driven to."[8] Jane Franklin Mecom, a 63-year-old widow from the North End, was one of seventeen Bostonians who traveled more than 60 miles to lodge with the Greene family of Warwick, Rhode Island, old friends whose "harts were open to all the world."[9] Some refugees, like Sarah Winslow Deming and her family, traveled a hundred miles to find lodging among strangers.[10] Others sought out far-flung family members. "I hope your people will have pity upon them, & take them in," wrote Andrew Eliot, beseeching his eldest son, a minister in

[5] JBoyle, 27 April 1775.
[6] John Andrews to William Barrell, 1 June 1775 in *Letters of John Andrews*, 95.
[7] John Boyle, a printer, placed the official civilian population in August of 1775 at 6,573 (based on a census conducted by General Gage), and estimated that 13,600 troops held the city. He reckoned that "about 14,000 of the Inhabitants have removed into ye Country." JBoyle, 10 August 1775. One modern historian has estimated that 10,000 civilians left the city in the first 8 weeks of the siege. Jacqueline Barbara Carr, *After the Siege: A Social History of Boston: 1775-1800* (Boston: Northeastern Univ. Press, 2005), 22.
[8] Abigail Adams to John Adams, 12 July 1775, MHS.
[9] Jane Franklin Mecom was the youngest sister of Benjamin Franklin. She stayed with William and Catherine Greene for several months before her brother escorted her to his home in Philadelphia. Letter, JFM to BF May 14, 1775 in *The Letters of Benjamin Franklin and Jane Mecom*, ed. Carl Van Doren (Princeton Univ. Press, 1950).
[10] Deming and her family settled in Canterbury, CT for the duration of the siege. They had no family there, but a friend's sister took them in. Sarah Winslow Deming journal.

Fairfield, Connecticut, to take in his mother and younger sisters. Eliot apologized for the inconvenience, lamenting, "Whether ever I shall be able to remunerate you or them is uncertain . . . I know I put you to difficulties, but you are the only asylum I have."[11]

The refugee crisis proved disastrous, both for the exiles and for those who took them in. In the months following Lexington and Concord, epidemics of dysentery, typhus, and smallpox rode the coattails of displaced civilians and soldiers on the march.[12] In Braintree, Abigail Adams battled against the "voilent Dysentery" that killed her mother, her brother-in-law, dozens of neighbors, and left her three-year-old son, Tommy, "pale lean and wan." "Our House is an hospital in every part," she wrote, "And such is the distress of the neighbourhood that I can scarcly find a well person to assist me in looking after the sick."[13] In Needham, Reverend Samuel West reported that the "calimity" killed 50 people in his parish, including 34-year-old Esther Daniels and seven of her young children.[14] Newspapers in Providence and Worcester printed "A CURE FOR THE BLOODY FLUX" so that desperate readers could ward off death with oral doses of clarified butter.[15] As far away as Deerfield, country doctors battled typhus, known to them as "the Camp Distemper." Dr. Elihu Ashley spent September of 1775 treating patients suffering from "a violent fever, a Nausea, Stupor and Incessant Purging Bloody Bilious Matter." Small children who fell ill could be dead in as little as thirty hours.[16] General Washington was so terrified that smallpox would devastate his farm-bred troopers that he banned refugees from the camp at Cambridge, prohibited civilians from using Fresh Pond, and ordered incoming letters to

[11] Andrew Eliot, Sr. to Andrew Eliot, Jr., 23 April 1775.
[12] For extensive treatments of these epidemics, see Elizabeth Fenn, *Pox Americana: The Great Smallpox Epidemic of 1755-82* (2001) and Philip Cash, *Medical Men at the Siege of Boston* (1973).
[13] Abigail Adams to John Adams, 8-10 Sept 1775, MHS.
[14] Diary of Reverend Samuel West (in collection of first church of Needham) as quoted by Judith Cataldo, local historian, email exchange.
[15] *American Oracle of Liberty* (Worcester), 30 August 1775; *Providence Gazette*, 2 September 1775.
[16] Elihu Ashley, *Romance, Redemies, and Revolution: The Diary of Dr. Elihu Ashley of Deerfield*, ed. Amelia F. Miller and A.R. Riggs (UMass, 2007), 246-7. Entries for 14 and 15 September 1775.

be doused in vinegar.[17] In towns like Braintree, smallpox filled the graveyards, with "4, 3 and 2 funerals in a day for many days."[18] Boston's exiled civilians had taken refuge in the countryside, but they had brought the war with them.

Among the displaced was Lydia Dyar, a 78-year-old widow from Boston's North End. As the daughter of a tallow-chandler, widow of a mariner, and mother of a cooper, Lydia belonged to the community of maritime tradesmen who made Boston one of America's most important ports.[19] A longtime widow, Lydia supported her family through a combination of inheritance and industriousness.[20] In 1750, her father had left her a "Mansion House" on the corner of Middle Street and Salutation Alley, steps from the New North Church and within shouting distance of the wharves.[21] The house had a large garden plot, which she put to good use. Every spring, Boston's newspapers informed city-dwellers that Lydia Dyar was eager to supply them with imported and locally-grown seeds for "long green prickly cucumber," "colly flower," "curl'd Imperial, brown and Cabbage lettice," and "good boyling Peas."[22] By 1775, she had translated her hard work into an estate that included feather bedding, gold jewelry, and 68 ounces of silver in the form of porringers, a tankard, and tea accoutrements.[23]

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[17] Elizabeth A. Fenn, Pox Americana: The Great Smallpox Epidemic of 1775-82 (Hill and Wang, 2002), 48-50.
[18] Abigail Adams to John Adams, 8-10 Sept 1775, MHS.
[19] Lydia (Hough) Dyar was born to William Hough and Mary Bricknell on February 2, 1696/7. On December 17, 1717, Lydia was married to Joseph Dyer (son of John and Elizabeth Dyer b. March 2 1686/7) by Rev. John Webb at the New North Church. see *A Preliminary Genealogy of the Dyar Family* by Harrison Gray Dyar (1903), 6; John Elliot Bowman, "The Widow Lydia Dyar" in *The Genealogical Magazine* (1906), 131; will of William Hough, Suffolk Co. Probate, vol 18, p 388, #3626, Massachusetts State Archives.
[20] Joseph Dyar's precise date of death is unknown. Lydia Dyar was a definitely a widow in 1750, when her father's estate was apportioned. The fact that her sons were born in 1719 and 1721, with no children recorded after those dates, indicate that Joseph may have died as early as 1720. That his death went unrecorded in the Boston records suggests that he may have died at sea or in a foreign port.
[21] In the 1770s, Christ Church (now known as Old North Church) was called "New North," while "Old North" referred to the old wooden church built by the Mathers in 1650. The Old North edifice was destroyed during the lean siege winter of 1775-6.
[22] advertisements, *Boston Gazette*, 28 March 1774, 10 March 1760, and 17 March 1763.
[23] Will of Lydia Dyer, 1774, Suffolk Co. probate vol. 79 p.293, #17231, Massachusetts State Archives.

Only one of Lydia Dyar's children, Joseph, survived to adulthood. A successful cooper, he operated a prosperous workshop on the waterfront and surrounded his mother with a lively crew of grandchildren.[24] Lydia doted especially on her teenage namesake, who stood to inherit much of the family's moveable wealth, including the elder Lydia's "Fether Bed Bolster & Pillows," all of her bedding and "Warring Apparel," her "Gold necklace and buttons," and all of the house linens and furniture.[25] She was less generous to her eldest grandson, William, who seems to have been living in his grandmother's house with his wife and two young children on the eve of the siege.[26] In her will, Lydia threatened to punish William and his family if they proved ungrateful for all she had done for them:

> if my Grand Son William Dyer should bring in any Account against me either for Board or any thing Else then I give him not more of my Estate then five shillings, but if he does not then I will that he shall have his Equal shair with the Rest of my Grand Children.

Whatever affections or resentments governed the familial relationships, no one could deny that Lydia Dyar had done her duty in providing for her family. Before Lexington and Concord, she could have looked forward to a relatively comfortable old age filled with vegetable seedlings and the prattle of her great-grandchildren.

The siege of Boston upended Lydia Dyar's life. Like so many others, she fled the city in the spring of 1775, unsure of where she would go. She had neither children nor grandchildren in the country to take her in. Perhaps she was able to wear her jewelry and pocket some of her

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[24] Will of Joseph Dyar, 1780, Suffolk Co. probate vol. 79 p.273, #17215 Massachusetts State Archives.

[25] Girls in colonial America generally inherited moveable wealth, while boys often inherited real estate. Young Lydia (b. 1757) had at least one sister (Sarah, b. 1768) living in 1774, when the elder Lydia made out her will. Another sister, Elizabeth, was born in 1774, but may not have survived long. In any event, young Lydia is the only granddaughter who received a specific bequest from her grandmother. By leaving her bedding, clothing, furniture, and jewelry to the girl who shared her name, Lydia Dyar created a stable line of female inheritance and family identity. For more on this practice, see Ulrich, "Hannah Barnard's Cupboard." For genealogy, see Harrison Gray Dyar, *A Preliminary Genealogy of the Dyar Family*, Gibson Brothers: Washington, D.C., 1903, page 8; see also Will of Lydia Dyar

[26] William Dyar was born in 1754. For genealogy of William Dyar and Abigail Bowman, see *A Volume of records Relating to the Early History of Boston*, vol. 30 (Boston: Municipal Printing Office, 1903), 76. His mother was probably Abigail, daughter of William and Susanna Bowman, b. 23 Sept 1750 in *Boston Births*; see also Harrison Gray Dyar, *A Preliminary Genealogy of the Dyar Family* (Gibson Brothers: Washington, D.C., 1903), 12.

silver spoons, but her real wealth — her garden, a warehouse and workshop on Ballard's Wharf, and the network of familial and neighborly connections she had built over a lifetime in the North End — was left behind.[27] Somehow, Lydia ended up in Billerica, a town so inundated by refugees that the town fathers appointed a committee "to take care of and provide for the Donation persons that came from the towns of Boston and Charlestown."[28]

Lydia Dyar never returned to Boston. On Sunday, July 28th, 1776, she died in Billerica. Her body was buried in the local burying ground and her grave marked with one of the Lamson family's finest blue slate monuments. Chiseled with a deft hand beneath a smiling, curly-haired cherub, her epitaph lays her death at the feet of King George himself:

Here lies ye Body of the
Widow LYDIA DYAR of BOSTON;
the Place of her Nativity where
She left a good Estate & came
into ye Country May 22d. 1775 to
escape ye abuce of ye Ministerial
Troops sent by GEORGE ye 3d to
subject North-America to Slavery.
She died July 28th 1776, Aged 80 Years.
The sweet Remembrance of the Just
shall flourish when they Sleep in dust.

[27] When the estate was probated in 1780, the silver was valued at 1,360 pounds, the house at 17,000, and the land (including a warehouse) at 3,000.
[28] Billerica Town Records, quoted in Henry Allen Hazen, *History of Billerica* (Boston: A Williams and Co., 1883), 236.

Figure 38: Lydia Dyar stone, 1775, Billerica, MA
carved by Lamson family workshop
photo by author

* * *

In John Adams' oft-quoted opinion, the American Revolution was not won on the battlefield. Rather, "the Revolution was in the minds and hearts of the people, a change in their religious sentiments of their duties and obligations." In Adams' estimation, the American colonists remained loyal "while the king and all in authority under him were believed to govern in justice and mercy," but abandoned that loyalty "when they saw those powers renouncing all the principles of authority and bent upon the destruction of all the securities of their lives, liberties, and properties."[29] Much ink has been expended in explaining the changes in American minds: in their understanding of their constitutional rights as Englishmen, their opposition to imperial policies on matters ranging from taxation to conscription, and on their ambitious ideas

[29] John Adams to Hezekiah Niles, 13 February 1818.

for creating a new republic. Somewhat less has been spent on the subject of their changing hearts. As Adams notes, an important element of the transformation was the immediate experience of suffering endured by civilians before the shooting war had started in earnest. During the Siege of Boston in 1775-6, misery followed refugees like Lydia Dyar out of Boston and into the countryside, where it was memorialized in a way calculated to melt any hearts that were still lukewarm.

In the spring of 1775, Massachusetts residents were deeply invested in the fate of civilians, both real and rhetorical. More than six years into the British military occupation of Boston, conflict between soldiers and the civilian population simmered, occasionally erupting into violence. Working men brawled with the privates who competed with them for jobs, sailors used lethal force to escape impressment, and the city's many taverns, newspapers, and bookshops overflowed with impassioned recriminations against the occupation. Whatever their social and economic circumstances, resistance-minded colonists agreed: standing armies were antithetical to the lives and liberties of a civilian population.

For Boston's Whigs, professional soldiers were categorically defined as enemies of "the people." They believed that the demands of military discipline were so corrupting to both the common soldier and the officer — inculcating "brutal debauchery and real cowardice" among the former and "venal haughtiness and extravagant dissipation" among the latter — that neither could be trusted with any power over civil society. "They envy and hate the rest of the community," wrote Josiah Quincy of the common soldiers in the British army, "and indulge a malignant pleasure in destroying those privileges to which they can never be admitted."[30]

[30] Josiah Quincy, Jr., *Observations on the Act of Parliament, Commonly Called the Boston Port Bill; With Thoughts on civil Society and Standing Armies*, (Boston: Edes and Gill, 1774), 33-5. For extensive coverage of the American colonists' fears of standing armies, see Bernard Bailyn, *Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (1967).

If ordinary troopers were bad, the officers were worse. Bostonians saw the gentlemen officers as cruel, arrogant, and capricious, and feared that they would eventually turn the viciousness they displayed toward their own men onto the civilian population.[31] Worst of all were the King's ministers, the greedy, conniving schemers who had sent the troops to enforce their arbitrary and exploitative policies. At first, American Whigs were reluctant to implicate the Sovereign, but by 1775, they had concluded that King George himself was conspiring to deprive them of their liberties.[32] To wealthy, well-educated partisans like Josiah Quincy, James Otis, and John Adams, resistance was not rebellion. It was the only way to preserve the ancient rights of English subjects in the face of a corrupt government.

Within this schema, it was critical to American Whigs that "the people" be understood as victims, rather than instigators. If they hoped to win support for the idea that they were the guardians of ancient English liberties, they had to refute the label of "rebel" by avoiding any appearance of aggression. Some suspected that King George's ministers dearly wanted "to see America in arms because it furnished them with a pretense for declaring us rebels."[33] Eventually, American Whigs would recognize that their cause had indeed been revolutionary in many of its effects and implications, but in 1775, they explicitly denied that their resistance was a rebellion.

This was not always an easy case to make. The group that modern Americans remember as "Patriots" was a conglomeration of smaller groups whose interests, motivations, and tactics were often mutually counter-productive. The laboring classes of Boston's waterfront included local craftsmen, itinerant mariners, teenage apprentices, indentured servants, and slaves whose grievances against the crown went hand-in-hand with their grievances against the elite merchant

[31] Fred Anderson, A People's Army: Massachusetts Soldiers and Society in the Seven Years' War (1984).
[32] For a full discussion of elite Whigs' ideological evolution, see Pauline Maier, From Resistance to Revolution: Colonial Radicals and the Development of American Opposition to Britain, 1765-1776 (1992).
[33] Bailyn, 128.

class. Their primary political weapons were crowd actions, in which they could articulate their desire to remake the social order along more egalitarian lines through physical intimidation and demonstrations of solidarity.[34] Between 1765 and 1775, these working men maintained an uneasy alliance with the urban Whigs, educated professionals like Quincy, Otis, and Adams. As men of higher social standing, elite Whigs made their political arguments through the channels they controlled, relying particularly on the press and legal proceedings. Their pamphlets, newspapers, and public speeches not only broadcast their message beyond the urban center, but preserved their line of thinking for posterity. Though they were willing to ally themselves with the laboring classes when their immediate interests aligned, urban Whigs' resistance to imperial policies was grounded in a desire to protect private property and they were not eager to see all social relationships upended. Throughout the imperial crisis, Boston's Whigs struggled to maintain a veneer of control over the demonstrations of the laboring classes. In truth, their influence over actual crowds was limited. Where they excelled was in interpreting, publicizing, and memorializing events in ways that fit their political needs.

During the British occupation of Boston, one of the most visible means of reinforcing the theme of a civilian population at the mercy of malicious conspirators was through public mortuary rituals and objects. On the eve of war, funerals, gravestones, and other material trappings of death presented the argument that the colonial dead were docile victims of imperial cruelty. In the case of Lydia Dyer and other vulnerable exiles whose age or sex made their innocence seem self-evident, public ceremonies and monuments insinuated — or stated baldly — that a rapacious Crown bore the blame for deaths that might otherwise have seemed natural. In the case of armed combatants, like Jason Russell of Menotomy, memorials used the language

[34] For a full discussion of waterfront politics in Revolutionary America, see Gary Nash, *Urban Crucible: social Change, Political Consciousness, and the Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979).

of crime, rather than the language of war, erasing traces of the deceased's own culpability in the nascent shooting war. These public expressions of grief and outrage interpreted the deaths of individual Americans in light of Whig conspiracy theories and presented them as evidence in the most emotionally powerful of terms. Arguments that had once been the subject of learned pamphlets now became the subject of impassioned memorial sermons and lugubrious epitaphs, created by and accessible to a wide audience.

The idea of the burying ground as a didactic landscape was not new. Generations of New Englanders had seen graveyards as public places where important lessons were on display. The paramount message was, of course, the *memento mori*, the exhortation to prepare for an inevitable and unpredictable demise. From infancy, New Englanders were instructed to regard the "burying place" as an instructional setting that should inspire them to experience a personal "awakening," as in this verse from the ubiquitous *New England Primer*:

> I in the Burying place may see
> Graves shorter there than I;
> From Death's arrest no age is free,
> Young children too may die.
> My God, may such an awful sight
> Awakening be to me!
> Oh! that by early Grace I might
> For Death prepared be.[35]

Not all of the graveyard's lessons were religious, though. As previous chapters have demonstrated, New Englanders had long expanded the didactic function of the graveyard to express arguments about the mundane world and individuals' place in it. In a time of crisis, the Revolutionary generation turned the old tools to new tasks.

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[35] The New England Primer was first published around 1690 and formed the basis of early literacy education in the region throughout the eighteenth century. Some historians estimate that as many as three million copies were printed, but very few survive, perhaps because of the hard use they saw. The oldest surviving copy dates from 1727, and is the edition in which this verse is found. E. Jennifer Monaghan, *Learning to Read and Write in Colonial America* (UMass, 2007), 98.

Before delving into the specifics of the political gravestones and funerals of 1769-1776, an important methodological point must be elevated from the footnotes. In most cases, it is exceptionally difficult to pinpoint the exact date a gravestone was carved. While some New England gravestones were custom-made, many stonecutters kept decorated blanks in their shops and carved the epitaphs to order. On occasion, the gravestone was already in place at the time of the funeral, but gravestones could be purchased days, months, or years after a death.[36] Because this chapter takes gravestones as evidence of Revolutionary-era thought, some care must be taken to show that these monuments were, in fact, erected soon after the deaths they commemorate.

In a few cases, this can be proven fairly convincingly. An epitaph for Daniel Malcom, who died on October 23, 1769, was re-printed in Boston newspapers less than a month later under the notation, "The following Inscription is on the Grave Stone of the late Capt. Malcom," proving that the gravestone was indeed carved in 1769.[37] The John Jack stone (1773) in Concord, Massachusetts, was probably carved before 1775, when the epitaph's reputed author fled to safety in Nova Scotia. It was definitely carved before 1789, when the epitaph was printed in a newspaper.[38]

Other stones must be dated more generally, based on what is known about the carver and his stylistic development. Thus, we can say that the Charles Pratt Marston stone, carved by Henry Christian Geyer, conforms to the style that Geyer employed in the mid-1770s, and certainly cannot have been carved later than 1790, the year of Geyer's death. The gravestones

[36] An entry in Samuel Sewall's diary (22 August 1717) mentions a gravestone that was placed very close to the time of death: "Mrs. Mary Winchcomb was buried in the old burying place, in the 67th year of her age, as her Relations tell me; though the Stone bear 69.: died suddenly." In August, a funeral would have been within a few days of death. Since Mrs. Winchcomb died suddenly and the stone was present at the funeral, it seems that local carvers could potentially deliver a gravestone within two or three days.
[37] *Boston Evening-Post*, 20 November 1769.
[38] A full discussion of the John Jack stone and its provenance can be found later in this chapter.

carved by the Park family workshop in Groton, Massachusetts for the victims of a 1775 epidemic show signs of having been carved hastily, with children's epitaphs carved on the footstones of adults, possibly because the carvers were pressed to keep up with demand during a deadly season.[39] Other internal evidence may point to the creation of gravestones during the siege. In Cambridge, a stone honoring a New Hampshire soldier who was mortally wounded at the Battle of Bunker Hill contains the curious caption, "Made at Newton" at the bottom of the epitaph. This concern with location would not make much sense in peacetime, given that the carver, Daniel Hastings, had been born in Newton and did not move his workshop during the siege. Instead, this advertisement may indicate that Hastings was addressing recently-arrived soldiers who might not know where to find a carver, or locals wondering whether he had gone elsewhere. In short, a mixture of documentary, stylistic, and suggestive evidence supports the claim that politically-charged gravestones were carved during the crisis. Even when particular stones cannot be dated definitively to the years 1775-6, they appear to have been carved during the war years, rather than being placed as back-dated monuments decades later.

Whether they were erected in 1775 or 1785, the gravestones of exiled Bostonians show how the residents of Massachusetts made the imperial crisis personal. Threats of tyranny and conspiracy were no longer hypothetical, nor confined to the printed page, nor to Boston itself. The deaths of vulnerable, respectable civilians like Lydia Dyar were concrete, observable facts that seemed to confirm Whig pamphleteers' direst predictions. In creating gravestones for colonists whose deaths could plausibly be attributed to the occupation, Massachusetts civilians did two things: they connected their personal experiences with world-historical events using the language of radical Whig ideology, and they erected public monuments that encouraged their neighbors to do the same.

[39] see Molley Ames epitaph on the footstone of Sarah Ames, 1775, Groton, MA

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In the decade before 1775, Bostonians staged funeral spectacles that were as dramatic and as politically-charged as those held under the Andros regime a century before. These were not puppet shows, orchestrated by a few elite Whigs. Burial rites had long provided dissenters and marginalized people with access to the public sphere, allowing them to infuse necessary funeral rituals with sharp critiques of power. For Boston's laboring classes, the funeral was a familiar form that could be adapted to organize crowd actions, as in the case of the mob of August 14, 1765, which demolished stamp distributor Andrew Oliver's home and office after taking on the guise of a funeral procession for his effigy.[40]

One of the grandest processions of the era was the funeral of 11-year-old Christopher Snider on February 26, 1770.[41] Snider had been killed on February 22 during a fracas at the home of Ebenezer Richardson, an unpopular Customs official. A large crowd of boys and men, angry that Richardson had attempted to disrupt their attack on a nearby importer's shop, assailed his home with a barrage of stones, bricks, and garbage so fierce that it tore the casings from the windows, broke through the roof, demolished the front door, and injured Richardson's wife. Richardson responded by firing a load of pea-sized swanshot into the crowd, killing Snider and wounding another youth.[42]

Outraged Bostonians organized an impressive funeral for the boy. Advertisements in the *Boston Gazette* and other newspapers publicized the procession beforehand, encouraging "Friends of Liberty" to pay "their last Respects to the Remains of this little Hero" by joining the

[40] Nash, Urban Crucible, 185
[41] alias Seider
[42] Richardson incurred the crowd's wrath by removing a taunting effigy from a neighbor's shop. The neighbor, Theophilus Lillie, "a very inoffensive man, except in the offense of importation," had refused to sign the town's nonimportation pact and was routinely harassed by boys who smeared his windows with tar and feathers, pelted his door with excrement, and adorned his shop with effigies and signs. When Richardson intervened on February 22, the crowd turned on him and his house. Hiller Zobel, *The Boston Massacre* (1970), 173.

procession to the Granary Burying Ground.[43] On the afternoon of February 26, six young boys carried Snider's coffin from his parents' house to the Liberty Tree, where approximately two thousand Bostonians joined them for the procession to the graveyard.[44] "My Eyes never beheld such a funeral," wrote John Adams, "The Procession extended further than can be well imagined."[45] To the assembled crowd and readers of the *Gazette*, Snider was not part of a mob that had attacked a private residence; he was an "innocent Lad," an "unhappy young Person," an "amiable Youth," and an "unfortunate Boy," "whose LIFE has been a Victim to the Cruelty and Rage of *Oppressors!*"[46]

Lest his death be forgotten after he was buried, "A Number of patriotic Gentlemen" donated money for a gravestone of "elegant Simplicity . . . with an Inscription" to be erected over Snider's remains.[47] Despite their efforts, there is little evidence to suggest that such a stone was ever made. If it was, it did not survive the abuses of British Regulars during the siege of 1775-6. In any event, mourners did have a chance to read an epitaph dedicated to Snider. During the funeral, the Sons of Liberty "ordered a Board to be affix'd to Liberty Tree," bearing an inscription that adapted Scripture to praise Snider and indict his killer:

> Thou shall take no Satisfaction for the Life of a MURDERER; — He shall surely be put to Death. Though *Hand join in Hand*, the Wicked shall not pass *unpunish'd*. The Memory of the Just is *Blessed*.[48]

Though Ebenezer Richardson was a native of nearby Woburn, Massachusetts, his loyalty to imperial Customs policy allied him with the occupying troops in the minds of his countrymen. To them, he was "an execrable Villain, directed by others, who could not bear to see the Enemies

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[43] *Boston Gazette*, 26 Feb 1770.
[44] Both the *Boston Gazette* and John Rowe, a Boston selectman, estimated the crowd at 2,000.
[45] John Adams, *Diary of John Adams*, 26 February 1770. MHS
[46] *Boston Gazette*, 26 Feb 1770.
[47] *Boston Gazette*, 5 March 1770.
[48] *Boston Gazette*, 5 March 1770; These quotations from the KJV Bible are Numbers 35:31, Proverbs 11:21, and Proverbs 10:7. The last of these was one of the most common Biblical passages inscribed on gravestones in 17th- and 18th-century Massachusetts.

of America made the *Ridicule of Boys*."[49] The idea that innocent civilians were at the mercy of vicious conspirators was repeated in the inscription carved on the head of Christopher Snider's coffin: Innocentia nusquam tuta!, "denoting that we are fallen into the most unhappy Times, when even *Innocence itself* is *no where safe!*"[50]

Snider's funeral was soon eclipsed by an even grander spectacle. On March 5, 1770, just a week after the little martyr was buried, the Boston Massacre claimed the lives of five more Bostonians: James Caldwell, Crispus Attucks, Samuel Maverick, Samuel Gray, and Patrick Carr. Their funeral procession on March 8 brought the city to a standstill as approximately 12,000 of its 15,000 inhabitants paid their respects.[51] "Many of the shops were shut," wrote John Boyle, a young printer's apprentice, and the "immense Concourse of People" exhibited a "peculiar solemnity."[52] The dead — a ropemaker, two sailors, and a carpenter's apprentice — were afforded the kind of funeral usually reserved for leading citizens or high-ranking officials.[53] The *Boston Gazette*, which devoted two black-bordered pages to coverage of the events, reported many details of the funeral — the pealing of bells in Boston, Charlestown, and Roxbury, the "Distress and Sorrow visible in every Countenance," the mourners marching in ranks of six, the procession of hearses — enabling distant readers to take part in the spectacle.[54]

The *Gazette* embellished its report with an illustration. Many eighteenth-century newspapers featured woodcut mastheads and occasional stock images to adorn advertisements,

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[49] *Boston Gazette*, 26 Feb 1770.
[50] *Boston Gazette*, 5 March 1770.
[51] Only four of the victims — Crispus Attucks, Samuel Maverick, Samuel Gray, and James Caldwell — were buried on March 8th. The fifth victim, Patrick Carr, died several days later and was buried in the same tomb as the others. John Rowe, a prominent merchant and one of the town selectmen, observed both funerals and estimated that between 10,000 and 12,000 people attended the Boston Massacre procession, while only 2,000 had gathered for Snider. John Rowe, *Diary*, 26 Feb 26 and 8 March 1770.
[52] JBoyle, 8 March 1770. Boyle was an apprentice of the Boston printers John Green & Joseph Russell before opening his own shop in 1771.
[53] Patrick Carr, who died several days after the funeral, was an Irish immigrant.
[54] *Boston Gazette*, 12 March 1770.

but a custom woodcut made to accompany a news item was unusual. In its coverage of the funeral on March 12, the *Gazette* published a visual representation of the four coffins, each adorned with the victim's initials and a skull and crossbones motif. The coffin belonging to 17-year-old Samuel Maverick also displayed a scythe and hourglass to emphasize his youth. This visual vocabulary had been part of New England's mortuary culture since the end of the seventeenth century and had experienced a resurgence in the 1760s, especially in the gravestone carvings of John Homer and Henry Christian Geyer. Under normal circumstances, working men like Crispus Attucks and Samuel Maverick probably would not have been able to afford any gravestone, let alone a fashionable work by Homer or Geyer. They might even have been laid to rest in shrouds of sailcloth rather than expensive coffins. Men of their class who died natural deaths could expect to be mentioned only in the *Gazette*'s usual year-end statistics of municipal burials, not in specially printed sections with custom illustrations. By using the imagery of the burying ground to reinforce his text, printer Benjamin Edes represented the four men as respectable members of the community, individuals with names, coffins, and lives consequential enough that his readers should care whether they were cut short. The image carried this message into every tavern in Boston and beyond, making every reader a funeral spectator.

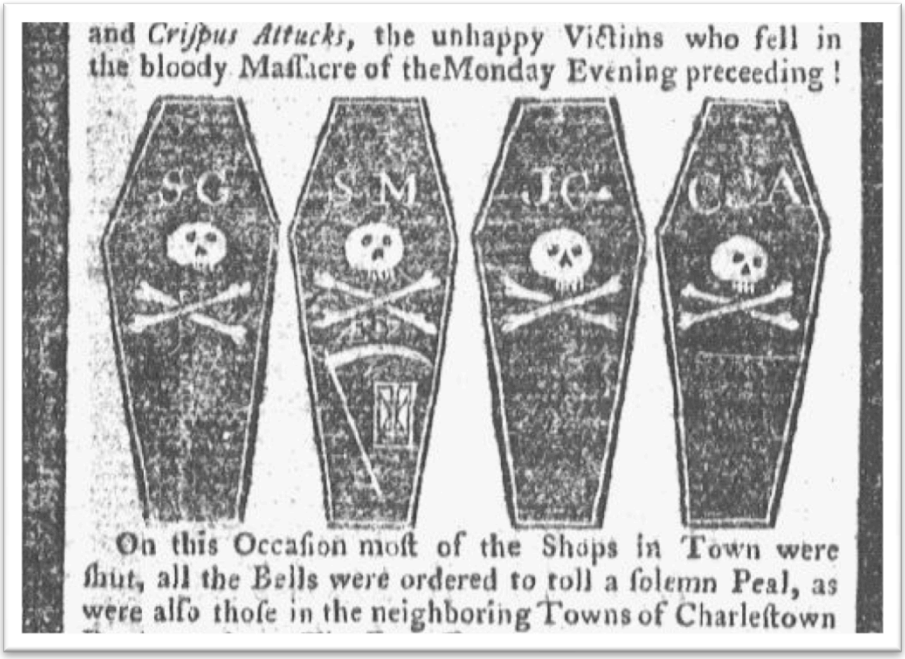

Figure 39: *Boston Gazette*, March 12, 1770
Archive of Americana, AAS

Not every Whig was as quick to embrace the dead of the Boston Massacre. Their biographies and the actions of the crowd posed a problem for those leading Whigs who wished to portray Bostonians as passive yeomen suffering at the hands of a tyrannical army. With the exception of Edward Payne, a genteel merchant who was wounded while standing in his own doorway, the wounded and dead were exactly the type of waterfront laborers who could be dismissed as troublemakers by imperial officials and skittish would-be allies. Articulate Bostonians floated several different arguments to paper over the difficulty. John Adams argued that the perpetrators had been outsiders — a "motley rabble of saucy boys, negros and molattoes, Irish teagues and outlandish jack tars" — who did not represent the community at large.[55] Others blamed Governor Francis Bernard and his cronies for the Massacre, claiming that they "contrived, and executed plans for exciting disturbances and tumults, which otherwise would

[55] John Adams, *Legal Papers of John Adams* (Belknap, 1965), 266. The quotation comes from John Adams' defense of the Regulars during their trial.

probably have never existed."[56] Still others maintained that the crowd had been completely blameless, as in Paul Revere's famous engraving, which depicts a British officer ordering his troops to fire on unarmed civilians. Benjamin Edes' *Gazette* resolutely referred to the deceased as "unhappy Victims" and "unfortunate Sufferers."[57] In each case, the message was the same: "the people" of Boston were not rebels, but peaceable civilians.

Figure 40: detail of "The Bloody Massacre," 1770, engraved by Paul Revere
Courtesy of the Massachusetts Historical Society

A week after the Massacre, Thomas Fleet's *Boston Evening-Post* published an elegy to the dead:

> Long as in *Freedom*'s Cause the Wise contend,
> Dear to your Country shall your Fame extend;
> While to the World, the letter'd *Stone* shall tell,
> How *Caldwell*, *Attucks*, *Gray* and *Mav'rick* fell.[58]

[56] *A Short Narrative of the Horrid Massacre in Boston*, (Boston: Edes and Gill, 1770). This account is anonymous, though Bernard Bailyn attributes it to James Bowdoin.
[57] *Boston Gazette*, 12 March 1770.
[58] *Boston Evening-Post*, 12 March 1770.

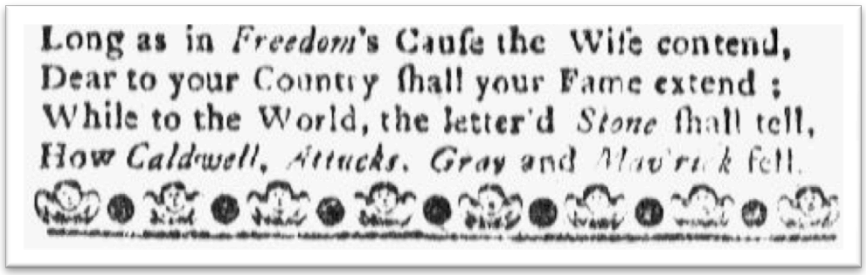
Long as in *Freedom*'s Cauſe the Wife contend,
Dear to your Country ſhall your Fame extend ;
While to the World, the letter'd *Stone* ſhall tell,
How *Caldwell, Attucks, Gray* and *Maverick* fell.

Figure 41: *Boston Evening Post*, March 12, 1770
Archive of Americana, AAS

This text was embellished with a border of tiny winged effigies of the type that commonly adorn gravestones of the era. Coupled with the poem's reference to a "letter'd stone," these cherubic designs created a symbolic gravestone for the victims. Despite the poet's prediction and John Boyle's report — "Tis said a Monument will be erected to yr. Memory" — there is no record of a physical gravestone being placed over the Boston Massacre victims' grave in the immediate aftermath of their death.[59] Still, the expectation that the victims' story should be represented on a stone monument and that such an object would broadcast that story "to the world" demonstrates the public nature of these gravestones. Epitaphs were not private objects, hidden away from the world — they were pronouncements, posted in public places where they would be highly visible.

One gravestone from this period that does survive is the monument to Daniel Malcom in the Copp's Hill Burying Ground. Malcom, a North End merchant, had a reputation for antagonizing crown officials and organizing his fellow Bostonians. In 1766, when Malcom was accused of smuggling alcohol, he refused to open his door to the investigating Customs officials, saying that "if any man attempted it, he would blow his brains out." The Customs officials retreated. When they came back with a search warrant, their access was blocked by several

[59] JBoyle, 8 March 1770. see James Spear Loring, The Hundred Boston Orators Appointed by the Municipal Authorities and Other Public Bodies from 1770 to 1852 (Boston: J.P. Jewett & Co., 1853), 20. See also C.W. Ernst, Historical Sketch and Matters Appertaining to the Granary Burial-Ground (Boston: Municipal Printing Office, 1902). Boston's town meeting heard proposals for a monument to be erected at the site of the Massacre less than a week after the incident; Boston Gazette, 12 March 1770.

hundred of Malcom's friends. Malcom's fame peaked in 1768, when he coordinated Boston's non-importation pact and played a prominent roll in the *Liberty* affair.[60]

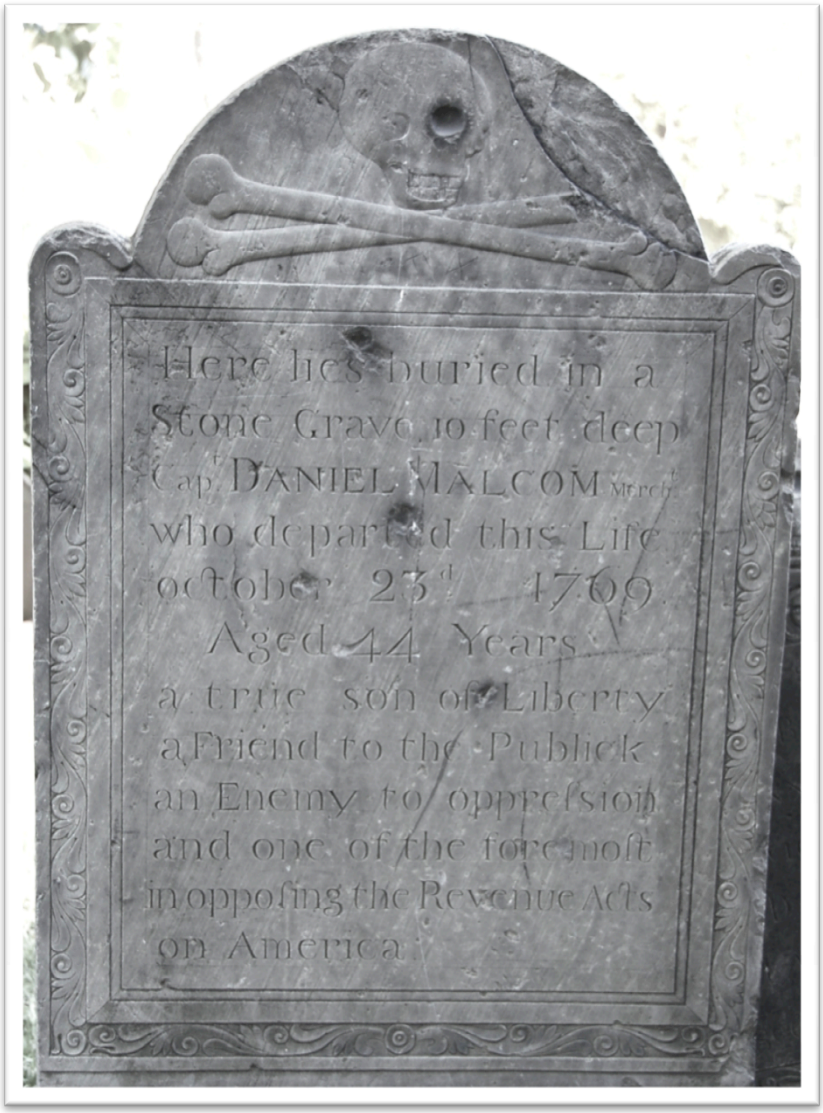

Figure 42: Daniel Malcom, 1769, Copp's Hill Burying Ground, Boston
carved by John Homer
photo by author

[60] Customs officials believed that the sloop *Liberty*, owned by John Hancock, was being used to smuggle goods, so they sent a boarding party to seize the ship and tow it into the custody of the warship Romney. A large crowd of North-Enders, including Malcom, attempted to prevent the seizure by threatening to "throw the people belonging to the Romney overboard." Though he did not attain the lasting fame of Sam Adams or James Otis, Daniel Malcom was well known among his contemporaries, celebrated by his friends, and loathed by his enemies. see Jayne E. Triber, *A True Republican: The Life of Paul Revere* (UMass Press, 2001); *Boston Evening-Post,* 18 Sept 1769.

Boston's Whigs regarded Malcom as a hero. When he died in the autumn of 1769, they hurried to erect a gravestone in his honor over his grave in Copp's Hill Burying Ground.[61] It reads,

Here lies buried in a
Stone Grave 10 feet deep
Capt. DANIEL MALCOM, Mercht.
who departed this Life
october 23d 1769
Aged 44 Years
a true son of Liberty
a Friend to the Publick
an Enemy to oppression
and one of the foremost
in opposing the Revenue Acts
on America[62]

If anyone wondered why Malcom should be buried "10 feet deep," his memorial plaque on the wall of the New North Church clarifies by adding, "Safe from British Bullets" to the inscription.[63]

To ensure that Malcom's epitaph was as public as possible, several newspapers printed the text in the weeks following his death, noting that, "The following Inscription is on the Grave-Stone of the late Capt. Malcom."[64] The newspapers' reprinting of the epitaph shows the public nature of this monument, but it also confirms that overtly political gravestones were not backdated artifacts of a later era, but contemporaneous objects that were meant to shape events,

[61] The *Boston News-Letter* mentions Malcom's gravestone and reprints its text less than a month after his death.
[62] Daniel Malcom gravestone, 1769, Copp's Hill Cemetery, Boston
[63] I haven't been able to find out for certain when the memorial plaque was put up. I've made inquiries at Old North, but haven't been able to find a document yet. I don't assume that it was contemporary with the gravestone, though the sentiment seems to be. The sentiment expressed there can also be found in Oliver Wendell Holmes' poem, "Grandmother's Story of Bunker Hill Battle" (1875), in which the old corporal cries,

> Oh! fire away, ye villains, and earn King George's shillin's,
> But ye'll waste a ton of powder afore a 'rebel' falls;
> You may bang the dirt and welcome, they're as safe as Dan'l Malcolm
> Ten foot beneath the gravestone that you've splintered with your balls!

There are three round gashes in Daniel Malcom's gravestone. Local legend tells us that they are scars from potshots taken by British soldiers during the siege, but there seems to be no 18th-century evidence to corroborate the story.
[64] The *Boston News-Letter and New-England Chronicle* ran the item on 17 November 1769. The *Boston Evening Post* followed on 20 November, and the *Essex Gazette* on 21 November.

not just commemorate them. Like the broadsides and effigies visible at street demonstrations, gravestones were public statements of political arguments, but unlike the ephemera of crowd actions, they were intended to be permanent and dignified. Sanctified by their placement in a solemn landscape, these epitaphs were simultaneously more imposing and more familiar than the transient cries of an angry crowd or the polemical pamphlets so beloved by lawyerly Whigs. Epitaphs like Malcom's occupied an important middle ground: they were respectable enough that they demanded serious consideration by elites and accessible enough to reach a broad audience.

If Daniel Malcom's death was an example to his friends, it was also a comfort to his enemies. Lt. Governor Andrew Oliver, the highest-ranking Crown official in Massachusetts, gloated over his demise in a letter to the absent Governor Bernard,

> It is remarkable that there have been three untimely deaths among those concerned in running the Sloop Libertys Cargo, viz Capn. Marshall the next day, Capn. Barnard afterwards drownd at Sea, & Capn. Malcolm since, who I hear said he catchd his death at that time. Should [James Otis'] Fate prove as is expected, we might be justified in looking to the hand of Providence in the disposal of these Events. [65]

Oliver's satisfaction at the downfall of these notable radicals may have had a touch of personal vindication. During the Stamp Act crisis 1765, a crowd of disgruntled Bostonians had held a mock funeral for an effigy of Oliver in an attempt to scare him into resigning his commission as stamp distributor. The procession, which mimicked a funeral cortege, wound through the city streets from the Liberty Tree to Oliver's brick office building, which the protestors tore down with their bare hands. Afterward, they marched on Oliver's house, demolishing it with ceremonial glee.[66] Three days later, Oliver resigned his office.

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[65] Andrew Oliver to Francis Bernard in Reports of Cases Argued and Adjudged in the Superior Court of Judicature in the Province of Massachusetts Bay between 1761 and 1772, ed. Josiah Quincy and Horace Gray, (Boston: Little, Brown, 1865), 464.
[66] Nash, *Urban Crucible*, 293-4.

Andrew Oliver may have seen the hand of providence at work in the deaths of his political adversaries, but Malcom's friends would have the last laugh. The frail Lieutenant Governor died on March 3, 1774, and was laid to rest on March 8, exactly four years to the day after the funeral of the Boston Massacre victims. The funeral for such an important official should have been impressive, but "very few" of the customary dignitaries took part in the procession. John Rowe, a perpetually befuddled moderate, believed that, "Thro some misunderstanding or Blunder the Gentlemen of the Councill did not attend this Funerall & very few of the House of Representatives." Furthermore, the "Multitude of Spectators . . . [such as] I never saw at any Funeral here before" exhibited "Some Rude Behaviour" when Oliver was laid to rest.[67] Oliver's younger brother, Peter, who was Chief Justice of the Massachusetts Superior Court, was less circumspect:

> The Vengeance of the Faction was carried to, & beyond the Grave. Upon [Andrew Oliver's] Interrment a large Mob attended, & huzzaed at the intombing of the Body; & at Night there was an Exhibition, at a publick Window, of a Coffin & several Insignia of Infamy.[68]

Fearing that the "risque of his Life was too great," Chief Justice Oliver did not dare to "pay his fraternal Respect to his Brother's Obsequies."[69] Here, then, were stakes even higher those confronted by Parson Ratcliffe and his infant Anglican congregation in 1689.

Loyalists did not entirely surrender the graveyard as an arena for ideological debate. In Concord, a biting epitaph skewers the hyperbolic Whig rhetoric of slavery and liberty. The epitaph commemorates 60-year-old John Jack (d. 1773), "a native of Africa," who was owned

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[67] John Rowe, *Letters and Diary of John Rowe, Boston Merchant, 1759-1762, 1764-1779*, ed. Anne Rowe Cunningham (Boston: Clarke, 1903), entry for 8 March 1770. Rowe would exhibit similar confusion six years later at the funeral of Maj. Gen. Joseph Warren. Rowe attended, but found "to my great mortification [I] was very much Insulted by some furious and hot Persons whitho[ut] the Least Provocation." He left the funeral at the urging of a friend, but remained incredulous at his ill treatment. "This has caused some Uneasy Reflections in my mind as I am not Conscious to myself of doing anything Prejudicial to the Cause of America either by will or deed." John Rowe, *Diary*, entry for 8 April 1776.
[68] Peter Oliver, *Origin and Progress*, 112.
[69] ibid.

for much of his adult life by Concord cordwainer Benjamin Barron.[70] Valued at L120 in Barron's will of 1754, Jack purchased his freedom from the estate some time before 1761 and went on to piece together a farm of six acres. [71] He is buried on Concord's Burial Hill under a gravestone that begins with the epigram, "God wills us free, man wills us slaves. I will as God wills, God's will be done." The body of the epitaph reproaches the local Whigs who bewailed their own rhetorical "slavery" under British rule while perpetuating the actual bondage of their black slaves:

Tho' born in a land of slavery,
He was born free.
Tho' he lived in a land of liberty,
He lived a slave.
Till by his honest, tho' stolen labors,
he acquired the source of slavery,
Which gave him his freedom;
Tho' not long before
Death the grand tyrant,
Gave him his final emancipation,
And set him on a footing with kings.
Tho' a slave to vice,
He practiced those virtues
Without which kings are but slaves.

All available evidence indicates that the epitaph was probably composed by Daniel Bliss, the Tory lawyer whom John Jack named as his executor.[72] If so, the stone must have been erected sometime between Jack's death in 1773 and Bliss's flight from Concord in 1775, when he and

[70] Though John Jack's epitaph has been widely celebrated, he is not the most famous member of the Barron household. Benjamin Barron's wife was none other than Elizabeth "Betty" Parris (1682-1760), infamous for the accusations of witchcraft she made against her Salem Village neighbors when she was nine years old.
[71] Benjamin Barron's will refers to John Jack as "Jack." When he purchased four acres of land from Susanna Barron, the deed called him "John, a free man." Other Concord records refer to him as "Jack Barron." His will is signed only with a mark, so I am not sure what name he called himself.
[72] I have seen the epitaph attributed to Bliss in many secondary works, but have not been able to confirm it with 18th-century sources. Still, the attribution is plausible; John Jack made Daniel Bliss the executor of his will in 1772, so Bliss would have been charged with burying him. Jack left his entire estate to Violet, a fellow-slave in the Barron household who was living with Benjamin Barron's daughter at the time of Jack's death. He apparently had no other family. Elise Lemire, author of *Black Walden: Slavery and its Aftermath in Concord, Massachusetts* (2011) argues that Bliss was the author of John Jack's epitaph and I defer to her knowledge of the individuals and circumstances in question.

many other Loyalists sought the protection of General Gage's troops in Boston.[73] The gravestone was definitely in place by 1789, when its epitaph was reprinted in a Boston newspaper.[74] Even if Bliss did not write the epitaph, patriotic observers could hardly have missed the critique of their "land of liberty." Half a century later, Concord abolitionists would adopt John Jack's gravestone as a sign of early abolitionist sentiment in their community, replacing the crumbling original with a new stone and laying flowers at the grave. But in 1775, the epitaph would have read less as a statement of principled opposition to slavery and more as a parting shot at the Whigs.[75]

Figure 43: detail of the John Jack stone reproduction, Concord, MA
original carved c.1773-5, reproduction carved c. 1830
photo by author

* * *

The Stamp Act riots and the Boston Massacre are staples of the story of American independence. What is less clear is the process by which waterfront crowds and earnest

[73] Robert Gross, *The Minutemen and Their World*, 96-7. Daniel Bliss went to Nova Scotia when the army evacuated Boston in March of 1776.
[74] The Herald of Freedom and Federal Advertiser, 14 August 1789.
[75] Elise Lemire argues, convincingly, that Daniel Bliss was not a principled abolitionist, having shown no interest in freeing his own family's slaves. Lemire, 102.

resolutions transformed into sustained action by a widely dispersed population. Several historians have argued that personal contact with British soldiers was crucial to American colonists' commitment to independence, but few New Englanders outside of Boston had direct contact with British soldiers in the decade before the outbreak of war.[76] Men who had fought in the Seven Years' War (1756-1763) had encountered the cruelty of British officers, but by 1775, those interactions were memories, not daily experiences. In the city, the constant menace of quarrelsome, drunk, and unruly soldiers who drilled on the common and scuffled in the streets provided colonists with daily reminders of imperil encroachment. In the countryside, the Regulars' bad behavior was common knowledge, if not an immediate problem. Town meetings might draft impressive resolutions denouncing meddlesome imperial policies, but contact with actual representatives of the Crown was minimal. In most of the outlying towns, the people suffering most because of the imperial crisis were local Tories, many of whom were removed from local offices and pulpits for the crime of insufficient enthusiasm for Whiggish resolutions.[77] All this changed when the siege of Boston dumped 14,000 weary, disease-ridden refugees on the doorsteps of rural civilians.

Civilian deaths during the siege provided the colonists — rural hosts as well as urban exiles — with many opportunities to personalize the radical Whigs' rhetoric. Though the details

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[76] Fred Anderson, A People's Army and Alfred Young, The Shoemaker and the Tea Party.

[77] One of these unfortunate "Tories" was the Reverend Samuel Dana of Groton, son-in-law of Abigail Kenrick. In March, his parish met to discuss the "unhappy differences subsisting among us" in the matter of politics. Over the next several weeks, Rev. Dana refused to attend any meetings proposed by the Deacons. Finally, on May 15th, a "very full town meeting" voted to dismiss Dana from the pulpit. Dana submitted a conciliatory statement:

> [I] do hereby sincerely ask Forgiveness of all such for whatever I have said or done, that had the least Tendency to the Injury of my Country, assuring them that it is my full Purpose, in my proper Sphere, to unite with them, in all those laudable and fit Measures, that have been recommended by the Continental and Provincial Congresses, for the Salvation of this Country, hoping my future Conversation and Conduct will fully prove the Uprightness of my present Professions.

Unmoved, the deacons declared that "what Mr Samuel Dana has offrd to the Publick for Satisfaction for his Conduct in Political matters is by no means Satisfactory to this Church as a brother." see *Early Church Records of Groton, 1761-1830*, edited by Samuel Abbott Green, 14, and *Groton Historical Series*, by Samuel Abbott Greene, 14. For more on Tories in the rural towns, see Gross, *Minutemen and Their World*.

of their lives and deaths differ, the exiles' epitaphs fit them into a coherent narrative of innocent civilians destroyed by a scheming Crown and its cruel soldiers. Abigail Codman, a middle-aged woman who died in Haverhill, was "drove from Charlestown in April 1775 by ye Cruel hand of Oppression."[78] Fifty-six-year-old Faith Durant, buried in Dedham, was "driven by the hand of tyranny from BOSTON."[79] Rebecca White, age 94, wandered from place to place before dying near the end of the war, having never returned to Boston:

Here lies the Body of
Mrs. REBECCA WHITE
Widow of Mr.
ISAAC WHITE late of Boston.
When the British Troops took possession
of the Town of Boston, she went
to her Son JOHN WHITE Esq.
of Charlestown and continued in his
Family 'til She died at Billerica,
Sept. 13th 1782 Aged 94 Years.

Though the immediate cause of their removal was the American army's siege of the city, rather than the nearly seven-year-old occupation by British soldiers, these epitaphs specifically blame the King and his lackeys for the deaths of people's neighbors, friends, and relatives. Lydia Dyar may have died of disease or old age, but her gravestone places the blame on the "Ministerial Troops sent by GEORGE ye 3d to subject North-America to Slavery." These gravestones — public monuments erected in communities throughout the region — substantiated Whig fears that imperial conspirators threatened the lives, as well as the freedoms, of innocent Americans.

Many of the overtly political gravestones of exiled Bostonians commemorate the deaths of young children and the elderly. These vulnerable populations fared poorly in the epidemics of dysentery and smallpox that radiated from the military camps, and their deaths became emblematic of the suffering inflicted on innocents. One elderly exile, Abigail Kenrick, was 76

[78] Abigail Codman gravestone, Haverhill, MA. Codman was 51 years old.
[79] Faith Durant gravestone, Dedham, MA.

years old when she, "left her pleasant habitation in Newton . . . on account of ye civil War" to ride out the siege with her daughter's family in Groton, Massachusetts. Her gravestone reports that she was "removed by a dysentery" on September 5, 1775, ascending to "that place where ye wicked cease from troubling & ye weary are at rest."[80] The invocation of Job was apt in Kenrick's case. The dysentery epidemic that claimed her life also killed her one-year-old grandson, Stephen Dana (d. Aug. 6, 1775), and twenty other Groton children. Though Abigail's is the only stone that explicitly mentions "ye civil War," any visitor to Kenrick's grave stood only feet from the gravestones of seven-year-old Miriam Holden (d. Aug. 4), three-year-old Molley Ames (d. Aug. 6), three-month-old Phineas Wait (d. Aug. 10), ten-year-old Samuel Moors (d. Aug. 12), ten-month-old Abigail Lawrence (d. Aug. 13), three-year-old Luther Page (d. Aug. 13), six-year-old Lucy Moors (d. Aug. 17), one-year-old Peggy Quails (d. Aug. 17), 10-month-old Philomela Lawrence (d. Aug. 19), fourteen-year-old Olive Fletcher (d. Aug. 24), 10-year-old Samuel Patch (d. Sept. 9), five-year-old Mary Bowers (d. Sept. 21), five-year-old Joseph Parker (d. Sept. 22), four-year-old Sarah Bowers (d. Sept. 25), two-year-old Ebenezer Patch (d. Sept. 30), two-year-old Simeon Shed (d. Oct. 5), and the Champney children: six-year-old Elizabeth (d. Aug. 27), three-year old Sally (d. Aug. 29), and one-year-old Ebenezer (d. Aug. 29).[81] Could anyone in Groton doubt that imperial aggression was a menace to every household?

[80] gravestone of Abigail Kenrick, 1775, Groton, MA, Park workshop; Job 3:17
[81] Samuel Abbott Green, Epitaphs from the Old Burying Ground in Groton, Massachusetts, 63-71.

Figure 44: Abigail Kenrick stone, 1775, Groton, MA
carved by Park family workshop
photo by author

As the long months of the siege dragged on and more civilians died, gravestone carvers produced epitaphs that amplified the pathos of their plight by inflating the ages of the elderly. Solomon Kneeland, "late of Boston," was 77 years old when he died in Shrewsbury on December 23, 1775, but his gravestone states that he died "in his 80th year."[82] Lydia Dyar was six months shy of her 80th birthday when she died, but her epitaph ("Aged 80 Years") rounds her

[82] gravestone of Solomon Kneeland, 1775, Shrewsbury, MA; Solomon Kneeland, son of Solomon and Mary Kneeland, was born on September 23, 1698. Boston Birth Records, 1630-1699, pg. 241. The construction of reporting that someone died "in his 80th year," i.e. 79 years old, maximizes age. In Kneeland's case, the true age is still inflated.

age up.[83] When the *Boston Gazette* printed an item announcing the death of "Elder William Parkman, late of Boston" in Stoughton in July of 1775, it reported his age as 90, though he was also six months short of that milestone.[84] Perhaps the discrepancies can be explained by the difficulty of consulting Boston's birth records or family Bibles during the siege. Yet, the consistent age inflation suggests that whoever composed these epitaphs wished to make the deceased appear as venerable and as vulnerable as possible.[85] When the printer John Boyle made a list of 139 civilians who died in Boston during the siege, he noted the ages of only eleven, ten of whom were over 70.[86]

News of the suffering in Massachusetts traveled to other colonies, where those who hoped to inspire men to join the army urged them to defend American grandmothers and grandfathers. "Our young men here disdain the thought of endangering the lives of the aged," wrote a Philadelphia correspondent in June 1775, describing the burgeoning war effort in his city to the *Boston Gazette*, "and I have not the least doubt of thought of the same generous sentiments prevailing in your Place."[87] The reality of civilian deaths lent weight to appeals that had relied on rhetorical civilians to rouse men to arms. In a rousing oration on the fifth anniversary of the Boston Massacre, March 5, 1775, General Joseph Warren had implored his audience to defend their liberties by honoring their elders and protecting their children: "The faltering tongue of hoary age calls on you to support your country. The lisping infant raises its suppliant hands, imploring defense against the monster slavery."[88] Within weeks, Warren's rhetorical victims would be made flesh. Days after the battles of Lexington and Concord, Warren authored a

[83] Lydia Hough Dyar was born on February 2, 1696/7, according to the *Boston Birth Records*.
[84] Boston Gazette 7/3/75: "DIED At Stoughtonhara, Elder William Parkman, late of Boston, AEtat. 90." see *Boston Birth Records 1630-1699*, 166.
[85] The threat to elderly people was particularly poignant in a society that had long considered advanced age to be a sign of divine grace. see David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed*, on "New England Age Ways."
[86] JBoyle, 30 March 1776.
[87] *Boston Gazette*, 12 June 1775, "Extract of a Letter from Philadelphia."
[88] Joseph Warren, *Boston Massacre Oration*, 5 March 1775, 21.

recruitment broadside that eschewed cerebral appeals to English law in favor of emotional blackmail. According to Warren, "the barbarous Murders on our innocent Brethren" made it "absolutely necessary that we immediately raise an Army to defend our Wives and our Children from the butchering Hands of an inhuman Soldiery." The time for action had come. Warren warned that if men delayed their enlistments for even a single hour, they risked inflicting "perpetual Slavery upon the few of your Posterity, who may survive the Carnage."[89]

The toxic disease environment created by the war continued to spread even after the British evacuated Boston on March 17, 1776. The virulent epidemic of smallpox that had sparked in 1775 eventually swept the entire continent, decimating populations as far away as Georgia, Mexico City, and the Pacific Northwest before it burned out in 1782.[90] In Massachusetts, prominent citizens like Abigail Adams braved the dangers of inoculation, while others suffered the full wrath of the disease.[91] Abijah and Sarah Childs of Lexington buried six children in the space of three weeks. In their grief, they commissioned a single gravestone that accounted for every day of their children's lives, from Sarah's "13 years 8 months & 11 days" down to little Moses's "3 years wanting 8 Days."[92] No mainland colony escaped the misery. In the spring of 1777, John Adams took a break from attending the Continental Congress in Philadelphia and spent a morning walking among the graves of two thousand American soldiers who had died of smallpox and other camp diseases. "The Graves of the soldiers, who have been

[89] Joseph Warren, broadside: "In Congress at Watertown, April 30, 1775," printed by Benjamin Edes, Massachusetts Historical Society
[90] Fenn, *Pox Americana* (2002)
[91] Abigail Adams was inoculated on July 12, 1775. Fenn, 37.
[92] The Childs children gravestone in Lexington, Massachusetts reads, "This monument is Erected to the Memory of 6 Children of Mr. Abijah Childs & Mrs. Sarah his Wife. Sarah Childs Died August 28th 1778 Aged 13 years 8 months & 11 days. Eunice Childs Died August 23d 1778 Aged 12 years 3 months & 8 Days. Abijah Childs Died Sept 6th 1778 Aged 11 years and 37 Days. Abigail Childs Died August 29th 1778 Aged 7 years 7 months & 11 days. Benjamin Childs Died August 24th 1778 Aged 4 years 9 months & 8 Days. Moses Childs Died August 19th 1778 Aged 3 years wanting 8 Days."

buryed, in this Ground . . . are enough to make the Heart of stone to melt away," he reported in a letter to Abigail, adding, "I never in my whole Life was affected with so much Melancholly."[93]

Figure 45: Childs Children stone, 1778, Lexington, MA
photo by author

In addition to encouraging enlistments, civilian deaths inspired the colonists to cast themselves as actors on the vast stages of Biblical narrative and international politics. Samuel Adams, relating the plight of the "sufferers" of Boston in a letter, wondered whether General Gage would ever "condescend to let the People go."[94] Benjamin Edes of the *Boston Gazette*, driven from his home to the wilderness of Watertown, also interpreted Gage's actions in terms of the Exodus story:

> Instead of humbling yourself before God for your blood guiltiness, Pharaoh like, you are hardening your heart and fitting yourself for a signal destruction *by rebelling against the light.*[95]

When Abigail Adams' mother died in the same dysentery epidemic that took so many children and old people in Needham and Groton in the late summer of 1775, Adams compared Massachusetts' suffering to the plight of Job:

> How long o Lord shall the whole land say I am sick? O shew us wherefore it is that thou art thus contending with us? In a very perticuliar manner I have occasion

[93] John Adams to Abigail Adams, 13 April 1777, MHS.
[94] letter, Samuel Adams to Samuel Purviance, 19 May 1775, MHS
[95] *Boston Gazette,* 17 July 1775.

> to make this inquiry who have had Breach upon Breach, nor has one wound been permitted to be healed e'er it is made to Blead affresh, in six weeks I count 5 of my near connections laid in the grave . . . Yea tho he slay me I will trust in him said holy job. [96]

By relating their personal experiences to the well-known Biblical stories of Moses and Job, colonists inserted themselves into those narratives, giving them a framework for understanding what was happening to them. There was nothing novel about this — their ancestors in the Winthrop fleet had also imagined themselves as participants in Old Testament narratives. What was significant was the renewed sense that individuals of no great fame were intimately bound up in international politics. When John Boyle's wife, 24-year-old Celia Gay Boyle, died in exile on April 11, 1776, he specifically recorded his private grief in terms of public events:

> She has resided with her Family in this Town (Hingham) eleven Months, on Account of the Civil Wars in America; Boston, the Place of her Nativity, being in the Possession of the British Troops, from whence she was obliged to flee into the Country, where she might enjoy that domestic Felicity which was denied her there![97]

Not since the days of the Great Migration had the mundane events of local life seemed so important to the world at large. People in rural communities like Groton, Billerica, Brainteree, and Haverhill had long directed their gaze inward. In 1775, the thousands of friends and relatives who took refuge in their garrets and barns brought evidence of an imperial conspiracy into every house in a way that pamphlets never could.

No civilian was too small to participate in international politics. Charles Pratt Marston was only nine months old when he died in Burlington, Massachusetts in October of 1775, "While British Forces held his native town."[98] His father, John Marston, was a strong Whig and the keeper of the Golden Ball tavern in Boston, a man actively engaged in keeping the public

[96] Abigail Adams to John Adams, 9 Oct 1775, Massachusetts Historical Society.
[97] JBoyle, 11 April 1776.
[98] Charles Pratt Marston gravestone, 1775, Burlington, MA

informed about the wider world. When Elizabeth Greenwood Marston gave birth to a son in January of 1775, he was named in honor of Charles Pratt, the First Earl of Camden, a Whig politician and close associate of William Pitt. When the child died in exile, his family erected an impressive gravestone in the local burying ground. Unlike the gravestones dedicated to the children of Groton, this stone employs a clear, confrontational, and self-consciously political tone. Young Charles Pratt's epitaph is both a lament for a lost child and a primer in parliamentary politics:

> Here rest sweet Babe! . . . nor know the Cares of Life;
> Nor taste vain Hope; nor bear tumultuous strife . . .
> Then shalt thou rise; where dwells Immortal Love
> And with great CAMDEN live in brightest Realms above.

A footnote to this verse informs the viewer that, "Lord Camden [is] a great friend to America & after whom the Child was nam'd."[99] The didactic monument was not for the edification of the baby's family; after all, his parents were familiar enough with Lord Camden and his politics to bestow his name on their child. Rather, this gravestone instructs the residents of Burlington in their political allies. They might never have heard of Lord Camden before, but this gravestone introduced them to the eminent earl as a protector of American babies, in stark contrast to the "British Forces" sent by King George to hound them unto death.

[99] Charles Pratt Marston's father, John Marston, was the keeper of the Golden Ball tavern in Boston and a strong Whig with familial ties to Boston's waterfront community. Marston was originally from Salem, where his father and grandfather were "master mariners." Though there is no evidence that he ever went to sea himself, he remained close to the maritime community, marrying Elizabeth Greenwood, the daughter of a sailmaker. One grandson, also named John Marston, became one of the first Rear Admirals in the American Navy, and another, Ward Marston, served as a colonel with the Marines. Marston family legend reports that John Marston took part in the Boston Tea Party of 1773, though if there is any truth to this story, the participant was probably his 17-year-old son, John Jr. See *Colonial and Revolutionary Families of Pennsylvania*, "John Marston," (1911), 1103-4; I.J. Greenwood, *The Greenwood Family of Norwich, England in America* (1934), 180.

Figure 46: Charles Pratt Marston stone, 1775, Burlington, MA
carved by Henry Christian Geyer
photo by author

As in the case of Charles Pratt Marston, the process of personalizing public events influenced choices about the beginning of life, as well as the end. During the siege, many exiled Bostonians and their neighbors christened their newborn infants with names that honored revolutionary leaders. Ebenezer and Abigail Dorr, late of Boston, named their Medford-born son Samuel Adams Dorr on July 1, 1775. Nathaniel and Rachel Appleton, who had remained in the city, welcomed George Washington Appleton in October. These babies were soon joined by Oratio Gaits Lawrence, Israel Putnam Dawes, Moses Hazen White, Henry Knox May, and Benjamin Franklyne Adams.[100] A century and a half earlier, the Puritan ancestors of the revolutionary generation had identified themselves as members of a holy exodus by giving their children Old Testament names. Parents with English names like Henry and Jane signaled their

[100] Boston Births 1700-1800, 326.

separation from the unconsecrated body of the English people by naming their children Abraham and Deborah.[101] In the 1770s, their descendants made a similar move. Jabez Rice of Marlborough, Massachusetts and his wife, Miriam, bore names appropriate for members of the new Israel. When Miriam gave birth to twins on June 27, 1775, she named them John Hancock and Dorothy Quincy Rice, names for the new republic.[102]

* * *

Not all of the Americans who died during the siege of Boston were actually civilians. Beginning with the minutemen of Lexington and Concord, hundreds of militiamen and soldiers from across New England were killed in battle, expired in prison, or died of camp diseases. Most of these men were buried with little fanfare, but some did receive gravestones, while others were honored with cenotaphs in their hometowns.[103] While many of these stones praise the dead for their patriotism, they also make a remarkable argument: that armed Americans were harmless civilians, rather than combatants. For Americans who supported resistance to Britain's imperial policies, the question of aggression was paramount. If they were themselves the aggressors, they were rebels working outside of and against the legitimate order. If, on the other hand, Americans were innocent victims at the hands of a scheming Crown and its brutal soldiers, their resistance

[101] A good example of this phenomenon can be found in the vital records of Windsor, Connecticut. Windsor provides an ideal case study because it was colonized by a coherent group of committed believers who gathered themselves into a formal church in Dorset, England before emigrating. They traveled as a body, first to Dorchester, Massachusetts, and then to an isolated part of the Connecticut River Valley with very little addition or attrition along the way. Their integrity as a group makes them an ideal test case for observing change in naming styles across generations. Excluding the five most popular male and female names, which were long-time favorites among Englishmen of all religious persuasions, only 29% of men in the emigrant generation had names derived from the Old Testament, while 68% of their sons did. Among women of the emigrant generation, 35% had Old Testament names, but they gave them to 53% of their daughters. Source: Windsor Town Records. This statistical analysis had a sample size of 1,317 individuals: emigrant generation: 136 women, 160 men; children born in Windsor, CT, 1637-1684: 485 girls, 536 boys.

[102] Charles Hudson and Joseph Allen, *History of the Town of Marlborough, Middlesex County, Massachusetts* (Boston: T.R. Marvin & Son, 1862), 438.

[103] A cenotaph is a monument that commemorates someone who is buried elsewhere.

was justifiable as a protection of ancient English freedoms. Thus, it was crucial that American Whigs define themselves as inoffensive bystanders who took up arms only under duress.

The Jason Russell gravestone in Menotomy (since renamed Arlington), Massachusetts is a prime example of these themes.[104] According to his epitaph, the 59-year-old Russell, who was killed on April 19, 1775, was "barbarously murdered in his own House by GAGE's bloody Troops."[105] Never mind that Russell had barricaded himself inside his home in order to shoot at Regulars drawn in by the companies of colonial militia deployed in his orchard. His monument characterizes him as a passive victim, rather than as a soldier.[106] According to witnesses, Russell boldly declared that "an Englishman's home is his castle" as he reinforced his defenses. Alas, English castle doctrine does not extend to homes that are being used as actual castles, strongholds of armed resistance harboring soldiers who fire on the King's troops. In the midst of a bloody skirmish, British grenadiers stormed the house, killing Russell and several other militiamen who had fallen back into the house after being routed from the yard. "His body is quietly resting in this Grave," continues Russell's epitaph, "with Eleven of our friends who in like manner with many others were cruelly Slain on that fatal day." These "friends" were, of course, the other militiamen who had taken a stand at the Russell house. Friends they may have been, but hapless neighbors they were not: nine of the eleven men buried with Russell were militiamen from Needham, Lynn, Dedham, Dover, and Salem.[107] They had answered the Lexington alarm and died like soldiers, engaging the foe.[108] Jason Russell's gravestone denies

[104] At the time, Arlington was called Menotomy and was a village of Cambridge, rather than a separate town.
[105] Jason Russell gravestone, 1775, Arlington, MA
[106] David Hackett Fischer, *Paul Revere's Ride* (Oxford, 1995), 256.
[107] The twelve men killed on April 19, 1775 and buried in the Menotomy Burying Ground are Jason Russell (Menotomy), Jabez Wyman (Menotomy), Jason Winship (Menotomy), William Flint (Lynn), Thomas Hadley (Lynn), Abednego Ramsdell (Lynn), Amos Mills (Needham), Nathaniel Chamberlain (Needham), Jonathan parker (Dedham), Elias Haven (Dover). Wyman and Winship were killed at Cooper's Tavern, but most of the others were killed at the Russell house.
[108] Fischer, 256.

this interpretation, using the language of criminality, rather than the vocabulary of war. The British Regulars were not soldiers fighting a budding American army — they were murderers who invaded private homes to kill innocent civilians.

Figure 47: Jason Russell stone, 1775, Arlington, MA
photo by author

The idea that armed Americans were not truly soldiers was commonplace in American rhetoric in the early months of 1775. In the first issue of the *Boston Gazette* printed in exile at Watertown, Benjamin Edes published a vicious open letter to General Thomas Gage, spluttering,

> Is it a crime to commit murder? . . . Have not your troops (sent with orders to steal, rob and murder) fulfilled as much of your INFERNAL plan as was in their power? Did they not murder 8 innocent inoffensive men at Lexington, and a number more at Concord?[109]

[109] *Boston Gazette,* 5 June 1775.

Edes's use of criminal terms like "murder," "steal," and "rob" positioned the Minutemen of Lexington and Concord as "innocent inoffensive" civilian victims, rather than armed companies of militia. John Boyle, the Boston printer in exile at Hingham, agreed, asserting that the Minutemen who turned out to oppose the column of Regulars, "were determined to be peaceable Spectators of this extraordinary Movement."[110]

In the weeks following the battle, the Massachusetts Provincial Congress commissioned printer Isaiah Thomas of Worcester to publish a pamphlet containing numerous depositions from eyewitnesses attesting to the wantonness of the British troops during their retreat from Concord. Benjamin and Rachel Cooper of Cambridge testified that the Regulars,

> fired more than an hundred bullets into the house where we dwell . . . where we and two aged gentlemen were, all unarmed, we escaped for our lives into the cellar, the two aged gentlemen were immediately most barbarously and inhumanly murdered by [the soldiers], being stabbed through in many places, their heads mauled, skulls broke, and their brains out on the floor and walls of the house.[111]

The "aged gentlemen" are not named in the deposition. Cross-referencing Cooper's testimony with casualty lists from the day identifies them as Jason Winship, age 45, and Jabez Wyman, age 38, both listed in the appendix among the Cambridge dead and known to have been killed at Cooper's tavern.[112] Other deponents offered accounts claiming that colonists had acted civilly in all matters, including the burial of the British dead. Rumors that a British soldier "was scalped and the ears cut from the head" were reported to be greatly exaggerated "to dishonour the Massachusetts people, and to make them appear to be savage and barbarous."[113] The depositions

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[110] JBoyle, 19 April 1775.
[111] A Narrative of the Excursion and Ravages of the King's Troops Under the Command of General Gage, on the nineteenth of April, 1775: Together with the Depositions Taken by Order of Congress to Support the Truth of it (Worcester: Isaiah Thomas, 1775), 21.
[112] Jason Winship was baptized in Cambridge in 1730. Wyman was probably 38 years old and certainly no older than 45. He was baptized in Woburn in December of 1736. His parents, Jabez Wyman and Mary Smith, were married in 1730. see *Woburn Vital Records*, *History of Arlington* by Cutter and Cutter, and *Proceedings of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts*, 1923.
[113] Narrative, 20.

made a deep impression on the pamphlet's far-flung readers. John Boyle copied long sections of testimony into his journal.[114] In Harwich, on Cape Cod, Rev. Isaiah Dunster read the accounts and promptly wrote to his nephew, Rev. John Marrett of Woburn, to ascertain their veracity. Marrett confirmed that many civilians had indeed suffered, but relayed his doubts about the deaths of Jason Winship and Jabez Wyman: "[I] am not certain they were unarmed; but it is likely enough they were; they were drinking flip . . . [they] were solacing themselves at the tavern the chief of the day; both died like fools."[115] Two middle-aged drunks did not make very compelling victims for Thomas's readers, but "two aged gentlemen" would serve.

Once the war was well underway, gravestones and cenotaphs honoring soldiers were installed in burying grounds across New England. These stones, which often memorialized men whose bodies were never returned to their communities, were public war memorials as well as private expressions of grief. Erected when the outcome of the fighting was still uncertain, these monuments display bold pronouncements of loyalty to a country whose very existence was still somewhat hypothetical. How extraordinary to erect a permanent, graven monument declaring that 70-year-old Seth Pomeroy of Northampton died, "in the Army of the united States" in 1777, when that institution was anything but rock solid.[116] When the family of 22-year-old Joseph Morris of Hampden, Massachusetts praised him for dying "in the Service of his Country" in August of 1776, they insisted that the war was being fought on the behalf of a legitimate nation,

[114] JBoyle, 19 April 1775. Boyle added these accounts to the diary after the publication of the pamphlet. The whole diary seems to have been copied over at some point after it was written, but still in the 18th century and probably by Boyle himself.
[115] Letter from John Marrett to Isaiah Dunster, 28 July 1775, as quoted in Benjamin Cutter and William R. Cutter, *History of the Town of Arlington, Massachustts* (Boston: Clapp & Sons, 1880), 74-5. "Flip" was a tavern concoction involving rum, molasses, sugar, cream, and sometimes pumpkin stirred with a red hot poker (with regional variations). In Benjamin Rush's taxonomy of drink, entitled, "The Drunkard's Looking-Glass," flip ranks in the middle of pack relative to other intoxicating beverages (worse than grog, better than straight liquor), and is said to encourage "lying and swearing," generally sending those who partake to the hospital or poor-house.
[116] Seth Pomeroy cenotaph, 1777, Northampton, MA. Pomeroy is buried in Peekskill, NY.

not a rebellious faction.[117] Even in the early days of the war, colonists in rural hamlets like West Farms (since renamed Franklin), Connecticut made bold declarations of their support for the "American Army" by honoring men like Asa Kingsbury:

> In memory of Lieut. Asa
> Kingsbury, who died at
> Pomfret on the 5th of Sept
> 1775 In the 47th Year of
> his Age; Who was on the
> March to Roxbury to Join
> the American Army &
> was brought here by his
> Friends & Inter'd with that
> respect which was due
> from the Public to such
> characters.

West Farms was a hundred miles from the battlefront, but its citizens had nevertheless forged imaginary bonds that compelled them to erect a monument to Asa Kingsbury that simultaneously memorialized the deceased and testified to their own investment in the cause.

Similar sentiments can be found in the text of the monument proposed by the Continental Congress to honor Joseph Warren after his death at the Battle of Bunker Hill on June 17, 1775. On April 8, 1777, Congress approved an epitaph praising the man who "devoted his life to the liberties of his country" and that he "fell an early victim" while "bravely defending them."[118] The monument would also serve as a public vote of confidence in the new nation by crediting "The Congress of the United States" with erecting it. Alas, Congress neglected to appropriate funds for the project and the monument was not built.[119] But many others were. Even without the Warren monument as a model, the gravestones of men like Pomeroy, Morris, and Kingsbury cropped up

[117] Joseph Morris, 1776, Hampden, MA
[118] *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789*, vol. 7 (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1907), 243.
[119] Isaac P. Gragg, "The Evolution of the Warren Monument" in *Monument to Joseph Warren: Its Origin, History, and Dedication, 1894-1904* (Boston: Municipal Printing Office, 1905), 19.

in towns throughout the colonies, showing ordinary people's optimism about the war's eventual outcome.

Just a few years earlier, most American colonists had been proud to call themselves British subjects. By 1782, "Britons" seemed an altogether foreign and unsavory people. Thus, the family of Abijah Perkins of Hanover, Connecticut could announce that their son died "after enduring Imprisonment Chains Hunger and ye barbarous Insults of cruel Britons . . . in ye Bloom of youth a Martyr to his Country's Cause," with no indication that they had considered themselves "Britons" not long before.[120] For the family of Robert and Anna Munro of Lexington, Massachusetts, the division between Americans and Britons was clear. Robert was killed during the fight at Lexington on April 19 and buried with his seven fallen comrades. When Anna died in August 1775, during the dysentery epidemic, her loved ones erected a gravestone that commemorated both Anna and the husband who had been "Slain by the Enemy."[121]

In New England graveyards, the lines between civilian and soldier blurred. Soldiers' gravestones were not the uniform, government-issued monuments of later wars, but private, idiosyncratic objects created by grieving families and local craftsmen eager to tell the stories that mattered to them. When Simon Patch of Groton, Massachusetts was "wounded in ye defense of his Country at ye White-plains [NY]" in 1776, his older brother, Jacob, carried him home to die so that he could be buried beside his younger brothers, 10-year-old Samuel and 2-year-old Ebenezer, both victims of the 1775 dysentery epidemic. At a distance of centuries, modern Americans recognize Simon as a casualty of the Revolution, but his family, friends, and

[120] Abijah Perkins gravestone, 1782, Hanover, CT

[121] The Lexington militiamen were originally buried in the common burying ground, but their remains were removed to the Battle Green in 1835. Anna Munro's gravestone is a good example in support of the theory that these gravestones were carved soon after the deaths they commemorate. Her monument was carved by the Park family workshop, a prolific business that has well-defined stylistic shifts as different members of the family rose to mastery. Anna Munro's stone has the hallmarks of the style period that the Farber Collection designates as 1766-1779.

neighbors remembered Samuel and Ebenezer as well. Another Groton family, the Parkers, erected a single gravestone in honor of both of the sons they lost in the war: 5-year-old Joseph, who died during the epidemic, and 19-year-old Nehemiah, "who died in his Country service at Ticonderoga" one year later. Their memory is inseparable.

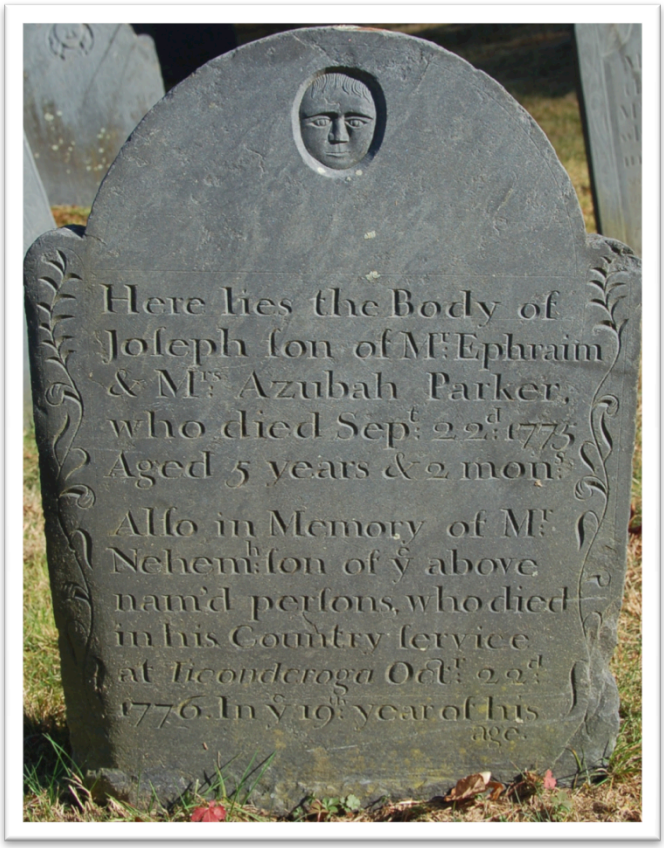

Figure 48: Joseph and Nehemiah Parker stone, 1776, Groton, MA
carved by Park family workshop
photo by author

The idea that the American dead were innocuous bystanders was a crucial claim because it allowed the colonists to defy British authority while simultaneously denying that they were doing so. American Whigs had little interest in fostering rebellion against established hierarchies, but they were eager to redefine legitimacy according to their own creative understanding of their rights as Englishmen. "Rebel" was an epithet to them. In Edes' open letter, he hurls the word at General Gage, counting it a greater indictment than any other:

> But you are not only a robber, a murderer and a usurper, but a wicked *Rebel*. A rebel against the authority of truth, law, equity, the English constitution of government, these colonial states, and humanity itself.[122]

While the colonists would eventually extol the military prowess of their soldiers, in the spring of 1775, Whiggish rhetoric demanded that the afflicted be as "innocent" and "inoffensive" as possible. Still unsure whether the other colonies would rally around them, Massachusetts Whigs portrayed British officials and soldiers as aggressors against civilian life. Displaced grandmothers like Lydia Dyar and Abigail Kenrick made obvious examples, as did children like Charles Pratt Marston and Joseph Parker. In the case of men like Jason Russell, who died with muskets in their hands in skirmishes between organized military forces, gravestones advanced a narrative that supported the revolutionary cause, even as it strained credulity.

* * *

Eleven years after the battles of Lexington and Concord, the elite Whigs of Massachusetts found their political position drastically altered. No longer a provincial insurgency, they were now the leaders of a Commonwealth, tasked with implementing unpopular fiscal policies and keeping the peace. In 1786, the new commonwealth government faced one of its first great challenges: the uprising of debt protesters in Western Massachusetts that history remembers as Shays' Rebellion. A post-war recession and a bevy of new taxes had hit rural New Englanders hard, and many farmers found themselves summoned to court to answer for their unpaid debts. Instead of submitting meekly, crowds of well-armed citizens, many of them veterans of the recent revolution, shut down the courts. In response, the government sent the state militia to oppose the "Regulators" and arrest their leaders. On January 25, 1787, the militia defeated a Regulator force of 1,500 that had attacked the United States Armory at Springfield in

[122] *Boston Gazette*, 17 July 1775.

hopes of obtaining weapons and supplies to sustain their cause. The leaders of rebellion scattered and the troops pursued them.

One of the militiamen sent to track down fleeing protestors was thirty-one-year-old Jacob Walker, from the tiny town of Whately, just south of Deerfield on the Connecticut River. A man of humble circumstances, Walker had answered the call of the Massachusetts militia before. In April of 1775, he had marched with a company from Hatfield in response to the Lexington alarm.[123] The man he was chasing, fifty-three-year-old Regulator Jason Parmenter, had fought beside him then. Both men's service records show that they manned the siege line around Boston in the fall of 1775: company documents mention that Walker was stationed at Prospect Hill in modern-day Somerville on September 30, 1775 and that he received a money order "in lieu of [a] bounty coat" at "Camp Cambridge" on October 25, 1775; Parmenter received an order for a "bounty coat or its equivalent in money" at Prospect Hill on December 22, 1775.[124] Later, they both served in the Saratoga campaign of 1777, where Walker was promoted to the rank of sergeant and Parmenter lost his 16-year-old son to British artillery fire. Now, in 1787, they were adversaries. As Walker's company closed in on Parmenter's party in the snowy woods near the Vermont border on February 17, 1787, Parmenter fired a shot and Walker fell, mortally wounded.[125]

In death, Jacob Walker became a hero to the wealthy and powerful. His funeral procession featured a "division of Infantry, under arms" along with mounted troops, a line of horse-drawn sleighs, and a "large and respectable number of Officers and private Gentlemen."

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[123] Walker served under Capt. Seth Murray out of Hatfield, Massachusetts. His company marched on April 29, 1775 and served until August. Walker subsequently joined other expeditions, following Capt. Murray during the Saratoga campaign of 1777. Josiah Howard Temple, *History of the Town of Whately, Mass*. (1872)

[124] Full service records for Jacob Walker and Jason Parmenter can be found in *Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors of the Revolution*

[125] Jason Parmenter was arrested and sentenced to death for his role in Shays' Rebellion. His sentence was commuted and he was eventually pardoned by Governor John Hancock. For specifics of the fatal encounter and the funeral, see the *Hampshire Gazette*, 28 February 1787.

After prayers, sermons, and "solemn musick" at the meeting-house the corpse was carried to the burying ground and interred while the soldiers fired a salute over the grave. Newspapers as far away as Philadelphia heralded Walker's death "in defence of the rights of mankind, and in support of the laws of God and his country."[126] The *Hampshire Gazette* of Northampton, Massachusetts reported that Walker was "much lamented by the most valuable part of the community."[127] One of those "valuable" mourners was Sylvester Judd, a well-connected Justice of the Peace who had served as both a representative to the General Court and a member of the Massachusetts Constitutional Convention. Judd had fathered three sons, all of whom died in infancy, and all of whom had been named Sylvester, after their father. When Judd's next son was born on February 28, 1787, he was christened Jacob Walker Judd.[128]

Perhaps Judd or one of his influential friends paid for the expensive gravestone that still stands in Hatfield's burying ground.[129] Carved by the impossibly-named John Locke of Deerfield, Jacob Walker's monument is impressive, a tall slab of the type of fine-grained, blue-gray slate that holds lines so crisp they seem to have been cut yesterday.[130] Other gravestones in Hatfield, made of rough local granite or crumbly red sandstone, have not fared so well, but Jacob Walker's was made to last. The epitaph praises him as a man who was "respected by the Brave, Beloved of his Country's Friends, and Dear to his Relations." His military rank is omitted in favor of the civilian appellation, "Mr. Jacob Walker." Nevertheless, he died a hero's death:

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[126] Pennsylvania Packet, 3 August 1787.
[127] *Hampshire Gazette*, 28 February 1787
[128] Sylvester Judd, *Thomas Judd and His Descendants* (1856), 24. The next son after little Jacob Walker was also named Sylvester, suggesting that Judd would have named his son Sylvester if he had not felt so strongly about Jacob Walker's death. Jason Parmenter was not wholly forgotten. His fellow Regulator, Daniel Luddington, who had also been convicted of treason for his part in Shays' Rebellion, named his own son Jason Parmenter Luddington on March 17, 1787. See *Hampshire Gazette*, 25 July 1787.
[129] There is no record of the exact cost of this gravestone, but it was probably among the more expensive gravestones in Hatfield at the time. It is unusually large, finely carved, and made of expensive slate. In an era when epitaphs were generally paid for by the letter, its language is effusive rather than economical.
[130] The stone was cut in Locke's shop, but may have been his work or the work of his student and partner, Solomon Ashley. For a discussion of the Locke/Ashley partnership, see Kevin M. Sweeney, "Where the Bay Meets the River: Gravestones and Stonecutters in the River Towns of Western Massachusetts, 1690-1810," *Markers* III (1985).

while manfully defending
the Laws & Liberties
of the Commonwealth, [he]
NOBLY FELL
by the impious hand
of Treason & Rebellion.

It had been little more than a decade since Lydia Dyar had been driven from her home by "ye Ministerial Troops sent by GEORGE ye 3d to subject North America to Slavery." Now, the "most valuable part of the community" urged their neighbors to honor Jacob Walker and disavow the evils of "Treason & Rebellion":

Citizen passing drop a tear
And dare to imitate the BRAVE.

Figure 49: Jacob Walker, 1787, Hatfield, MA
carved by John Locke (and/or Solomon Ashley)
photo by author

Epilogue:
Upon the Border of Two Worlds

Figure 50: Halcyon Lake and Mary Baker Eddy Memorial
Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge, Mass.
photo by author

On a clear September day in 1831, Supreme Court Justice Joseph Story took leave of his law books to address a rapt audience of 1,500 gathered among the new-planted trees at Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Before the "perfect silence of the multitude," Story extolled the many virtues of America's first "rural" or "garden" cemetery, where affluent Bostonians could contemplate the great mysteries of life and death in an atmosphere of "solemn calm, as if we were in the bosom of a wilderness." [1] Though the meticulously manicured Mount Auburn was scarcely second-cousin to a wilderness, its flowery dells and willow-shaded ponds did set it apart from the hustle of city life. Isolated from the "rivalries of the world," mourners believed they would establish mystical, immediate connections with the dead. With the city safely reduced to distant scenery, "the spirit of forgiveness will gather new impulses; the selfishness of avarice will be checked; the restlessness of ambition will be rebuked." Mount

[1] *Boston Courier*, 30 September 1831; *New York Spectator*, 7 October 1831.

Auburn would be a holy place in a profane world. At the crescendo of his address, Story insisted, "It is sacred, it is an eternal trust. It is consecrated ground. May it remain forever inviolate!"[2]

This commitment to eternal preservation grew, in part, from anxiety over the distressing state of New England's historic burying grounds. Overcrowded, unsanitary, unsightly, and haphazardly maintained, the forefathers' burying grounds were wholly unfit for the type of melancholy meditations that Justice Story and his nineteenth-century contemporaries demanded. Mount Auburn would be different. More garden than graveyard, it would provide a sanctuary where visitors could stand "upon the border of two worlds," absorbing the wisdom and virtue of the dead. Their ancestors had imagined that the dead were forever beyond the reach of the living, but Americans of Story's generation believed in communication through the veil:

> As we sit down by their graves, we seem to hear the tones of their affection, whispering in our ears. We listen to the voice of their wisdom, speaking in the depths of our souls . . . We return to the world, and we feel ourselves purer, and better, and wiser, from this communion with the dead.[3]

Seekers need only divest themselves of the frivolous cares of modern life and open their hearts to the "superhuman eloquence" of the grave in order to learn truths, "more persuasive, and more enduring, than ever flowed from human lips." These revelations could not blossom in the treeless lots of urban graveyards like the Granary Burying Ground or King's Chapel, where the rumble of omnibuses and the glare of gas lamps chased away sentimental musings.[4] Mount Auburn offered a refuge from the mundane; a haven for the quick and the dead alike.

Mount Auburn was part of a broad movement among the English, French, and American literati to create garden-cemeteries that combined the aesthetics of romantic pastoralism with

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[2] Joseph Story, "An Address Delivered on the Dedication of the Cemetery at Mount Auburn, September 24, 1831" (Boston: Joseph & Edwin Buckingham, 1831), 17-20.
[3] Story, "Address," 7.
[4] The first gas lamps were installed in Boston in 1828. Horse-drawn omnibuses started rolling into Scollay Square in 1826.

neo-classical ideals. Reformers of the early nineteenth century believed that enlightened citizens could cultivate both moral and civic virtues by immersing themselves in naturalistic landscapes that had been carefully engineered to represent an ideal version of Nature. Cemeteries — "Places of Repose" in Justice Story's translation of the Greek root words — were ideally suited to ennobling meditation. In addition to natural beauty, they offered ample opportunities for visitors to reflect on the exemplary lives of the deceased and cultivate a sense of dignified melancholy. The visual culture of mourning in the seventeenth century had been dominated by grisly symbols like skulls, hourglasses, and scythes, but, by the latter half of the eighteenth century, these had been replaced with neoclassical symbols like urns, willows, and laurel wreaths. Refined mourners reproduced this imagery on gravestones, mourning jewelry, and memorial needlework. The rural cemeteries founded in the first half of the nineteenth century translated these motifs into full-fledged landscapes intended to inspire visitors through beauty, rather than dread. The construction of Pere Lachaise Cemetery in Paris (1804), Mount Auburn in Massachusetts (1831), and Kensal Green Cemetery in London (1832) ushered in a new era in Euro-American burial customs.[5]

By the beginning of the Civil War, cities across the United States had established their own rural cemeteries. Their names read like a botanical encyclopedia: Laurel Hill in Philadelphia, Green-Wood in Brooklyn, Forest Lawn in Buffalo, Hollywood in Richmond, Magnolia in Charleston, and the Woodland Cemetery and Arboretum in Dayton, Ohio. Indeed, the founders of many of these cemeteries made their horticultural ambitions explicit. In Philadelphia, the managers of Laurel Hill Cemetery set a goal of including "one specimen at least of every

[5] A few early experiments like the South Park Street Cemetery in Kolkata (1767) and the New Burial Ground in New Haven, Connecticut (1796) also embraced the values of the rural cemetery movement, but were less influential than Pere Lachaise and Mount Auburn. For example, the New Burial Ground in New Haven was a small, flat lot much like earlier graveyards, but it included the decorative plantings that would come to be a feature of the rural cemeteries.

valuable tree and shrub which will bear the climate of this latitude" to create "a species of Arboretum."[6] The trustees of Green-Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn conceived of their project as a sort of nature preserve. After choosing a location that boasted "a fine old forest of native growth" which they vowed to "preserve and cultivate with care," they set out to reclaim "those parts which have been cleared off for purposes of agriculture." Their ultimate goal was to give Green-Wood "a character of sylvan still life in harmony with the quietness and repose of the grave."[7] In every case, the appearance of a "natural" environment, secluded from urban life, was essential to the cemetery's success.

Justice Story characterized the new cemeteries as "natural" not only in the horticultural sense, but as expressions of a universal human impulse to commemorate the dead in bucolic sanctuaries. In his Mount Auburn address, Story argued that the practice of interring the dead amid organic beauty was common to all people — civilized and savage alike — from the very beginning of human history. "The scenery is not new," he said, " for the hill and the valley, the still, silent dell, and the deep forest, have often been devoted to the same pious purpose." Whether they were ancient Germans who "buried their dead in groves consecrated by their priests," "Asiatics" who created mausoleums "embowered with shrubbery," Muslims who established "rural retreats" for the dead, or Romans who built their monuments "in the midst of trees and ornamental walks, and ever-varying flowers," every age and every nation set aside an Edenic haven for its dead. The Jewish forefathers chose "ornamented gardens, and deep forests, and fertile valleys, and lofty mountains." The Greeks "discouraged interments within the limits of their cities," preferring "shady groves, in the neighborhood of murmuring streams and mossy fountains" for their honored dead. Even the tribal peoples that Story regarded as heathen

[6] Conger Sherman, A Guide to Laurel Hill Cemetery Near Philadelphia (1847), 115.
[7] Exposition of the Plan and Objects of the Green-Wood Cemetery (New York: Narine & Co., 1839), 12.

barbarians "delighted to make [the grave] the abode of the varying beauties of Nature," wreathing their burial places with flowers and garlands. "Every where," he claimed, "the spots seem to have been selected with the same tender regard to the living and the dead; that the magnificence of nature might administer comfort to human sorrow, and incite human sympathy."

Most importantly, the burial places in Story's address were separated from everyday life. Physically located on the outskirts of human habitation, swathed in greenery, the ideal burial place was perpetually protected from the mundane world. Mount Auburn fit the bill perfectly. The uplifting view of Boston across the Charles River would "speak to the eye, and yet leave a noiseless loneliness on the ear," awakening "emotions of the highest and most affecting character" without contaminating the meditative environment. It was a place apart. Story assured his audience that the "inviolable sanctity" of cemeteries was so powerful that even "the ravages of war never reach them." Three decades before the Civil War, genteel Bostonians were eager to believe that Mount Auburn would forever remain a refuge, unsullied by politics or modern intrusions. At the core of his argument, Story promised them eternal stability:

> While the cities of the living are subject to all the desolations and vicissitudes incident to human affairs, the cities of the dead enjoy an undisturbed repose, without even the shadow of change.

Not only would Mount Auburn and its fellows embody the universal requirements of sacred burial, they would themselves remain forever unchanged, immune to the demands of the world.

This was an odd argument for a reform movement to embrace. If human burial practices had remained fundamentally stable across centuries and cultures, why was the rural cemetery movement necessary at all?

The historian can devise an answer, situating the rural cemetery movement of the early nineteenth century within the broad context of urban sanitation reform, the English landscape

garden movement, the rise of Romanticism and Naturalism, and the Euro-American fascination with the pastoral and the picturesque.[8] But Justice Story and his contemporaries had a different explanation. To their eyes, reform was necessary because modern vices had disrupted the proper order respected by all previous ages. Nineteenth-century reformers absolved their ancestors of blame for the unsatisfactory state of the old burying grounds, blaming instead the bugbears of modern life: urban growth, moral decay, and personal avarice.

Graveyards had no place in the nineteenth-century city. At the most basic level, they were regarded as nuisances to public health. Miasmatists believed that the fumes from decaying bodies were partially responsible for epidemics of yellow fever, scarlet fever, and cholera. In hopes of stalling these contagions, major cities like London and New York banned burials within their city limits in the 1820s.[9] Many Bostonians campaigned for a similar prohibition. Publications like *The Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* (precursor to the *New England Journal of Medicine*) printed gruesome case studies of mass deaths resulting from exposure to dead bodies that contaminated urban spaces with "pestiferous insects" and "pestilential exhalations."[10]

Even if the dead had posed no direct threat to the living, the city was no fit place for eternal rest. Urban streets, teeming with boisterous crowds and the hustle of commerce, were irretrievably profane. Burying grounds that were "crowded on all sides by the habitations of the living" could never be the holy sanctuaries of Justice Story's ideal. Rather, they were exposed "to the broad glare of day, to the unfeeling gaze of the idler, to the noisy press of business, to the discordant shouts of merriment, [and] to the baleful visitations of the dissolute."[11] Proponents of

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[8] For an excellent cultural history of the rural cemetery movement, see Blanche M.G. Linden's *Silent City on a Hill: Picturesque Landscapes of Memory and Boston's Mount Auburn Cemetery* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2007).
[9] Ward, Silent City on a Hill, 121.
[10] *The Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*, "Intra-Mural Burials" (November 13, 1850); "Church Burial: Curious Cases of Pestiferous Insects" (March 7, 1832).
[11] Story, "Address," 12.

the rural cemetery movement had difficulty believing that their forebears would have intentionally buried their dead in the midst of a city. As Massachusetts' former Governor and Senator Edward Everett explained when addressing the downtrodden state of Boston's graveyards in 1856, the Granary Burying Ground "was formerly on the outskirts of its inhabited portion," but was "now in the centre of its population."[12] This was something of a mischaracterization of Boston's early geography — the city's first burying ground was sandwiched between the schoolyard and the town jail — but it fit both the antebellum elite's understanding of the disruptive potential of urban growth and their desire to see Mount Auburn as a return to historical norms, rather than as an innovation.

More than simple neglect, reformers feared that New England's historic burying grounds had fallen victim to modern greed and modern fashions. John H. Sheppard, librarian of the New England Genealogical and Historical Society, accused greedy sextons of speculating in tombs, clearing out old bones and chipping away old inscriptions so that the vaults could be resold for personal gain. "Such sacrilege is outrageous," he fumed. The "greedy, unprincipled grave-digger" perpetrated a crime "next only to that of Burking for the dissecting room!"[13] In Medford, Massachusetts, nineteenth-century preservationists decried a 1786 law that had allowed residents to construct fashionable family tombs in the town graveyard, believing that the fad's followers were stealing old gravestones to use in the construction of new tombs. "Are there as many gravestones now standing within the old burying-ground as were there fifty years ago?" asked a town historian. "We think not. Where are they? Can the mouths of the tombs answer?" [14]

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[12] Edward Everett, introduction to *The Pilgrims of Boston and Their Descendants* by Thomas Bridgman (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1856), xii.
[13] John H. Sheppard, introduction to *Epitaphs from Copp's Hill Burial Ground, Boston* by Thomas Bridgman (Boston: James Munroe & Co., 1851), xx-xxi.
[14] Charles Brooks, William Henry Whitmore, *History of the Town of Medford* (Boston: James Usher, 1855), 427: "Are there as many gravestones now standing within the old burying-ground as were there fifty years ago? We think not. Where are they? Can the mouths of the tombs answer?"

Distressingly, the fashion for new tombs was also a financial boon to churches. In the 1820s, the congregations of St. Paul's and the Park Street Church in Boston began building and selling exclusive crypts beneath their churches in order to pay down massive debts incurred during lavish building projects.[15]

Massachusetts poet William Bingham Tappan expressed the disgust of his peers in his 1839 poem, "Horticultural Graveyard." "Who would be buried in a city?" he began, explaining that urban burial meant burial "in the scant ground . . . where no grass grows." Tappan imagined that the forefathers' graveyards were places of natural beauty similar to Mount Auburn. Lost in reverie, he described King's Chapel Burying Ground as surely it must have been in the good old days:

> Two hundred years ago our sires had given,
> To this most sacred purpose consecrate –
> Where men might lay their dead: a spot
> That opened to the breeze, and shaded, too,
> By cheerful trees, which threw their shadow o'er
> The grassy graves.

This elysian scene had been corrupted by modern irreverence and greed. Now, Tappan observed, the graves were "begirt with walls / Tow'ring to heaven, that seem to covet e'en / The niggard space allotted to the dead." Worse still, a "cunning Yankee" had planted a garden in "one corner of this holy soil." "Yea, I saw the graves / Teeming with corn and squash," Tappan mourned. The "calculating plodder" thus mocked his ancestors, feeling no compunction when he sat down to "eat vegetables gathered from the bones / Of a dead father, and lick up the food / Grown on a mother's dust." But then, what could one expect from a city dweller? "Sympathy dwells not / In

[15] Ward, Silent City on a Hill, 125.

crowded towns; there Avarice hath its reign." To Tappan, the mundane use of a supposedly sacred place was a "perversion" that would bring any feeling observer to tears.[16]

The problem was not confined to cities. Even in the countryside, graveyards had fallen into a "sad, neglected state, exposed to every sort of intrusion, with scarcely a tree to shelter their barrenness." Reformers blamed the decay on nineteenth-century New Englanders' lack of respect for their forefathers. In every ancient burying ground, gravestones were broken, fences were in shambles, and gravesites were utterly devoid of natural beauty. "Brambles abound instead of shrubbery," an observer complained of the old burying ground across the street from Harvard Yard in Cambridge, lamenting that the ground that held the ashes of great men had been "converted into a common passage-way . . . rioted over by every vagrant schoolboy."[17] Local chroniclers in villages like Scituate, Massachusetts declared it "a reproach to their descendents" when the ancestral burying ground was "suffered to lie an exposed common."[18] The contemplative delights of a wilderness were lost on those who found their forebears' graves "exposed to the trampling of horses and cattle."[19] A resident of Simsbury, Connecticut bewailed the "barbarous want of christian feeling" on display in neglected graveyards, where the supposedly beloved dead were "buried, and, like the beast . . . like the vilest of the vile, [allowed] to rot uncared for and unprotected."[20] "Graves and church yards are left to the course of gradual dilapidation and decay," complained the *New Haven Palladium* in a widely reprinted editorial,

[16] William Bingham Tappan, "Horticultural Graveyard" in *The Poet's Tribute* (Boston: 1840), 223-4. The poem is dated July, 1839.
[17] William Thaddeus Harris, *Epitaphs from the Old Burying-Ground in Cambridge* (Cambridge: John Owen, 1845), v.
[18] Samuel Dean, History of Scituate, Massachusetts: From its First Settlement to 1831 (Boston: James Loring, 1831), 115.
[19] William Biglow, History of Sherburne, Mass (Milford, Massachusetts: Ballou & Stacy, 1830), 17.
[20] Emendator, "The Neglected Burying Ground," in *Supplements to the Connecticut Courant for 1850* (Hartford: Boswell & Faxon, 1850), 91.

opining that such neglect, "ever follows in the train of moral degradation."[21] Justice Story expressed the common outrage of his generation when he deplored the state of New England's graveyards: "These things were not always so among Christians. There is much that demands of the future a more spiritual discharge of our duties."[22]

Thus, nineteenth-century reformers concluded that New England's colonial-era graveyards were in dire need of restoration, not because the ancestors had made poor choices in setting up their graveyards, but because modern descendants had betrayed their trust. An old graveyard was "like a narrow peninsula" that "connects the world that now is with the world that was," and anxious elites were eager to "have the place remain undisturbed."[23] New cemeteries like Mount Auburn could safeguard the future, but that was not enough. The rural cemetery movement inspired a simultaneous preservation movement meant to return New England's historic burying grounds to the pristine condition of reformers' imaginations. In the decades after 1830, large cities and little hamlets alike took up beautification projects to erect new walls, restore gravestones, and plant all manner of trees, shrubs, and flowers in the old graveyards.

New Haven, Connecticut provides a clear example of the reform efforts undertaken by hundreds of other cities and towns.[24] In 1838, the city appointed a committee to look into the condition of its burying ground and provide recommendations for its improvement. The committee's report was dire. The graveyard's fences were "altogether weak, decayed, and totally

[21] Reprinted in the *Vermont Phoenix* (December 9,1842), the *Charlestown Courier* [South Carolina] (November 1, 1842), the *North American and Daily Advertiser* [Philadelphia] (November 12, 1842), and the *American Traveller* [Boston] (December 16, 1842).
[22] Story, "Address," 13.
[23] Thomas Bridgman, *Memorials of the Dead in Boston* (Boston: B.B. Mussey, 1853), introduction.
[24] As early as 1796, the city was interested in creating a different kind of burying place; the New Burying Ground (now Grove Street Cemetery) established in that year was one of the first cemeteries on either side of the Atlantic to incorporate ornamental plantings and designated family plots in a formally designed layout. Still, it was not a full-fledged garden cemetery on the scale of later projects. A flat plot of six acres, only lightly planted with poplars, it was puny and barren in comparison to Mount Auburn's original 70 acres of hills, ponds, groves, and winding pathways. For a discussion of the New Burying Ground's place as a forerunner of the rural cemeteries of the 19th century, see Stanley French, "The Cemetery as Cultural Institution: The Establishment of Mount Auburn and the 'Rural Cemetery' Movement," *American Quarterly*, Vol. 26 No. 1, March 1974, pp 37-59.

inadequate to protect the ground," providing "scarcely a defense against animals." It was "destitute of trees, shrubs, or anything whatever . . . to impart a general appearance of care, cultivation, and decent ornament, becoming such a place." Townspeople and Yale students crisscrossed the lot, making paths over the graves and breaking through the fence in various places. Due to this exposure, the yard had become "the resort of the idle, the thoughtless, and the vicious, at all hours of the day and night, and especially on the Sabbath, for mere amusement or for worse purposes."[25]

To remedy these abuses, the committee recommended an extensive slate of improvements. A wooden fence, painted "to resemble an iron fence," should enclose the ground, supported by stone posts "in the shape of obelisks" and terminating in "an ornamental gateway in the Egyptian style," which would "impart a tasteful and imposing effect to the whole design." This gate was to be the only entrance to the graveyard, and would be locked from dusk until dawn. A residence for the groundskeeper would be built just inside the gate to ensure that all comings and goings would be "under the eye of the keeper or his family." The committee also proposed an ambitious plan for filling the burying ground with trees and shrubs. A dense thicket of twenty different species of trees would ring the perimeter, with "beautiful flowering shrubs" edging the interior paths. The report budgeted $1,000 for greenery, including four hundred large trees and thousands of saplings. Directly echoing Justice Story's argument that garden burial was "a most ancient custom," the New Haven reformers cited Biblical, Greek, Roman, and Turkish antecedents for their project. Their urban graveyard could never truly rival Mount Auburn, but they heartily embraced the project of "cheer[ing] the darkness of the tomb, by the freshness of

[25] Report of the Committee Appointed to Inquire Into the Condition of the New Haven Burying Ground and to Propose a Plan for its Improvement (New Haven: B.L. Hamlen, 1839).

green trees and the lightsome beauty of flowers." With enough care and good taste, they could make their forebears' burying ground into "a quiet, sacred place, as was intended."[26]

The celebrated preacher and social reformer Henry Ward Beecher was among the many influential proponents of these improvement schemes. In his essay, "New England Graveyards," written in rural Woodstock, Connecticut in 1853, Beecher repeated the familiar complaints. Animals wandered unchecked. The sun beat down unimpeded. The weeds were too weedy. "Who would not shrink from being buried under wild parsneps [sic], burdocks, blackberry bushes, and hardhack?" he fussed. "It were better to be burned, or to sink to the bottom of the sea!" Though he stopped short of blaming outright avarice for the state of village burying places, Beecher condemned the sort of Yankee "practical utility" that precluded "a love of the graceful and beautiful." In sardonic asides, he conceded the efficiency of letting animals graze in the graveyard — "thus saving the expense of mowing, beside a clear gain in grass!" — but lamented the lack of "moral beauty" that attended New England's neatly cultivated farms. Though "any one who has Christian refinement will feel an interest in mending the grossness of prevalent custom," Beecher considered the task "a peculiarly fit labor of love for woman," and urged the ladies of every church to make their local graveyards "blossom as the rose."[27]

Though the New Haven Committee, Beecher, and their peers spoke the language of preservation, they innovated in the name of restoration. Despite their sincere belief that "nothing remains the same, but the burial-places of the dead," they implemented sweeping alterations, filling graveyards with plantings and Egyptian-revival monuments to bring them closer to the

[26] *ibid*., 15.
[27] Henry Ward Beecher, "The New England Graveyard" in *Star Papers or Experiences of Art and Nature* (New York: Derby, 1855), 121-128.

garden ideal of their own day.[28] They claimed that the changes were meant to return the burying places to a state resembling the intentions of the founders, but did not make any particular effort to understand what graveyards might have meant to the generations that established and used them. Rather, they relied on their own common sense and belief in universal principles to imagine the founders' intent. Because they believed that bucolic burials were an eternal constant, nineteenth-century New Englanders saw worldly intrusions into the graveyards of their ancestors as modern moral decay. They never entertained the possibility that the forefathers intended their burying places to be profane, rather than sacred landscapes.

When nineteenth-century New Englanders argued that their contemporaries had betrayed the forefathers' original intent, they laid bare their belief that original meaning was not only discoverable, but plainly evident to the average observer. To them, understanding the founders' values was not a matter of historical investigation. Since the preservationists believed that all decent people throughout history practiced burial customs that were broadly in concert with their own ideals, there was no need to consult primary sources about the meaning and use of burying places in centuries past. Any visitor possessing reasonable intelligence and good intentions could understand all he needed to know just by standing on the sacred soil.

This, then, was history as sympathy, a belief that the past was accessible not through an accumulation of knowledge, but through a shared feeling of purpose. Joseph Story said as much in his Mount Auburn oration:

> The deeds of the great attract but a cold and listless admiration, when they pass in historical order before us like moving shadows. It is the trophy and the monument, which invest them with a substance of local reality. Who, that has stood by the tomb of Washington on the quiet Potomac, has not felt his heart more pure, his wishes more aspiring, his gratitude more warm, and his love of country touched by a holier flame?

[28] Thomas Bridgman, Memorials of the Dead in Boston: Containing Exact Inscriptions on the Sepulchral Monuments in the King's Chapel Burial Ground in the City of Boston (Boston: B.B. Mussey, 1853), 18.

This strain of thought lives on in modern heritage tourism. Every year, more than three million tourists visit the Granary Burying Ground in downtown Boston to kindle their holy flames at the monuments dedicated to Paul Revere, Samuel Adams, and John Hancock.[29] The patriots' bones are long decayed and their gravestones rearranged to make room for walking paths, but no matter. Visitors to the Granary often describe their experience of the landscape in tactile terms: the landscape is "brimming over with history," and they "soak in the history" just by standing in a place with "all that history just oozing out." Joseph Story and his contemporaries would have been glad to know that their tree-planting and path-laying schemes allowed modern visitors to experience the urban burying ground as "a peaceful respite from the hustle and bustle of the surrounding city," where "you come to a peaceful calm very quickly." One 2013 visitor updated Justice Story's language, but not his sentiment: "Seeing it in person is much different than any text book or lecture . . . there is just something uplifting about it all."[30]

For the writers of these testimonials, historic burying grounds offer an immediate connection between past and present. Like Justice Story, they feel themselves "upon the border of two worlds," where the remote dead are made accessible. Pilgrimages to preserved burying grounds are opportunities to forge personal connections with the Founding Fathers. As visitor Jeff M. of Medford, Massachusetts explains,

> Sam Adams, Paul Revere, Peter Faneuil . . . they all still reside here to stop in and say hello. Ok, that's a tad bit creepy but I do kind of have conversations with them in my head, wondering what they would think of 21st century America and how we have changed through the years . . . If you catch yourself on the Freedom Trail, do yourself a favor and stop in for 10 - 15 minutes to say WHADDUP to the Fathers of the Revolution, I'm sure they are still tipping their caps back at you.[31]

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[29] Mimi La Camera, president of the Freedom Trail Foundation, estimates the Granary Burying Ground's annual visitors at 3.1 million. Amanda Cedrone, "Burying Ground Improvements Can Rest," *Boston Globe*, 15 November 2011.

[30] Visitor comments excerpted from Yelp.com reviews of the Granary Burying Ground (Jeremy G. of Humble, TX, 2011; Beth F. of Cincinnati, OH, 2013; Robin Y. of Natick, MA, 2013; Schel H. of Los Angeles, CA, 2014)

[31] Yelp review of Granary Burying Ground, 2013.

Jeff's tone may be irreverent, but his sentiment is widespread. "The Puritans and the Pilgrims may have made their way into the history books, writes Chrysanthemum A. of Napa, California, "but in this place, they are very much with us."[32] Beneath the overwrought prose is an authentic belief that a visit to the burying ground confers special status on the living visitor. Some modern heritage tourists may truly believe that they gain special insight or inspiration through proximity to the Founding Fathers' remains, while others may be self-consciously posturing to signify their political commitments to their more earnest peers. In either case, the visitor claims a benefit from his or her graveyard pilgrimage. Whether this benefit is genuine spiritual uplift or a feeling of moral superiority over a supposedly fallen modernity, visitors carry it with them when they return to the world, feeling themselves "purer, and better, and wiser, from this communion with the dead."

Whatever they are, they are not better historians. For both the nineteenth-century preservationists and the modern heritage tourists quoted here, the main value in New England's colonial-era burying places lies in their potential to bolster the self-narratives of the living, rather than in their usefulness as historical sources. Ironically, the seemingly high level of preservation in historic graveyards undermines observers' willingness to think about them historically. The ability to touch an original gravestone and stand in proximity to the dead shortens the distance between past and present, seducing visitors into believing that their subjective experiences are actually universal and timeless. Unlike a centuries-old pamphlet that trips the modern reader with unfamiliar rhetoric and vocabulary, a burying place can seem both permanent and transparent. What artifact could be more constant than an unmoveable plot of land studded with memorials that are literally carved in stone? What experience does every generation share, if not the loss

[32] Yelp review of Copp's Hill Ground, 2011.

and memorialization of the beloved dead?

But death has its own history, and burying places, too. The graveyards of colonial New England were founded as part of a broader program of reform that challenged the laws and customs of England. For centuries, they have hosted political demonstrations of one kind and another, re-made and re-interpreted to suit the needs of each generation. When the graveyards were still active burying places, those arguments were frequently in favor of change, even outright revolution. Once they stopped accepting the newly dead, they became relics, frequently deployed as bulwarks of continuity against the restless world. But, if the past is truly a foreign country, historic graveyards are phrase-books riddled with false friends. Not only will an unsuspecting visitor blunder about, overestimating his comprehension, he will return home confirmed in his belief that translation is unnecessary.