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The Religious Factor

Religion was one of the principal traits distinguishing the Northern from the Southern colonies. In the South the state-established Church of England tended to be dominant, but the Northern colonies were largely settled by members of churches dissenting from the established church. These Dissenters came to America largely because they desired to create communities in which they could practice their beliefs undisturbed.

The Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century had taken two broadly different paths. In the rising absolute monarchies of Europe, the state gained control over the church within the nation (whether Protestant or Catholic) and found it more consonant with its own power-structure to maintain the episcopal system. On the other hand, independent and decentralized cities and provinces, such as Switzerland and the Netherlands, were the home of far more thoroughgoing reform in religious doctrine and structure. In these (Calvinist) countries, bishops were eliminated and ministers appointed directly by the state.

In England, the church, created as a state church by the Crown, not only maintained episcopacy but was far closer than the Lutherans to Roman Catholic doctrine and practice. Protestantizing reforms were soon introduced into the church, but the Catholic church during the reign of Queen Mary drove the more radical of the reformers to Holland and other Continental centers of advanced Protestant theology and practice. When the Church of England was reestablished under Elizabeth in 1559, the returning reformers found the Anglican church even less reformed than before they had gone into exile. They now concentrated on seeking a purification of religious ceremonies within the Anglican church and were thus called

Puritans. The Puritans came to hold important church and university positions and to exercise a strong influence in the government and in Parliament, but the government soon summarily removed them from their posts. Persecution polarized the Puritans, who began to advocate the purification of the church organization (which had blocked the purification of rites) by eliminating the role of the bishops. Some of the reformers (the Separatists, or Congregationalists) doubted the possibility of reforming the state church from within, and illegally withdrew from attendance at church to organize separate reformed churches, vesting autonomous control in each congregation.

The bulk of the Puritans, however, were influenced by the Calvinist or Presbyterian form of church organization dominant in the Netherlands and parts of Switzerland, where their leaders had lived in exile. In the Presbyterian system, first established at Geneva, each church or congregation was, to be sure, ruled by elders—the preaching elder, or minister, and the ruling elder, or leading layman. But to prevent diversity of doctrine, the congregation selected the minister and elder only with the advice and consent of a synod or consistory of the ministers and elders of the churches of the district. While the role of the leading laymen in the church was high, state officials in Geneva were restricted to church members, and this limited the selection of magistrates to laymen who were under the influence of the ministers. Thus, in contrast to Anglicanism, control of the church was partially replaced by church control of the state. This Presbyterian method of church organization, negating the roles of king and bishops, tended to appeal to the ministers and to the local community oligarchs—nobles, gentry, merchants—whose powers over the people would thus be increased at the expense of their political opposition, the king and his officials. In France, England, Scotland, and the Netherlands a large portion of local political leaders became Calvinist and Presbyterian.

Since the English government strongly punished suspected Calvinists, the Presbyterian organization was not directly introduced into England, and the Puritans, aided by their intellectual center at Cambridge University, spread their beliefs from within the Anglican church, by which they influenced the important groups and industrial populations of London, East Anglia, and the West Country.

When James I succeeded Elizabeth in 1603, one of his earliest problems was to face Puritan demands for reform of the Anglican church. The Millenary Petition, signed by about a thousand Puritan ministers of the Church of England (or about one-tenth of all the clergymen of that church), requested modifications in church ceremonies and protection from governmental persecution. Because of its Presbyterian overtones, the petition was rejected and some three hundred of the Puritan clergymen were removed from their positions in the Church of England. The majority of the Puritan clergy, however, continued to conform outwardly to Anglican church ceremonies, in order to continue their reform movement undis-

turbed. In contrast, some of the Separatists or Congregationalists who had already left the Church of England decided they could no longer bear the persecution and fled England. As Pilgrims, they went to the Netherlands in 1608.

Let us now return to colonization in the early seventeenth century. We remember that the earliest English settlement in America was founded by the London, or "South Virginia," Company in 1606. The "North Virginia," or Plymouth, Company had been granted the American territory from the forty-first to the forty-fifth parallel. The Plymouth Company had landed an expedition in Maine in 1607, but it was forced to return home the following year and then sunk into desuetude. In 1620, Sir Ferdinando Gorges, a favorite of King James, was anxious to secure a monopoly of the fisheries on the northern American coast. To this end, Gorges secured from the king a new charter. Replacing the Plymouth Company was the Council for New England, now completely separate from Virginia, and the territory actually granted to the company was greatly extended to include the land between the fortieth and the forty-eighth parallels. President of the Council was the Duke of Buckingham, an unpopular favorite of King James, and leading members were Sir Ferdinando Gorges and the Earls of Pembroke, Lenox, and Southampton. The Council was granted powers of rule, the subgranting of land in the territory, and a monopoly of shipping on the New England coasts and therefore, implicitly, a monopoly of the fishing rights.

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The Founding of Plymouth Colony

The mere granting of land by the Crown did not yet create a settlement. The first successful settlement in New England was something of an accident. By 1617 the Pilgrims had determined to leave the Netherlands, where their youth were supposedly being corrupted by the "licentiousness" of even the Calvinist Dutch, who, for example, persisted in enjoying the Sabbath as a holiday rather than bearing it as a penance. Deciding to settle in America, the Pilgrims were offered an opportunity to settle in New Netherland, but preferred to seek a patent from the South Virginia Company, which would provide an English atmosphere in which to raise their children. The Pilgrims formed a partnership in a joint-stock company with a group of London merchants, including Thomas Weston, an ironmonger, and John Peirce, a clothmaker. The company, John Peirce and Associates, received in 1620 a grant from the Virginia Company for a particular plantation in Virginia territory. In this alliance, each adult settler was granted a share in the joint-stock company, and each investment of 10 pounds also received a share. At the end of seven years, the accumulated earnings were to be divided among the shareholders. Until that division, as in the original Virginia settlement, the company decreed a communistic system of production, with each settler contributing his all to the common store and each drawing his needs from it—again, a system of from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.

Just over a hundred colonists sailed from England on the *Mayflower* in September 1620. Of these, only forty-one were Pilgrims, from Leyden, Holland; eighteen were indentured servants, bound as slaves for seven

years to their masters; and the others were largely Anglicans from England, seeking economic opportunity in the New World.

Bound supposedly for the mouth of the Hudson River, the *Mayflower* decided instead to land along what is now the Massachusetts coast—outside Virginia territory. Some of the indentured servants began to grow restive, logically maintaining that since the settlement would not be made, as had been agreed, in Virginia territory, they should be released from their contracts. "They would use their own liberty, for none had power to command them." To forestall this rebellion against servitude, the bulk of the colonists, and especially the Pilgrims, decided to establish a government immediately, even though on shipboard. No possible period without governmental rule was to be permitted to the colonists. The Pilgrim minority straightway formed themselves on shipboard into a "body politic" in the *Mayflower* Compact, enabling them to perpetuate their rule over the other majority colonists. This, the first form of government in the New World established by colonists themselves, was by no means a gesture of independence from England; it was an emergency measure to maintain the Pilgrim control over the servants and other settlers.

In mid-December 1620 the *Mayflower* landed at Plymouth. In a duplication of the terrible hardships of the first Virginia settlers, half of the colonists were dead by the end of the first winter. In mid-1621 John Peirce and Associates obtained a patent from the Council for New England, granting the company 100 acres of land for each settler and 1,500 acres compulsorily reserved for public use. In return, the Council was to receive a yearly quitrent of two shillings per 100 acres.

A major reason for the persistent hardships, for the "starving time," in Plymouth as before in Jamestown, was the communism imposed by the company. Finally, in order to survive, the colony in 1623 permitted each family to cultivate a small private plot of land for their individual use. William Bradford, who had become governor of Plymouth in 1621, and was to help rule the colony for thirty years thereafter, eloquently describes the result in his record of the colony:

All this while no supply was heard of. . . . So they began to think how they might raise as much corn as they could, and obtain a better crop than they had done, that they might not still thus languish in misery. At length . . . the Governor (with the advice of the chiefest among them) gave way that they should set corn every man for his own particular, and in that regard trust to themselves. . . . And so assigned to every family a parcel of land . . . for that end, only for present use. . . . This had very good success, for it made all hands very industrious, so as much more corn was planted than otherwise would have been by any means the Governor or any other could use, and saved him a great deal of trouble, and gave far better content. The women now went willingly into the field, and took their little ones with them to set corn; which before would allege weakness and inability; whom to have compelled would have been thought great tyranny and oppression.

The experience that was had in this common course and condition, tried sundry years and that amongst godly and sober men, may well evince the vanity of that conceit of Plato's . . . that the taking away of property and bringing community into a commonwealth would make them happy and flourishing. . . . For this community . . . was found to breed much confusion and discontent and retard much employment that would have been to their benefit and comfort. For the young men, that were most able and fit for labour and service, did repine that they should spend their time and strength to work for other men's wives and children without any recompense. The strong . . . had no more in division of victuals and clothes than he that was weak and not able to do a quarter the other could; this was thought injustice. . . . Upon . . . all being to have alike, and all to do alike, they thought . . . one as good as another, and so . . . did . . . work diminish . . . the mutual respects that should be preserved amongst men. . . . Let none object this is men's corruption . . . all men have this corruption in them. . . .*

The antipathy of communism to the nature of man here receives eloquent testimony from a governor scarcely biased *a priori* in favor of individualism.

Plymouth was destined to remain a small colony. By 1630 its population was still less than four hundred. Its government began in the Mayflower Compact, with the original signers forming an Assembly for making laws, choosing a governor, and admitting people to freemen's citizenship. The governor had five assistants, elected also by the freemen. This democratic setup signified a very loose control of the colony by the Peirce company, which wanted to accelerate the growth of the colony, and saw the Pilgrim dominance as an obstacle to such growth. Religious exclusiveness in a colony necessarily hampers its growth; we have seen that Lord Baltimore soon abandoned the idea of Maryland as an exclusively Catholic colony in order to encourage its rapid development. Thus, persecution of non-Separatists for playing ball on Sunday and for daring to observe Christmas as a holiday was hardly calculated to stimulate the growth of the colony.

To inject some variety into the colony, the English merchants therefore sent the Rev. John Lyford, a Puritan within the Church of England, with a group of colonists to Plymouth. As soon as Lyford began to administer the sacraments according to the Church of England, his correspondence was seized by Governor Bradford, and Lyford and his chief supporter, John Oldham, were tried for "plotting against Pilgrim rule both in respect of their civil and church state." To the charge of Lyford and Oldham that non-Pilgrims were being discouraged from coming to Plymouth, Governor Bradford replied that strangers were perfectly "free" to attend the Pilgrim church as often as they liked. When Bradford spread the stolen letters, critical of the government, upon the record, Oldham angrily called upon the Assembly to revolt against this tyranny, but no one followed his lead. The Reverend Lyford instantly recanted and groveled in his errors before the court.

*William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation, 1620-47* (New York: Knopf, 1952), pp.120-21.

Both men were ordered banished from the colony. Oldham went thirty miles north, with a number of the discontented, to found a settlement at Nantasket (now Hull). Included in this company were Roger Conant and William and Edward Hilton, who shortly traveled further north to join David Thompson, a Scottish trader who had established a settlement at what is now Portsmouth, New Hampshire, at the mouth of the Piscataqua River. The Hiltons were later to found the nearby town of Dover, New Hampshire.

In return for his abasement, the Reverend Lyford was put on six months' probation, but again some critical letters to England were purloined by the government, and this time Lyford was truly expelled and went on to join the Nantasket settlement.

The Pilgrims, however, had not seen the last of the rebellious band. In the spring of 1624, the Pilgrims built a wharf some sixty miles north, on the current site of Gloucester, at Cape Ann in northeastern Massachusetts, only to find the following spring that Lyford, Oldham, and their group had moved there. They had been invited to Gloucester by the Dorchester Company of merchants from western England. The company's founder, the Rev. John White, a Puritan, had already established a fishing village at Gloucester in 1623. Roger Conant was now installed as superintendent of the community, and Lyford became its pastor. Upon returning to Gloucester to find the dissidents established there, the first instinct of Plymouth's military leader, Capt. Miles Standish, was, typically, to demand the surrender of the unwelcome wharf, but cooler heads prevailed and a peaceful compromise was soon reached. The Pilgrims, however, could not make a go of this fishing station and abandoned it at the end of the year.

Upon the bankruptcy of the Dorchester Company the following year, the Conant-Oldham group left Gloucester, and moved fifteen miles down the coast to found the town of Naumkeag, later known as Salem. Lyford was its Anglican minister.

In 1625, Thomas Morton, gentleman lawyer and an agent of Sir Ferdinando Gorges, organized another settlement, Merrymount, north of Plymouth at the present site of Quincy, Massachusetts. Merrymount was an Anglican settlement, and the citizens did not comport themselves in the highly ascetic fashion to which the Plymouth Separatists wished them to conform. Apparently Merrymount was merry indeed, and whiskey and interracial (white-Indian) revelry abounded, including the old Anglican (but denounced by the Pilgrims as pagan) custom of dancing around a maypole, a practice which King James I had urged in his *Book of Sports* (1617). Plymouth had established friendly relations with the Indians, but Merrymount was now threatening to compete most effectively with Plymouth's highly lucrative monopoly of the beaver trade with the Indians. Merrymount was also a place where Morton set his servants free and made them partners in the fur trade, and thus it loomed as a highly attractive haven for runaway servants from Plymouth.

The Pilgrims denounced Morton's colony as a "school of atheism"—"atheism" apparently signifying the use of the Anglican Book of Common Prayer, the maypole, and selling rum and firearms to the Indians (and buying furs in exchange). The sale of rum and firearms was condemned even though relations with the Indians had been perfectly peaceful. Then, in 1628, Plymouth established a virtual New England tradition of persecution by dispatching Captain Standish with an armed troop to eradicate Merrymount. Having surrendered on the promise of safe treatment to himself and the settlement, Morton was assaulted by Standish and his men and almost killed, the Plymouth forces "not regarding any agreement made with such a carnal man." Hauled into a Plymouth court—despite Plymouth's lack of legal jurisdiction over Merrymount—Morton was almost executed; his death was urged at great length by Miles Standish. Finally, he was deported back to England, with Standish still threatening to kill Morton personally before he could leave the colony. Before deportation, Morton was confined alone for over a month of severe winter at the Isles of Shoals without a gun, knife, or proper clothing.

Despite the destruction of Merrymount, and the failure of other attempts at settlement, the 1620s saw several settlements dot the Massachusetts coast. Most important was the Roger Conant group at Naumkeag; another was a settlement at Boston led by the Puritan minister, Rev. William Blackstone.

In 1627 the inherent conflict between colony and company in Plymouth was finally resolved, by the elimination of the company from the scene. In that year, the seven years of enforced communism by the company expired, and all the assets and lands were distributed to the individual shareholders. Grants of land were received in proportion to the size of the stock, so that the larger shareholders received larger gifts of land. This complete replacement of communism by individualism greatly benefited the productivity of the colony. Furthermore, the colonists took the happy occasion to buy up the shares of the Peirce company. Plymouth was now a totally self-governing colony. By 1633 the entire purchase price had been paid and the colonists were freed from the last remnant of company, or indeed of any English, control.

There still remained, of course, the overlord Council for New England. In 1630 the Council granted a new patent to the Plymouth Colony, clearly defining its territory, and recognizing its right to freedom of trading and fishing. But Governor Bradford limited the privileges of trade to the original Pilgrim partners—the Old Comers—and kept the patent in his own possession before relinquishing it in 1641. Plymouth was destined to remain a small colony in which the nominal rulers, the freemen, were rarely consulted, and the governor and the Council imposed an oligarchic rule. But after the Council for New England was dissolved in 1635, Plymouth nevertheless became a fully self-governing colony.

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The Founding of Massachusetts Bay

When the tiny band of Separatists left England in 1608, the great bulk of English Puritans, despite the persecutions of the early part of the reign of James I, were highly confident of their future in England and of the potential for reform within the English church structure. Why then the intense Great Migration only one generation later? What had happened to sap the confidence of the English Puritans?

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, virtually all of England's export trade consisted of unfinished woolen cloths, which were sent to the Netherlands for finishing and dyeing and to be reexported to the north for grain. In the decade following the conclusion of peace with Spain in 1604, the woolen trade, and hence the English economy, flourished. But parliamentary refusal to approve any further taxes in protest against rising taxation, as well as the persecution of Puritan clergy, led, in 1614, to the Crown's dissolution of Parliament. In its search for revenue, the Crown then decided to create new monopolies—and its meddling in the vital wool trade had disastrous results. On the proposal of Alderman Cockayne of the Eastland Company, the government suspended the charter of the Merchant Adventurers (an attempted monopoly in the export of unfinished cloth), and completely prohibited the export of unfinished cloth upon which the prosperity of England rested. Instead, a new charter was granted to a syndicate of Eastland Company and Levant Company merchants in a new company, the King's Merchant Adventurers, which had a legal monopoly of the export of finished and dyed cloth, half the profits of which were to be paid to the Crown.

The English government failed to realize that the English were not technically equipped for finishing and dyeing cloth; the higher costs of finishing wools in England left an open field for the emergence of a new competitive cloth industry on the Continent. As a result, English woolen exports fell by a catastrophic one-third in two years, and the repeal of the prohibition in 1616 could not succeed in reviving the cloth trade. Not only did the tax-crippled English industry have to compete with the low-cost industry of the Continent, but the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War in 1618 brought about a Continent-wide debasement of currencies, a debasement that aided exports from the debasing countries at the expense of such other countries as England. Renewal of war in the Netherlands in 1622 further disrupted the vital market there, and the result was a continuing great depression in England in the twenties, a depression and unemployment concentrated particularly in the cloth-making centers of East Anglia and the West Country.

Fearful of rising political opposition sparked by the depression, the government tried desperately to relieve the victims of the depression by maintaining wage rates at a high level and keeping failing companies in operation. The result was only to prolong and intensify the depression the government was trying to cure: artificially high wage rates deepened unemployment in the clothing centers and imposed higher costs on an already high-cost industry; propping up of inefficient producers wasted more capital and ruined their creditors; and the domination of inefficient monopoly companies was tightened at the very time when the industry's salvation could only come from freer competition and escape from the taxation and regulation of government. The overcapitalized monopoly companies were especially hard hit by the depression; the East India and Muscovy companies defaulted to their creditors, and the Virginia Company's difficulties resulting from the government's monopoly of tobacco sales led to its dissolution. Hence the royal assumption of power over the Virginia colony.

One growing light on the economic horizon was the exportation of the lightweight "new draperies," produced free from government control, and over which no monopoly company held sway. Export trade in these new draperies was developing in southern Europe by the 1620s. The contrast in the fortunes of the two branches of cloth trade was too great to be ignored—the connection between free trade and economic growth, and between privileges and decline was becoming evident to contemporaries.

In successive Parliaments the representatives of the people demanded freedom in economic and political affairs and the termination of the government's restrictions, monopolies, and taxes that had brought about the depression engulfing the country. The government responded characteristically by imprisoning the opposition leaders, such as Sir Edwin Sandys and Lord Saye and Sele, for advocating free trade, radicalism, and interference with tax collection. The Parliament of 1624 presented a list

of grievances in protest against the moratoria issued to debtors against their creditors, against the increases in government officials and expenses, against extraordinary tariffs and taxes, against the government's use of informers and enforcement of regulations and controls, and against the monopoly trading companies, which were popularly regarded simply as gangs of thieves, from the East India Company to the Council for New England. The Parliament concluded by passing the Act Against Monopolies, by which all monopolies were outlawed and all proclamations furthering them prohibited. Unlike the depression of the 1550s, which had led to the unquestioned creation of monumental government controls over the economy, the depression of the 1620s witnessed an attempt toward liberalization by removing the regulations that had caused the crisis. The movement for the abolition of the government's monopolies and regulations became a major part of the seventeenth-century constitutional struggle in England, and had a significant influence on the American colonists, whose migration was a fruit of the government's controls.

However clear the principles of liberalism had become, the struggle for their realization in the seventeenth century had hardly begun. The accession of Charles I to the throne in March 1625 ushered in a period of conflict that was to span the mid-seventeenth century. The financial difficulties of the new government were greatly increased when England decided to enter the Thirty Years' War by attacking Spain in 1625.

The English government had remained behind the scenes in the early phases of the war, acting through diplomacy and subsidies, despite the pressure of Puritan opinion for greater aid to the Calvinist forces of Germany, which had gone to war with Austria, and to the United Provinces, which had renewed the war with Spain and had suffered heavy defeats by the two Hapsburg powers. When the English government intervened in an alliance of the Lutheran powers of northern Europe with the anti-Hapsburg Catholic powers of southern Europe, it tried to use the excitement of war preparations as a convenient means of gaining taxes from Parliament. However, the Parliament refused to be stampeded by the crisis of European Protestant fortunes, and refused to vote taxes until the government had redressed grievances, especially in church reform. For the major authority in government on ecclesiastical matters was Rev. William Laud, archbishop of Canterbury, who strongly opposed Puritanism in doctrine and in practice, and who had embarked upon a policy of eliminating all churchmen suspected of Puritan sympathies and promoting those whose theology and devotions the Puritans considered Catholic in origin.

The persecution of the Puritan clergy was matched by imprisonment of the opposition leaders and of merchants who refused to pay the taxes that Parliament had refused to approve. Moreover, the people were conscripted or had soldiers quartered in their homes if they refused to pay these taxes. It was this climate of increasing religious and political

persecution placed on top of the continuing economic depression that led the Rev. John White, a mildly Puritan minister from Dorchester and founder of the Dorchester Company, to revive the project of a settlement on the coast of New England. A settlement was projected to form a colony of West Country Puritans who would find refuge without having to submit to the tyranny of the religious and social conformity of the Separatists at Plymouth. Surely if the relatively humble Separatists could succeed in America, the far wealthier and more powerful Puritans could succeed all the more. The old Dorchester Company was bankrupt, but in 1628 White formed the New England Company with other Puritans and with old Dorchester associates, and secured a grant from the Council for New England of all the land between three miles south of the Charles River (which runs through Boston) and three miles north of the Merrimack (now the Massachusetts–New Hampshire border). Immediately John Endecott and a major financier of the company, Matthew Cradock, were sent out, with settlers, to take control of the Naumkeag settlement—by then renamed Salem—and for Endecott to supersede Conant as governor.

John Endecott's idea of rule was that God had chosen him as "a fit instrument" for establishing a new Canaan for the chosen people by rooting out all lesser folk, red and white, preferably by means of the pillory and the whipping post. His major struggle was to cripple the livelihood of the old settlers by prohibiting their tobacco culture and beaver trade, turning these over to the New England Company. The "old planters" could only protest in vain that they were becoming slaves to a monopoly company.

During the spring of 1629, still harder-line Puritans immigrated to the New England colony, and their ministers established a quasi-Separatist church based on a congregational covenant. Old planters who refused to go this far from the Church of England and embrace the covenant were persecuted by Endecott as "libertines," and some were deported to England, where the Rev. John White tried vainly to protect them. Many of the old planters expelled from Salem by Endecott moved to Rev. William Blackstone's settlement at Boston and Charlestown.

Migration under the New England Company was small, but the rush of events soon intensified Puritan desires to seek a haven in the New World. Having added a war against France in 1627 to the conflict with Spain, the Crown was obliged to call Parliament into session to provide financing for the war effort. But Parliament took the occasion to present a petition of its grievances to be met before voting taxes for the king's adventures. The Petition of Right (June 1628) denounced taxation without consent of Parliament, arbitrary arrests without benefit of habeas corpus, and the quartering of the government's soldiers upon the people. Insistence upon these libertarian demands before supply of revenue led to the king's dissolution of Parliament in March 1629 and to the Crown's arrest of the leaders of the opposition.

Thus, English Puritans faced the gloomy prospect of greatly intensified repression at home, at the hands of the absolute royal power and its prerogative courts (of the High Commission and the Star Chamber). Puritan gloom was further deepened by the aggravated plight of their fellow Calvinists on the European continent. England's military operations against France and Spain had failed, especially in trying to relieve the French Huguenots (Calvinists) besieged by the French Crown at La Rochelle; the Huguenots were forced to surrender to the French forces in October 1628. Early the following year, the Protestant powers in Germany concluded a humiliating peace issuing from the almost uninterrupted string of losses they had suffered in the first decade of the Thirty Years' War. Finally, the Calvinist United Provinces in the Netherlands were undergoing serious losses at the hands of the Spanish army. Thus, everywhere in Europe the Catholic powers were triumphant, and the Protestants suffering losses. As the Puritan leader John Winthrop concluded, during 1629, "All other Churches in Europe are brought to desolation, and it cannot be but the like judgment is coming upon us." A secure sanctuary in America seemed to be vital for Puritan survival.

Seeing their plight, the Puritans were able to persuade Charles I to grant a royal charter in March 1629 to the Massachusetts Bay Company, the more powerful successor of the New England Company. Coincidentally, the charter was granted just four days after King Charles' dissolution of Parliament. The old unincorporated company had now become an incorporated body politic with power to govern its granted territory. The old grant of land was reconfirmed. The new company was to appoint the governor, deputy governor, and council, and make laws for its settlers. The company promptly sent out a fleet of colonists to Salem. With the arrival of this fleet, Salem immediately attained to a larger size than the decade-old Plymouth Colony (by 1630 the Massachusetts Bay colony totaled a little over five hundred people).

Massachusetts Bay Company and colony, however, developed far more rapidly than their founders had foreseen, thanks to the unexpectedly overwhelming interest in emigration among the Puritans of East Anglia. The East Anglians were the most numerous and most extreme of the English Puritans, reaching virtually the point of Separatism from the Church of England. As dedicated Puritans, the East Anglians had been embittered by Archbishop Laud's anti-Puritan movement within the Church of England, and by a widespread growth of a liberal Dutch theology in the universities and among the upper classes, a theology stressing free will and religious toleration. Such doctrines were highly suspect to the Calvinist Puritans bent upon predestination and extirpation of heresy. For a long while, however, the East Anglians had been indifferent to the emigration movement, for East Anglia had not been as widely hit by the depression of the 1620s as had the West Country and other manufacturing centers in England. The reason for the relative prosperity was that East Anglia was

the center for the production of the lighter new draperies, which had not been crippled by taxation, monopoly privilege, or stringent state regulation. However, the wars with France and Spain interrupted the markets for East Anglian textiles while moving the state, in its frantic search for revenue, to bring taxes and controls upon the new-drapery industry. Production of new draperies in East Anglia dropped by a startling two-thirds between 1628 and 1631, and tens of thousands of spinners and weavers were thrown out of work, increasing the poor-tax burdens upon the country farmers and gentry. Riots and disorders by the workmen made things still worse; they led the government to impose further taxes and minimum-wage rates upon the manufacturers, to force merchants to buy textiles, and to prohibit export competition with the monopoly companies. With sudden economic distress and injustice added to unwelcome political and religious trends, the Puritans of East Anglia were now ripe for mass emigration.

A decisive conference of Puritans took place at the Puritans' intellectual center, Cambridge University, at the end of August 1629. In the Cambridge Agreement, a group of Puritan leaders from East Anglia agreed to join the Massachusetts Bay Company and to immigrate to America if the officers were to be chosen solely from immigrants to New England, and if the company charter were to be carried with them to the New World. Moreover, the Puritan stockholders remaining in England agreed to sell all their shares in the company to the emigrants; the Massachusetts Bay Company could now be completely located in New England as a self-governing Puritan colony. This was a legal action, because the Puritans had cleverly persuaded the king not to specify the location of the company in the charter. John Winthrop, a leading East Anglian attorney was appointed governor of the company and John Humphrey, brother-in-law of the highly influential Earl of Lincoln, deputy governor. When Humphrey decided to remain in England, he was replaced by Thomas Dudley, the steward of the Earl of Lincoln. Although the Rev. John White did send some West Country Puritans to Salem during 1630, the vast bulk of the great Puritan exodus of the 1630s—the Great Migration—came from East Anglia.* The Great Migration of Puritans began immediately, and seventeen ships sailed from England in 1630 alone. They settled not only in Salem, but all along the Massachusetts coast, founding such towns as Watertown, Roxbury, Dorchester, Medford, and Newtown (later Cambridge). During the 1630s, from 20,000 to 25,000 people immigrated to Massachusetts; by 1640, 9,000 remained (deducting emigration from Massachusetts back home or to other lands), while only 1,000 people lived in Plymouth.

Thus, by 1630 the two New England colonies, Plymouth and Massa-

*It must be noted that by no means all of the great wave of Puritan emigrants from East Anglia in the 1630s chose to go to Massachusetts Bay. A greater number moved to Barbados, other West Indian islands, and Ireland.

chusetts Bay, had managed to win for themselves virtual self-governing status, independent of English control. Like Virginia, the New England colonies began as chartered companies. But the Virginia Company continued to rule the colony from England, being finally expropriated and superseded by the Crown in 1620. The New England settlements, in contrast, were strongly impelled by religious motives. Hence, the Plymouth Pilgrims and Separatists were only loosely controlled by the parent company, and soon bought out that company completely, while the Puritan Massachusetts Bay Company transferred itself to, and completely blended with, the colony in America.

According to the Massachusetts Bay charter, the governor, deputy governor, and Council of Assistants were to be elected by the whole body of stockholders or "freemen." This sounds highly democratic on paper, but the stumblingblock was that only twelve stockholders migrated to America, and all were officers of the colony. Since any new freemen had to be selected by the existing freemen, the natural tendency was to perpetuate a closed oligarchy and to select few new members. Rumblings of popular resistance occurred as early as the fall of 1630, when 109 settlers petitioned to be made freemen of the company. The freemen gave in to this request, but completely vitiated its effect by mendaciously claiming that the charter had put all power into the hands of the Council of Assistants, who could choose the governor and deputy governor and make all the laws. Moreover, the assistants were to hold office permanently, on good behavior. The *only* function of the body of freemen, it was alleged, was filling vacancies in the council. By thus failing to show the freemen the text of the charter, a dozen Puritan oligarchs managed to keep absolute control of the colony's affairs for great lengths of time. In addition, though in violation of the charter, only Puritans were admitted to the body of freemen, thus insuring domination of the churches and the broad body politic by the church elders.

From the beginning, the authorities had trouble from the newly burgeoning smaller towns. At the beginning of 1631, a tax of sixty pounds was levied upon each settlement, to pay for frontier forts at Newtown. The inhabitants of Watertown promptly refused to pay the tax, assessed by the Council of Assistants, on the great old English ground that no community may be taxed without its own consent. As the Watertown protesters eloquently declared: "It was not safe to pay moneys after that sort, for fear of bringing themselves and posterity into bondage." Here was the first tax strike in America, long anticipating the episode in Surry, Virginia. In 1632 the government bowed to the strike—after an apology was extracted from the resisters and the freemen assumed the power to elect the governor and the assistants (though the governor had to be chosen from the ranks of the assistants), and also to make tax levies. Or rather, this power was assumed by the *representatives* of the freemen—direct democracy now being held impractical in the large colony—and two

deputies were elected from each town in Massachusetts. For over a decade, the deputies and the assistants sat in the same house of the legislature (the General Court), but then separated into two houses of that court.

During the following year, political conflicts intensified in the colony as opinion polarized two camps: Thomas Dudley, backed by the elders, accused Governor Winthrop of "leniency," and of being negligent in instituting the absolute and complete "tyranny of the Lord-Brethren." Dudley called, characteristically, for "heavier fines, severer whippings, more frequent banishments." On the other hand, many of the freemen continued to grow restive at the oligarchical rule, and the leading Puritan divine, Rev. Thomas Hooker, arrived in Massachusetts to stand aghast and protest at the tyranny of the colony's magistrates.

The struggle came to a head in 1634. A paper by Israel Stoughton denounced the government oligarchy for monopolizing power: "They made the laws, disposed lands, raised monies, punished offenders, etc. at their discretion; neither did the people know the portent. . . ." The magistrates responded by burning the paper, but the argument would not thus be stifled. Finally a committee from each of the eight towns in Massachusetts Bay sent representatives to insist on the opening of the hitherto secret charter for the colony. When they then discovered that the lawmaking power was fully and legally vested in the freemen rather than in the assistants, the General Court from then on assumed full jurisdiction for the making of laws. The magistrates made sure, however, that not the *total* body of freemen, but the more malleable deputies in the General Court were actually to make the laws.

For a while, the General Court—especially the deputies in the lower house—was furious at the lengthy betrayal, and, led by Israel Stoughton as speaker of the deputies, it deposed Winthrop as governor and levied fines on some of the assistants. But the number of freemen was still restricted to Puritan church members by an act of 1631, and a law five years later prohibited any new churches from existing in the colony without securing the consent of the authorities. The loosening of the oligarchic rule in Massachusetts was therefore not very great. Indeed, Dudley, who had replaced Winthrop as governor, quickly prohibited Stoughton from any public office for a three-year period. Soon the General Court was all too happy to return Winthrop to office and depose Dudley.

A threat of English overlordship vanished in 1635 upon the dissolution of the Council for New England. The Council had failed financially; its doom had been assured when its fishing monopoly off the English coast was disallowed by the Crown. Sir Ferdinando Gorges and his associates still tried to menace the colony by proposing that the territory of New England be parceled out to individual proprietors in the Council. Gorges also tried his best to have the Massachusetts charter revoked.

The Crown, indeed, was thinking along similar lines. England was getting very worried about the virtual independence of Massachusetts

Bay. In 1634 the lords commissioners for Foreign Plantations in General, as Privy Council committee under the chairmanship of the formidable Archbishop Laud, moved firmly against the colony. Authorized to control the colonies as well as emigration, the commission moved, in the spring of 1635, to revoke the charter of the Massachusetts Bay Company in the courts. The English courts severely rebuked the officer of the Massachusetts colony for not appearing at the trial, and decided to revoke the colony's charter in 1637. Massachusetts prepared to arm to repel an English attack, but it was saved from such a confrontation by the beginnings of the Puritan Revolution the following year, a revolution that hopelessly distracted the English government from Massachusetts affairs for fully a generation.

20

The Puritans "Purify": Theocracy in Massachusetts

The Puritans had no sooner landed in the New World than they began coercively to "purify" their surroundings. As early as John Endecott's arrival in Salem, the Puritans had surprisingly shifted from their loyal opposition within the Anglican church and had severed themselves from the Anglican communion. In this way, they became to a large extent as Separatist as the Plymouth Pilgrims they had previously despised. This act of separation was accomplished in 1629, with Francis Higginson and Samuel Skelton as the guiding ministers. Two Puritan members of the Council, John and Samuel Browne, balked at this radical departure from Puritan beliefs, and moved to form an Anglican church of their own. This prompted the government to move quickly, in the first act of "purifying" the colony's spiritual atmosphere. Governor Endecott protested that the Brownes' speeches and activities were "tending to mutiny and faction," and promptly deported them to England—thus serving notice that any Anglican worship in Massachusetts would be speedily prosecuted.

The Puritans also proceeded to the final destruction of Thomas Morton's ill-starred Merrymount colony. For Morton, in 1629, had indeed reestablished his colony of the interracial frolic, the Anglican maypole, and brisk and efficient trade in Indian furs that competed with Massachusetts Bay. Massachusetts offered to share the Bay Company's fur trading monopoly with Morton, but the highly efficient Morton refused to do so, judging that he could easily outcompete the Massachusetts monopoly. This he did, far outstripping Massachusetts in the fur trade by over six to one. This the colony could not tolerate, and Captain Littleworth was sent to Merrymount with an armed troop. Littleworth cut down the maypole, burned

Morton's house and confiscated his property, and proceeded to destroy the settlement. Morton was charged by the authorities with "alienating" the Indians—the reverse of the fact—and was again deported to England.

Back in England, the embittered Morton protested his persecution and worked for Gorges in trying to void the Plymouth and Massachusetts patents, but to no avail. Years later, returning to Massachusetts, the poverty-stricken Morton was heavily fined, was imprisoned for a year by the authorities, and died in Maine shortly after his release.

The Massachusetts colony was organized in towns. The church congregation of each town selected its minister. Unlike the thinly populated, extensive settlement of Virginia, the clustering in towns was ideal for having the minister and his aides keep watch on all the inhabitants. Although the congregation selected the minister, the town government paid his salary; in contrast to the poorly paid clergy of the Southern colonies, the salary was handsome indeed. Out of it the minister could maintain several slaves or indentured servants and amass a valuable library. The minister—himself a government official—exerted enormous political influence in the community, and only someone whom he certified as "godly" was likely to gain elected office. The congregation was ruled, not democratically by the members, but rather by its council of elders. Also highly important was the minister who functioned as "church teacher," specializing in doctrinal matters.

Since only church members could vote in political elections, the requirements for admission became a matter of concern for every inhabitant. These requirements were rigorous. For one thing, the candidate had to satisfy the minister and elders of his complete adherence to pure doctrine and of his satisfactory personal conduct. And, once admitted, he was always subject to expulsion for deviations in either area.

As the years wore on, the rule of the oligarchy tended to tighten and purify further, so that a lower proportion of the colony was admitted to church membership. The Puritan leaders made strenuous efforts to exclude the "unsanctified" from the colony. Thus, in 1636 the town of Boston outlawed any person's entertaining strangers for more than two weeks, without obtaining permission from the town government. Salem went one better by hiring an inspector "to go from house to house . . . once a month to inquire what strangers . . . have thrust themselves into the town." To quicken his incentive for snooping, he was rewarded with the fines levied against those whose crime in entertaining "strangers" he had uncovered. In 1637 the Massachusetts government imposed this outlawing of hospitality on all towns, and it was now illegal for any town to permit a stranger to move there without the consent of high government officials. As the years went on, however, and the colony grew, the authorities were forced by the need for labor to admit servants, apprentices, sailors, and artisans, who did not necessarily belong to the body of Puritan "saints."

To the saints and their leaders, any idea of separation of church and state was anathema. As the Puritan synod put it in their *Platform of Church Discipline* (1648): "It is the duty of the magistrate to take care of matters of religion. . . . The end of the magistrate's office is . . . godliness." It is the duty of the magistrate to punish and repress "idolatry, blasphemy, heresy, venting corrupt and pernicious opinions . . . open contempt of the word preached, profanation of the Lord's Day. . . ." Should any congregation dare to "grow schismatical" or "walk incorrigibly or obstinately in any corrupt way of their own," the magistrate was to "put forth his coercive power." And if the state was to be the strong coercive arm of the church, so the church, in turn, was to foster in the public the duty of obedience to the state rulers: "Church government furthereth the people in yielding more hearty . . . obedience unto the civil government." From this attitude, it followed for the Puritan that any rebel against the civil government was a "rebel and traitor" to God, and of course any criticism of, let alone rebellion against, Puritan rule was also a sin against God, the author of the plan for Puritan hegemony. So insistent indeed were the Puritans on the duty of obedience to civil government that the *content* of its decrees became almost irrelevant. As Rev. John Davenport, a leading Puritan divine, put it: "You must submit to the rulers' authority, and perform all duties to them whom you have chosen . . . whether they be good or bad, by virtue of their relation between them and you." Naturally, John Winthrop, who helped govern Massachusetts for twenty years after its inception, agreed with this sentiment. To Winthrop, natural liberty was a "wild beast," while correct civil liberty meant being properly subjected to authority and restrained by "God's ordinances."

Perhaps the bluntest expression of the Puritan ideal of theocracy was the Rev. Nathaniel Ward's *The Simple Cobbler of Aggawam in America* (1647). Returning to England to take part in the Puritan ferment there, this Massachusetts divine was horrified to find the English Puritans too soft and tolerant, too willing to allow a diversity of opinion in society. The objective of both church and state, Ward declaimed, was to coerce virtue, to "preserve unity of spirit, faith and ordinances, to be all like-minded, of one accord; every man to take his brother into his Christian care . . . and by no means to permit heresies or erroneous opinions." Ward continued:

God does nowhere in His word tolerate Christian States to give toleration to such adversaries of His truth, if they have power in their hands to suppress them . . . He that willingly assents to toleration of varieties of religion . . . his conscience will tell him he is either an atheist or a heretic or a hypocrite, or at best captive to some lust. Poly-piety is the greatest impiety in the world. . . . To authorize an untruth by a toleration of State is to build a sconce against the walls of heaven, to batter God out of His chair.

And so the Puritan ministry stood at the apex of rule in Massachusetts, ever

ready to use the secular arm to enforce its beliefs against critics and false prophets, or even against simple lapses from conformity.

To enforce purity of doctrine upon society, the Puritans needed a network of schools throughout the colony to indoctrinate the younger generation. The Southern colonies' individualistic attitude toward education was not to be tolerated. Also, the clusters of town settlements made schools far more feasible than it did among the widely scattered rural population of the Southern colonies. The first task was a college, to graduate suitably rigorous ministers, and to train schoolmasters for lower schools. And so the Massachusetts General Court established a college in Cambridge in 1636 (named Harvard College the following year), appropriating 400 pounds for its support. In a few years, after schoolmasters had been trained, a network of grammar schools was established throughout the colony. In 1647, the government required every town to create and keep in operation a grammar school. Thus, Massachusetts forged a network of governmental schools to indoctrinate the younger generation in Puritan orthodoxy. The master was chosen, and his salary paid, by the town government, and, of course, crucial to selecting a master was the minister's intensive inquiry into his doctrinal and behavioral purity. Indeed, in 1654 Massachusetts made it illegal for any town to continue in their posts any teachers "that have manifested themselves unsound in the faith or scandalous in their lives." To feed the network of grammar schools, the colony, in 1645, compelled each town to provide a schoolmaster to teach reading and writing.

There would be no point to government schools for indoctrinating the masses, if there were no masses to be indoctrinated. Vital to the system, therefore, was a law compelling every child in the colony to be educated. This was put through in 1642—the first compulsory education law in America—and was in contrast to the system of voluntary education then prevailing in England and in the Southern colonies. Parents ignoring the law were fined, and wherever government officials judged the parents or guardians to be unfit to have the children educated properly, the government was empowered to seize the children and apprentice them out to others.

One of the essential goals of Puritan rule was strict and rigorous enforcement of the ascetic Puritan conception of moral behavior. But since men's actions, given freedom to express their choices, are determined by their inner convictions and values, compulsory moral rules only serve to manufacture hypocrites and not to advance genuine morality. Coercion only forces people to change their actions; it does not *persuade* people to change their underlying values and convictions. And since those already convinced of the moral rules would abide by them without coercion, the *only* real impact of compulsory morality is to engender hypocrites, those whose actions no longer reflect their inner convictions. The Puritans, however,

did not boggle at this consequence. A leading Puritan divine, the Rev. John Cotton, went so far as to maintain that hypocrites who merely conform to the church rules without inner conviction could still be useful church members. As to the production of hypocrites, Cotton complacently declared: "If it did so, yet better to be hypocrites than profane persons. Hypocrites give God part of his due, the outward man, but the profane persons giveth God neither outward nor inward man."

One requisite for the efficient enforcement of any code of behavior is always an effective espionage apparatus of informers. This apparatus was supplied in Massachusetts, informally but no less effectively, by the dedicated snooping of friends and neighbors upon one another, with detailed reports sent to the minister on all deviations, including the sin of idleness. The clustering of towns around central villages aided the network, and the fund of personal information collected by each minister added to his great political power. Moreover, the menace of excommunication was redoubled by the threat of corollary secular punishment.

Informal snooping, however, was felt by some of the towns to be too haphazard, and these set up a regular snooping officialdom. These officers were called "tithing men," as each one had supervision over the private affairs of his ten nearest neighbors.

One Puritan moral imperative was strict observance of the Sabbath: any worldly pleasures indulged in on the Sabbath were a grave offense against both church and state. The General Court was shocked to learn, in the late 1650s, that some people, residents as well as strangers, persisted in "uncivilly walking in the streets and fields" on Sunday, and even "travelling from town to town" and drinking at inns. And so the General Court duly passed a law prohibiting the crimes of "playing, uncivil walking, drinking and travelling from town to town" on Sunday. If these criminals could not pay the fine imposed, they were to be whipped by the constable at a maximum rate of five lashes per ten-shilling fine. To enforce the regulations and prevent the crimes, the gates of the towns were closed on Sunday and no one permitted to leave. And if two or more people met accidentally on the street on a Sunday, they were quickly dispersed by the police. Nor was the Sabbath in any sense a hasty period. Under the inspiration of the Rev. John Cotton, the New England Sabbath began rigorously at sunset Saturday evening and continued through Sunday night, thus ensuring that no part of the weekend could be spent in enjoyment. Indeed, enjoyment at *any* time, while not legally prohibited, was definitely frowned upon, levity being condemned as "inconsistent with the gravity to be always preserved by a serious Christian."

Kissing one's wife in public on a Sunday was also outlawed. A sea captain, returning home on a Sunday morning from a three-year voyage, was indiscreet enough to kiss his wife on the doorstep. For this he was forced to sit in the stocks for two hours for this "lewd and unseemly behavior on the Sabbath Day."

Not only were nonreligious activities outlawed on Sundays, but attendance at a Puritan church was compulsory as well. Fines were levied for absence from church, and the police were ordered to search through the towns for absentees and forcibly haul them to church. Falling asleep in church was also outlawed and whipping was the punishment for repeated offenses.

Gambling of any kind was strictly forbidden. The law declared: "Nor shall any person at any time play or game for any money . . . upon penalty of forfeiting treble the value thereof, one half to the party informing and the other half to the treasury." Yet, as so often happens in this world, what was so sternly prohibited to *private* individuals was permitted to government. Thus, government was permitted to raise revenue for itself by running lotteries. To government, in short, was given the compulsory monopoly of the gambling and lottery business. Cards and dice were, of course, prohibited as gambling. Also prohibited, however, were games of skill at public houses, such as bowling and shuffleboard, such activities being considered a waste of time by the people's self-appointed moral guardians in the government.

Idleness, in fact, was not just a sin, but also a punishable misdemeanor—at any time, not only on Sunday. If the constable discovered anyone, singly or in groups, engaged in such heinous behavior as coasting on the ice, swimming, or sneaking a quiet smoke, he was ordered to report to the magistrate. Time, it seems, was God's gift and therefore always to be used in His service. A sin against God's time was a crime against the church and state.

Drinking, oddly enough, was not completely outlawed, but drunkenness was, and subject to a fine. The practice of drinking toasts was outlawed in 1639, because of its supposedly pagan origin and because, once a man has begun to drink a toast, he is on the road to perdition; "drunkenness, uncleanness, and other sins quickly follow." And yet the stern guardians of the public morality had their troubles, for decades later we find ministerial complaints that the "heathenish and idolatrous practice of health-drinking is too frequent."

Women and children, as might be expected, were treated extremely harshly by the Puritan commonwealth. Children were regarded as the virtually absolute property of their parents, and this property claim was rigorously enforced by the state. If any child be disobedient to his parents, any magistrate could haul him into court, and punish the little criminal with a maximum of ten lashes for each offense. Should the pattern of disobedience persist into adolescence, the parents, as provided by the law of 1646, were supposed to bring the youth to the magistrate. If convicted of the high crime of stubbornness and rebelliousness, the son was to be duly executed. Happily, it is likely that this particular law, on the books for over thirty years, was rarely, if ever, put into effect by the parents.

Women were viewed as instruments of Satan by the Puritans, and

severe laws were passed outlawing women's apparel that was either immodest or so showy as to indicate the sin of "pride of raiment." "Immodesty" included the wearing of short-sleeved dresses, "whereby the nakedness of the arm may be discovered"—a practice duly outlawed in 1656.

In outlawing "pride of raiment," women were not discriminated against by the Puritans; men too felt the heavy arm of the state. In 1634 the General Court began the practice of outlawing finery of dress for either sex, including "immodest fashions . . . with any lace on it, silver, gold or thread," hat bands, belts, ruffs, beaver hats, and many other items of adornment. In 1639 more items of sin were added: for example, ribbons, shoulder bands, and cuffs—these nonutilitarian items being of "little use or benefit, but to the nourishment of pride." Excessive finery was subject to heavy fines, and the law was extensively enforced. Thus, in one year, Hampshire County hauled thirty-eight women and thirty men into court for illegal finery, silk being an especially popular sin. One woman was punished "for wearing silk in a flaunting garb, to the great offense of several sober persons."

Even the wearing of one's hair long—an old Cavalier practice condemned by the Puritans, who were therefore called Roundheads—was placed under interdict. The General Court repeatedly condemned flowing hair as dangerous vanity. Many Puritan divines ranked "pride in long hair" fully as sinful as gambling, drinking, or idleness. One citizen, fined for daring to build upon unused government land, was offered a remission of half the amount if he would only "cut off the long hair off his head into a civil frame." Hair righteousness, however, never had much of a chance even in godly Massachusetts, for some of the major leaders of the colony, including Governor Winthrop and John Endecott, persisted in the sin of long hair.

Mixed dancing only came to the colony late in the century, but was promptly condemned as frivolous, immoral and a waste of time. Boston, upon hearing complaints, closed down a dancing school.

The measures of the fanatical Puritan theocracy were not solely motivated by religious zeal. Part of the motivation had an economic-class basis. As the century progressed, the lowly laborers and indentured servants formed an increasing minority of the populace; since they were not admitted to the political and social privileges of church membership, they were naturally the most disaffected members of the social body. The above measures were partly designed to keep the lower classes in their place. Thus, the authorities were *particularly* angered to see servants or the families of laborers having the gall to wear fine apparel. The General Court, in 1658, severely announced "our utter detestation . . . that men or women of mean condition should take upon them the garb of gentlemen, by wearing gold or silk lace, or buttons or silk of taffeta hoods, or scarves, which though allowable to persons of greater estates or more liberal

education, yet we cannot but judge intolerable in persons of such like condition." In short, the lower orders must know their place, and the stringent requirements of a fanatical moral code could bend for the upper strata of society.

Similarly, the requirement of compulsory education was enforced particularly upon the indentured servants, as many masters believed that their servants would be less inclined to be independent or "give trouble" if imbued with Puritan teachings.

Indeed, the leaders of the colony did not hesitate to justify the oligarchic rule by the rich over the poor. As Governor Winthrop expressed it in his *A Model of Christian Charity* (1630): "God Almighty in His most holy and wise providence hath so disposed of the condition of mankind as in all times some must be rich, some poor; some high and eminent in power and dignity; others mean and in subjection."

Generally, then, it was the lower orders who had to bear the main brunt of the severely enforced "moral" rules of the Puritan code. Indeed, Massachusetts imposed maximum ceilings on wage rates in order to lower wage costs to employers. The temporarily enslaved indentured servants were particularly oppressed by Puritans trying to maintain them as the efficient property of their masters; they therefore tried to suppress all deviant tendencies from the norm.* Many servants were branded like cattle with their initials and the date of purchase, so as to assure their rapid identification in case of flight. When found unsatisfactory or troublesome, servants were generally punished, whipped, and imprisoned, or had their tenure of servitude extended. Orphan boys were bound out as servants by the state until they reached the age of twenty, while illegitimate boys were especially punished by being bound out until the age of thirty. In addition, indentured servants could, like slaves, be sold by their masters to other masters, and thus be forcibly separated from their families. Servants caught escaping were often punished by having their ears cut off.

*The sources of servants in Massachusetts and the other Northern colonies were the same as those of the servants coming to Virginia, as described above.

21

Suppressing Heresy: The Flight of Roger Williams

"The Puritans in leaving England," the historian Thomas Jefferson Wertenbaker wrote, "fled not so much from persecution as from error." It was to build a rigorous theocracy free from dissent that the Puritans built a colony in America. And yet a Protestant theocracy must always suffer from a grave inner contradiction: for one significant tenet of Protestantism is the individual's ability to interpret the Bible free of ecclesiastical dictates. Although particular Protestant creeds may have no intention of countenancing or permitting dissent, the Protestant stimulus to individual interpretation must inevitably provoke that very dissent.

If the Puritans were so rigorous in suppressing idleness and frivolity on the Sabbath, we can imagine their zeal in rooting out heresy. As the Reverend Urian Oakes put it: "The Loud outcry of some is for liberty of conscience . . . I look upon an unbounded toleration as the first born of all abominations." And the Rev. Thomas Shepard echoed that "'tis Satan's policy, to plead for an indefinite and boundless toleration." The eminent Puritan divine John Norton, in *The Heart of New England Rent*, thundered against liberty: "We both dread and bear witness against liberty of heresy. . . . It is a liberty . . . to answer to the dictate of error of conscience in walking contrary to rule. It is a liberty to blaspheme, a liberty to seduce others from the true God, a liberty to tell lies in the name of the Lord." As for liberty of conscience, Norton speciously claimed to be upholding it, but not the "liberty of the error of conscience"; in short, people were to be "free" to believe what Norton wanted them to, but were not to be free to differ. As early as 1631 the Puritan authorities revealed their position on heresy. In that year Phillip Ratcliffe was whipped, fined forty shillings,

had his ears cut off, and was banished for the high crime of "uttering malicious and scandalous speeches against the government and the Church."

The first important case of heresy also came soon after the founding of the colony. To Massachusetts in early 1631 came the young Rev. Roger Williams, who quickly refused the coveted appointment of teacher of the Boston church. An individualist and a fearless logician, Williams had concluded that the Puritan church in Massachusetts, being Separatist *de facto*, should also be Separatist *de jure*: that is, should break openly from communion with the Church of England. In short, he pursued the Puritans' logic further than they were willing to go, and thus embarrassed the Puritans a great deal. Beginning with this dissent, Williams quickly went on to strike hammer blows against the entire political structure of the colony. First he proceeded to deny the right of the civil authority to punish the infraction of religious rule or doctrine. This struck at the entire theocratic principle, and the General Court of Massachusetts declared in reply that it was clearly absurd to maintain that "a Church might run into heresy . . . and yet the civil magistrate could not intermeddle." To the Puritans this was clearly a puzzling and astonishing doctrine.

Williams now accepted appointment as teacher of the Salem church, but his appointment was overruled by the General Court on account of Williams' Separatist views and his dedication to religious liberty. Williams thereupon moved to the fully Separatist Plymouth, where he became assistant to the Reverend Ralph Smith, who had also been ejected from Salem for his pure Separatist views. But Plymouth itself was becoming less Separatist, and could not tolerate Williams' libertarianism. As a result, Williams accepted in late 1633 a second call from Salem to be a teacher of the church. There he joined the senior pastor, Samuel Skelton, in attacking the growing practice of ministers in holding periodical joint discussions—a practice which they perceptively feared would grow into a form of synodal quasi-Presbyterian control over the individual congregations. Only four years later, Skelton and Williams were proved right by the erection of a system of synods, which also resulted in joint ministerial advice to the civil power.

Williams proceeded to strike another fundamental blow at the social structure of Massachusetts Bay. He denied the right of the king to make arbitrary grants of the land of Massachusetts to the colonists. The Indians, he maintained, properly owned the land and therefore the settlers should purchase the land from them. This doctrine attacked the entire quasi-feudal origin of American colonization in arbitrary land grants in the royal charters, and it also hit at the policy of ruthlessly expelling the Indians from their land. Williams, indeed, was the rare white colonist courageous enough to say that full title to the soil rested in the Indian natives, and that white title could only be validly obtained by purchase from its true owners. The whites, charged Williams, lived "under a sin of usurpation of others' possessions." The denial of the king's right to grant title to land he did not justly own, of course, hit directly at the basis of the Massachusetts charter

itself, which, Williams argued, the colonists had a moral duty to turn from and renounce.

The infuriated authorities now moved in on Williams, charging him with subversive doctrine. Bowing to *force majeure*, Williams recanted and offered to burn the tract expressing his dissenting views.

But Williams was too much a man of principle to be suppressed for long, and by late 1634 news reached Boston that Williams was repeating his old subversive doctrines as well as adding the purist religious deviation from Puritan orthodoxy that oaths should not be administered by magistrates to unregenerate sinners. Williams also denounced the loyalty oaths coerced upon the mass of nonfreemen residents of the colony, in April 1634, as blasphemous; he refused to subscribe to the oath and urged his congregation to do the same. Williams did this despite the punishment for refusal having been announced as banishment from the colony.

A crackdown by the Massachusetts authorities was precipitated by Salem church's appointing Williams as its chief minister in place of the deceased Skelton. The Massachusetts authorities now unanimously condemned Williams' views as "erroneous and very dangerous" and denounced Salem's action as "a great contempt of authority." The Massachusetts clergy recommended to the General Court that this dangerous advocate of religious liberty "be removed." Hauled into General Court in July 1635, Williams now remained adamant, even after several confrontations with church authorities.

The General Court now openly moved to undermine Williams with his home base at Salem, punishing that town by refusing to grant it title to land that it claimed at Marblehead Neck. Salem church struck back with an indignation meeting, which sent letters to the congregations of the other churches of the colony, urging them to "admonish" the magistrates and deputies for their "heinous sin." The elders of the other churches made certain to suppress any potential upsurge of popular sympathy for Williams and Salem by not reading the letters to their congregations. Williams continued to strike hard, denouncing the oligarchy of elders for keeping information from the body of church members.

As the fierce conflict continued, Williams' fearless spirit, the logic of Protestantism, and the dynamics of the conflict itself drove Roger Williams to the ultimate conclusion of Separatism: calling upon Salem church to separate clearly from the other churches of the colony, as well as from the Church of England. This was the straw that broke the Massachusetts camel's back. The Puritan oligarchy now brandished its temporal sword, sending to Salem its *Model of Church and Civil Power*. The *Model* gave grave warning that the civil magistrates would strike down any "corrupt" or schismatic church. Independent churches would be suppressed; religious toleration could only end by dissolving the state as well as the church.

In September the civil power followed this by subduing Salem: the General Court expelled the Salem deputies and reiterated its refusal to

grant the town's land claims. The assistant ruling Salem, John Endecott, defended the Salem church but was promptly imprisoned until he recanted and was discharged. Under the severest pressure by the Puritan oligarchy, the majority of Salem church, as Williams was later to write, "was swayed and bowed (whether for fear of persecution or otherwise) to say and practice what, to my knowledge . . . many of them mourned under."

With Salem brought to heel, it now remained only to suppress the isolated Roger Williams himself. Yet, when brought again into General Court in October 1635, Williams stoutly maintained all of his heretical and libertarian opinions. He refused to recant even when forced to debate with the Rev. Thomas Hooker, a leading Puritan divine. Thereupon the General Court ordered Williams expelled from the colony within six weeks. The sentence of banishment declared:

Whereas Mr. Roger Williams . . . hath broached and divulged divers new and dangerous opinions, against the authority of magistrates, has also written letters of defamation, both of the magistrates and churches here . . . and yet maintaineth the same without retraction, it is therefore ordered that the said Mr. Williams shall depart out of this jurisdiction.

The court agreed to extend the deadline for Williams' banishment provided that he would not "go about to draw others to his opinions." But the authorities were chagrined to find that even Williams in private was having a subversive effect. While Salem bowed reluctantly to the decision of the authorities—and received the Marblehead land in return—Williams himself separated from the Salem church, and others were moved to do the same.

Over twenty Salem families now prepared to follow Williams southward into exile and there build a haven of religious liberty. With the disappearance of the Council for New England in 1635, Massachusetts Bay and Plymouth were both virtually self-governing, and what is more, the land south of the Massachusetts grant and west of Plymouth became a tempting vacuum, not having been parceled out to any person or group. It was in this free area that Williams now prepared to found a new colony.

The Massachusetts authorities were greatly dismayed, because they had expected that Williams would be forced back to England. It was not enough to oust Williams forcibly from the land area assigned to Massachusetts; should he merely move southward, there would still be a danger that, in the words of Governor John Winthrop, "the infection would easily spread" to Massachusetts Bay. The General Court hastily sent a ship to Salem to arrest Williams and send him speedily back to England. But Williams bested his persecutors and fled alone into the wilderness. He trudged south through the snow and spent the winter among the friendly Narragansett Indians.

In the spring Williams was joined by four friends, and they proceeded to the northern tip of Narragansett Bay, where they founded the settlement

of Seekonk. There they were soon joined by several more families from Salem. The great southward flight from Massachusetts had begun.

Williams' travail had scarcely ended, however. Soon the governor of Plymouth Colony wrote to Williams regretfully advising him that Seekonk was still inside the Plymouth boundaries, and that Plymouth could not dare displease Massachusetts by allowing the little band to remain. So Williams was now banished from Plymouth as well; and the purchase of the Seekonk land from the Indians, the clearing of land, and the planting of crops had all been in vain.

Moving west across the Seekonk River, Williams left the jurisdiction of Plymouth and founded the settlement of Providence. In Providence Plantations, Williams and the others scrupulously purchased the land from the Indians, and determined to allow religious liberty in their new and spontaneously formed colony.

How Roger Williams was regarded by the frightened Puritan oligarchs of Massachusetts Bay may be seen from the historical account of the Rev. Cotton Mather, one of the main leaders of the later generation of Puritan divines: "There was a whole country in America like to be set on fire by the rapid motion of a windmill in the head of one particular man, Roger Williams." And Mather realized that Williams' doctrines were aimed at "the whole political, as well as the ecclesiastical, constitution of the country." The reaction of the Massachusetts authorities to Williams' flight was to step up their persecution of Salem Separatism. All meetings of Separatists were now outlawed.

Williams' views, at least in these early days of his career, were notably libertarian, especially in contrast to those of other Americans of his time. But it must be recognized that Williams emerged as an embattled leader within the context of a Puritan and Dissenter movement in England, which in the 1630s and 1640s was rapidly becoming radicalized and increasingly libertarian. The libertarian movement reached its culmination—and was not to reach the same height again for well over a century—in the Leveller movement of the 1640s. Williams himself had participated in the emerging Puritan cause. A protégé of the great liberal jurist Sir Edward Coke, Williams owned opinions that had brought him into conflict with the ultra-Anglican and minion of the Stuarts, Archbishop Laud. Williams thus received his early ideological training in the liberal Dissenter movement.

Free and safe in a Providence enjoying religious liberty and separation of church and state, Roger Williams was later able to elaborate on his doctrines of religious liberty. His most famous theoretical work, *The Bloody Tenent of Persecution for the Cause of Conscience Discussed*, appeared in 1644. A sequel, *The Bloody Tenent Yet More Bloody*, rebutting the reply of the leading Massachusetts divine, Rev. John Cotton, appeared eight years later. Compulsory religion, Williams pointed out, violated the

Christian tenet of love and, by "ravishing and forcing souls" and consciences, led to hypocrisy for fear of state punishment. Coerced religion, Williams declared, leads to sects "slaughtering each other for their several respective religions and consciences." Again unusual for his time, Williams insisted that not only Protestants, but *all* religions must be completely free, including "the most paganish, Jewish, Turkish, or anti-Christian consciences and worships." He added, "To molest any person, Jew or Gentile, for either professing doctrines or practicing worship. . . is to persecute him and such a person (whatever his doctrine or practice be true or false) suffereth persecution for conscience." And this man of courage and principle nobly proclaimed the importance of cleaving to truth: "We must not let go for all the flea-bitings of the present afflictions. . . having bought Truth dear we must not sell it cheap, not the least grain of it for the whole world . . . least of all for a little puff of credit and reputation from the changeable breath of uncertain sons of men."

While Williams' heart was in the right place in insisting on purchasing all land voluntarily from the Indians, there were important aspects of the land problem that he had not thought through. While the Indians were certainly entitled to the land they cultivated, they also (1) laid claim to vast reaches of land which they hunted but which they did not transform by cultivation, and (2) owned the land not as individual Indians, but as collective tribal entities. In many cases the Indian tribes could not alienate or sell the lands, but only lease the use of their ancestral domains. As a result, the Indians also lived under a collectivistic regime that, for land allocation, was scarcely more just than the English governmental land-grab against which Williams was properly rebelling. Under both regimes, the actual *settler*—the first transformer of the land, whether white or Indian—had to fight his way past a nest of arbitrary land claims by others, and pay their exactions until he could formally own the land.

Williams, always a friend of the Indians, bought from the sachems, or chiefs, a grant of the large amount of land called the "Providence Purchase." Williams then donated the land to a Town Fellowship, a joint property held equally by himself and five of his followers—the Fellowship shortly enlarged to thirteen. As long as only the original settlers lived in Providence, all was peaceful, and virtually no government arose at all. As Williams described it, "The masters of families have ordinarily met once a fortnight and consulted about our common peace, watch and plenty; and mutual consent have finished all matters of speed and pace." But it was inevitable that new settlers would come, and then that the arbitrary nature of the land allocation should give rise to conflict. Indeed, recriminations and tensions rapidly developed. Not realizing the inherent injustice of any arbitrary claims to unsettled land, and therefore not realizing that he and the others of the Fellowship were taking on the aspect of quasi-feudal land monopolists, Williams naturally believed he had acted gener-

ously in giving the land to the Fellowship. But the later settlers, forced to purchase the land from the Fellowship, properly resented this feudalistic proprietary.

The Fellowship, later enlarged to fifty-four, assigned eleven acres to each member, plus the right to an additional 100 acres apiece. In this way some of the land passed quickly to the individual members of the Fellowship. If their acreage was not in precise proportion to the degree of settlement, at least this land was now in the hands of its just owners, the individual settlers. But, unfortunately, the great bulk of the Providence tract still remained in the hands of the collective Fellowship proprietary, and in 1640 the Fellowship moved to formalize its claim, and to establish a proprietary oligarchy over future settlers. In that year, the Fellowship drew up a "Plantation Agreement at Providence," and appointed a board of five "disposers" that would take charge of disposing of the land, managing the land held in common, and passing judgment on the qualification of new settlers. Taught little humility by their own sufferings, the disposers tended to be rigorous in their judgments. Before a man was permitted to settle and buy land in Providence, even the land of an individual settler willing to sell, the Fellowship had to approve, and a veto by one Fellow was sufficient to bar the newcomer. The original Fellows soon admitted more members, but the number of Fellows never exceeded 101, and the later members received only twenty-five rather than 100 acres of collectively owned land. Positions in the Fellowship descended to the heirs of the original members; the other settlers who were permitted to become landowners in Providence were excluded from the select circle of the Fellowship proprietary, which thus controlled the land and government. The Fellowship kept a sharp check on its five disposers, but this hardly made the government of Providence less oligarchical.

The most oligarchic feature of the Plantation Agreement dealt with Pawtuxet, a tract of land immediately south of Providence. Pawtuxet had been purchased from Indian sachems in the spring of 1638 and turned over by Williams to the Fellows, then numbering thirteen. Overriding Williams' wishes, the Fellows, led by William Arnold and William Harris, decided in October of 1638 eventually to divide the Pawtuxet lands among themselves, without even providing for any new settlers. The Agreement of 1640 confirmed Pawtuxet as a closed proprietorship.

Roger Williams carried his principles of religious liberty into practice. There was no state church, and no one was forced to attend church. Williams himself was to change his religious views several times, becoming a Baptist for a few months, and then ending as a Seeker, who held to no fixed creed. Liberty has its own inner logic, and so Williams' religious liberty in Providence extended also to women. One of Williams' Salem adherents who had followed him to Providence, Joshua Verin, tasting the heady wine of religious liberty, grew disenchanting with Williams' sermons and stopped attending church. This was perfectly legitimate in his

newfound home, but Verin went so far as to prevent his wife from attending, even beating her to prevent her from going. Verin was therefore disfranchised by Providence in the spring of 1638 for restraining his wife's conscience; he soon returned to Salem, where he could again exercise the Puritan role of despotic paterfamilias.

The logic of liberty had, as we shall see, even more drastic implications. For, as some citizens of Providence began to reason, if the conscience of the individual was to be supreme in religious matters, if the state was to have no power to interfere with any actions determined by his religious conscience, why shouldn't his liberty extend to civil matters as well? Why shouldn't the individual's conscience reign supreme in all civil as well as religious affairs?

22

Suppressing Heresy: The Flight of Anne Hutchinson

Very shortly after the expulsion of Roger Williams, the Massachusetts Bay Colony was rent far more widely by another heresy with roots deep in the colony—the “antinomianism” of Mrs. Anne Hutchinson. A major reason for the crisis that Anne Hutchinson’s heresy posed for Massachusetts was that she occupied a high place in the colony’s oligarchy. Arriving in Massachusetts in 1634, she and her husband lived close to Governor Winthrop’s mansion in Boston and participated in Boston’s high society. A friend of the eminent Rev. John Cotton, she first confined her religious activities to expatiating on Cotton’s sermons. Soon, however, Mrs. Hutchinson developed a religious doctrine of her own, now known as antinomianism. She preached the necessity for an inner light to come to any individual chosen as one of God’s elect. Such talk marked her as far more of a religious individualist than the Massachusetts leaders. Salvation came only through a covenant of grace emerging from the inner light, and was not at all revealed in a covenant of works, the essence of which is good works on earth. This meant that the fanatically ascetic sanctification imposed by the Puritans was no evidence whatever that one was of the elect. Furthermore, Anne Hutchinson made it plain that she regarded many Puritan leaders as *not* of the elect. She also came to assert that she had received direct revelations from God.

In contrast to Williams’ few Salem followers, Anne Hutchinson had rapid and sweeping success in converting her fellow citizens. John Cotton now became a follower of hers, as did young Sir Henry Vane, chosen governor by the General Court in 1636, and Anne’s brother-in-law, Rev. John Wheelwright. Indeed, John Winthrop (deputy governor in 1636) wrote dis-

gustedly that virtually the entire church at Boston had become her converts. As bitter enemies of Anne, there remained especially Winthrop and the senior minister of Boston, John Wilson. Mrs. Hutchinson failed in her attempt to oust Wilson from his post, but she did succeed in having him censured by his own congregation.

The Hutchinsonian movement began, if inadvertently, to pose political problems for the oligarchy as well. The conscription of soldiers for a war against the Indians met resistance from Boston Hutchinsonians, on the ground that the military chaplain, Rev. John Wilson, was under a "covenant of works" rather than of grace.

The anti-Hutchinson forces moved first against the fiery Reverend Mr. Wheelwright; the General Court narrowly convicted him of sedition and contempt in March 1637. But the sentencing of Wheelwright was postponed. The turning point of the Hutchinson affair came with the May election of 1637, which the Winthrop forces managed to win by shifting its site from pro-Hutchinson Boston to Newtown (now Cambridge). The election pitted Sir Henry Vane against former governor Winthrop and Thomas Dudley, running for his old post of deputy governor. With the election turning on the Hutchinson issue, Vane carried Boston but lost the other towns heavily. Winthrop, Dudley, and the majority of the magistrates, or assistants, were carried by the conservative, anti-Hutchinson faction—a not surprising victory when we consider that suffrage was restricted to the ranks of accepted church members.

This overwhelming defeat spelled swift suppression for the antinomian heretics. Quickly the new General Court passed a law that penalized strangers and was directed against a group of Hutchinsonians known to be on their way from England. Disheartened, Sir Henry Vane gave up the struggle and returned to England. Seeing the way the wind was blowing, John Cotton promptly deserted his old disciple, abjectly recanted his "heresies," and at a Newtown synod denounced ninety-one antinomian opinions as unwholesome or blasphemous. Vane was gone and Cotton an apostate, but there was still the Reverend Mr. Wheelwright. The already convicted Wheelwright was again hauled before the General Court and sentenced to banishment from the colony. Wheelwright walked through the snows to New Hampshire in the north, where he founded the settlement of Exeter. When by 1643 Massachusetts had appropriated the New Hampshire towns, Wheelwright fled to Maine. But by 1646 Wheelwright had recanted, bewailed his own "vehement and censorious spirit," and was allowed back into Massachusetts.

Having vented their fury on the major followers and isolated the leader, the Puritan oligarchs proceeded to the culminating point of the drama: the trial and persecution of Anne Hutchinson herself. There was no independent judiciary in the colonies; the supreme judicial arm in Massachusetts was the legislative body, the General Court, at this time a unicameral legislature presided over by the governor. Anne Hutchinson was

hauled up for "trial," or rather public examination, before the General Court in November 1637. Anne's enemies on the General Court duly "tried" her, convicted her of sedition and contempt, and banished her from the colony. Governor Winthrop summarized the proceedings thus: "The Court hath already declared themselves concerning . . . the troublesomeness of her spirit, and the dangers of her course amongst us, which is not to be suffered." Winthrop then called for a vote that Mrs. Hutchinson "is unfit for our society—and . . . that she shall be banished out of our liberties and imprisoned till she be sent away. . . ." Only two members voted against her banishment.

When Winthrop pronounced the sentence of banishment Anne Hutchinson courageously asked: "I desire to know wherefore I am banished." Winthrop refused to answer: "Say no more. The court knows wherefore, and is satisfied." It was apparently enough for the court to be satisfied; no justification before the bar of reason, natural justice, or the public was deemed necessary.

The General Court now proceeded against all the leading Hutchinsonians, concentrating on sixty Bostonians who had previously signed a moderate petition denying that Reverend Wheelwright had stirred up sedition among them. Two members of the General Court, both of whom had spoken up for Mrs. Hutchinson at the trial, were expelled from the court and banished from the colony. Many people were disfranchised, and seventy-five citizens were disarmed, on the pretext that the Hutchinsonians were plotting to follow the path of the German Anabaptists of old and rise up in armed revolt. The "reasoning" as expounded by Dudley at the Hutchinson trial was that the German Anabaptists had *also* claimed to enjoy private revelations. Hutchinsonian military officers were forced to recant, but the determined Capt. John Underhill refused to do so and was duly banished.

Anne Hutchinson's ordeal was still not ended. Spared banishment during the rugged winter, she was imprisoned at the home of one of her major enemies, and the elders attempted, throughout the winter, to argue her out of her convictions. Finally, they subjected her to an ecclesiastical trial the following March. Tormented, ill, and exhausted, Mrs. Hutchinson momentarily recanted, but as she continued to be denounced, her spirits returned and she put forth her views again.

To save himself from the fate meted out to the other Hutchinsonians, John Cotton now apparently felt that his personal recantation was not enough, so he joined the pack rending Mrs. Hutchinson at the ecclesiastical trial. This man, whom Anne Hutchinson had revered and followed to the New World, now turned on her savagely, wailing that he had been duped, denouncing her as a liar and for conduct tending eventually to infidelity.

The Boston ecclesiastical court then pronounced excommunication upon Anne, and it was the peculiar satisfaction of the Rev. John Wilson, her most bitter enemy, to deliver the sentence:

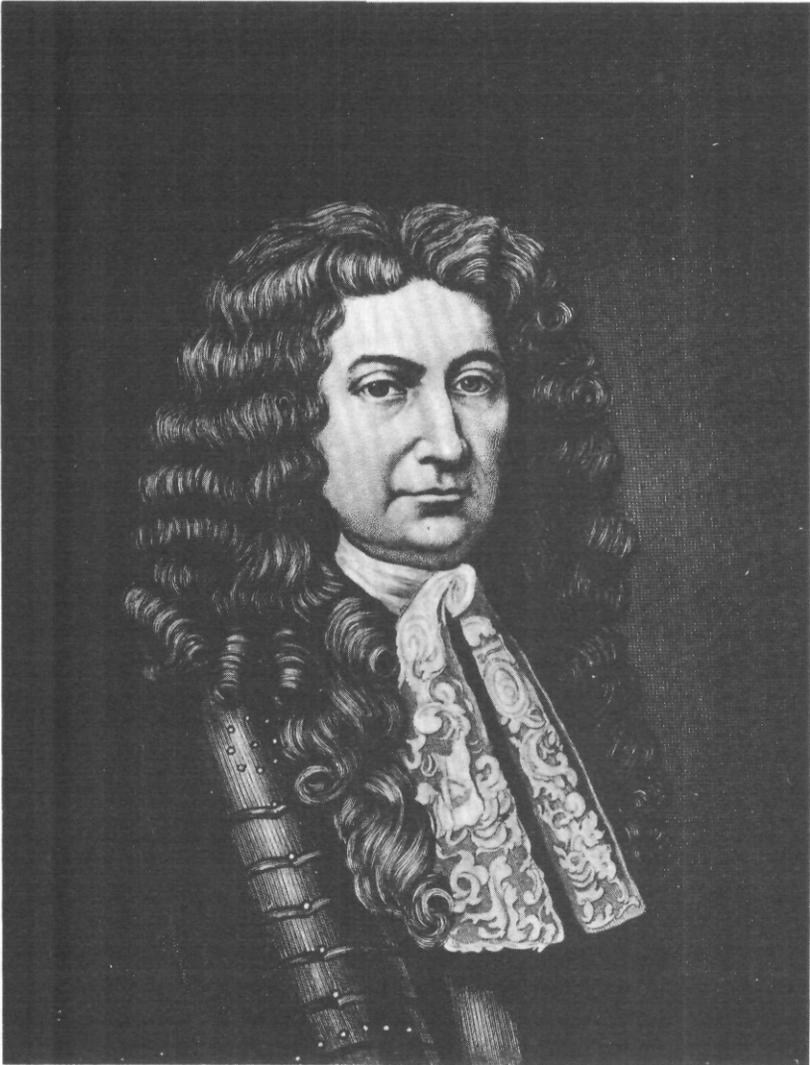


Courtesy of The New-York Historical Society, New York City
John Winthrop



J. Gougeon

Courtesy of The New-York Historical Society, New York City
Increase Mather



Courtesy of The New-York Historical Society, New York City

Edmund Andros

(Engraved by E. G. Wilhams & Bros., New York)



Courtesy of The New-York Historical Society, New York City
Governor Berkeley and the Insurgents (Bacon's Rebellion, 1676)



Cotton Mather



Courtesy of The New-York Historical Society, New York City
William Penn
(Engraved by J. Possewhite)



Statue of Roger Williams in Providence, Rhode Island



Statue of Anne Hutchinson

I do cast you out and in the name of Christ, I do deliver you up to Satan, that you may learn no more to blaspheme, to seduce and to lie, and I do account you from this time forth to be a heathen and a Publican . . . therefore I command you in the name of Christ Jesus and of His Church as a Leper to withdraw yourself out of the Congregation. . . .

The undaunted Anne Hutchinson had the last word: "Better to be cast out of the Church than to deny Christ."

While Anne was undergoing imprisonment and subsequent excommunication, the leaders of the Hutchinsonian movement gathered together to flee the colony, and to prepare a home for themselves and Anne away from the developing reign of terror in Massachusetts. On March 7, 1638, nineteen men, including Anne's husband, William Hutchinson, gathered at the home of the eminent Boston merchant William Coddington, one of the wealthiest men in the colony and its former treasurer. In a solemn compact, the nineteen formed themselves into a "Bodie Politick," choosing Coddington as their judge.

The Hutchinsonians first intended to go to Long Island or Jersey to make their home, but they were persuaded by Roger Williams to settle in the Rhode Island area. On Williams' friendly advice, Coddington purchased the island of Aquidneck from the Indians, and founded on the island the settlement of Pocasset (now Portsmouth). Anne, ill and exhausted, joined her husband at Aquidneck in April as soon as her trial was over.

The enormous significance of Roger Williams' successful flight and settlement of Providence two years before was now becoming evident. For Williams' example held out a beacon light of liberty to all the free spirits caught in the vast prisonhouse that was Massachusetts Bay. By the happy accident of the demise of the Council for New England, the land south of Massachusetts Bay and west of Plymouth was free land, free of proprietary and effective royal government alike. It was a haven for religious liberty and for diverse sects and groupings, and for an extension of the logic of liberty as well; for once liberty is pursued and experienced, it is difficult to hobble its uttermost expansion.

When the ill Anne Hutchinson arrived at her haven in Aquidneck, the many months of persecution had left their mark and she suffered a miscarriage, as did her beautiful young follower Mary Dyer, who had stood up to walk out of the Boston church with the excommunicated Anne. The Puritan leaders of Massachusetts Bay, preoccupied for years afterward with the Hutchinsonian menace, characteristically gloated in righteous satisfaction at the misfortunes of Anne and Mary. The theocrats were jubilant and the Rev. John Cotton, Governor Winthrop and the Rev. Thomas Weld all hailed Anne's and Mary's sufferings as the evident judgment of God. It was typical of the Puritans to hail the misfortunes of their enemies as God's judgment, and to dismiss any kindness shown them by others as simply God's will and therefore requiring no gratitude to those showing it.

Massachusetts Bay continued, indeed, in a state of hysteria over the Hutchinsonian heresy for a number of years. Anne's followers and sympathizers were fined, whipped, and banished, and five years later Robert Potter was executed for being a Hutchinsonian. It was also typical that, with Anne outside their jurisdiction, the Boston church leaders should send a committee to Aquidneck to try to persuade her of the error of her ways. If they could no longer inflict violence upon Anne, they could at least badger and harass her. It is not surprising that the beleaguered Anne gave the committee short shrift, kicked it out of her home, and denounced the Boston church as a "whore and a strumpet."

In Pocasset, Anne was spiritual leader of the flock and Coddington temporal leader. The Pocasset government was chosen by the assembled freeholders, and, like Providence, the government had to consent to the arrival of any newcomers to the colony. But Anne Hutchinson was becoming more and more concerned for the principle of freedom of conscience rather than for propagating her own religious views. She began to see that Coddington and his associates were launching a new theocracy of their own in the infant colony. For Coddington was "judge" of the settlement, basing his decrees and decisions on the "word of God," as interpreted by himself. And Anne began to chafe at the state control that Coddington was increasingly imposing.

Coddington based his seizure of power on the flimsy legalism of his being the sole name on the deed of purchase of Aquidneck from the Indians. Therefore, he claimed for himself all the rights of a feudal lord owning the whole island, owning and renting out the lots of all the settlers, and asserting authority over all land grants.

At the beginning of 1639, Anne Hutchinson led a movement that successfully modified the Pocasset constitution; the change gave the body of freemen a veto over the actions of the governor, and the right to elect three "elders" to share the governor's powers. Thus, the increasingly dictatorial rule of Coddington was checked.

Coddington reacted most ungraciously to this limitation on his power, and he appointed a constable to keep watch on any "manifest breaches of the law of God that tend to civil disturbance." Had Anne Hutchinson fled the theocracy of Massachusetts only to see a miniature raise its head in her new home? Finally, in April, the Hutchinson forces insisted, at the Pocasset town meeting, on a new election for governor—a demand that startled Coddington, who expected to remain in office indefinitely and without the fuss and bother of elections. Vigorous pressure by the freemen on Coddington finally won the demand for elections, and William Hutchinson was elected by a large majority. Coddington and his followers, including Nicholas Easton, John Coggeshall, William Dyer, and John Clarke, abandoned Pocasset and founded the new settlement of Newport, at the southern end of Aquidneck Island.

The victorious Hutchinsonians adopted a new compact of government

and changed the name of the town to Portsmouth. Oligarchical distinctions were eliminated, and all the male inhabitants signed the new compact. Provision was made for jury trial, and church and state were at last separated. There was no provision, for example, in the new civil compact about the "word of God," the only rule by which Coddington had made his decisions. Anne Hutchinson had been rapidly learning firsthand about state persecution, and freedom of religion for all Christians was now guaranteed. William Hutchinson was chosen new chief judge of the colony.

The power-hungry Coddington now mounted an armed attempt to rule over Portsmouth, but was forcibly ejected by the Hutchinsonians. Soon, however, Coddington was able to arrest William Hutchinson and order his disfranchisement. Anne and her husband were again victims of harassment and persecution.

A year later, on March 12, 1640, the two groups came to an agreement and the settlements of Portsmouth and Newport (the latter by now being the larger of the two) united, primarily on the libertarian principles of Portsmouth. Coddington was chosen governor, however, and William Hutchinson one of his assistants. The separate towns were allowed to retain their autonomy, and the laws were to be made by the citizens rather than by an oligarchy. And a year later, in May 1641, the Aquidneck government declared: "It is ordered that none shall be accounted as delinquent for doctrine." Religious liberty had been officially decreed in Aquidneck. The settlements of Providence and Aquidneck had raised the banner of freedom for all religious creeds. In this free air, diversity of religion came to proliferate in the colony.

Soon, however, Mrs. Anne Hutchinson, ruminating in the free air of Rhode Island on the meaning of her experience, came to an astounding and startling conclusion—and one that pushed the logic of Roger Williams' libertarianism far beyond the master. For, as Williams reported in bewilderment, Anne now persuaded her husband to give up his leading post as assistant in the Aquidneck government, "because of the opinion, which she had newly taken up, of the unlawfulness of magistracy." In short, the logic of liberty and a deeper meditation on Scripture had both led Anne to the ultimate bounds of libertarian thought: to individualist anarchism. No magistracy whatever was lawful. As Anne's biographer Winifred Rugg put it: "She was supremely convinced that the Christian held within his own breast the assurance of salvation. . . . For such persons magistrates were obviously superfluous. As for the other, they were to be converted, not coerced."*

To the Puritans of Massachusetts, Aquidneck was an abominable "Isle of Errours" and the Rhode Island settlements were "Rogue's Land." Massachusetts began to plot to assert its jurisdiction over these pestiferous settlements and to crush the havens of liberty. Indians were egged on to

*Winifred K. Rugg, *Unafraid, A life of Anne Hutchinson* (Boston, 1930).

raid the Providence and Aquidneck territories. Massachusetts then shut off all trade with the Rhode Islanders, who were thus forced to turn to the neighboring Dutch settlements of New Netherland for supplies. A son and son-in-law of Anne's, visiting Boston, were seized and very heavily fined by the authorities, and then banished from Massachusetts on pain of death.

In 1642, soon after his resignation from public office, William Hutchinson died. Deprived of her husband and mainstay, disgusted with all government, and deeply worried about Massachusetts' threatened encroachments on Rhode Island (and knowing also that the Bay Colony was now regarding her as a witch and therefore deserving of death), Anne decided to leave once more. Taking a few members of her family and a few dozen disciples, Anne Hutchinson left Rhode Island to go to Long Island, in New Netherland, and finally to settle in the wilderness of Pelham Bay. There, in late summer of 1643, Anne and her family were murdered by a band of Indians, engaged in armed struggle with the Dutch. William's and Anne's deaths were hailed and gloated over by the Puritan oligarchy of Massachusetts Bay. To the unconcealed delight of the divines of Massachusetts, Anne Hutchinson had, finally, been physically destroyed; but the spirit of liberty that she embodied and kindled was to outlast the despotic theocracy of Massachusetts Bay. Perhaps, in the light of history, the victory in the unequal contest was Anne Hutchinson's

Even in the short run, Massachusetts Bay was soon to meet again the spirit of Anne Hutchinson—the emphasis on the inner light, on individual conscience, on liberty—in the new sect of Quakers, a sect joined by many Hutchinsonians, including William Coddington and Mary Dyer, and in the Baptists, headed by Anne Hutchinson's sister, Catherine Scott, and by the Hutchinsonian Dr. John Clarke.

23

The Further Settlement of Rhode Island: The Odyssey of Samuell Gorton

In the meanwhile, religious liberty, and hence diversity, was flourishing in nearby Providence. An Anglican minister who had been living in the vicinity before the Williams settlement continued to preach there. Baptists came also to the colony and exerted great influence. The first Baptist minister was Dr. John Clarke, a physician, who had arrived in Massachusetts from England just in time to join with Anne Hutchinson and leave for Aquidneck. William Harris also was a leading Rhode Island Baptist from the earliest days. The brilliant Baptist leader and sister of Anne Hutchinson, Mrs. Catherine Scott, even succeeded in temporarily converting Roger Williams (along with many other leaders) to the Baptist faith in early 1639. The inveterate Baptist insistence on individual conscience and the right of religious liberty was very close to Williams' views. In addition, each Baptist church was separate and completely autonomous; the officers were democratically elected by the entire congregation. In a few months, however, Williams shifted again to become a Seeker, which he continued to be for the rest of his life. Williams had arrived at the point of questioning the claims of all churches to apostolic authority or to correctness of ritual.

In addition to religious liberty, and apart from land allocation, the powers of government in Providence were limited. Disputes were to be settled by arbitration, but the arbitration was compulsory, enforced by the ruling "disposers." And, in contrast to Massachusetts, there was no establishment of government schools.

One of the most repeatedly and consistently persecuted Americans of the seventeenth century was Samuell Gorton, an individualist and a free

spirit who had been a clothier in London. Gorton, a "Professor of the Mysteries of Christ," challenged not only the right of theocracy, but the wisdom of all priests and formal religious organizations. Politically, this individualist argued that any transgressions of government beyond the rights guaranteed by the English common law were impermissible. Gorton also opposed theocratic laws against immorality, and questioned the existence of heaven and hell, the truth of the Scriptures, baptism, and the taking of oaths.

Chafing at the restrictions of Anglican England, Gorton left London for Boston in 1636 "to enjoy liberty of conscience, in respect to faith towards God." It did not take Gorton long to see that he had only moved from the frying pan into the fire; he arrived just in time to see the expulsion of the Reverend Wheelwright to Exeter, and he realized that if Massachusetts would not tolerate the presence of the relatively orthodox Wheelwright, it could surely have little place for the likes of him.

Gorton therefore left quickly for Plymouth, where he began to attract considerable following for his views. Adopting Anne Hutchinson's device of prayer meetings in his parlor, Gorton began to arouse the ire of the colony's oligarchs by making a convert of the wife of the Rev. Ralph Smith, the respected retired minister of Plymouth. Another inconvenient convert was a sewing maid of the current minister of the colony, the Reverend Mr. Rayner. Reverend Mr. Smith began a campaign to expel Gorton from the colony, and a suitable excuse came shortly to hand. Employed as Mrs. Gorton's serving maid was a widow newly arrived from England, Ellen Aldridge. Charges began to be whispered about Plymouth Colony that Ellen had committed the grievous offense of "smiling in church." Complaints were duly lodged against her, and the Plymouth fathers summarily ordered Ellen to be promptly expelled from the colony as a "vagabond." Gorton spoke up heatedly in protest over these high-handed proceedings, for which high crime Gorton himself was hauled into court in late 1638. In a pretrial hearing, Gorton accused one of the magistrates of lying, a charge which only added to his crimes. At this trial Gorton denounced the grave violation of English common law in uniting the offices of prosecutor and magistrate in the same man. Protesting against the injustice of the trial, Gorton addressed the crowd: "Ye see good people how you are abused! Stand for your liberty; and let them not be parties and judges." The frightened church elders, on hearing this plea, urged the court to inflict summary punishment to remove this libertarian troublemaker from the colony. Gorton was duly prohibited from speaking in his own defense, and the court swiftly fined Gorton and gave him fourteen days to leave Plymouth. Gorton was thereby forced to walk through the wilderness in the snow, and was barely able to finish the journey southwestward to Portsmouth, where he settled.

In Portsmouth, Gorton found political rule centered in William Coddington, the sole magistrate. Joined there by his main Plymouth disciple, John Wickes, Gorton promptly amassed a large following, and formed an

alliance with Anne Hutchinson to overthrow Coddington's dictatorial rule and to repulse Coddington's armed attempt to impose his rule in Portsmouth.

A year later, however, with Newport joined to Portsmouth, Coddington was back in command, even though opposed by the majority of Portsmouth residents. Again Samuell Gorton, who had steadfastly refused to enter into the agreement to join Newport, felt the lash of persecution, and again Gorton's defense of someone in his employ was the catalyst used.

At the end of 1640 an old woman's cow invaded Gorton's land. Coming after the cow, the trespassing old lady got into a fight with a serving girl of Gorton's, after which the woman hauled the servant into court. Gorton defended his servant, and strongly protested the unfair trial, attacking the justices as "just asses." He also denied the authority of the constituted court and government. Since no royal charter covered Rhode Island, it was free territory, and therefore no authority to set up a government could exist. Coddington, the chief justice at the trial, ordered Gorton arrested forthwith, crying out, "You that are for the King, lay hold on Gorton"; to which the defiant Gorton instantly riposted: "All you that are for the King, lay hold on Coddington." A hand-to-hand fight ensued, with Coddington's armed guard gaining the victory. Gorton was arrested and John Wickes, who had also defended the servant, was put into the stocks, Gorton himself was soon whipped and banished from Aquidneck; Wickes and several Gortonites were banished as well.

What next? The only place left for Gorton to go was Providence, and so he and a dozen families of disciples arrived there in the winter of 1640-41. In Providence, Gorton found two major factions: the owners of Pawtuxet, headed by William Arnold and William Harris, and Providence proper, led by Roger Williams. The oligarchical Pawtuxet clique was particularly fearful that Gorton might convert a majority of townsmen and overturn its rule, and so the Pawtuxet rulers refused to allow the Gortonites to use the town commons. The Arnold faction urged that the "turbulent" Gorton and his followers be expelled immediately from the settlement. But Gorton expanded his following, and they soon became a third force in the little colony,

And what of Roger Williams? Enjoying increasing political power, Williams was beginning to lose the edge of his libertarian principles. He became alarmed that Gorton, far more individualist and libertarian than himself, was "bewitching and bemadding poor Providence . . . with his unclear and foul censures of all the ministers of this country. . . ." Williams tried to violate, *sub rosa*, his own principles of religious liberty by simply excluding Gorton from Providence, an exclusion which was in the power of the landed oligarchy of the town. Or rather, Williams, more moderate than Arnold, wanted to grant Gorton admission *only* if he pledged to respect the authority of the government, and if he abandoned such "uncivil" protests as had gotten Gorton expelled from Portsmouth.

Finally, in November 1641 some of the Pawtuxet faction seized some cattle owned by a Gortonite, to satisfy a debt judgment the Gortonites believed to be arbitrarily decreed by the disposers. This led to a full-fledged riot between the two factions (the Gortonites being led by Randall Holden and John Greene) and the Gortonites managed to save their friend's property from the "cattle stealers."

Because of the riot, thirteen of the Pawtuxet oligarchs made a desperate and treacherous call for the Massachusetts government to intervene with force to expel the "anarchist" Gortonites. The oligarchs pulled out all the stops against their enemies, accusing the Gortonites of being anarchists, and leaning toward communism and free love, or "familism." Their appeal to Massachusetts was a direct threat to all the precious liberties that the men of Providence had fled Massachusetts to preserve. And thus began an active threat to Rhode Island liberty from Massachusetts that was to last and be of great significance for the little settlements for years to come.

Massachusetts replied haughtily to the Pawtuxians that it would intervene only if Providence would first submit to its authority, which Providence would not do. Indeed, less than a third of the Providence citizens supported the Arnold-Harris petition.

Williams, however, now joined the Pawtuxians in obtaining the expulsion of Gorton from Providence. Gorton was now banished even from this relative haven of religious liberty. His only consolation was that *this* time he wasn't whipped out of town. Gorton and his followers now moved to West Pawtuxet, an unused tract of land which Gorton had purchased the year before. But once again, the alarmed Arnold-Harris forces in September 1642, requested coercive intervention by Massachusetts and in return offered the submission of Pawtuxet to Massachusetts authority. Delighted, Massachusetts accepted with alacrity, and their declamations thoroughly alarmed the Gortonites. Governor Winthrop, for example, exulted that Samuell Gorton "was a man not fit to live upon the face of the earth," and Massachusetts troops made ready, it appeared, to put that harsh value judgment into effect.

There was, it seemed, no place in America that would tolerate the existence of Samuell Gorton—not even the relatively free Providence and Aquidneck settlements. There was but one course left: Gorton determined to found an entirely new settlement of his own. Gorton, a friend of the Indians and of Indian rights, moved with his flock south of Providence to purchase Indian land and found the settlement of Shawomet in November 1642.

Tasting the heady wine of freedom at last, the Gortonites sent a defiant letter to the Massachusetts authorities, which the diligent Boston synod discovered to contain no less than twenty-six "blasphemies." Massachusetts and its Pawtuxian underlings now formed a secret alliance with some marauding Indian chiefs to lay claim to Shawomet territory in order to charge that the Gortonite land purchase was null and void. Massachu-

setts, suddenly and for the first time championing Indian land rights and implicitly assuming jurisdiction in an area not covered by its charter, ordered Gorton to appear before the Massachusetts courts to defend his land claims. Gorton of course refused.

In the summer of 1643, Massachusetts shamefully arranged the murder of the high Indian chief Miantonomo, who had sold Shawomet to Gorton. Again the Massachusetts General Court wrote to the Shawomet settlers, ordering them all to appear at Boston, ostensibly to settle the land claims. Randall Holden wrote the defiant reply for the Gortonites on September 15, a reply filled, of course, with what the Bostonians called blasphemies. Addressing himself to "the great and honoured Idol General, now set up in the Massachusetts," Holden denounced the submitting Indian sachems (headed by one Uncas) as thieves, pointing out that Shawomet was outside Massachusetts jurisdiction, and proceeding to talk to the Massachusetts oligarchy, at long last, in terms which none had yet dared to use. Calling them a generation of vipers, murderers of Anne Hutchinson, and companions of Judas Iscariot, Holden and the Gortonites heroically declared that they would henceforth treat Massachusetts precisely as Massachusetts treated them:

According as you put forth yourselves towards us, so shall you find us transformed to answer you. If you put forth your hand to us as country-men, ours are in readiness for you; if you exercise the pen, accordingly do we become a ready writer; if your sword be drawn, ours is girt upon our thigh; if you present a gun, make haste to give the first fire, for we are come to put fire upon the earth, and it is our desire to have it speedily kindled.

To this valiant defense of the rights of Shawomet, Massachusetts replied instantly in the way it knew best: by declaring the Gortonites "fitted for the slaughter" and by dispatching an armed troop. The Massachusetts troop having laid siege to Shawomet, Gorton asked Massachusetts to accept an offer of Providence ministers to arbitrate the dispute. Winthrop quickly refused, charging that this was just a ruse to delay matters while Gorton stirred up the Indians. After the soldiers plundered the houses and seized the cattle of the Gortonites, the settlers surrendered, but only on the pledge of the soldiers that they would be treated, en route to Boston, as guests rather than as captives. As soon as the surrender was completed, however, the Massachusetts soldiery reneged on the agreement and the Gortonites were marched to Boston under orders that anyone who spoke on the way would be knocked down and anyone who dared to step out of the column would be run through with a bayonet.

Arriving in Massachusetts, the Gortonites found that that colony had now conveniently forgotten about the dispute over the Indian land claims. With the Gortonites at last in its power, Massachusetts held them exultantly without bail on charges of heresy, blasphemy, and opposition to the authority of Massachusetts. According to now hallowed Massachusetts custom, it was not enough of a scourge upon the Gortonites to be charged with heresy,

blasphemy, and treason; in addition, they had to be constantly pursued and harassed by the church elders and ministers trying to convert them to the Puritan faith. Once—only once—was Gorton allowed to speak in a Massachusetts church, to the great regret of the theocracy. Courageously he proclaimed: "In the church now there was nothing but Christ, as that all our Ordinances, Ministers, and Sacraments, etc. were but men's inventions, for show and pomp."

On hearing this, some of the ministers urged the magistrates speedily to "hew" Gorton "in pieces." The Rev. John Cotton urged death for the heretics; indeed, the cry for death was joined by all but three ministers of the colony. Happily, the death vote lost (by two votes) in the General Court—the supreme judicial as well as legislative arm of the colony. Not that the court's sentence was not severe. On November 3, 1643, the General Court condemned the Gortonites to indefinite terms of hard labor in chains and forbade them to speak any of their "blasphemous and abominable heresies" on pain of death.

The indomitable Gortonites, however, did not let their sentence faze them in the least. Working at hard labor rather than languishing in prison meant that they traveled throughout the colony, working in different towns. Defiantly ignoring the death threat, the Gortonites preached their view of the Gospel wherever they went, and made numerous converts all over the colony, especially among women. Before long a majority of the colony was at the least sympathetic to their plight. Many influential leaders, including former governor John Endecott, urged death for the disobedient Gortonites, and Rev. John Cotton recommended that they be starved into submission. But finally, the alarmed and perplexed authorities decided that the safest course was to get the resisting Gortonites out of the country. They freed the prisoners, giving them fourteen days to leave the colony on pain of death. The Massachusetts authorities assumed that the banishment order covered Shawomet; acting on the technicality that the town was not explicitly mentioned in the order, the Gortonites returned home to Shawomet.

They were not long allowed to remain there, however. On hearing of their return, Governor Winthrop ordered the Gortonites out, and the hapless settlers fled back to Portsmouth, where they rented houses and land, despite the opposition of Governor Coddington to their immigration. But the trials and tribulations of Samuell Gorton and his flock were far from over.

Much as Roger Williams continued self-government free from English rule, the threat of Massachusetts imperialism, brought on by the Pawtuxet oligarchs, had driven him to realize that it was now necessary to gain an English charter to protect the Rhode Island settlement, once and for all, from Massachusetts aggression. Sailing in 1643 for England, now in the midst of the exhilarating ideological ferment of the Puritan Revolution,

Williams persuaded Parliament, in the spring of 1644, to grant Providence and Aquidneck a charter as the united "Providence Plantations."

While in England, Williams happily associated with the radical liberal wing of the revolution—especially with Sir Henry Vane, the former ally of Anne Hutchinson in Massachusetts—and with its struggle against any established Presbyterian or Puritan church. It was in England, indeed, that Williams was inspired to elaborate his principle of religious liberty and to publish his famous *Bloody Tenent*. His writings were hailed by the British liberals, who used Williams' arguments in their own struggle against any budding theocracy.

The new Rhode Island charter was happily loose and vague, allowing any sort of self-government generally and vaguely compatible with English laws. On Williams' triumphal return to Providence in late 1644, the colony's General Assembly met for the first time and formed a loose and informal organization, with Williams chosen as "chief officer." Bitterly opposed to the charter, however, was William Coddington, whose increasingly pressed claim to sole ownership of all of Aquidneck Island was now permanently in jeopardy. Coddington treacherously followed the Pawtuxet lead by seeking to bring in the force of Massachusetts (and also the newly formed New England Confederation) against the new charter. Forgetting his former fight for liberty alongside Anne Hutchinson, Coddington actually wrote Winthrop that he believed wholeheartedly in the Massachusetts system, "both in Church and Commonwealth."

Samuell Gorton returned to Portsmouth just in time to throw himself into the defense of the charter against Coddington's attempted usurpation. Gorton was, in fact, made a judge by the anti-Coddingtonians of Portsmouth.

Despite the protective charter of 1644, Massachusetts continued, in the next two years, to claim authority over all of the Rhode Island settlements. Thus, in 1645 Massachusetts and its sister colonies of the United Colonies, or New England Confederation, declared war against the peaceful Narragansett Indians and dispatched a military force to Rhode Island. Upon hearing of Roger Williams' negotiation of neutrality with the Narragansetts, Massachusetts and Plymouth thundered to the Providence Plantations that if they persisted in their neutrality they would be treated as enemies, and also forbade them to operate under their 1644 charter.

Moving specifically against the Gortonites, Massachusetts, in autumn 1645, authorized a group of families to settle at Shawomet, on the lands seized from the Gortonites. Plymouth, however, felt that it too had a claim to the territory and warned off the new settlers from Massachusetts. The United Colonies of New England promptly proceeded to assume jurisdiction and presumed to award the territory to Massachusetts.

Alarmed at the developing aggression of Massachusetts, Samuell Gorton decided to go to England to seek definite English protection for his rights

to Shawomet. Holding also an impressive commission from his friends, the Narragansett Indians, who declared themselves willing to submit to an English charter, Gorton, along with Holden and Greene, left for England in late 1645.

After a decade of odyssey and persecution, it was highly gratifying for Samuell Gorton to arrive in England at the height of the great libertarian ferment spawned by the Levellers and other radical individualist groups. Gorton had the time of his life for two years, spoke throughout England, was widely hailed, and wrote and published two books—his literary output being inspired, evidently, by the radical libertarian ferment in England.

In the fall of 1646, Randall Holden and John Greene returned triumphantly to Boston, armed with an order from the Earl of Warwick, head of the Commission for Foreign Plantations, to allow the Shawomet settlers to return home in freedom and to remain there without molestation. The submission of the Narragansett Indians to England also successfully kept the potentially bountiful Narragansett country out of Massachusetts' hands. The incensed Massachusetts authorities seriously considered jailing Holden and Greene and ignoring Warwick and Parliament. But cooler heads finally prevailed, and the two Rhode Islanders were allowed to proceed on their way.

Samuell Gorton himself exultantly returned to Boston in the spring of 1648. The infuriated General Court of Massachusetts immediately decided to lock up Gorton "to prevent the infection of his pestilent doctrine," but Gorton triumphantly produced a letter of safe conduct from the Earl of Warwick. The disgruntled General Court had been stopped from arresting Gorton, but it gave him a week to get out of the colony. Gorton returned to Shawomet, which he gratefully renamed Warwick. William Arnold, the leading Pawtuxet oligarch, continued to complain about Gorton to Massachusetts and urge intervention, but Massachusetts was now chastened and decided, at long last, to leave the Gortonites alone. The saga of violent Gortonite persecution was finally over.

Shawomet, and later Warwick, had no government at all until it united with the other towns to form the colony of Providence Plantations in 1648. Until then, the little settlement, in the words of Gorton, "lived peaceably together, desiring and endeavoring to do wrong to no man, neither English nor Indian, ending all our differences in a neighborly and loving way of arbitration, mutually chosen amongst us." But this anarchist idyll soon came to an end. Beginning in 1647 and completed the following year, the four Rhode Island Towns of Providence, Portsmouth, Newport, and Warwick were united into the colony of the Providence Plantations. From a persecuted outcast, Samuell Gorton had now become a respected leader of the colony. As the undisputed leader of Warwick, Gorton was chosen town magistrate and for numerous other posts, and he was Warwick's main representative in the new colony.

The code of the united colony, drawn up in 1647, followed Gorton's in-

sistence on conforming judicial procedure to English Law. The code had been largely drafted by Roger Williams, acting as moderator of the Providence town meeting, and discussed in detail both by committees of correspondence in the various towns and by the Assembly. Numerous safeguards were included against the exercise of power by the central government of the colony. The selected officers, who constituted the supreme judicial power, did *not*, as in other colonies, constitute also an upper legislative house. Instead, they had no position in the legislature, which was in fact a General Assembly of *all* the freemen of the colony. The only representative body was a General Court—a committee of six from each town, meeting in between the meetings of the larger General Assembly. Laws passed by the General Court were subject to the approval of the towns. If a majority of the towns approved, then the law would stand, but only until confirmation by the next General Assembly. Popular elections were to be annual, for all representatives *and* executive officers. The duties of each official were carefully defined and every officer was warned not to go “beyond his Commission.” Wrongdoing by any official made him liable to impeachment and trial in the General Assembly. In addition, the towns were empowered to make their own apportionment of the taxes levied upon them by the central government, and to do their own collecting.

One of the crucial safeguards raised in the code against the central government was the guarantee of home rule to each town. To guard against the supremacy of any one town, the General Court and Assembly were to rotate their meeting place among the towns. Moreover, the code provided for initiative and referendum, and nullification by the towns. Initiative permitted the “agitation” and passage of new legislation by a majority of the town meetings themselves, thus completely bypassing the General Court. The referendum-and-nullification provision forced the General Court, as we have seen, to refer its enactments to the towns, a majority of which could veto any legislation. In accordance with Rhode Island’s role of providing asylum, there were (unlike Massachusetts) no “stranger” laws preventing persons or towns from receiving newcomers without the consent of the central government.

The code also provided no mitigation of legal penalties for “gentlemen” criminals, and there was no primogeniture in the law of inheritance. In contrast to the brutal edicts of Massachusetts, punishments for crime were restricted, and were far more proportional to the gravity of the crime. Only once did Rhode Island under the code whip or brand anyone, and branding was abolished by 1656. And in contrast to the scores of capital crimes in England and Massachusetts, Rhode Island listed only nine crimes as capital. More important, only two criminals were executed in Rhode Island during Roger Williams’ long lifetime—and both of these were murderers.

Religious liberty was guaranteed in the Rhode Island code, and the laws against personal immorality, though not completely absent, were relatively mild. There was neither sumptuary legislation against “unseemly”

adornment nor any attempt to regulate a person's church life, though laws restricting drinking and gambling were imposed. And while witchcraft was technically illegal, the law against supposed witches was never enforced in Rhode Island.

After several years of this system, the General Assembly in 1650 dissolved itself, thereby ending the democratic veto of the body of freemen. A newly strengthened unicameral General Court of six from each town now constituted the legislature of the colony. Provision for veto of any law by a majority of towns was, however, retained.

In the new government, it might be added, Samuell Gorton was especially selected to serve on committees of defense against Massachusetts' encroachments, a task which Gorton was certainly happy—and well fitted—to pursue.

Let it not be thought, however, that Rhode Island was in any sense out of the woods. For one thing, it still faced the Coddington threat. Thwarted in his claim to unfettered rule in Aquidneck, Coddington spurned Williams' offers to arbitrate their differences, and turned again to an outside colony to practice subversion—this time to Plymouth. Aquidneck would not agree to the scheme, however, and Coddington left for England in late 1648 to plead his case there.

In the meanwhile, Massachusetts Bay continued its pressure on Rhode Island, and especially on Warwick and the Gortonites. Massachusetts and Plymouth stirred up the Indians to plunder Warwick. And then Massachusetts returned to its imperialist course by meddling in behalf of William Arnold and the Pawtuxet oligarchy. Arnold embarked on an aggressive campaign of land-grabbing, and forcibly seized the land of William Field of Pawtuxet. When Field sued in the Providence courts, Arnold refused to appear, and produced obviously mutilated documents of title to try to prove that Providence had no jurisdiction. These documents would, in effect, have ejected many Pawtuxians from their homes and lands, which would then become the property of Arnold and his friends. At this point, spring 1650, Massachusetts suddenly intervened and ordered Rhode Island to end its prosecution of this case, thus throwing its cloak of protection over the land theft by William Arnold and his friends, and moving to extend its suzerainty over Rhode Island.

To add to Rhode Island's and Gorton's troubles, Massachusetts quickly followed this intervention by granting to Arnold and his Pawtuxet friends the right to encroach on Gortonite land in Warwick. It did this by decreeing the forced merger of Pawtuxet and Warwick into one county of Suffolk. Shortly afterward, in the fall of 1650, Massachusetts troops arrived in Rhode Island and prevented the Warwick citizens from prosecuting Arnold. Finally, to make the little colony's cup overflow, Coddington returned from England in the spring of 1651 with an astounding new charter, granting Coddington the right to rule Aquidneck Island as its sole feudal lord and ruler for life, to be aided only by six appointed assistants.

The hammer blows against Rhode Island were now falling thick and fast. Massachusetts sent an official warning to Roger Williams that any attempt to collect taxes from William Arnold and his Pawtuxet oligarchs would lead the Bay magistrates to intervene "in such manner as God shall put into their hands." And, what is more, the United Colonies of the New England Confederation authorized Plymouth to assume complete jurisdiction over Warwick.

Little Rhode Island was clearly in desperate straits. Its plight was reinforced by Massachusetts' persecution of the growing sect of Rhode Island Baptists. As early as 1646, the United Colonies had ordered the vigorous suppression of Baptists for rejecting infant baptism. The Baptists proceeded to aggravate the Puritan theocracy all the more by adopting the practice of baptism by immersion. Dr. John Clarke, the Baptist leader in Rhode Island, infuriated the Massachusetts authorities by converting some citizens of Seekonk, on the Plymouth side of the border, and Massachusetts went so far as to threaten armed action against Plymouth if it did not suppress the invading Baptists. By the fall of 1651, Massachusetts was negotiating with William Coddington for forcible extradition of all those refugees from Massachusetts who had found shelter at Aquidneck, and it began to contemplate the invasion of Rhode Island for the armed suppression of the Rhode Island Baptists.

During this time, John Clarke and Obadiah Holmes, the successful Baptist missionaries to Seekonk, had fallen into the hands of the Massachusetts oligarchy. Visiting a sick old communicant at Lynn, Clarke and Holmes were arrested and sentenced to a heavy fine. The eminent Clarke protested that Massachusetts proceedings violated traditional rights under English law; the report of Governor Endecott held—characteristically—that Clarke "deserved death" and "was worthy to be hanged." Obadiah Holmes refused to sanction the legitimacy of his sentence by not paying the fine, at which point the enraged Rev. John Wilson, minister of the Boston church, struck Holmes in a fury and called down "the curse of God" upon him. Holmes received an extremely severe whipping of thirty lashes, scarring him for life. After this additional fines were levied on the two men, with promise of another severe whipping in case of default.

Roger Williams protested fervently against this brutal treatment, but to no avail. Deeply moved, Williams asked Massachusetts how it was that "he that speaks so tenderly for his own, hath yet so little respect, mercy or pity to the like conscientious persuasions of other men." And Williams cried out:

It is a dreadful voice from the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords: "Endicot, Endicot why hunttest thou me? Why imprisonest thou me? Why finest, why so bloodily whippest, why wouldest thou . . . hang and burn me?"

There was rising disgust in England as well. The English Puritans had come increasingly under the influence of libertarian views, emanating

from the revolutionary ferment. As Massachusetts tightened its theocratic rule, the English Puritans became more and more horrified. Sir Richard Saltonstall, himself a former Massachusetts oligarch who had long since returned to England, wrote to Massachusetts in eloquent and aggrieved reaction to the prolonged whipping of Holmes: "It doth not a little grieve my spirit to hear what sad things are reported daily of your tyranny and persecutions in New England, as that you fine, whip and imprison men for their consciences." English Puritans, Saltonstall reminded them, had hoped that "you might have been eyes to God's people here, and not practice those courses in a wilderness, which you went so far to prevent."

Rhode Island was clearly hemmed in on every side, with Plymouth seizing Warwick, Coddington seceding to become sole overlord of Aquidneck and allying himself with the colony's enemies in Plymouth and Massachusetts, and Massachusetts assuming jurisdiction to protect the Pawtuxet land-grab and threatening suppression of Rhode Island Baptists—indeed the crushing of the colony altogether. It was more than high time for a final desperate attempt to save the little colony. Obviously, the only thing to do was to send respected agents immediately to England, to try to obtain firm parliamentary protection for Rhode Island's charter. Samuell Gorton, now president of Providence Plantations (a truncated colony including only Warwick and Providence), was the active force in raising 200 pounds to send Roger Williams to England. The majority of citizens of Aquidneck, bitterly opposed to Coddington's usurpation, raised the money to send Dr. John Clarke of Newport along with Williams, to represent the island. The Gortonites quickly informed the United Colonies that Williams was going to England on their behalf, among other things to detail the numerous wrongs they had been suffering at the hands of Plymouth and Massachusetts.

Alarmed by this decision, the determined William Arnold pleaded with Massachusetts to send troops immediately and take over Rhode Island before the opportunity was lost. Asking Massachusetts to keep his letter secret, Arnold—not noted for his own personal piety—warned that should Rhode Island be allowed to continue in existence "under the pretense of liberty of conscience . . . thee comes to live all the scum the runaways of the country." Arnold pointed to a horrible example: a man imprisoned in Connecticut (New Haven) for adultery had escaped prison and fled to Rhode Island, where he was *not* executed, although the guilty woman, having failed to escape, was properly put to death. Arnold also charged indignantly that some of the Gortonites "cryeth out much against them that putteth people to death for witches; for they say there be no other witches upon earth . . . but your own pastors and ministers."

Massachusetts, however, growing a bit cautious, did not take Arnold's tempting advice. Instead, it went so far as to permit Williams and Clarke free passage to Boston, where they set sail for England in November 1651.

With Williams gone, Samuell Gorton was the dominant force in the

Providence-Warwick government. As president, and then as moderator of the Assembly the following year, Gorton was able to enact the outlawing of slavery in the colony, and also to limit the term of any indentured service to ten years. Unfortunately, the former law remained a dead letter, but it was the first act of abolition of slavery in American history. Gorton also secured the elimination of imprisonment for debt. Samuell Gorton had successfully completed his odyssey of persecution to become one of the foremost leaders of the colony.

24

Rhode Island in the 1650s: Roger Williams' Shift from Liberty

With Williams gone to England, William Coddington discovered that it was not easy to impose absolute feudal rule upon a free people. The citizens of Aquidneck, led by Capt. Richard Morris and Nicholas Easton, launched an armed revolt against Coddington in early 1652, threatening him and ordering his feudal court to disperse. Coddington, searching for yet another imperial armed force that he could rule and hide behind, turned in desperation to the Dutch, asking vainly for a troop of New Netherland soldiers to suppress the revolt. When Coddington's chief aide, Captain Partridge, seized the home of one of the citizens to enforce a Coddingtonian court order, the enraged populace rose up, occupied the house, and hung the captain then and there. The voice of the people had been heard, and Coddington, speedily taking the lesson to heart, reversed New England custom by fleeing to Massachusetts. He dared return only when he had signed an agreement relinquishing all claims to any greater ownership of Aquidneck than had any other freeman.

In the meantime, Williams and Clarke easily convinced the English government of the spuriousness of Coddington's claim, and obtained an order vacating the Coddington charter. Soon William Dyer returned to Aquidneck from England with the good news. The Coddington threat was finally over.

Williams arrived in England at the moment of Puritan victory and at the peak of the revolutionary intellectual ferment. The great libertarian Leveller movement was at the peak of its influence, and religious freedom had given rise to many diverse and enthusiastic sects. Williams plunged again into intimate association with such liberal Puritan leaders as Sir Henry Vane and John Milton. The upsurge of libertarian views had led to a polar-

ization of ideas among the Puritans, a polarization accelerated by the disruption that always follows the victory of a revolutionary coalition. The orthodox Puritans, or Independents, headed by the Rev. John Owen, began to move toward a new state church of their own and toward the suppression of other religious views. The liberal wing of the Puritans, including Vane and Milton, moved in to battle this essentially counterrevolutionary trend, and Williams enthusiastically joined in this struggle.

Eight years before, Williams' *Bloody Tenent* had been ordered burnt by the Presbyterians then in control of Parliament. Now his writings in behalf of religious liberty received great acclaim in Parliament and in the victorious New Model Army. This was especially true of his published reply to the Rev. John Cotton's attack on the *Bloody Tenent*. Williams' rebuttal was *The Bloody Tenent Yet More Bloody*, in which he denounced Massachusetts' persecution of men for their consciences. Williams also proceeded to a keen attack on the Massachusetts oligarchy: a forced payment of tithes created a church leadership "rich and lordly, pompous and princely," and gave it a monopoly on public office. Wasn't the insistence on compulsory church attendance a reflection of the fear of the rulers that, given a free choice, people's attendance in their churches would fall off? Williams pointed also to Holland's commercial greatness continuing side by side with its practice of religious toleration. And he warned prophetically that the Irish question would never be settled so long as the laws persecuting Roman Catholics remained. Only full religious freedom, "free Conferings, Disputings and Preachings," could reduce civil strife and bloodshed.

Williams even pressed on from his insight into religious liberty to a much wider politico-economic libertarian view: the kings of the earth, he declared, used power "over the bodies and goods of their subjects, but for the filling of their paunches like wolves." These rulers, employing "civil arms and forces to the utmost," pressed for "universal conquest" to establish "rule and dominion over all the nations of the Earth." But, on the contrary, government's proper function is to secure to each individual his "natural and civil rights and liberties . . . due to him as a man, a subject, a citizen."

In another tract written in that exhilarating spring of 1652, *Hireling Ministry None of Christ's*, Williams defended the idea of voluntary rather than compulsory donations to churches. He also declared: "I desire not that liberty to myself, which I would not freely and impartially weigh out to all the consciences of the world beside." Government's "absolute duty" was to insure "absolute freedom" for each religious group.

Williams' new writings had a twofold thrust and purpose: to advance the cause of Rhode Island liberty against Massachusetts, and at the same time to wage the good and general fight for liberty against tyranny in England itself. The major complementary tract, setting forth the specific case for Rhode Island, as well as a Baptist defense of religious liberty, was John Clarke's newly published *Ill Newes from New-England*.

Although Williams and Clarke had no difficulty disposing of Coddington's

claims, the larger problem of Rhode Island *vis-à-vis* Massachusetts was far more difficult. For the crucial decision on which way the Puritan Revolution would turn rested not with Williams' friends but with Oliver Cromwell, head of the New Model Army and a centrist torn between the flaming principles of the liberals and a conservative yearning by orthodox Independents and Presbyterians for a swing back to statism. Cromwell, furthermore, was friendly with the oligarchs of Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay, as well as with Roger Williams. Moreover, the Protector was, fatefully, balking increasingly at the obvious next task of the revolution: the smashing of feudal landholding. The libertarian groundswell of the revolution could not be sustained unless the feudal oligarchy was dispossessed of political power as well as of its restrictive hold of the land of England created by that power and on which that power was now based.

Events moved swiftly, as happens in revolutionary situations, and by May 1653 Cromwell had made his fateful decision—for the landed oligarchy, for statism, and for counterrevolution. Parliament was forcibly dissolved, and military dictatorship assumed by Cromwell. The great Leveller leader John Lilburne was jailed for his libertarian views and the Leveller movement broken up. Only the courageous Sir Henry Vane continued to cry out in protest, charging that Cromwell was plucking up liberty by its very roots. Williams too joined Vane in opposition, at least privately denouncing the Protector as a "usurper" and also attacking Cromwell's aggressive imperialism, typified by his war against the Dutch.

Proceeding skillfully, however, Williams was able to procure an at least tentative confirmation by the English government of Rhode Island's charter claims. Short of funds and discouraged by the new turn on the English scene, and spurred by the turmoil in Rhode Island, Williams returned home in the summer of 1654, leaving John Clarke in London to continue the negotiations.

Williams arrived to find a highly troubled colony. In particular, his beloved Providence was again in great danger. William Coddington had been successfully overthrown, but this by no means ended trouble from Aquidneck. Instead, the Aquidneck government, headed by William Dyer and including Nicholas Easton, had embarked on an aggressive, imperialist course of its own. It had launched piratical attacks on the Dutch of New Netherland, and simultaneously, in spring 1653, combined with a minority of Providence-Warwick people to claim that theirs was the true government of the Rhode Island colony. The Providence-Warwick government had protested, and charged that Aquidneck aggression against the Dutch would "set all New England on fire." At the same time, the Pawtuxet oligarchy again refused to pay taxes to Providence, and once again Massachusetts threatened armed intervention and prevented Providence from pressing its claim.

Any lesser man than the great founder of Rhode Island would have been discouraged enough to give up. For almost two decades Roger Williams

had fought for individual liberty, in England, in New England, and especially for his Rhode Island. And now England was retrogressing and Rhode Island was rent in civil strife. But the great peacemaker, who had conciliated so many disputes and conflicts with the Indians, now used his powerful influence to bring the various factions into conciliatory negotiations. Rational persuasion and not force was his instrument in obtaining agreement and a new unity in the colony. Williams' main task was to bring into the negotiations a reluctant Providence, disgusted by the piracy conducted by the Dyer-Easton rulers of Aquidneck against the Dutch. Finally, each of the four towns agreed to choose six commissioners for a conciliation conference, which met at Warwick at the end of August 1654. The decision of the conference was at once a victory for Williams and unity, and a complete defeat for the Easton-Dyer faction. Reunion of the Rhode Island colony was achieved, and all the laws of Aquidneck since the Coddington usurpation were eliminated, thus restoring the old pre-Coddington dispensation to the colony. Coddington himself formally submitted to Rhode Island authority two years later. Roger Williams was then elected president of the reunited colony.

Even the Pawtuxet troubles were finally fading. Benedict Arnold, son of William and leader of the Pawtuxet oligarchy, finally abandoned the oligarchy's long search for outside armed intervention, renounced Massachusetts, submitted himself to Rhode Island, and moved from Pawtuxet to Newport. However, the actual reunion of the rest of the colony with Pawtuxet did not take place for five more years.

A year later, 1655, Oliver Cromwell greatly helped settle the outstanding issues by sending a formal message to Rhode Island, confirming its right to self-government under the charter of 1644.

On this happy event, Williams wrote to Vane on behalf of the town of Providence. Vane had written to Rhode Island wondering why the colonists had fallen into such disorder. Williams replied for Providence that Rhode Island has "long drunk of the cup of as great liberties as any people that we hear of under the whole heaven." Possibly this "sweet cup hath rendered many of us wanton and too active." Rhode Island, Williams pointed out, had been spared the civil war of England, the "iron yoke of wolfish bishops," and the "new chains of Presbyterian tyrants . . . nor in this colony have we been consumed with the over-zealous fire of the so-called godly Christian magistrates." Williams expanded this recital of Rhode Island liberties to include the political and economic: "Sir, we have not known what an excise means; we have almost forgotten what tithes are, yea, or taxes either, to church or commonwealth."

It was at this very moment, the moment of triumph, that Roger Williams made a radical and fateful shift in his thinking and actions. From a fighter for liberty, Williams suddenly became a statist and an invader of liberty; from a devoted advocate of freedom of conscience, Williams became himself a persecutor of that very conscience. What was the reason

or reasons for this sudden turnabout, this betrayal of the causes for which Roger Williams had so long devoted his very life?

No historian can ever look completely into the soul of another man, but he can make some judicious estimates. We may note several probable reasons for the shift. First, there is the subtle corruption wrought by power, even upon the staunchest libertarian. In the last analysis, power and liberty are totally incompatible, and when one gains the upper hand, the other succumbs. The heroic fighter for liberty *out* of power is often tempted, once the reins of command are in his hands, to rationalize that *now* "order" must be imposed—by him; that "excessive" liberty must be checked—by him. Williams had been president of Rhode Island only once before, in the 1644–47 period when there was hardly any government in the colony. As soon as the colony was formally organized in 1647, Williams had been happy to retire to the private life of a successful fur trader. He had then only emerged from private life to go to England to save the colony. It was only now, in effect, that he was assuming the political post of head of Rhode Island.

A second reason was the coinciding theoretical error that Williams had made in his letter to Vane, that what Rhode Island had been suffering from was an excess of liberty—the "sweet cup hath rendered many of us wanton. . . ." On the contrary, the conflicts in Rhode Island had been caused not by too *much* liberty, but by too *little*: the land monopoly and the treachery of the Pawtuxet oligarchs, the Coddington attempt to impose feudal rule, the continuing imperialist pressure of Massachusetts and the United Colonies. It had only been the remarkable sturdiness of the libertarian tradition in Rhode Island that had kept the colony free despite all these dangers, and had enabled it to escape them at last; and the thought and life of Roger Williams had been perhaps the chief ingredient in that tradition. But that great tradition, strong enough to surmount other periods, was not strong enough to survive its betrayal by its own leading architect.

A third reason for Williams' shift was undoubtedly his discouragement at the retrogression of the libertarian movement in the mother country. Williams had been one of the great lights of that movement, and it in turn had inspired and nourished him—in the 1630s, the 1640s, and on his last visit to England. But then it had been an exciting, rising movement; now, because of Cromwell's betrayal, it was rapidly losing heart and being put to rout. Was the now aging Williams strong enough to keep his convictions at the same burning pitch? Was he strong enough to resist all the temptations to follow the Cromwellian path? Evidently the answer is no. We may consider, also, Williams' earlier lapse from the libertarian principle in the days of the Gorton persecution—and Williams' eventual siding with the Pawtuxet faction to expel Gorton from Providence. Purity of principle had been cast aside even then. And this indicates a fourth contributory reason for Williams' change of heart: a tendency to react testily when people more radically individualist than himself appeared upon the scene.

Williams' shift from liberty to tyranny was first revealed, sharply and

startlingly, in his imposing upon the people of Rhode Island compulsory military service. The other colonies underwent conscription, but this was a strong blow to the libertarian movement of Rhode Island. Driving through a compulsory-militia bill and the selection of military officers in a Providence town meeting, Williams precipitated vehement opposition. The leaders of this libertarian opposition were the Baptists, who denounced the bearing of arms as un-Christian and conscription as an invasion of religious liberty and of the natural rights of the individual. This opposition was itself radicalized by the crisis precipitated by Williams, and the logic of the pacifist opposition to conscription and arms-bearing led them straight to the *ne plus ultra* of libertarianism: individualist anarchism. The opposition—led by Rev. Thomas Olney, former Baptist minister at Providence, William Harris, John Field, John Throckmorton, and Williams' own brother Robert—circulated a petition charging that "it was blood-guiltiness, and against the rule of the gospel, to execute judgment upon transgressors, against the private or public weal." In short, government itself was anti-Christian.

The emergence of William Harris as an anarchist was a particularly striking phenomenon. This contentious man, who had been one of the original few to accompany Williams to Providence and had then joined the Pawtuxet oligarchy, had been suddenly aroused by William Arnold. Harris had been one of the victims of Arnold's attempted land-grab under the aegis of Massachusetts. Apparently this sobering experience of how the state can be used to oppress as well as to confer privileges, added to his disfranchisement by Providence a dozen years before for street brawling, had set Harris on the individualist path. His Baptist pacifism completed the process.

Roger Williams bitterly condemned the "tumult and disturbance" caused by the anarchist petition—conveniently failing to place any blame for the tumult on his original imposition of conscription. And Williams sneered at the "pretense" that arms-bearing violated the petitioners' conscience. He then came up with a famous analogy to support his newfound statist philosophy. He likened human society to a ship on which all people were passengers. All may worship as they pleased, he graciously declaimed, but none is to be allowed to defy "the common laws and orders of the ship, concerning their common peace or preservation." And if any should mutiny against their "officers" or "preach or write that there ought to be no commanders or officers because all are equal in Christ, therefore no masters nor officers, no laws nor orders, no corrections nor punishments . . . the commanders may judge, resist, compel and punish such transgressions. . . ." In short, not only were "mutinous" actions to be punished by the state, but even the very *advocacy* of anarchist principles.

Williams' analogy was superficially attractive, but of dubious relevance. If society inhabits a ship and must obey "its" officers, who are the *owners* of the social "ship"? What gives one set of men in a country the right to claim "ownership" of that country and the people in it, and therefore the

right to command and force others to obey? These were questions that Williams never bothered to raise, let alone answer. He might also have pondered in what way individual persons, pursuing their separate ways on land, were in any way comparable to a ship—and a *single* ship at that—which has to go in one direction at a time. Why must everyone be on *one* ship?

Williams' pronouncement did not convince the opposition either. The anarchists rose in rebellion against Williams' government, but were put down by force. Despite this failure, at the 1655 elections a few months later, at which Williams was reelected president, Thomas Olney was elected an assistant, and was seated even though he had participated in the uprising.

Williams now began a systematic campaign of statism in the colony. The central government was aggrandized at the expense of the home-rule rights of the towns. In May 1655 the Assembly decided to bypass its financial dependence on funds raised by the towns, and to appoint officials to levy general taxes directly on the people. The following year it was decreed that no laws of the colony may be "obstructed or neglected under pretense of any authority of any of the town charters."

Williams also moved to stiffen the laws against immorality. The Assembly decreed the compulsory licensing of liquor dealers and an excise tax on liquor. Sales of spirits to Indians were restricted severely. Punishments were intensified. The four towns had, until then, failed to provide prisons or stocks, so little was the need and so pervasive the spirit of freedom. But the colonial Assembly now moved to fill this gap and also to outlaw "verbal incivilities," which were to be punished by the stocks or payment of a fine. Adultery, which had not been subject to express penalty in the code of 1647, was now to be punished by whipping and a fine. Corporal punishment was to be levied for "loose living" and masters were to be held responsible for the "licentious careers" of servants or minor sons. On the other hand, divorce laws were liberalized, to allow for divorce for reasons of incompatibility.

It is clear that a large part of the motivation for the new statist trend was a desire to curry favor with Cromwell. It was shortly after receipt of Cromwell's official reconfirmation of Rhode Island's charter, in June 1655, that the Assembly passed the law against loose living, on information that Cromwell was restive at the state of morality in the colony. Furthermore, Cromwell in his message had ordered Rhode Island to provide against "intestine commotions." The colony swiftly passed a law against "ring-leaders of factions," providing that such ringleaders, when found guilty by the General Court, were to be sent to England for trial. Here was the fulfillment of the ominous hints of Williams' ship analogy.

But Baptist anarchism continued to multiply in Rhode Island. One of the new adherents was none other than Catherine Scott, the leading Baptist minister and a sister of Anne Hutchinson. Anne Hutchinson's lone pioneering in philosophical anarchism before her death had planted a seed

that came to fruition a decade and a half later. Also adopting anarchism were Rebecca Throckmorton, Robert West, and Ann Williams, wife of Roger's brother Robert. Catherine Scott and Rebecca Throckmorton were soon to espouse the Quaker faith. Finally, in March 1657 the crackdown arrived, and the four individualists were summoned into court by Williams, as being "common opposers of all authority." Williams relented after this public intimidation, however, and the charges were dismissed.

Meanwhile, Williams' relations with Pawtuxet had undergone a subtle but significant change. A former aggressor that many times had called on Massachusetts to crush the colony, Pawtuxet now became a relative island of liberty resisting encroachment from Providence. Apart from its oligarchy in land, Pawtuxet had managed to avoid paying taxes either to Rhode Island or to Massachusetts Bay, and was content to live in liberty from immorality laws or from laws against trading with the Indians. It was now Williams who began to agitate aggressively for a joint Massachusetts-Providence suppression of Pawtuxian liberties and for the forcible end to Pawtuxet secession.

This entire Pawtuxian experience with governments served to confirm William Harris in his anarchism, and also to embitter Williams against Harris more than against his fellows. Harris was particularly vehement in opposition to taxation—all taxation—and circulated to all the towns a manuscript denouncing "all civil government," and urged the people to "cry out no lords, no masters." Harris predicted that the state, the "House of Saul," would inevitably grow "weaker and weaker," whereas the "House of David," Harris and his followers, would grow "stronger and stronger." Harris also condemned all punishments and prisons, all officials and legislative assemblies.

William Harris was now hauled into court, charged with "open defiance under his hand against our Charter, all our laws . . . parliament the Lord Protector and all government." Harris, instead of quieting down under intimidation as had Mrs. Scott and the others, swore that he would continue to maintain his anarchism "with his blood." Persistently refusing to recant, Harris repeated his interpretation of Scripture that "he that can say it is his conscience ought not to yield subjection to any human order amongst men." The General Court found that Harris was guilty of being "contemptuous and seditious" and he and his son were heavily bonded for 500 pounds. The evidence was sent to England in preparation for a trial there for treason.

The treason trial never materialized, but only because the ship carrying the evidence to England was lost at sea. Harris was finally sufficiently cowed, however, to abandon his anarchism and he turned instead to a lifelong harassment of the hated Roger Williams through litigation of land claims.

Williams retired from the presidency in 1657, and a year later Pawtuxet was reunited with the rest of the colony.

25

The Planting of Connecticut

Rhode Island was not the only New England colony settled by former residents of Massachusetts Bay. But whereas Rhode Island was peopled by exiles and refugees, the exodus to Connecticut—the other area of southern New England not covered by charter or other royal grant of ownership—was largely voluntary.

From the early 1630s the Connecticut vacuum proved to be a magnet for settlers from several of the colonies. The first settlers were Dutch from New Amsterdam, who in mid-1633 established a trading post—for trade with the Indians—at Fort Good Hope (now Hartford). The preceding fall, Edward Winslow, a leader of Plymouth, had explored the Connecticut River Valley; after unsuccessfully trying to promote a joint Plymouth-Massachusetts expedition in the summer, he organized a trading post on the river at Windsor, north of Hartford, in the fall of 1634. John Oldham, from Massachusetts, founded a small settlement, at about the same time, at Pyquag (Wethersfield), south of Hartford on the Connecticut River. In the following year, other groups from the Bay settled around Hartford and even at Windsor, in defiance of Plymouth's claim to engrossment of the area.

In the summer of 1635, a Dutch vessel, erecting a fort and trading post at the mouth of the Connecticut River, was forcibly driven off by John Winthrop, Jr., a son of the Massachusetts governor and an agent of Lord Saye and Sele, Lord Brooke, and other lords who had jointly received a grant of the territory from the Council for New England. Winthrop named the conquered settlement Saybrook in his patron's honor.

One of the most important founders of Connecticut was Rev. Thomas

Hooker, minister at Newton in the Bay Colony. While Hooker was scarcely a libertarian, he was a moderate who was highly critical of the rigors of the Massachusetts theocracy. Hooker especially objected to the policy of admitting only a minority to membership in the approved Puritan churches, and of the virtually automatic reelection of state officials that had been instituted by the ruling oligarchy. Hooker also urged a clearer definition of the laws in order to limit the arbitrary rule of the magistrates. Finally, Hooker and his followers left Massachusetts in 1636 to settle at Hartford, his associates being led by the wealthy John Haynes and the lawyer Roger Ludlow, who moved southwestward in three years to found the Connecticut towns of Fairfield and Stratford. These and the previous river towns had all been settled with the permission of Massachusetts. But now a conflict arose between the claims of the English lords to the entire Connecticut Valley (as well as to Saybrook), and the right of the settlers themselves. In March 1636 the Massachusetts General Court, in a decision agreed upon by Hooker, the Connecticut settlers, and Winthrop—who had been regarded as governor of the territory—created a commission to govern the Connecticut River towns. In the joint agreement, Massachusetts—and Winthrop—ceded all governmental powers to the commission (all commissioners were to be residents of the territory), which was empowered to govern with the consent of all the inhabitants—thereby at least formally widening the base of government beyond the body of church membership. The commission was to be temporary, lasting only a year, but the effect was to relinquish all of Massachusetts' and Winthrop's claims to the river towns, and to leave Winthrop in charge of Saybrook.

Early the following year, three river towns—Hartford, Windsor (which had bought out Plymouth's claim), and Wethersfield—elected three men from each town to meet as a General Court and act as the sovereign governmental authority. In the spring of 1638, the Reverend Mr. Hooker declared in an election-day sermon that the "foundation of authority is laid . . . in the free consent of the people"; in January 1639 the three towns established their own permanent government based on a written constitution, the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut. The most northerly river town of Agawam (Springfield), led by William Pynchon, refused to join in this constitution, and instead submitted itself (permanently, as it eventually turned out) to Massachusetts' rule.

The Fundamental Orders, largely inspired by Hooker, provided for a unicameral General Court of four deputies from each of the towns, as well as an annually elected governor and assistants. The governor was to be subordinate to the General Court, which had the legislative power not subject to any gubernatorial veto. Furthermore, the governor and the assistants could not serve for two consecutive years. These provisions, however, did not prevent the assistants from forming an oligarchy, by obtaining a veto power over the General Court. Yet the united colony of Connecticut still remained a federation of independent towns, since all

power not expressly granted to the General Court continued to be reserved to the separate towns.

Let it not be thought, however, that the more democratic Connecticut framework was significantly less intolerant than Massachusetts Bay. The Connecticut leaders agreed with Massachusetts that a major task of the state was to compel uniformity of religious creed. Connecticut's law of 1642 provided that if "any man after legal conviction shall have or worship any other God but the Lord God, he shall be put to death." In 1644 the General Court established the Puritan church by taxing all residents for its support. And failure to attend a Puritan church, or speaking critically of its official doctrine, was outlawed and punished by stiff fines. While there was no official religious test for voting in Connecticut, as there was in the Bay, suffrage was restricted to freemen. Admission to the ranks of freemen was, in effect, restricted to orthodox churchmen, the admission being decided by the General Court itself. And one of the requirements for admission was that the person be of "peaceable and honest conversation"; interpretation of this vague test rested with the authorities. The chief difference between Massachusetts and Connecticut rule was that Hooker and Connecticut based the government of the colony on the body of orthodox church members, while Massachusetts government was far more centered in the hands of an oligarchy of magistrates and ministers.

Whereas local town government was guarded against any invasion by central government power, the same cannot be said for the liberty of the individual in Connecticut. Land allocation was, as in Massachusetts, under the control of the local oligarchy; land reverted to the ownership of the town if the individual owner moved away; forced labor was imposed for road building; and strangers had to be admitted by the town government. Blasphemy, drunkenness, and the like were outlawed and indentured servants jealously guarded. Speech critical of the government was severely punished. One woman was duly executed for expressing anti-Christian sentiments. A score of women were punished for alleged witchcraft and several hanged—the persecution of "witches" reached a peak in the early 1660s. Repeatedly, in the late 1640s and 1650s, the Connecticut government took steps to overrule the towns so as not to admit supposed "undesirables" to residence. Minimum requirements of property for "freemen" and for "admitted inhabitants" were imposed. By the 1660s oligarchy in Connecticut had grown considerably and at the expense of the originally more democratic framework envisioned by Thomas Hooker.

Meanwhile, what of Saybrook? By the early 1640s, the English lords had lost interest in their claims and had, at least *de facto*, abandoned them. The only proprietor living at Saybrook was George Fenwick, who illegally and without consulting his partners sold the ownership of Saybrook to Connecticut in exchange for the privilege of exacting tolls on goods passing through the mouth of the Connecticut River. From the time of this agree-

ment, in 1643-44, Connecticut assumed complete jurisdiction over Saybrook.

By 1662 fifteen towns had associated themselves in the Connecticut colony. Most of them were situated on the Connecticut River; the others were in the Fairfield-Stratford area to the southwest, on Long Island Sound, or eastward in the New London area. In addition, several townships on Long Island had joined Connecticut, including Southampton, Huntington, and Oyster Bay.

Completely separate from the Connecticut towns, for over a generation, was the Colony of New Haven. The founder of New Haven was the Reverend John Davenport, who arrived in Boston from England with his followers just in time to play a leading role in the persecution of Anne Hutchinson. To Davenport, *mirabile dictu*, Massachusetts Bay was lax and soft and not nearly theocratic enough. And so the Reverend Mr. Davenport, along with the wealthy merchant Theophilus Eaton, founded New Haven as an independent town in the spring of 1638. The land was purchased from the Indians. Davenport and Eaton made sure that *their* ruling theocracy would be *really* oligarchic, without any of the Bay Colony's democratic taint. In mid-1639, they selected twelve men, who in turn chose seven men, to begin the church, and government, of the town. This committee of seven had absolute power over admission of any member to the church, and only church members, of course, could vote in governmental elections. The result was that at the outset over one-half of the inhabitants of New Haven town were disfranchised, an achievement which Massachusetts took a score of years of growth and immigration to emulate.

The laws of New Haven were expressly to be confined to the "laws of God," as interpreted by the ruling clique. The seven committeemen, known as the "pillars of the church," chose nine or more additional men to constitute the General Court of the town. This court elected a magistrate and four deputies who served as judges. There was no need for jury trial, as the answers were to be found by the judges in the Bible. The town's General Court *was* the sole "town meeting." In short, there was little for even the restricted voting list to vote about.

The New Haven settlers soon founded other towns: in 1639, nearby Milford and Guilford on the coast, followed by Stamford, some distance to the southwest, in 1641. Milford, founded by Rev. Peter Prudden, was more democratic than the other towns. The rules on church membership and voting were relaxed, so that only less than one-fifth of the populace was disfranchised, and at least a handful of local leaders remained outside the church. A more rigid deviation from the New Haven norm characterized the town of Guilford, founded by Rev. Henry Whitfield, a friend of Hooker and Fenwick. In Guilford, political privileges were restricted not simply to Puritan church members, but to members of Whitfield's *own* church.

Stamford was settled in a manner completely different from the settling of other towns. New Haven had recently acquired a tract of land via one of the usual arbitrary purchases from the Indians. Anxious to settle the land, Davenport persuaded a group of dissidents in Wethersfield, Connecticut, headed by Rev. Richard Denton, to found a settlement (Stamford) there. In return, Stamford would submit to the jurisdiction of New Haven, send deputies to New Haven's town court, and accept magistrates and officials chosen by the New Haven court.

Another town settled by New Haven was Southold, in 1640, on the northeastern tip of Long Island. The tract had been purchased from someone who had a dubious grant from the old Council for New England. On that tract Southold was founded by Rev. John Youngs. Again, New Haven retained jurisdiction.

In 1643 these five towns—New Haven and its cluster of two (Stamford and Southold), and the two independent towns of Milford and Guilford—united to form the Colony of New Haven. The Frame of Government of the colony restricted suffrage in the same way as in the original New Haven town; indeed, each town's government was similar to New Haven's. Over each government was the central government of the colony. The approved church members—the freemen—elected the deputies from each town, a governor, and a court of magistrates; all of these constituted the unicameral General Court, which exercised the colony's legislative, executive, and judicial functions. The colony, however, was a loose confederation of towns, each town being autonomous in its own affairs.

So entrenched was the original oligarchy that Theophilus Eaton had no difficulty in remaining magistrate of New Haven town and governor of the colony from the beginning until his death in 1658.

Other towns added later to New Haven Colony were Branford, near New Haven, and Greenwich, as an addition to Stamford. No further foothold was gotten on Long Island; the towns there decided to join Connecticut. The failure of Southampton, Huntington, and Oyster Bay to join New Haven Colony was a particularly bitter blow, since New Haven had helped finance their settlement. The Long Island towns, however, objected particularly to New Haven's highly restrictive franchise.

As we might expect, the theocratic rigors of New Haven Colony were severe indeed. Drunkenness and sexual misdeeds were not only outlawed, but regulated minutely by the authorities. Even card playing, dancing, and singing were partially prohibited, because they tended to corrupt the youth and were a "misspense of precious time." Smoking in public was prohibited. The laws were enforced with particular severity against the lower classes—servants and seamen especially. Punishment was inflicted by stocks, pillories, whipping, and imprisonment, and some persons were executed for the crime of adultery. In a typical sentence in New Haven town, Goodman Hunt and his wife were banished from the town because he allowed someone else to kiss Mrs. Hunt on a Sunday.

New Haven did not turn out to be a flourishing colony, and much of the capital of the merchants was dissipated in unprofitable ventures. Not the least of these were the repeated and unsuccessful attempts to plant New Haven colonies far to the southwest, along the banks of the Delaware River.

One trouble was that the Delaware already had settlements, and non-English ones at that. Sweden's New Sweden Company had planted a settlement at Fort Christina (Wilmington) in 1637, headed by the Dutchman Peter Minuit. The Dutch established their own settlements on the river shortly thereafter. New Haven merchants organized the Delaware Company, and in 1640 their expedition, headed by Capt. George Lambertson and Capt. Nathaniel Turner, settled at Salem Creek, on the east bank of the river. Swedish and especially Dutch pressure against the colonists, added to the severe conditions, forced the closing of the settlement. Many years later, in the mid-1650s, New Haven projected a much larger, better-organized settlement on the Delaware, but this too never materialized. New Haven was anxious for others to make war upon the Dutch, to oust them from the Delaware and pave the way for their own colonial expansion. Massachusetts, however, wisely refused to be persuaded to war upon the Dutch for New Haven's advantage, and the New Haveners were bitterly disappointed when Cromwell made peace with Holland.

Discontent against the tight oligarchic rule was manifest in the colony by the 1650s especially outside the town of New Haven. When war loomed against the Dutch in the mid-1650s, citizens of Stamford, Milford, and Southold demanded an extension of the highly restricted suffrage and the substitution of regular English law for the rigors of the "Bible Commonwealth." Robert Bassett of Stamford was a particularly vocal dissident, attacking the government as tyrannical, and one under which justice could not possibly be obtained. The colony cracked down severely on all dissidents, hauling them into court and charging them with an attempt to change, undermine, and overthrow constituted authority, and with breaking their loyalty oaths by stirring up rebellion. All were convicted and heavily fined, and made haste to confess their sins. After this suppression, loyalty oaths were more widely imposed upon the inhabitants. Even so, grumbling continued against the high taxes and heavy debts stemming from increased governmental expenses for schools, meeting-houses, watchhouses, etc., and there was widespread tax evasion in the colony.

26

The Seizure of Northern New England

By the 1650s, then, five colonies were established in New England, as virtually self-governing entities: Massachusetts Bay and Plymouth in central New England, and Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New Haven in the south. The estimated total population of these colonies in 1650 was: Plymouth, 1,500; Rhode Island, 800;* Connecticut and New Haven combined, 4,100; Massachusetts Bay, with twice as much as the others combined, 14,000.

What, however, of northern New England—the region north of Massachusetts Bay? The first settlements there had been made by “unauthorized” private groups of fishermen. In 1621 a group settled at the mouth of the Piscataqua River, near the site of what is now Portsmouth, New Hampshire, on the Maine border. Two years later, another fishing group settled at Dover, up the bay from Portsmouth. More formal colonizing came later when, in August 1622, the Council for New England jointly granted to John Mason (a friend of the Duke of Buckingham, a favorite of King Charles I) and Sir Ferdinando Gorges all the land between the Merrimack and the Kennebec rivers (the former is now approximately at the New Hampshire—Massachusetts border, the latter is in western Maine). Small special subgrants of land were now made. In 1622 to David Thompson, who the following year founded the settlement of Rye (south of Portsmouth on the coast). In 1623 Christopher Levett received

*Of the distribution of population in the Rhode Island settlements, the breakdown in 1655 was approximately: Newport, 38 percent; Portsmouth, 29 percent; Providence, 17 percent; Warwick, 16 percent. In short, two-thirds of the Rhode Islanders lived in Aquidneck and one-third on the mainland.

a small grant and founded a settlement at the mouth of the Casco River (west of the Kennebec in Maine). And the following year John Oldham and Richard Vines settled Biddeford, on the south side of the Saco River, in what is now southern Maine. In 1629 Mason and Gorges agreed to divide their granted territory, Gorges obtaining all the land north of the Piscataqua, which he called Maine, and Mason all the land to the south, now called New Hampshire. In the early 1630s, Walter Neale founded two settlements on the Piscataqua, expanding Portsmouth further to the south, and adding the Rye settlement, and South Berwick on the north side. Gorges concentrated his colonizing in the area of York, a bit north of the border.

By the mid-1630s, then, northern New England was split in two, with small settlements along the coast: Casco, Biddeford, South Berwick, and especially York in Maine; Portsmouth and Dover in New Hampshire. John Mason had every intention of becoming lord proprietor of New Hampshire. Asserting that all the land was his own, he gave orders to arrest or shoot any persons daring to hunt animals on "his" territory. Mason also intended to establish the Anglican church in New Hampshire and to outlaw Dissenters. Stern resistance by the populace thwarted his designs, and when Mason died at the end of 1635, the colonists rebelled and announced the vacating of Mason's claims. They declared Mason's lands appropriated, and from then on they refused to recognize the sovereignty of his heirs. New Hampshire territory was now, like Rhode Island, a vacuum for free and unhampered settlement. Two years later, Rev. John Wheelwright, the first Hutchinsonian to be expelled from Massachusetts, walked northward through the snows to found the town of Exeter, New Hampshire. Wheelwright and his followers drew up the Exeter Compact in founding the town; it was modeled after the original Mayflower Compact. More orthodox Puritans, sent from Massachusetts Bay shortly afterward, founded Hampton, in New Hampshire.

Maine, however, was not that lucky with its proprietary feudal overlord. In 1639 Gorges obtained a royal charter that confirmed his position as proprietor and governor of Maine. Gorges sent his cousin Thomas Gorges to Maine to rule the colony, and he established a provincial court at York.

But if New Hampshire territory was a vacuum, it was, again, a vacuum that invited seizure by the ambitious, expansionist Massachusetts power. Massachusetts not only was impelled by the territorial drive endemic to all states, but also was attracted by the rich prospect of timber, fur, and fishing resources in the north. Unlike Rhode Island, New Hampshire and Maine had no influential Puritan friends in England; indeed, Mason and Gorges had been royal favorites and the settlers were largely Anglican. Hence, when the Puritans came to power in England, northern New England was looked upon as a ripe plum for Massachusetts' designs.

The New Hampshire towns were the first to go. Hampton, founded as an outpost of Massachusetts Bay, had always been under its jurisdiction,

and had been sending a representative to the Massachusetts General Court. The other towns, beginning with Dover, were appropriated by Massachusetts during 1641–43, a circumstance forcing Reverend Mr. Wheelwright to flee once more, this time to Maine. Also appropriated were scattered New Hampshire towns far to the west of the Piscataqua towns: Merrimack and Salisbury on the Merrimack River, and Haverhill far to the northwest.

Fortunately, Massachusetts' rule over the New Hampshire towns was relatively enlightened—due partly to the religious diversity of the towns and the numerous Anglicans living there. A large measure of home rule was allowed; the towns governed their local affairs in town meetings and elected deputies to the General Court at Boston. Significantly, the New Hampshiremen were exempt from the church-membership qualification for voting, a qualification strictly enforced in Massachusetts proper.

Massachusetts' grab of Maine came a decade later and encountered stiffer resistance. Gorges' death in 1647, coupled with the rise of Puritanism in England, left a vacuum in Maine. The three towns at the southern tip of Maine—York, Wells, and Kittery—attempted to form a free and independent union like that in Rhode Island, but Massachusetts did not permit it to come to fruition. Ignoring an appeal by Maine to Parliament, Massachusetts seized the towns in 1652 and then proceeded to annex the Saco and Casco settlements as well. Fortunately, the Maine towns received the same home-rule privileges as the towns of New Hampshire. Thus, both New Hampshire and Maine had by the 1650s been swallowed up by Massachusetts Bay.

27

Joint Action in New England: The Pequot War

It was characteristic of the New England colonies that their first exercise in united action came in a joint slaughter of Indians; specifically, the Pequot War of 1636-37. The Pequots, who were the dominant tribe in the Connecticut area, had had difficulty with the Dutch in Connecticut and were therefore eager at first to welcome the English colonists. Unfortunately, Lt. William Holmes, commanding the first English settlement—the Plymouth expedition to Windsor—started off on the wrong foot; in late 1633 he purchased the land from dissident sachems whom he had brought back with him, and who had been expelled by the Pequots. Another unfortunate incident was the murder by the Pequots of a drunken Virginian sea captain named Stone, in the summer of 1633, in the mistaken belief that he was Dutch. Yet, the following year, the Pequot grand sachem Sassacus made with Massachusetts Bay a treaty that amounted to surrender to white wishes: the English were to be allowed to settle in Connecticut. The murderers of Stone were also to be surrendered to the English, but the latter thoughtfully made no demands for enforcement of this provision.

This peaceful state of affairs was disrupted by the murder of a prominent New England trader. In 1636, John Oldham was killed by the Block Island Indians on Block Island in the Atlantic Ocean east of Long Island. Now there were several things that characterized white treatment of the Indians in North America: (1) Indian guilt was always treated as collective rather than individual and punishment was never limited to the actual individual criminals; (2) the punishment was enormously greater than the original crime; (3) no careful distinctions were made between Indian tribes, the collective guilt being extended beyond the specific tribe in-

volved; and (4) surprise attacks were used extensively to slaughter men, women, and children of the tribe. All these characteristics marked the white reaction to the murder of Oldham. In the first place, immediately after the death of Oldham, a party of whites under John Gallop shot at and rammed the unarmed Indian crew that had committed the crime, until all but four of the Indians were drowned. Of the four, two surrendered and one of them was promptly thrown overboard by Gallop.

But this swift punishment of the actual criminals was of course thought insufficient. Governor Vane of Massachusetts Bay quickly outfitted the tough John Endecott with an armed troop to slaughter more Block Island Indians. Now the Block Islanders had nothing to do with the Pequots. But somehow even the relatively liberal Vane concluded *a priori* that the Pequots *must* be harboring some of the murderers and he ordered Endecott to include the Pequots in the rigors of collective "punishment." Specifically, Endecott was instructed to massacre every male Indian on Block Island whether guilty or innocent of the crime, and to kidnap all the women and children—in short, to depopulate Block Island of native Indians. He also instructed to demand from them a thousand fathoms of wampum and to seize a few Pequot children as hostages for their good behavior.

Endecott found that he could not catch the Block Island Indians, but he partially compensated by burning all their crops and wigwams and by destroying their property. Returning from the island, he could not persuade the supposedly ferocious Pequots to fight, but he nevertheless managed to kill some of them and to burn many Pequot crops and wigwams.

The Pequots, understandably rather bitter at this undeserved plunder, urged the Narragansett Indians, the leading tribe in Rhode Island, to join with them in warring against the white invaders. The Narragansetts, however, were very friendly with Roger Williams and, under his influence, refused the offer (for which friendship, as we have seen, the Narragansett grand sachem was later murdered by Massachusetts). The Pequot reprisal was to besiege Fort Saybrook, whose leader, Lt. Lyon Gardiner, had warned the exuberant Endecott in his plunder that "you come hither to raise these wasps about my ears, and then you will take wings and flee away." Still, the situation was not yet out of hand, as only the military had been attacked, and not the settlers. But then, in the spring of 1637, amidst this explosive situation, the settlers at Wethersfield violated a solemn agreement they had made with a friendly chief named Sequin. When they bought the land from Sequin, they agreed to allow him to remain within the town limits. But now Wethersfield violated the agreement and expelled Sequin from the town. For the Pequots this was the last straw and they attacked Wethersfield and killed some of the inhabitants.

In the minds of the white men of that era, the deaths of a few white settlers were enough to justify the immediate extermination of an entire Indian nation—and it was precisely on such a course that the New England colonies now embarked. The first meeting of the General Court of

Connecticut in May resolved upon an "offensive war against the Pequot," and ninety men were conscripted from the three river towns under the command of Capt. John Mason (no relation to the Mason of New Hampshire). Joined by some dissident Indians, Mason launched a sneak attack on the Pequot camp, surrounding and burning the entire camp and slaughtering some six hundred Indians, the bulk of them old men, women, and children.

The remnant of the Pequot tribe, under Sassacus, attempted to flee westward, but they were now pursued by a combined force of Mason's troops and over a hundred men from Massachusetts and Plymouth. Stragglers from the Pequots were slaughtered; of over a hundred Pequot men, women, and children hiding in a swamp, all the men were murdered in cold blood by the Massachusetts troop. Two Pequots, spared when they promised to take the whites to Sassacus, were murdered when they failed to do so. The Pequot women were all either turned over to the ungracious hands of the dissident Indians, or sold into slavery in Massachusetts. Finally, the remainder of the Pequots were trapped in a swamp near the site of Fairfield. The men were wiped out and the women sold into slavery, in which, not making successful slaves, they died soon after. Roger Williams' pleas to Massachusetts for mercy for the Pequot prisoners were unheeded—despite his great service in keeping the Narragansetts out of the war. As for Sassacus, he managed to escape across the Hudson, but there the Mohawks—one of the Iroquois tribes allied to the Dutch and English—killed him and sent his scalp back to Boston as a token of their friendship with the English. The extermination of the Pequot people had been successfully accomplished.

28

The New England Confederation

The experience of the Puritan colonies in the joint aggression against the Pequots, added to the continuing drive of Massachusetts Bay for domination over its neighbors, led to a more formal bond between them.

As early as 1634 Massachusetts had moved in to establish control over a wholly Pilgrim trading post on the Kennebec in Maine. It arrested a Plymouth magistrate there and forced Plymouth leaders to go to Boston to settle the matter. Similarly, the following year Massachusetts forced Pilgrims out of land that they had settled on the Connecticut River, to permit Bay settlers to occupy the land. Massachusetts also pressed claims for large portions of Connecticut and Plymouth territory, and we have seen its designs on Rhode Island.

The first discussion of a confederation between the Puritan colonies occurred at the synod of August–September 1637 for the condemnation of Anne Hutchinson. The synod was attended by ministers from Connecticut and Massachusetts. Governor Winthrop of Massachusetts suggested to the Connecticut ministers that the synod become a regular annual meeting of the ministers of both areas because of their mutual "distaste for unauthorized interpretation." In the spring of 1638 Roger Ludlow, an advocate of strong government in Connecticut, inquired further about a confederation, as did John Davenport and Theophilus Eaton of New Haven. Connecticut sent John Haynes to Massachusetts to confer on the matter, but Massachusetts insisted on control of the upper Connecticut Valley about Springfield—crucial to the fur trade—which Connecticut refused to acknowledge. Massachusetts proposed setting up a commission with absolute power to settle all disputes between the colonies, and without reference to the

separate assemblies. In this way, Massachusetts hoped to gain control of the sister colonies, deeming it far easier to dominate a group of magistrates than the elected General Courts of the various colonies. But Thomas Hooker pointed out that the terms proposed by Massachusetts exceeded the "limits of that equity which is to be looked at in all combinations of free states." To prevent oligarchic control by the joint magistrates of the colonies, Hooker insisted that any such commissioners be elected.

The confederation proposed at this time therefore proved abortive. The joint Pequot War effort and the growing united interest in preventing asylum from being granted to runaway indentured servants, however, caused the Puritan colonies to draw closer together. Despite this, Massachusetts continued its aggressive expansion, seizing, as we have seen, the New Hampshire settlements. Similarly, Connecticut and New Haven were settling in territory claimed arbitrarily by the Dutch and liked the idea of a confederation for defending it. Furthermore, the civil strife in England was making the New England colonies even more self-governing than before and giving them an opportunity to carry more weight by acting jointly.

Finally, in the fall of 1642 Plymouth proposed a confederation provided that the General Court of each colony ratify all agreements. Connecticut also agreed to send delegates to a meeting in the spring, quickly making sure that Saybrook was incorporated within its realm before the confederation was formed. In May 1643 Massachusetts, Connecticut, Plymouth, and New Haven colonies agreed to form the "Confederation of the United Colonies of New England."

The Articles of Confederation declared its purpose to be "a firm and perpetual league of friendship, for offense and defense . . . both for preserving and propagating the truths of the Gospel and for their mutual safety and welfare." The General Court of each colony was to elect two commissioners to meet once a year and on special occasions. These eight commissioners had the power to declare war, make peace, and allocate military expenses among the colonies in proportion to their population. But approval of each colony's General Court was needed to levy the tax. For commissioners to reach any decision whatever required an affirmative vote of six of the eight. The commissioners were also to make recommendations to the specific colonies, settle boundary disputes, and provide for the capture of fugitives—for example, runaway servants. There was no executive; annually one of the commissioners was chosen president, and he served merely as moderator of the proceedings. All the commissioners had to be Puritan church members.

No colony was bound by the commissioners' decisions unless its General Court approved. Thus each colony could nullify any decisions affecting it, and insure against aggrandizement by the new centralized power.

One important provision of the confederation was to guarantee the independence and given territory of each member colony. For this reason,

Massachusetts moved to reject a proposal to admit the Maine settlements to the confederation, since Massachusetts was preparing to confiscate them. Rhode Island was not admitted for similar reasons, and also because its individualistic policies were a standing reproach to the other colonies. Thus, Rhode Island's continual refusal to coerce the return of fugitives and runaway servants from the other colonies—the colony was preserving itself as a haven for the oppressed—was itself a vital blow to the structure of caste and persecution in the other New England colonies. Hence, Rhode Island's application for admission in 1648 was rejected unless it agreed to become part of Massachusetts Bay—a condition that Rhode Island, of course, angrily rejected.

This first confederation of colonies in the New World was modeled on the United Provinces of the Netherlands, which had been established by the Union of Utrecht in 1579. The United Provinces was a loose confederation of seven provinces for purposes of defense. Deputies were selected by the autonomous provinces, each of which had to approve the decisions of the union for it to be bound by the union's actions. Many New Englanders had experienced the workings of such a confederation during their previous exile in the Netherlands.

From the start, the commissioners were clearly extensions of the ruling magistracy of the colonies. First president of the confederation was Governor John Winthrop, and his sons and grandsons became commissioners as well as magistrates in Massachusetts and Connecticut. The same was true for the other Massachusetts signatory of the Articles of Confederation, Thomas Dudley; he and his sons-in-law were to become governors and commissioners. Similarly Theophilus Eaton, governor and commissioner from New Haven; his sons-in-law became magistrates and commissioners from New Haven and Connecticut.

The requirement that commissioners belong to the Puritan church soon bore fruit. One of their earliest proposals, in 1646, was in answer to a request of Massachusetts for a meeting of the elders of the New England churches "to consider some confession of doctrine and discipline with solid grounds to be approved by the churches." After the Westminster Assembly in England adopted the Westminster Confession of Faith (1647), which espoused presbyterianism, a synod was held at Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1648, the same year in which the Cambridge Platform of the church was issued. The Platform accepted the Westminster Confession and provided that "idolatry, blasphemy, venting corruption and pernicious opinions are to be restrained and punished by the civil authority," and "if any church one or more shall grow schismatical, rending itself from the communion of other churches, or shall walk incorrigibly or obstinately in any corrupt way of their own, contrary to the rule of the Word; in such case, the Magistrate is to put forth his coercive power, as the matter shall require." The Massachusetts path of persecution had been confirmed by the

United Colonies. The commissioners of the confederation also levied an annual contribution on the towns of the colonies for the support of Harvard College.

After the massacre of the Pequots, the Narragansetts became the main body of Indians in southern New England. We have seen how Massachusetts and the United Colonies tried to take over Warwick and the Narragansetts, only to be foiled by the submission of the Narragansetts to England through Samuell Gorton. The United Colonies, however, struggled hard to conquer the Narragansetts. In 1645 Miles Standish led a confederation force into Rhode Island to beat the Narragansett Indians into a "sober temper." Foiled by Roger Williams' negotiation of peace and neutrality with the Indians, the enraged Standish threatened to seize any settler helping the Indians.

The confederation scarcely fulfilled the high hopes of its founders, and largely because of continuing difficulties between Massachusetts and its fellow colonies, with Massachusetts aggressively pressing its claims against the others. Thus, Massachusetts and Connecticut quarreled over the land taken from the Pequots. For years, Massachusetts claimed the lands, granting large tracts to Governor Winthrop's son John Jr., an assistant of the colony. Young Winthrop was even granted governmental power over his plantation. Finally, after the senior Winthrop's death in 1649, his son accepted Connecticut jurisdiction and was soon to become a long-term governor of his adopted colony. A more important rift occurred over Springfield, the northernmost settlement on the Connecticut River. Geographically one of the Connecticut towns, Springfield, as the uppermost town on the river, was critically important in the beaver trade with the Indians. In the late 1640s, Connecticut levied a river tax on the various towns to finance its hastily purchased Fort Saybrook. Springfield, led by its virtual manorial lord, William Pynchon, refused to pay the tax, pointing out that it had joined Massachusetts upon the creation of the New England Confederation, and was therefore outside Connecticut's jurisdiction. Massachusetts had appointed Pynchon as chief judge and magistrate; he ruled Springfield, and had a right of appeal to the court of assistants of the colony at Boston. To strengthen its claim on Springfield, Massachusetts now accepted deputies from the town to its General Court. Massachusetts of course backed Springfield's refusal to pay and persisted in defying the confederation agreement to submit all such disputes to arbitration. Massachusetts also retaliated by taxing products of the other New England colonies entering Boston. For the remainder of the century, Springfield continued as a virtually independent republic, loosely under Massachusetts, and governed by Pynchon and his son John. Springfield, indeed, set up its own frontier trading posts at such new settlements as Westfield, Hadley, and Northampton.

Massachusetts also took the lead in aggressive actions of the United Colo-

nies against other English colonies—for example, breaking off trade with Virginia, Bermuda, and Barbados for daring to continue their support of the royalist cause.

Most of the friction between Massachusetts and the other colonies occurred over acts of imperial aggression by one or the other against their French neighbors to the north or the Dutch to the south. The first confrontation occurred with the French. After the Virginians had sacked the French Jesuit settlement at Port Royal in 1613, the French created the Company of New France, with Cardinal Richelieu, chief minister to Louis XIII, as president. Richelieu granted his own company feudal rule of the land and a monopoly of the fur trade. England conquered the Acadian and some other Canadian settlements from France in the war of 1627–29, but these areas were restored in 1632 in return for a large dowry from the French bride of the English king Charles I.

By 1643 a virtual war had broken out between two French claimants to the rich prize of Acadia—especially to the fur monopoly and the feudal tenure. The losing claimant, Claude de la Tour, appeared at Boston in 1643, and Governor Winthrop and a few of the ruling oligarchs decided to give de la Tour secret support for an expedition against the French governor. In defiance of legality this crucial matter was referred neither to the General Court nor to the commissioners of the new Confederation of the United Colonies. Winthrop and the others did not submit the issue because they knew that this rash interference in French affairs would have been rejected. The purpose of the affair was to have a clique of Boston merchants join in plunder, and gain a share in the fisheries and the tempting Acadian fur monopoly.

The ignominious failure of the expedition swelled the rising opposition to the scheme in Massachusetts—an opposition led by the competing merchants from Salem and other outlying towns—and Winthrop was temporarily deposed in the 1644 election. Leader of the opposition to the Acadian adventure was Richard Saltonstall, a merchant of Ipswich, north of Salem. Still, the raiders did manage to plunder the plantation of the French governor, Charles d'Aulnay, and to bring back the booty to be sold at auction in Boston. The proceeds of the auction were divided among the raiders. The new governor, John Endecott, however, proclaimed the neutrality of Massachusetts in the intra-French war and offered d'Aulnay satisfaction. The commissioners of the United Colonies met in the fall of 1644 and sternly forbade all such secret plundering expeditions in the future. Finally, Massachusetts signed the Treaty of Boston with d'Aulnay in the fall of 1644, providing that the English in Massachusetts and the French in Acadia have a right to trade freely with each other and with any other peoples, and also providing that any disputes between the two parties be settled by peaceful means.

In the conflicts with the Dutch, on the other hand, it was the southern New England colonies that yearned to plunder the Dutch, and it was Mas-

sachusetts that held back from a war in which it was not economically concerned.

Connecticut and New Haven were early embroiled in problems with the Dutch. The original Dutch fort at Hartford was surrounded by English settlers, and the English pressed on to eastern Long Island. Such settlement was in itself highly legitimate, but this was not true of the accompanying *political* claims for governing these areas. New Haven also clashed with the Dutch and Swedes in the Delaware settlements, and was bitter not only at the Swedish and Dutch fur monopoly, but also at the Dutch for granting of asylum to runaway servants of the New Haven colonists.

The governor of Dutch New Netherland, Peter Stuyvesant, and the commissioners of the United Colonies, concluded the Treaty of Hartford in 1650, supposedly settling the large part of the disputes between them. The English were granted sovereignty over all land east of Greenwich, Connecticut, except for Fort Good Hope (Hartford), and over all of Long Island east of Oyster Bay. England, however, refused to ratify the treaty or to recognize any Dutch territory in America, and within a year, New Haven—backed by the United Colonies—attempted further expansion on the Delaware. What is more, the commissioners played a role in the passage of the anti-Dutch Navigation Act of 1651 in the English Parliament.

The following year, Cromwell launched his war of aggression against Holland, and New Haven and Connecticut whooped for war in earnest. They even stirred up false rumors of an alleged plot by Stuyvesant to incite the Indians to attack. Violating the treaty of 1650, Connecticut seized the Dutch fort at Hartford and forcibly incorporated the territory. And even Aquidneck, as we have seen, engaged in piracy against Dutch shipping. Furthermore, the English settlers in the New Netherland portion of Long Island—in the towns of Oyster Bay, Hempstead, Flushing, Jamaica, Newtown, and Gravesend—formed their own independent union.

Connecticut and New Haven, yearning for war, swung all but one of the commissioners to declare war against the Dutch, but Massachusetts coolly vetoed the scheme. Massachusetts asserted in its own curious but convenient interpretation of the Articles of Confederation, that the commissioners had no power to declare an *offensive* war. However, the Bay Colony was on completely sound legal ground in insisting on its right of nullification of the war decision as applied to itself. The Dutch model of the confederation, incidentally, had also stressed this right of nullification by each constituent province.

Why did Massachusetts balk at war? For one thing, it had no desire to put up two-thirds of the forces and the bulk of the finances for a war in which it could not gain. In fact, any Connecticut or New Haven accession to the lucrative Dutch fur trade with the Iroquois might well have been detrimental to Massachusetts' trading interests.

Massachusetts was successful in blocking the war and the English war with the Dutch ended in 1654 without New England's entering the fray.

Ironically, a British fleet, sent to America to act against the Dutch, arrived after the end of the war; thwarted, it decided not to waste its preparations and it promptly seized Acadia from the French. It is no coincidence that the leader of the Massachusetts force that helped conquer Acadia was Major Robert Sedgwick, a prominent Boston fish merchant, eager to obtain access to the Acadian fisheries.