

A TALE OF TWO COLONIES

“Plimoth” and Massachusetts Bay in the Seventeenth Century

In 1920 Plymouth celebrated the 300th anniversary of the landing of the “Pilgrims.” Recalling an elementary school pageant, “Pilgrims” dressed in black with wide brimmed hats and impressive belt buckles. Today we know that most did not wear black but favored “sadd colors” autumn hues of yellow, brown and russet.

“Native people” dressed in the style of “Plains Indians” familiar to some because of Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Shows. It was not the style of the Wampanoag people who first met the English colonists.

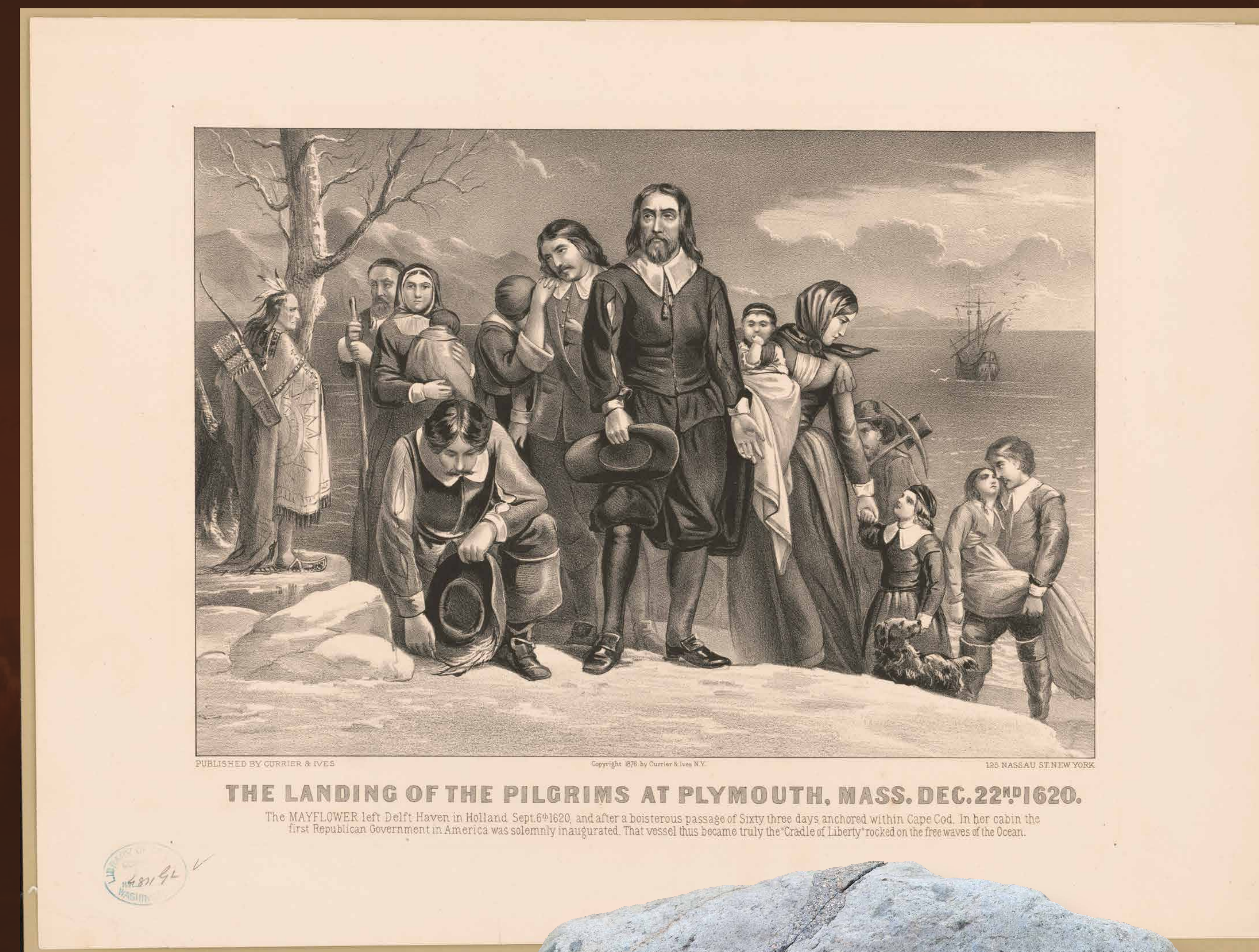
The arrival of the Pilgrims was a world historic event that continues to shape American life. Beyond getting the fashions right, we are now taking a more careful look at the story.

For Native people European colonization was an unimaginable disaster that unfolded over many generations. Today, at a time of large scale immigration to America, respect for ethnic and religious differences is again at issue.

We are also aware that America is attractive to many people around the world because of personal liberty, economic opportunity, and relative tolerance. The seeds of that culture were also planted during this period.

Institutions were founded in seventeenth century Massachusetts that have been described as “self-correcting” over time. Religious motivations led to the founding of public schools and Harvard College and to the serious study of science. A moralistic culture produced intolerance but also reform.

This is a tale of two colonies because Plimoth was soon joined by a larger colony, founded by English Puritans, the Massachusetts Bay Colony. These sister colonies have an outsized influence in our lives — even today.



*The exhibit will use the seventeenth century spelling of “Plimoth.” Plymouth Rock photo: JOHN O’NEILL. Currier & Ives print: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

Setting the Stage: The World in the 1620's

In seventeenth century Europe religion and religious conflict were central concerns in politics and war. The effects would be felt half a world away.



Wampanoag women interpret native planting methods at present day Plimoth Plantation. PLIMOTH PATUXET MUSEUMS

“God hath consumed the natives with a miraculous plague, whereby the greater part of the country is left void of inhabitants.”

John Winthrop, Governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony

Massachusetts in 1620

Beginning in the 1500's European fishermen and explorers brought diseases that wiped out up to ninety percent of native populations in coastal Massachusetts. Patuxet, the village that would be called Plimoth, had been abandoned. Disease was not well understood. In a deeply religious age many English colonists saw this as a sign of God's favor, clearing the land for them.



Public executions in Prague, 1618

Verzeichnis was gestalt der Graff von Schlick vnd ander hohe vnd Niderstaunds Personen hingericht vnd vollzogen worden.



On this 1616 map John Smith identified the region as “New England.” He also named “New Plimouth” four years before the voyage of the Mayflower.

THE THIRTY YEARS WAR

On the continent of Europe, Catholics and Protestants fought a prolonged and devastating war between 1618 and 1648. The overall death toll rose into the millions with barbarous atrocities on both sides. The population of German speaking Europe was reduced by 20%. Eventually the war evolved into a great power conflict as alliances crossed religious lines to maintain a balance of power.

England: Gathering Clouds

In England there were fears that religious war would engulf the country. After the Protestant Reformation many felt that the Church of England had not gone far enough to reform its liturgy and hierarchy. The king and most members of the aristocracy remained committed to the Anglican Church. Dissenters, including the “Pilgrims” and “Puritans” who would come to Massachusetts, experienced tremendous pressure to conform.



King Charles I had no tolerance for religious dissenters. His father James I had threatened “to make them conform themselves or I will harry them out of the land.” The policies of Charles I pushed England toward Civil War. PORTRAIT BY ANTHONY VAN DYCK



The 1631 sack of the German city of Magdeburg cost an estimated 20,000 lives during Europe's Thirty Years War. THEATRUM EUROPAEUM

Coming to Terms

Seventeenth Century religious differences can be baffling today. Calvinism was the dominant influence in Massachusetts.

“But they knew they were pilgrims.”

William Bradford, Of Plimoth Plantation



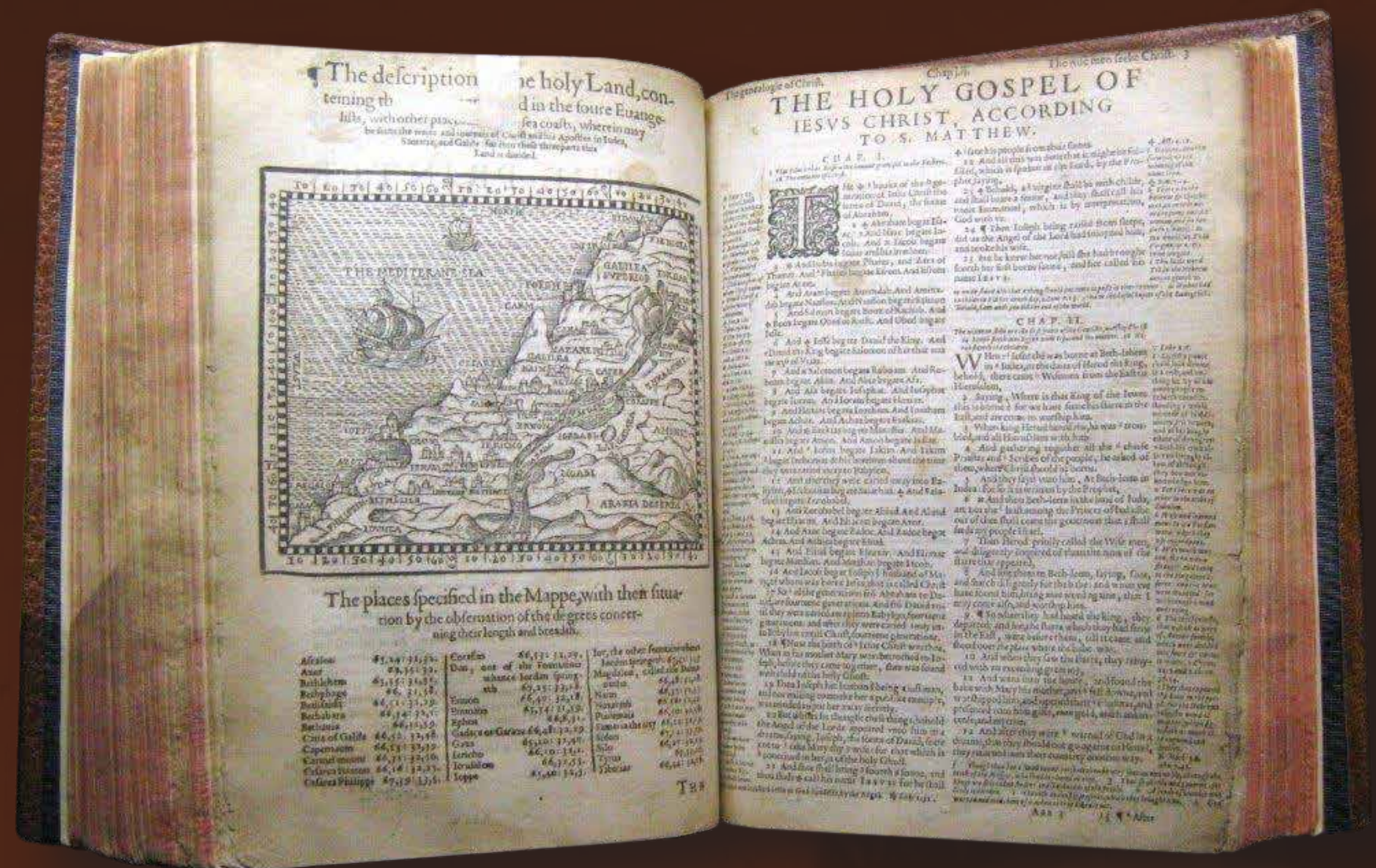
Calvinist factions debate religion at England's Westminster Assembly.
JOHN ROGERS HERBERT

Pilgrims and Puritans

The “Pilgrims” were led by “separatists” who wanted a complete break with the Church of England, a radical position. They founded the Plimoth colony in 1620. In theory, the “Puritans” remained in the Anglican Church, hoping to purify it from within. They founded the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1630 and Boston became its capital. In practice, both groups were Calvinists who favored an austere version of Christianity.

WHAT'S IN A WORD: PILGRIM

In his account *Of Plimoth Plantation* Governor Bradford wrote “But they knew they were pilgrims.” Although settlers understood the religious meaning of the word “pilgrim” they did not routinely call themselves “THE PILGRIMS.” That became more common in the nineteenth century after Bradford's writings were rediscovered by historians.



The 1560 Geneva Bible, an English translation with guides for reading and study, was favored by Pilgrims and Puritans. A copy was brought to America on the Mayflower. Eliminating teachings and liturgical practices not found in the Bible were Calvinist principles.



The former Catholic cathedral of St. Pierre in Geneva was the church mostly associated with John Calvin. YANN FORGET



John Calvin (1509-1564) left Catholic France for Switzerland, eventually establishing himself in Geneva.
MUSEUM CATHARIGNECONVENT

Understanding Calvinism: Predestination

Calvinists believed that God determined before birth who would be saved and who would be damned. It is difficult to understand the appeal of Calvinism today. Pessimistic Calvinists, expecting wide-spread damnation, may have found assurance that at least some would be saved, mixed with anxiety about their own fate.

LIGHTENING UP

Sarah Vowell is a woman of Native American ancestry. In her humorous look at Puritanism in America, *The Wordy Shipmates*, she imagined missionaries seeking to convert native people by bringing the “Good News” that they may be pre-destined to hell and cannot do anything about it.

An Act against Adultery and Fornication
152
Whereas the Violation of the Marriage-Covenant is highly provoking to God, and destructive to Families.
Be it therefore enacted by the Governour, Council and Representatives in General Court Assembled, and by the Authority of the same
That if any man be found in Bed with another Man's Wife, the man & woman so offending, shall be severely whip'd, not exceeding thirty Stripes unless it appear upon Oath that the woman so offending, did not consent thereto: And if any man shall commit Adultery, the man and woman that shall be convicted of such Crime before their Majesties Justices of Assize & general Gaol Delivery, shall be set upon the Gallows by the space of an hour with a Rope about their Neck, and the other end cast over the Gallows: And in the way from thence to the common Gaol, shall be severely whip'd, not exceeding forty Stripes. Also every person and persons so offending, shall for ever after wear a Capital A of two inches long, and proportionable bigness, cut out in cloth of a contrary colour to their cloath, and sealed upon their upper garment, on the outside of their Arm, or on their back, in open view. And if any person or persons, having been convicted and sentenced for such offense, shall at any time be found without their Letter so worn during their abode in this Province; they shall by warrant from a Justice of Peace, be forthwith apprehended and ordered to be publicly whip'd, not exceeding fifteen

“Puritanical:” Generations of high school students have read *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne. This 1694 Massachusetts law mandates wearing the letter “A” for adultery. Similar punishments had been enforced in Plimoth. MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES

Plimoth First

“If any did unjustly war against him, we would aid him, if any did war against us, he should aid us.”

1621 treaty between the Plimoth colony and Sachem Massasoit



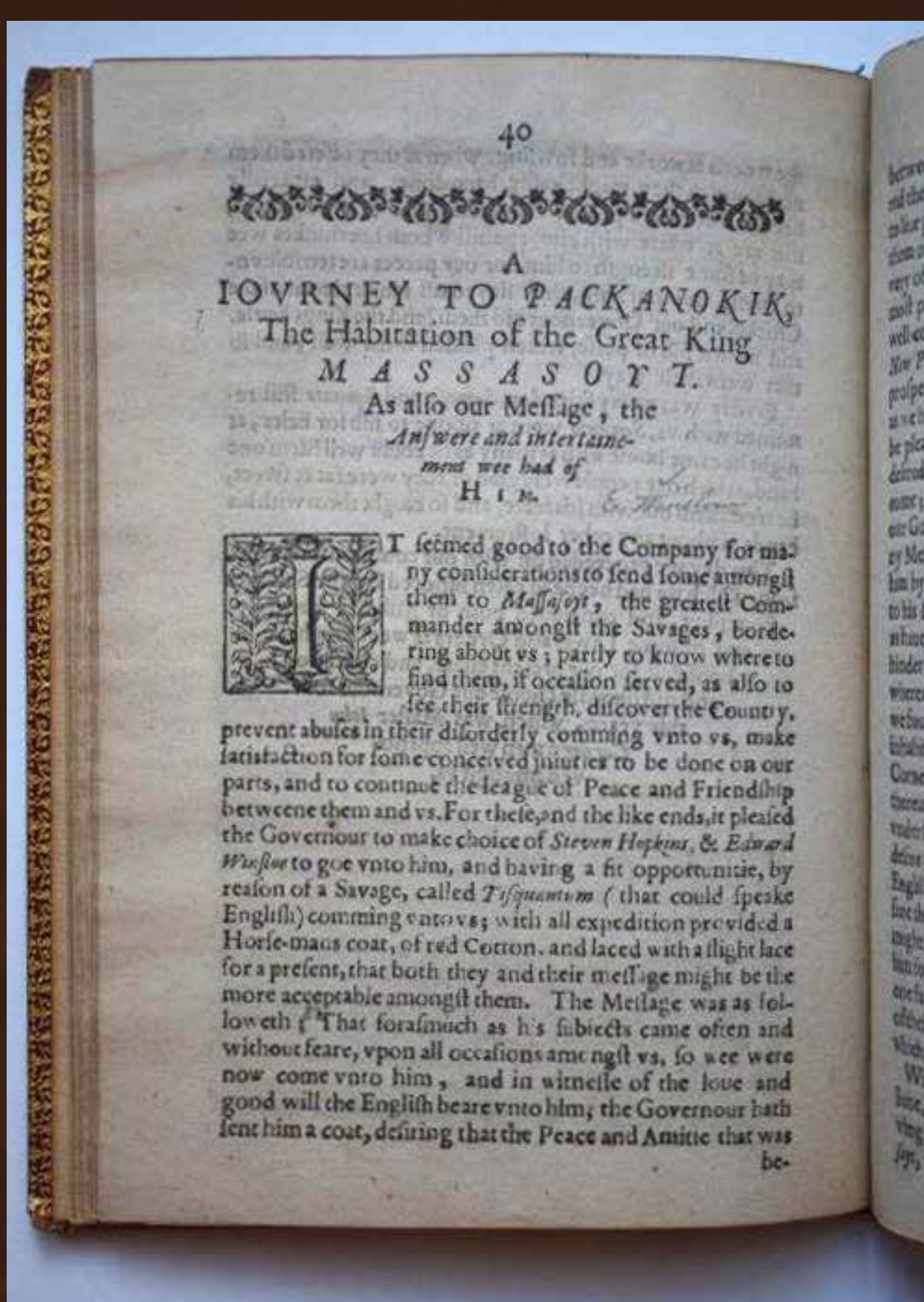
Mayflower and Arbella (flagship of the later Puritan fleet) are thought to have been similar in design—built in nearby shipyards within a few months of each other.



Embarkation of the Pilgrims by Robert W. Weir. This scene emphasizes the presence of women and children. Pilgrims and Puritans came as family units in contrast to some frontier communities dominated by single men. ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL

Legendary

It seems that the Pilgrims had better public relations than the Puritans. The small scale of the colony lends itself to a warm and nostalgic telling of history. There is the passage on the Mayflower, the harsh winter in the New World, the benevolence of native people who helped save the Pilgrims by teaching them to plant local crops. Above all there is the story of the “First Thanksgiving.” While not completely accurate, provincial Plimoth somewhat resembled the legend at first.



An Account of Early Negotiations between the Plimoth Colony and Massasoit from Mourt's Relation. (This 1622 pamphlet was written by William Bradford and Edward Winslow. The name is probably a misspelling of George “Morton” who helped with publication). LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



Mayflower passengers establish a “Civil Body Politic” and pledge to abide by “Just and Equal Laws” – America’s first agreement for self-government. The Mayflower Compact was not saved as a document. Governor Bradford recorded its text in his journal, now at the Massachusetts State House. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

SAINTS AND STRANGERS

In order to finance the colony London investors insisted that settlers motivated by economic need be included. Thus the colony was divided between “saints” and “strangers.” Some “strangers” like John Alden would play a significant role. The practical need to retain unity in a small settlement may have had a moderating influence over harsher religious proscriptions.



Imagining Massasoit – a noble image overlooking Plymouth harbor. GREG KULLBERG

Alliance with Massasoit

The small size and vulnerability of the colony encouraged efforts at an alliance with Massasoit and his Pokanoket nation (a Wampanoag community). Their numbers had been greatly reduced by disease, making them vulnerable to attack by rival nations like the Narragansett. Plymouth Colony court records show a more cautious attitude at first toward Native people accused of crimes. As more English settlers arrived punishments became more severe.



“Plimoth Plantation” today
PLIMOTH PATUXET MUSEUMS

Meet the Pilgrims

“He was tenderhearted and compassionate of such as were in misery.”

William Bradford describing Elder Brewster

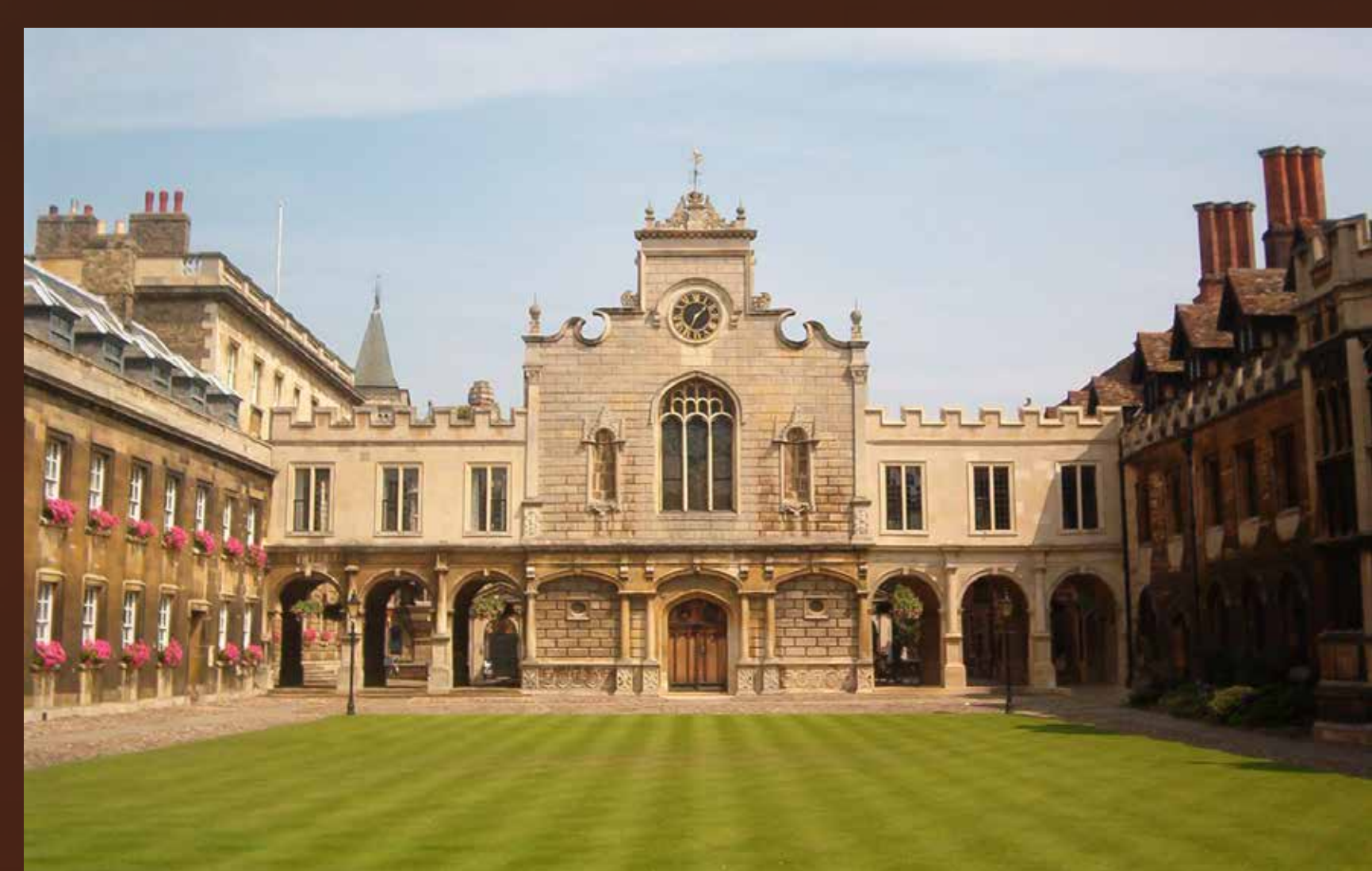
The leaders of Plimoth (and Massachusetts Bay) were flawed but idealistic — willing to sacrifice comfort for religious principles.

Climbing the Wrong Ladder: Elder Brewster

William Brewster studied for a time at Cambridge University before serving as a diplomat in Holland where he observed reformed religious practices. When his mentor, diplomat William Davison, fell out of favor with Queen Elizabeth, Brewster remained loyal to Davison feeling that he had been unfairly scapegoated. This act of personal courage may have been a turning point. In later years he fled to Holland, was targeted for arrest for religious publications, and eventually sailed on the Mayflower.



An actor portrays William Brewster. There are no accurate images from the period. BECURRY



William Brewster studied at Peterhouse in Cambridge University. He rejected a privileged life for a small house in Plimoth and a reputation for warmth and integrity. Most Pilgrims came from poorer backgrounds. UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE



Honoring William Bradford – abundant belt buckles are a “colonial revival” take on Pilgrim dress.

William Bradford

As a young man Bradford came under the influence of Elder Brewster. The death of his parents during childhood had a profound effect on Bradford’s life. Enduring a long illness he read the Bible and religious tracts. Although Bradford had potential to become a more significant landowner, his religious convictions drove him to leave England. He became the most influential governor of the Plimoth Colony. Respected for wisdom and moderation he could show toughness when the colony was threatened.



William Bradford’s home in England altered slightly from its seventeenth century appearance. MAYFLOWER 400

SPEAK FOR YOURSELF, JOHN

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, the children’s poet, helped burnish the Pilgrim’s image. His story of John Alden proposing to Priscilla Mullins, on behalf of his bashful friend Miles Standish, is memorable – as is her reply – “speak for yourself John.” Longfellow introduces real historical figures but not real history. Standish, the colony’s military leader, was not bashful but overly aggressive at times, particularly with Native people.



The Courtship of Miles Standish by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow TICHNOR

PLIMOTH COLONY VIGNETTES

John Howland fell off the deck of the Mayflower during a storm and survived by grasping a rope that had come loose.

John Carver was the first governor of the Plimoth Colony. Although influential in organizing the voyage of the Mayflower, he died in the spring of 1621. Of 102 passengers on the Mayflower, 45 died the first winter.

The First Thanksgiving

Generations of school children have heard the story of the “First Thanksgiving.” What is the history?

The Legend of Thanksgiving

After a harsh winter in the New World a sturdy band of Pilgrims met with their Wampanoag neighbors to celebrate the harvest. The menu may have included turkey and other native birds. Wampanoag hunters brought five deer for the festival. It is possible that cranberries and pumpkin dishes were prepared but not sugary sauce. There were no mashed potatoes or apple pies. Those foods arrived later.



The First Thanksgiving by Jennie A. Brownscombe

Origins of a Holiday

The Pilgrims did not realize that they were starting a holiday, although a 1623 Plimoth feast was called a “Thanksgiving.” Thanksgiving religious observances exist in many cultures. Harvest festivals are also common. No one has a monopoly on the holiday although the traditional foods and customs of Thanksgiving in America do have their origins in colonial Massachusetts.



Rediscovering the Pilgrims



Sarah Josepha Hale advocated a national Thanksgiving holiday. JAMES REID LAMBDIN

Although Thanksgiving was celebrated in colonial Massachusetts it was not associated with the Pilgrims until writings about the Plimoth colony were rediscovered in the mid-nineteenth century. As descendants of Massachusetts colonists moved west, Thanksgiving spread with them to the northern colonies and states. Abraham Lincoln declared it a national holiday.



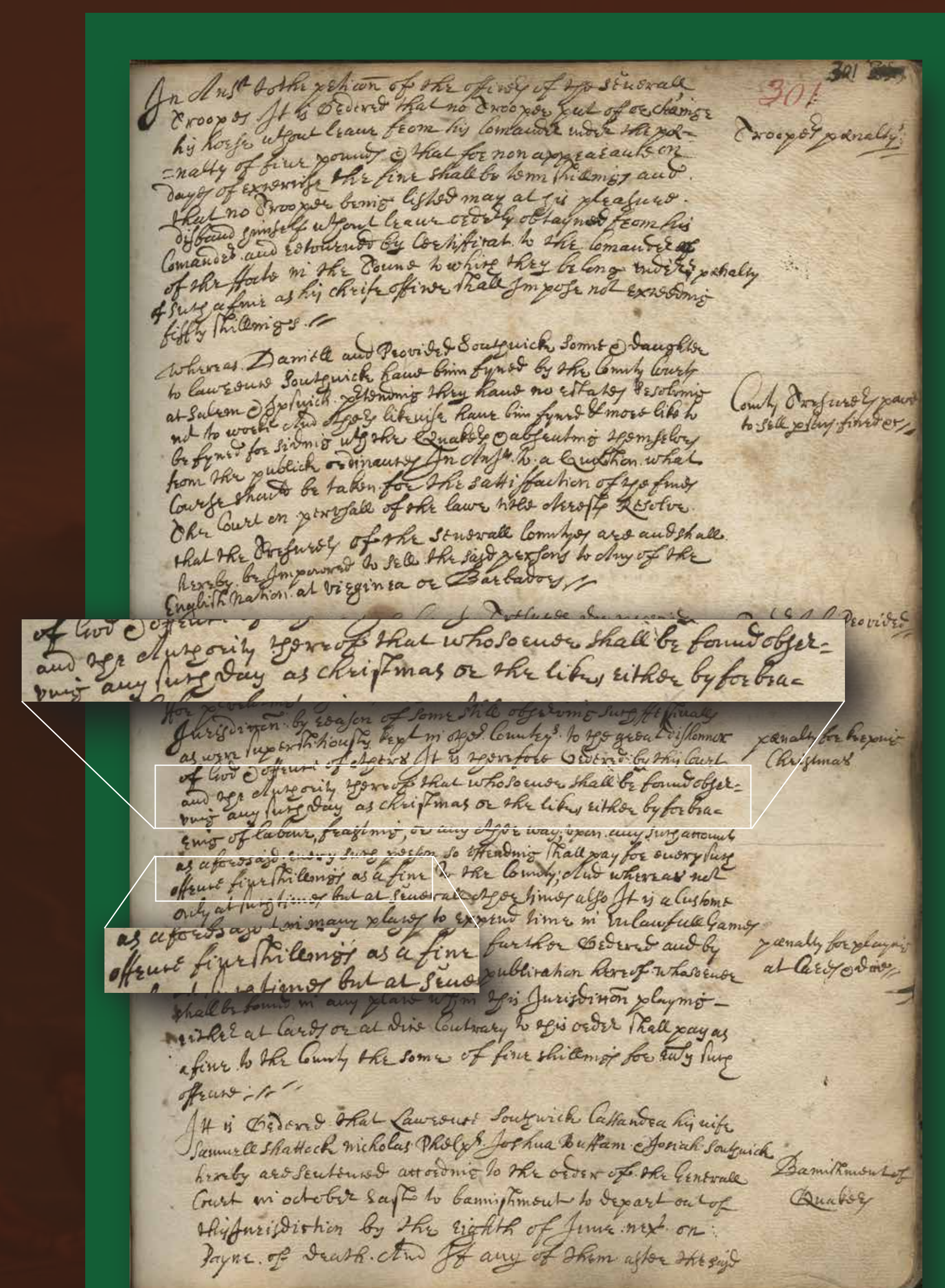
By 1900 New England style Thanksgiving customs—Pilgrims and all—were spread by new national circulation magazines.



Thanksgiving foods native to Massachusetts

THAT HOLIDAY FEELING: BANNING CHRISTMAS

Christmas was banned in Plimoth and in the Massachusetts Bay colony. The date December 25th did not appear in the Bible and the Puritans associated Christmas with “Mad Mirth...Long Eating...Hard Drinking...and Rude Reveling.” They also associated it with the Catholic and Anglican Churches. It is possible that many colonists missed having a holiday and some towns began to substitute Thanksgiving feasts in the fall.



This Massachusetts Bay law imposes a five shilling fine for “whoever shall be found observing any such days as Christmas.” MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES

WHY IS THANKSGIVING ON THURSDAY?

Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote about the “great and Thursday lecture” given by many Puritan ministers. Thursday was market day in some towns and ministers took advantage of a gathering crowd to provide more enlightenment. Because it was a special day, some towns may have selected Thursday for Thanksgiving.



Nathaniel Hawthorne, COURTESY OF PEABODY ESSEX MUSEUM

Downward Spiral

As reflected in Plimoth court records, relations with native people became harsher over time as more English settlers arrived in both the Plimoth and Massachusetts Bay colonies.



Seeking Justice

Murder of Penowyanquis, 1638

In 1638 Arthur Peach and two English companions were convicted and hanged for the robbery and murder of Penowyanquis, a Nipmuck Indian. The case illustrates respect for native lives combined with fear that upsetting neighbors would be dangerous for the small colony.

Punishing Adultery, 1639

In 1639 Mary Mendame of “Duxburrow” and Tinsin, an Indian, were convicted of adultery. She was sentenced to being whipped through the town’s streets and forced to wear a badge. If seen without the badge, she would be branded on the face. Tinsin received a lesser sentence of whipping at the post, perhaps reflecting caution in provoking native people.



The Case of Hoken, 1674

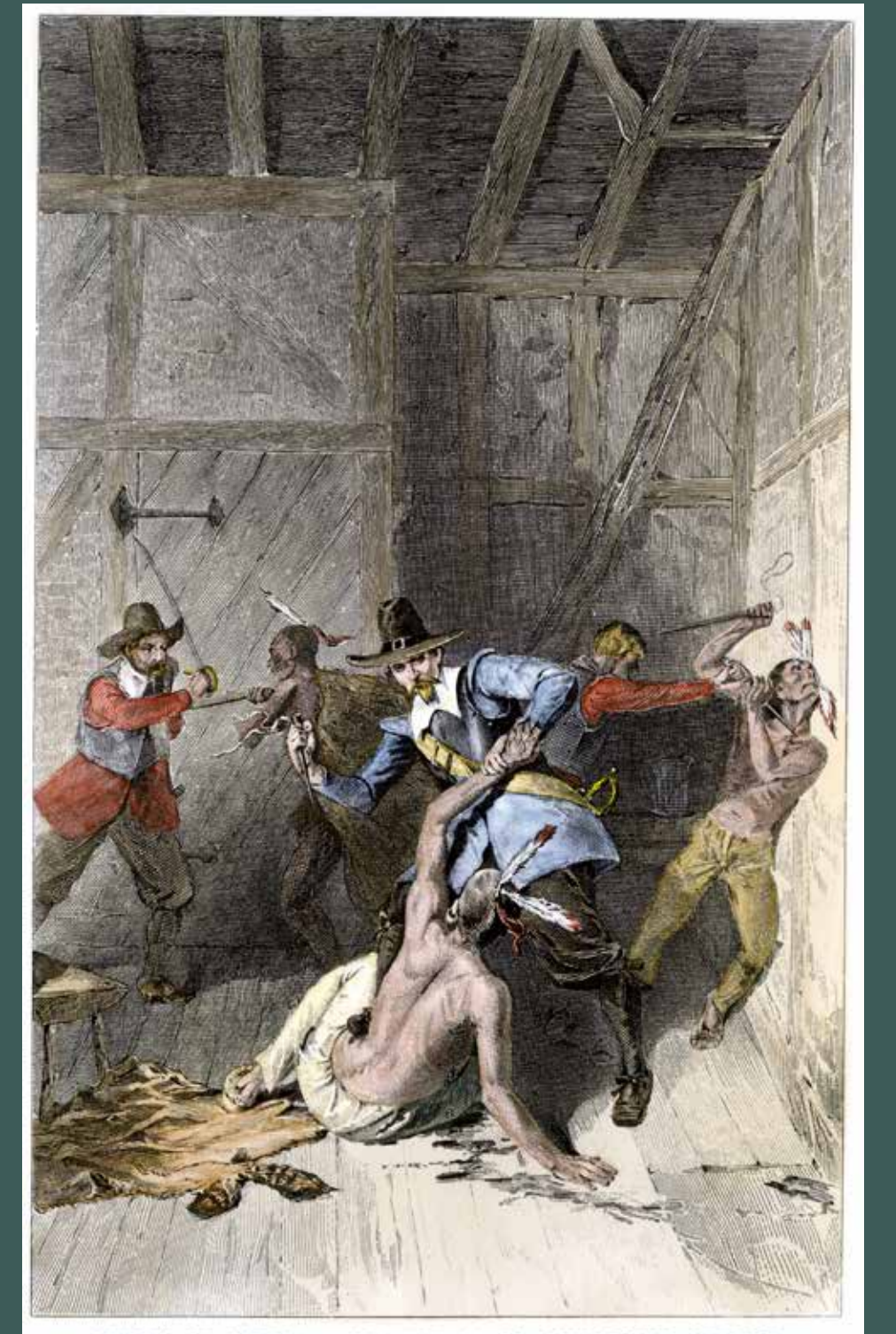
In 1674, after the population balance had shifted in Massachusetts, Hoken, an Indian that “hath bin a notorious theife” was sold into slavery in Barbados. Selling Indians into slavery and substituting harsh physical punishments for fines became more common over time.

Fathers and Sons

Edward Winslow was the pre-eminent diplomat in the Plimoth Colony. At one point Massasoit was near death and Winslow attempted to save him. He used his fingers to clear Massasoit’s mouth and nursed him to health with fruit preserves and chicken soup. In the 1670’s Edward Winslow’s son Josiah was governor of the Plimoth Colony during King Philip’s War when Massasoit’s son King Philip was killed by colonial soldiers.

EARLY TROUBLES

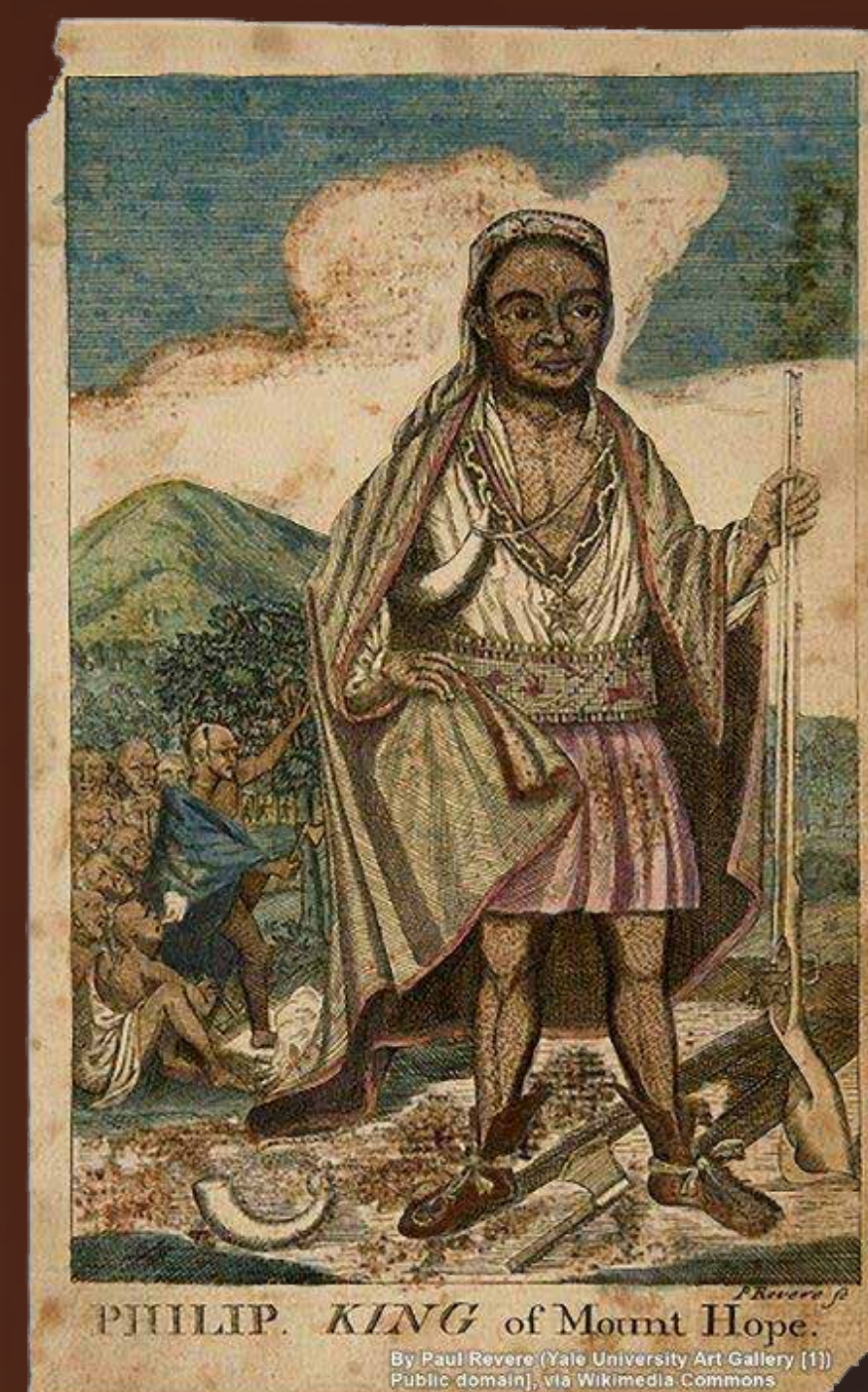
Feeling insulted in a previous encounter, and responding to rumors of Indian plots, Myles Standish invited several Indians to dinner at Wessagusset (present day Weymouth) in 1623. By prearrangement he suddenly barred the door and stabbed three to death, then killed several more before returning to Plimoth. His violent actions troubled many colonists and created lingering distrust toward the Pilgrims.



ALAMY

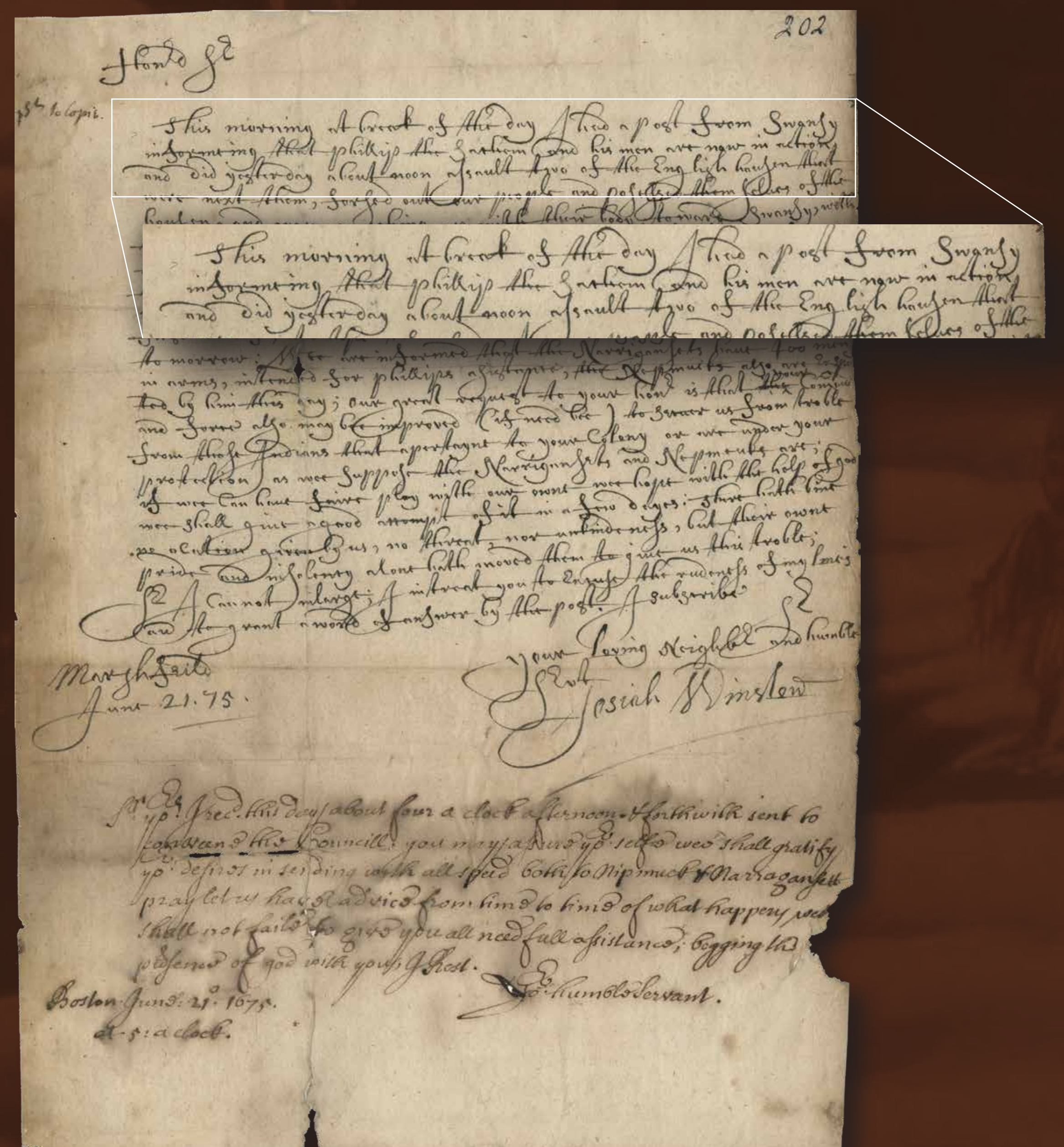
MYLES STANDISH AND THE MASSACHUSETTS CHIEFS

This oil painting of Edward Winslow is believed to be the only portrait of a Mayflower Pilgrim. It is displayed at Plymouth’s Pilgrim Hall Museum.



There is no accurate likeness of the Wampanoag leader King Philip. Paul Revere created this image. YALE UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY

King Philip is also known as Metacomet, Metacom, and Pometacom.



In this 1675 letter Governor Josiah Winslow of Plimoth informs the Massachusetts Bay Colony government of Indian attacks in Swansea and requests assistance. These events, at the beginning of King Philip’s War, reflect a sad deterioration in the treatment of native people over several decades. MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES

The Great Migration

In 1630 seven hundred Puritans sailed on a fleet of eleven ships and established the Massachusetts Bay Colony. By 1636 17,000 had arrived.



The Puritan fleet arriving in Salem in 1630 - WILLIAM FORMBY HALSELL

“If the Lord seeth it will be good for us, he will provide a shelter and a hiding place.”

John Winthrop to his wife Margaret on emigration to America

A Leadership Culture

Puritans believed that leadership was critical to success of the colony. Leaders should have intelligence, higher education, and a margin of wealth to provide authority (although great wealth was suspect). Character and competence were valued over hereditary riches. While ministers were influential they did not hold public office.

The Puritans and American Democracy

The Puritans opposed democracy in theory but were frustrated by hereditary power in England. Massachusetts Puritans pointedly established fixed terms of office — for Governor, members of the legislature, and other positions. Elections were frequent and freemen (members of the church) could vote without property qualifications. Democratic practices, including the right to criticize leaders, took root. However, unlike modern democracies, religious crimes were prosecuted.



The capital of Massachusetts takes its name from Boston, England. John Cotton, the colony's most important religious thinker, preached at St. Botolph's Church in Boston before leaving for New England. ALAMY

TOWN MEETING

Town meeting was an institution that did not exist in all of the colonies. In Massachusetts, a meeting house was built for religious services on Sunday and town meetings on other days. Town meeting not only fostered participation in government but also consensus building. To ensure compliance some towns did not require church membership to participate.



Built in 1681 the Old Ship Church in Hingham is the oldest surviving Puritan meeting house.



Individual congregations selected their minister. Some argue that this process also reinforced democratic tendencies.

MICHAEL CARTER

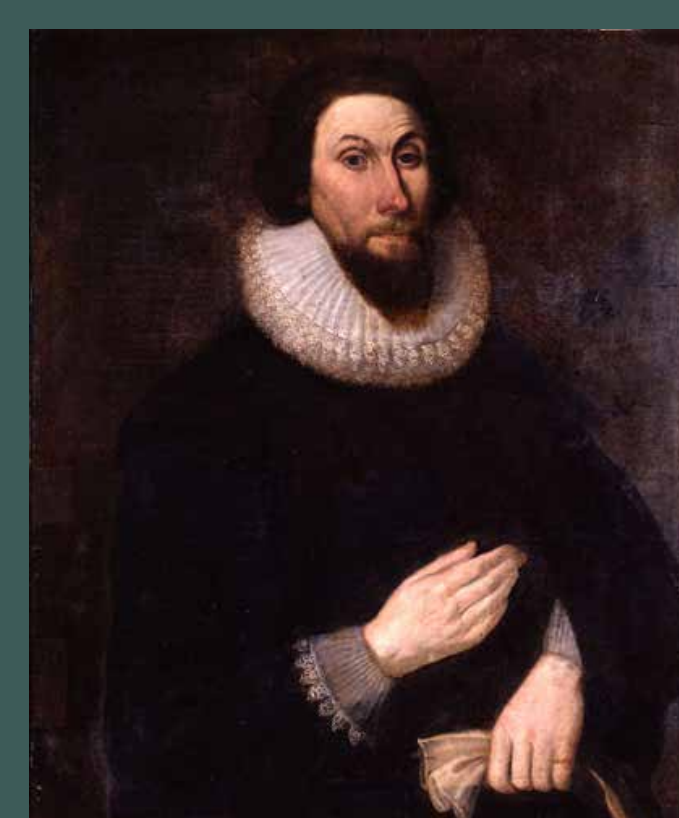


This 1629 Royal Charter granted governing authority for the Massachusetts Bay Colony. The original, with interpretive detail, is on display in the Commonwealth Museum's Treasures Gallery. MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES

City on a Hill

John Winthrop's lay sermon "A Model of Christian Charity" included the words "City on a Hill." Using a biblical phrase, Winthrop saw the colony as a model for the Church of England and future colonial settlements — but only if successful. His tone was not grandiose. President-elect John Kennedy and President Ronald Reagan used the term to contrast America with Cold War rivals.

CLIMBING THE WRONG LADDER: JOHN WINTHROP



Governor John Winthrop: Many of his decisions were harsh by today's standards. At the time he was considered a moderate and criticized by some for leniency.

John Winthrop was the longest serving governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. A member of the gentry class, he owned land (Groton Manor), was a wool merchant, and a lawyer. As an attorney in London he witnessed corruption and bribery in the supervision of "wards," underage heirs of estates. Uncomfortable with the cynicism of fellow attorneys, he interpreted personal financial setbacks as divine encouragement to leave for America.

First in Education

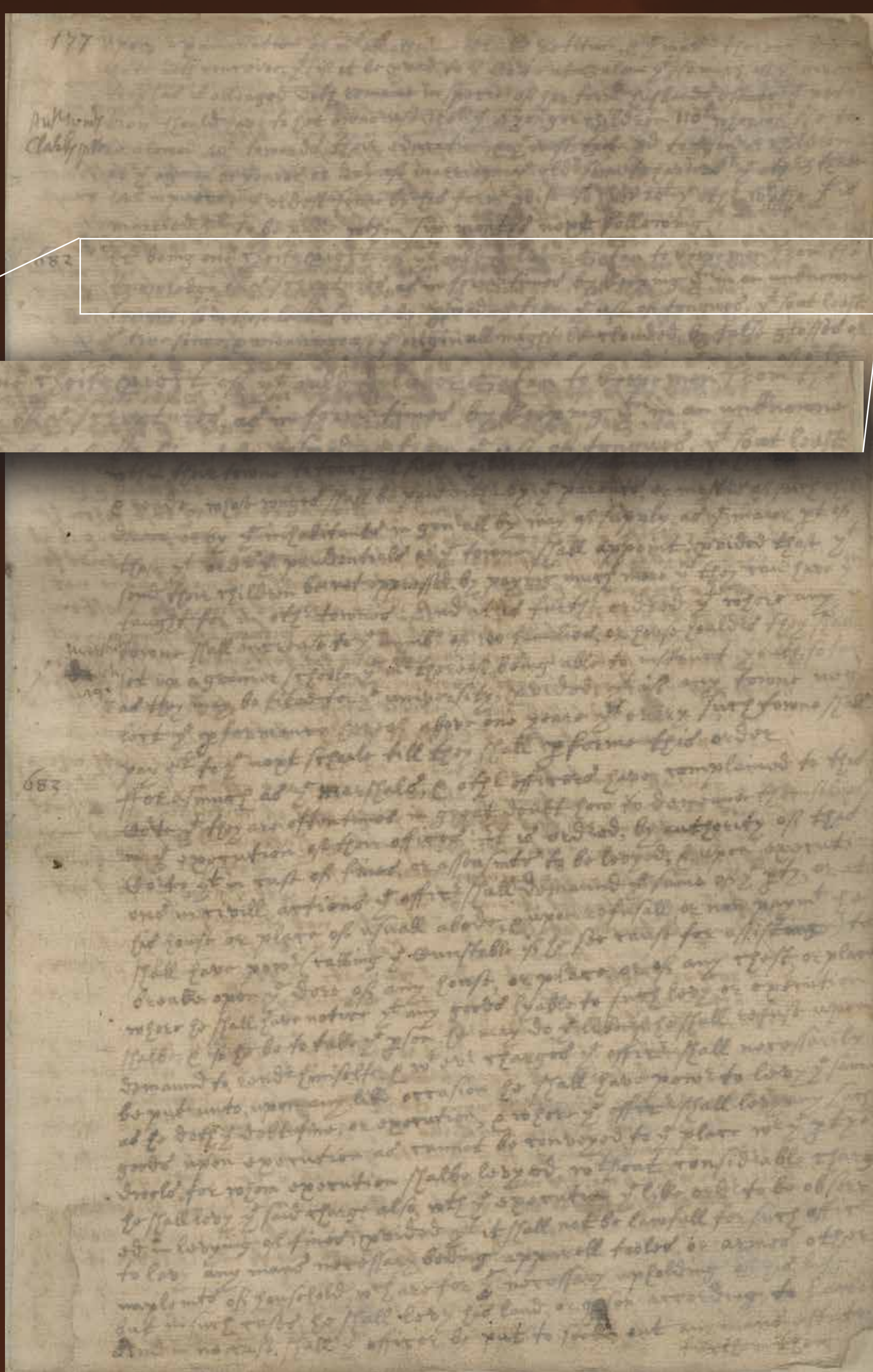
“One of the next things we longed for and looked after was to advance Learning and perpetuate it to Posterity.”

New England's First Fruits, 1643

Among seventeenth century groups the Puritans had a unique interest in education that still influences the character of Massachusetts and the United States.



John Harvard, a relatively obscure minister, left books and a sum of money to help establish a college.



Public schools will be established by law to foster literacy, “It being one of the chief projects of that old deluder Satan to keep men from knowledge of the Scriptures” 1647. MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES

Public Education

Believing that people should be able to read the Bible, Massachusetts Puritans established public schools. Each town of 50 families was required to open a public school. Each town with 100 families was mandated to establish a “grammar school” that would teach Latin and Greek to prepare students for college. Boston Latin School was founded in 1635 – the oldest public school in America. Widespread literacy would have the long term effect of promoting democracy.

Then and Now

Recently Reuters ranked Harvard and MIT among the top three universities in the world for innovation. Stanford was first.

Harvard College

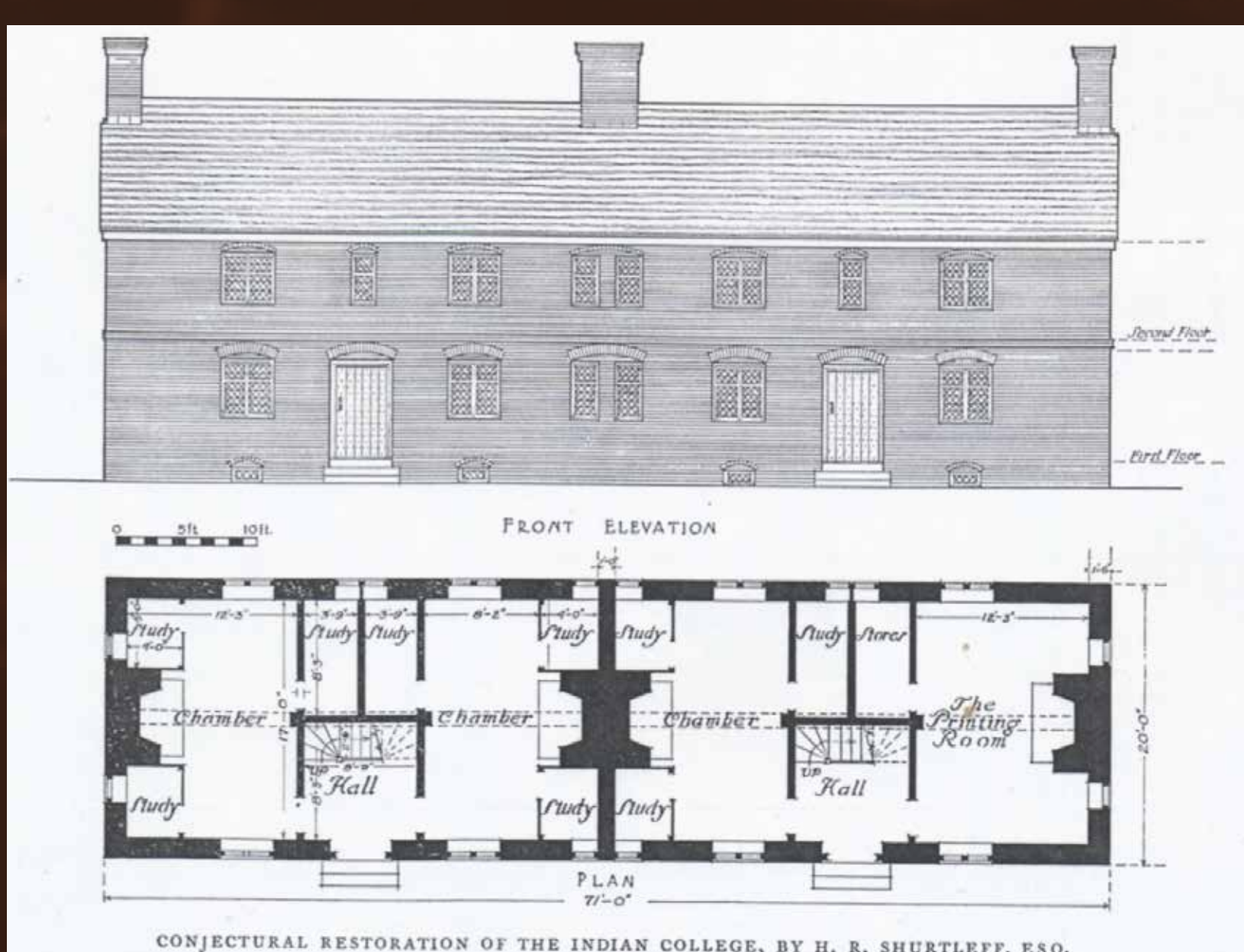
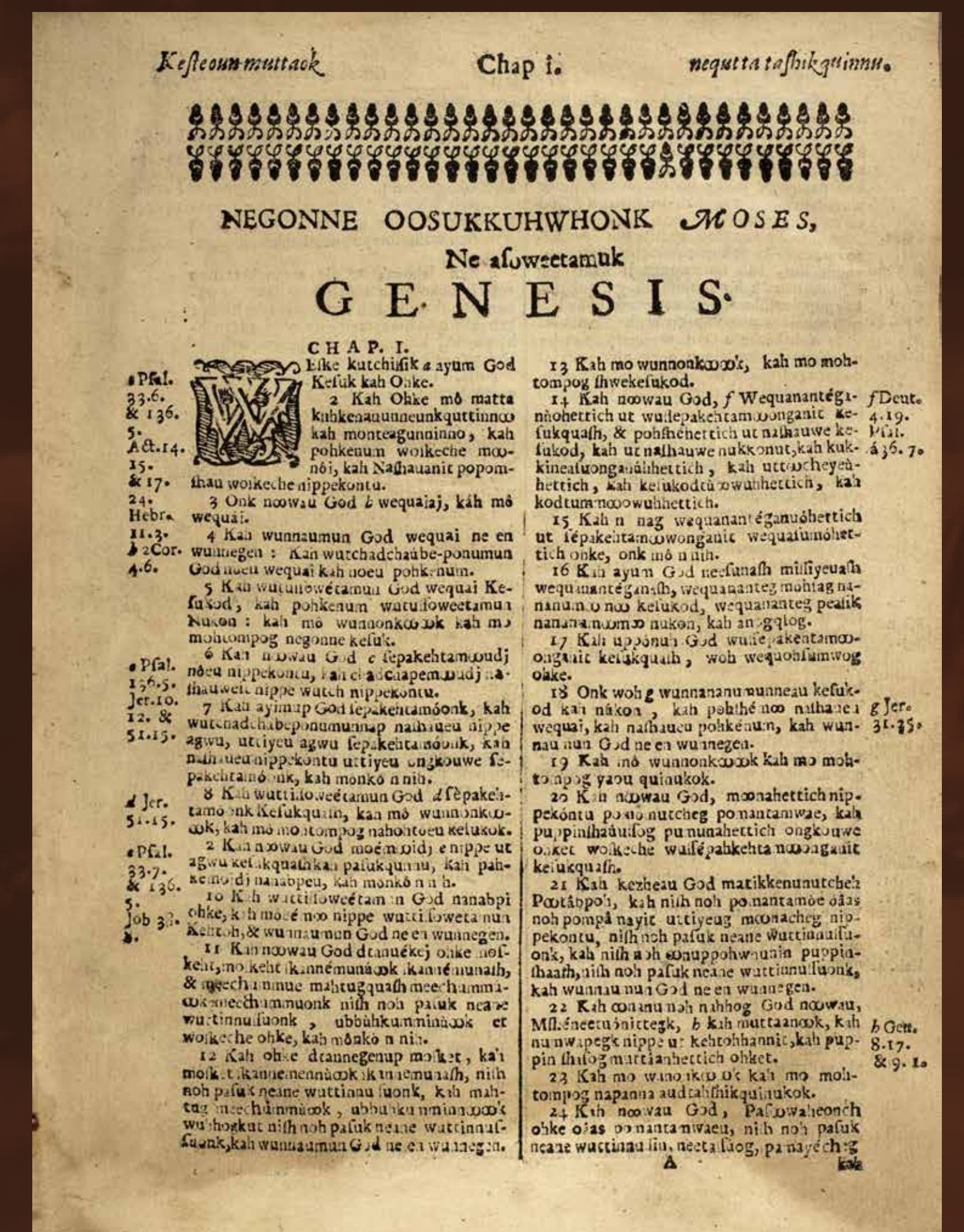
English Puritans lamented the ignorance of Anglican clergy and favored a rigorous program of education for ministers. Cambridge University was an important center of Puritan sentiment and several leaders in the

Massachusetts Bay Colony were alumni. Scholars studied the Bible in Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic and questioned practices and interpretations not found in scripture. For the training of ministers and colony leaders Harvard College was founded in 1636, the oldest American institution of higher education.



Caleb Cheeshahteumuck of the Wampanoag nation was the first Native American graduate of Harvard in 1665. His portrait was painted by Stephen Coit as part of a portrait diversity initiative at the university. IMAGE USED WITH PERMISSION OF THE ARTIST, STEPHEN COIT. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

Guided by four native translators missionary John Eliot published the first Bible in America. Written in the Algonquin language it was printed at Harvard's Indian College.



The Indian College was founded in the 1640's and was housed in a brick building that no longer stands. Although the college only enrolled five students, the Indian College press produced over 4,500 Bibles. HAROLD ROBERT SHURTLEFF



Excavations at Harvard Yard in 2009 uncovered bits of metal type thought to be from the Indian College press. PEABODY MUSEUM OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND ETHNOLOGY

Class Acts: Social Origins of the Massachusetts Puritans

Rebelling against the King and aristocracy, Massachusetts Puritans came from the middle segments of English society.



ALLAN ENGELHARDT

The main portions of Hatfield House were built by Robert Cecil, 1st Earl of Salisbury, around 1611. It exemplifies the tremendous wealth of seventeenth century aristocrats.



MATT BROWN

The View from the Top: King and Aristocracy

Landed aristocrats had enormous wealth and power. Some could trace their privileges back to the time of William the Conqueror. Vast estates were granted for military exploits and other services to the crown. Land holdings generated rents and other income on a massive scale. A title and hereditary seat in the House of Lords conveyed political power.



The Gentry Class: Groton Manor was the home of John Winthrop, who would become governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. ROBERT EDWARDS

BEING AND SEEMING TO BE

Although not free from scandal and hypocrisy most Puritans did not share a casual cynicism about public morality. Taking marriage seriously, for example, they objected to the life style of monarchs who often had mistresses despite leadership of the Anglican Church. The preference for truth over appearances creates divisions in every generation.

Upward Mobility: Gentry, Merchants, Professionals

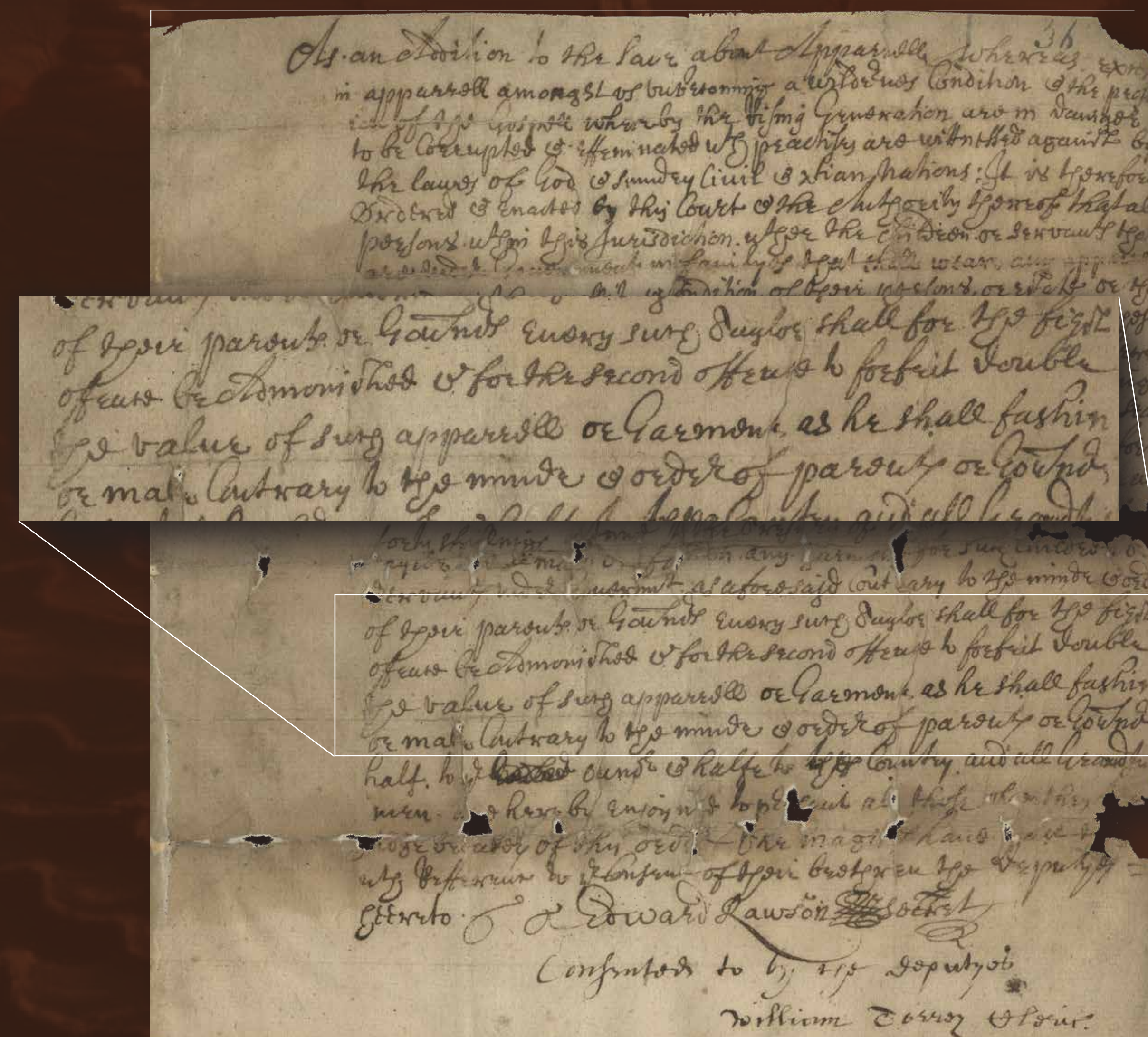
Less wealthy, but rising, lesser land owners in the gentry class, shipping merchants, lawyers and trained ministers often provided leadership in the Puritan movement. They did not believe that God distributed talent on a hereditary basis. Opening society to people of talent would be one legacy of the Puritans in America.

The Middling Sort

Some yeoman farmers, artisans, craftsmen, and shop keepers were attracted to religious reform. Shopkeepers were an easy target for the king's tax collectors. Some also resented the opulence and cost of maintaining traditional churches. These groups would provide the majority of Massachusetts colonists.

Warning Out: The Poorer Sort

A powerful respect for the work ethic often created hostility toward the poor. Those who had contributed a life time of work were given support in old age. Those at the very bottom of society were met with suspicion. Perhaps they did not have God's favor, or would be a source of disruption. In New England towns the very poor were often "warned out" upon arrival.



Although rejecting great wealth, the Puritans maintained class distinctions. This 1662 law mandates fines for dressing children and servants above their station including double forfeiture for tailors who had made the clothing. MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES

CAVALIER ATTITUDE: THE ENGLISH CIVIL WAR

In England religious and class tensions would eventually lead to civil war. In a review of a British documentary "Roundhead or Cavalier" the Guardian noted the "fierce duality of the British national character, one side being flamboyant, poodle-permed, lazy, fun-loving and scornful of rules (Cavalier), the other tidy, disciplined, power-mad and good at punctuation (Roundhead.)" Massachusetts was founded by roundheads.



Lord John Stewart and Lord Bernard Stewart were cavaliers who fought and died for the royalist forces in the English Civil War. (PORTRAIT BY SIR ANTHONY VAN DYCK) "Roundheads" in the Puritan army had short hair and simpler dress. (PORTRAIT BY JOHN PETTIE)



The execution of King Charles I in 1649 was followed by a "Commonwealth," a republican government controlled by Puritans. Disillusion with Puritan rule led to the restoration of the monarchy in 1660. SCOTTISH NATIONAL GALLERY

From Magic to Science

Puritans believed that science and religion were compatible. Studying God's creation was needed to recover knowledge lost in the fall of Adam and Eve.



John Winthrop Jr. had a reputation for moderation and personal warmth. He became the leading doctor in New England (although his methods were not advanced) and attempted to shelter Native people who were victims of warfare.

John Winthrop Jr.

After experience in Massachusetts government, John Winthrop Jr. founded New London, Connecticut, eventually becoming Governor of the Connecticut colony. He had a serious interest in science, medicine and technology and corresponded with other like-minded "Christian Alchemists" in Europe. (Early alchemists were interested in chemistry and metallurgy, not merely creating gold from lead.) Winthrop hoped to make New London a center for scientific research but his plans were frustrated by wars involving the New England colonies and Native people.



Remains of the John Winthrop, Jr. blast furnace in present day Quincy, Massachusetts
JAMES L. WOODWARD

Science and Tolerance

Winthrop believed that scientific knowledge was not limited to Calvinist Protestants. He traveled to Turkey to learn of discoveries in the Muslim world and to Catholic Belgium to study iron works. He tried unsuccessfully to establish a blast furnace in Braintree but the continental technology was used later at the Saugus Iron Works. Although he believed in witchcraft, he suspected that deviant behavior might have other explanations. After becoming governor there were no witchcraft convictions in Connecticut.



European technology studied by John Winthrop Jr. was used at the Saugus Iron Works.

PHOTO: DADEROT



PHOTO: JOHN PHELAN

SHINY OBJECTS

Winthrop and business partners searched for silver in the area of present day Southbridge, Massachusetts. Discovering only graphite their plans were shattered although they saw possibilities of selling graphite combs in Italy and Spain as a method of hair coloring for women.



Winthrop hoped to find silver in central Massachusetts and transport it overland to the Thames River for shipment to New London. The silver mine never materialized. JOHN SELLER

Getting Down to Business

“Religion and Profit Jump Together,”

Edward Winslow

The Puritans established a capitalist economy but also regulation of business for the common good.

ENTER MAX WEBER

In his famous work *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* Max Weber argued that Calvinism spurred business development. Perhaps success in business was a sign of God’s favor and the prospect of salvation. Many find that too simple an explanation today but there was often an affinity between the merchant class and Calvinist attitudes.



Coffee Klatch: some thought that coffee was an appropriate drink for business minded Protestants, unlike alcohol that dulled the senses. Lloyd’s started as a London coffee house frequented by insurance agents. Coffee was sold in Boston by 1670.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Clear-cutting trees and over hunting “nuisance” animals led to economic growth but long term environmental damage that was not understood at first.

Regulation in a Commonwealth

The Puritans did not have an ideological resistance to the regulation of business but favored a well-organized society where problems were addressed. Government could have a role in finding solutions. There were laws regulating the dates for fishing (to preserve stocks), laws mandating that seamen have a contract before voyages (to prevent pay disputes upon returning), and controls on the price and sale of commodities, among other regulations.

In the Matter of Robert Keayne

Keayne was Boston’s wealthiest merchant. He was accused by multiple colonists of unfair business practices, fined, and subjected to public ridicule. Minister John Cotton reprimanded him in religious terms. Few would agree with some of Cotton’s criticisms today (it is wrong to buy low and sell high) but it shows a willingness to curb abuses by the wealthiest colonists.



In part to salvage a damaged reputation wealthy merchant Robert Keayne left money to fund the Town House. It served as the center of government, a meeting place for militia, and the location of the town’s marketplace. The “Old State House” is at the site today.

MICHAEL G. HALL

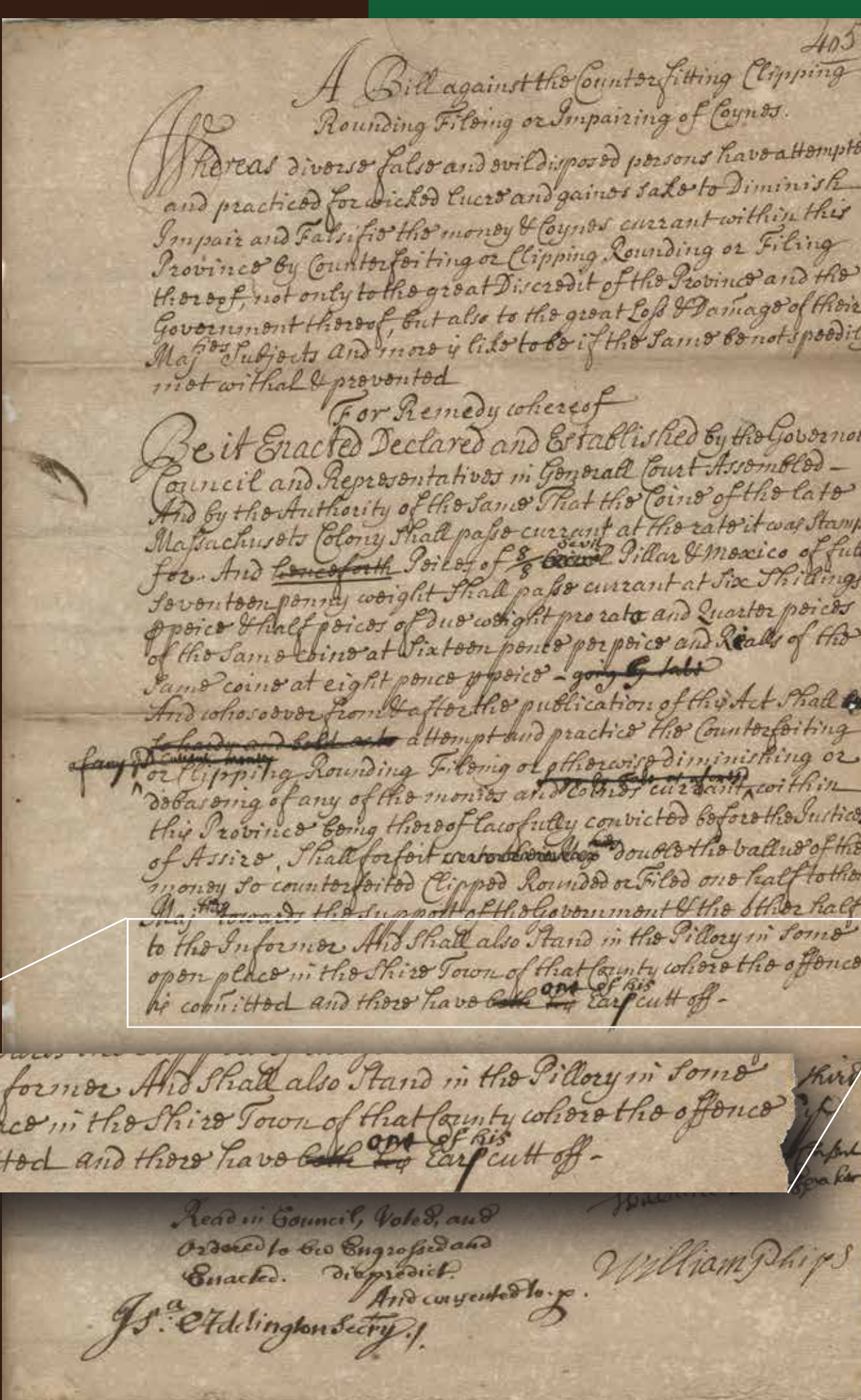


Judge Jonathan Corwin’s House is associated with the Salem Witch Trials. It is also an example of a prosperous merchant’s home — substantial for the time but unpretentious by later standards. ALAMY

THE PINE TREE SHILLING



Silversmith John Hull was appointed “mint master.” Melting down Spanish coins taken by privateers or gained in trade Hull created the pine tree shilling for Massachusetts. The elevated design at the edges was intended to frustrate counterfeiters.



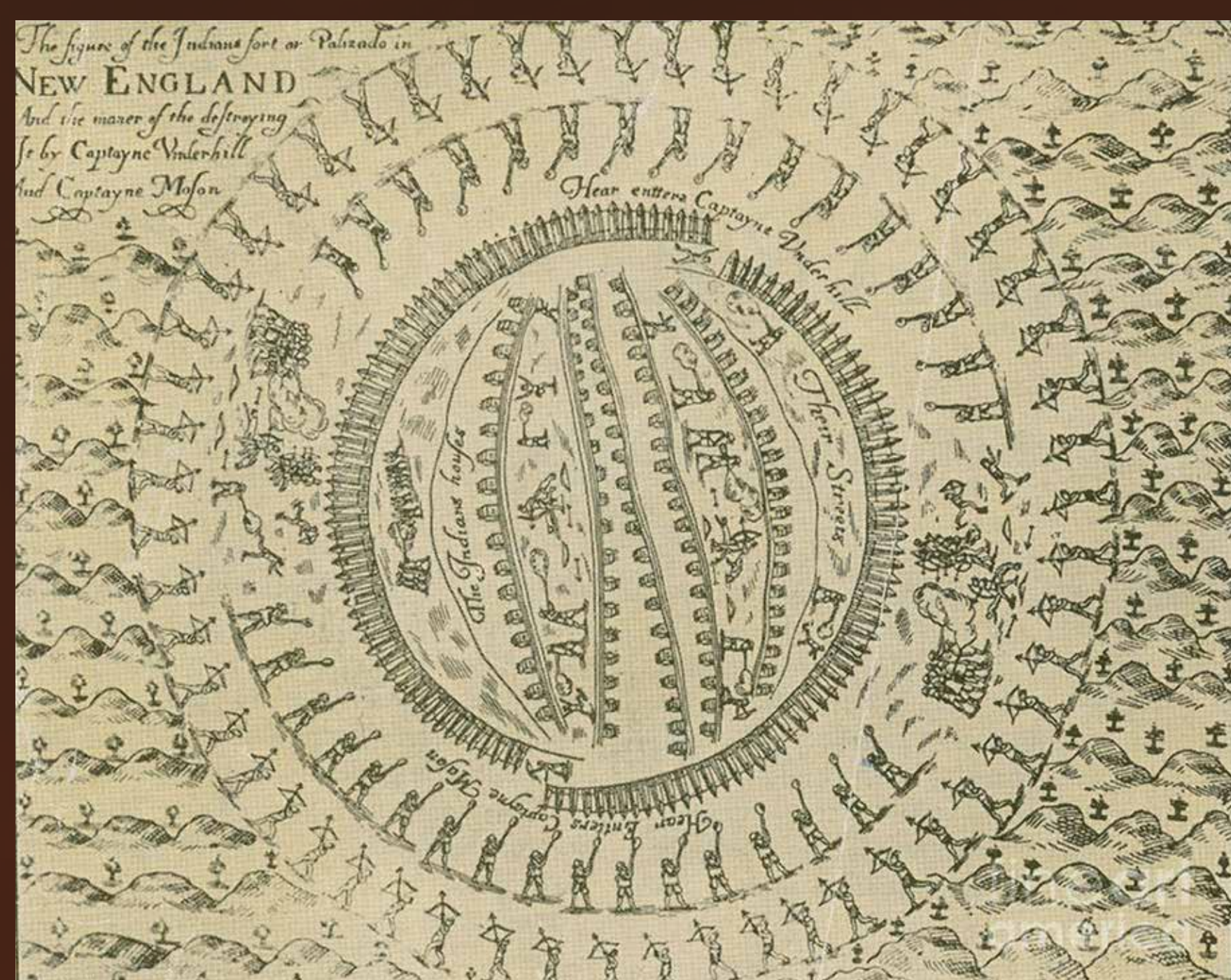
Later, a 1692 law provided penalties for counterfeiting, including the loss of an ear. Harsh penalties were not unique to Massachusetts but were practiced in England as well. MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES

New World Tragedy

The weight of English settlement and the appetite for land led to two wars and shocking atrocities against Native people.

Imperial Ambitions

Early Massachusetts was somewhat cramped geographically. The Charles and Merrimack Rivers did not offer navigation far inland while the Connecticut River had more potential for trade. Rhode Island also offered land for expansion. Authorities in Plimoth and Boston began to encroach on their southern neighbors. Demands were made that leaders of the Wampanoag, Narragansett, Niantic, and Pequot nations comply with directives or appear in person for pressure and reprimand. Refusal was seen as “insolence.”



This period image by John Underhill depicts a surrounded Pequot village. Approximately 400 men, women and children were massacred. Narragansett allies of the English were shocked at the European practice of total war.

“It is too furious, and slays too many men.”

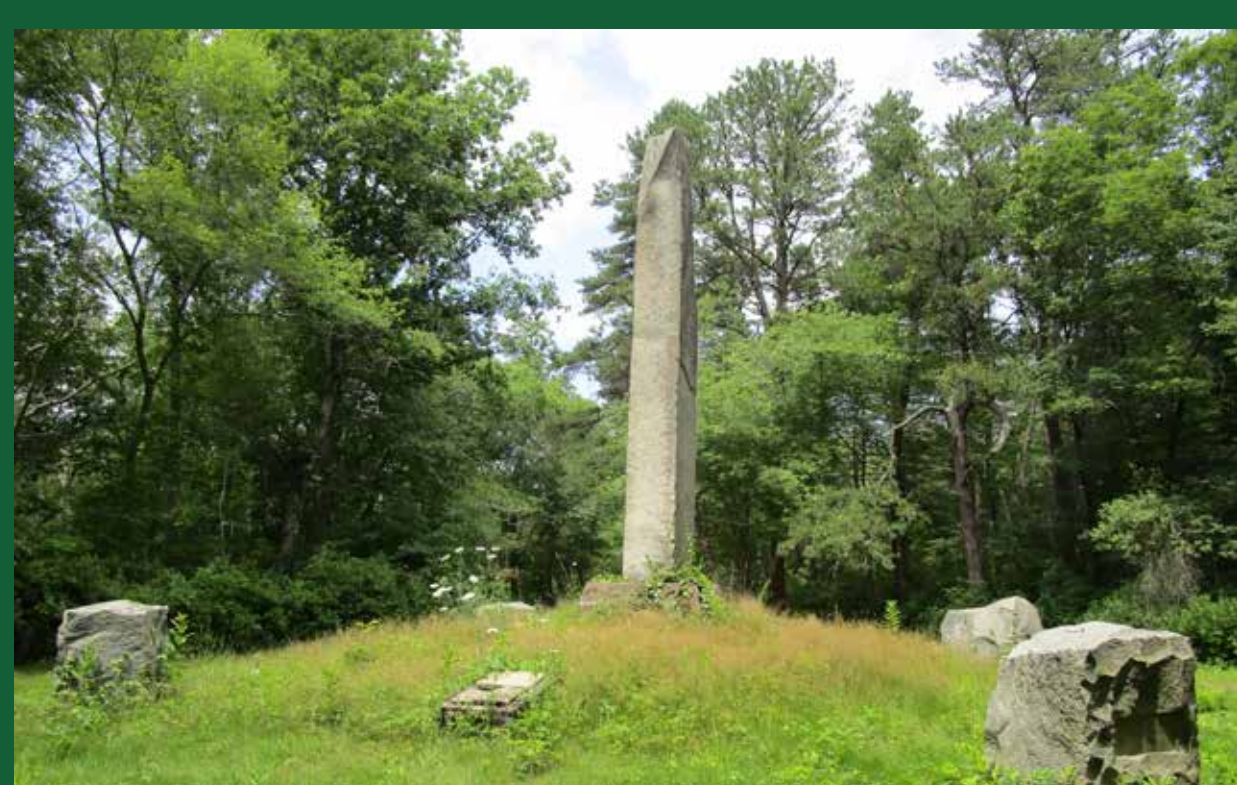
Narragansett reaction to the burning of a Pequot village



Near present day Mystic Connecticut a Pequot village was surrounded and set on fire. Those attempting to escape were shot down. ALAMY

THE GREAT SWAMP FIGHT

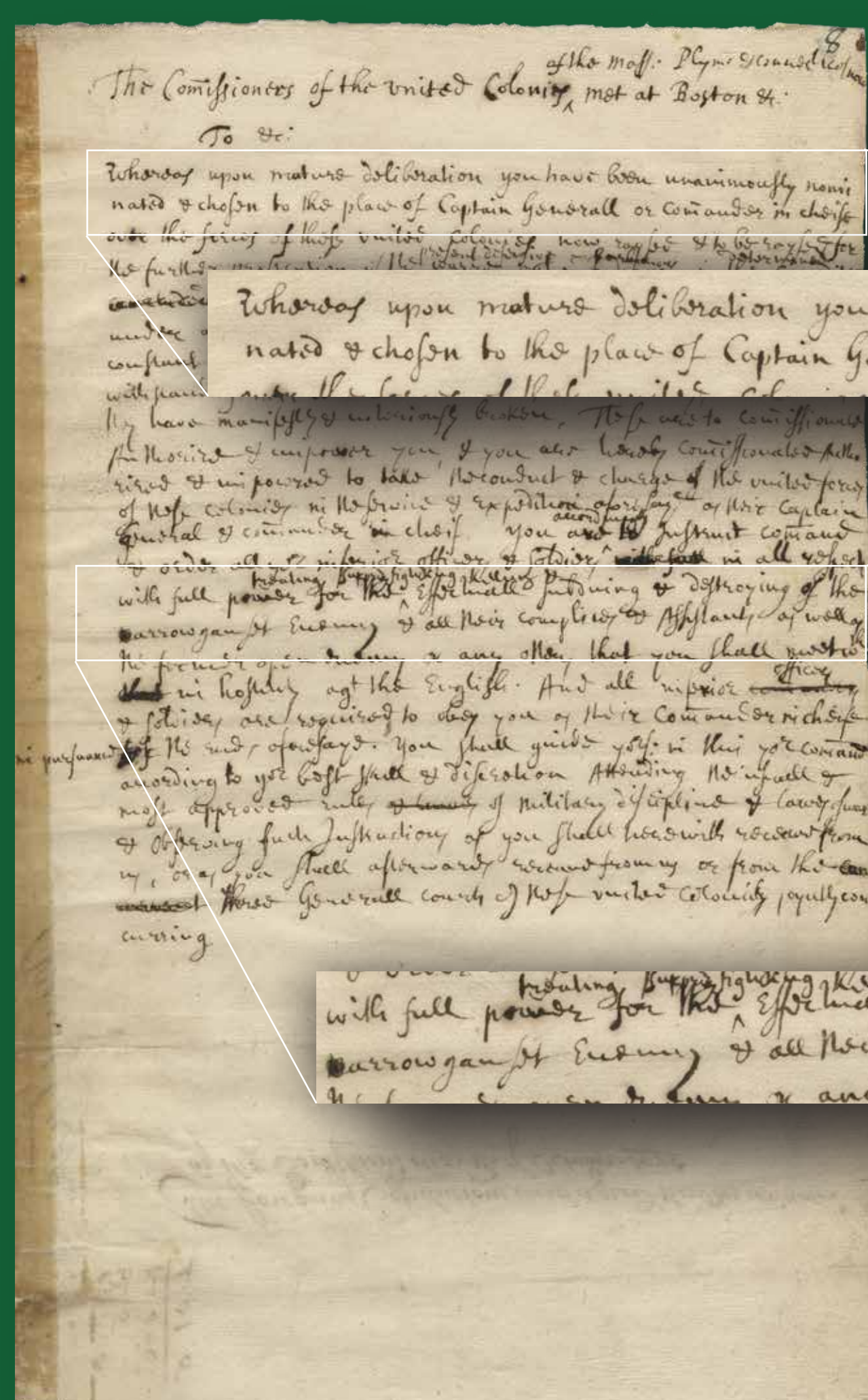
In the “Great Swamp Fight,” during King Philip’s War, a Narragansett fort that was hidden in the woods near the present day University of Rhode Island was surrounded and burned by colonial forces. The incident occurred in wintery December weather in 1675 and resulted in the death of hundreds of Indian men, women and children.



The Great Swamp Fight Monument in South Kingstown, R.I., the site remains largely undeveloped.



Dead and dying English soldiers were carried from the battlefield to Smith’s Castle in present day Wickford, R.I. Forty men were buried in a mass grave.



In 1675 Governor Josiah Winslow of the Plimoth Colony was chosen as “Captain General or Commander in chief” for the United Colonies, “with full power for...finding and destroying of the Narragansett enemy” (and other native fighters). MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES

Colonial Wars

In 1637 soldiers from Massachusetts allied with native warriors, including the Narragansett, to suppress the Pequot nation. Precipitating factors included the killing of a disreputable English sea captain by the Pequots, but control of land and wampum (refined sea shells used as money by the colonists) were significant factors. Many Pequot survivors were enslaved. In 1675 Massasoit’s son King Philip led a massive, region-wide revolt. On a per capita basis it had the highest death rate of any American war.

Bleak World View

Many Puritans saw war as an absolute struggle between good and evil. “Should not Christians have more mercy and compassion?” wrote Captain John Underhill. “When a people is grown to such a height of blood, and sin against God and man... Sometimes the Scripture declareth women and children must perish with the parents...We had sufficient light from the word of God for our proceedings.” “God was above them”...wrote John Mason, “making them as a fiery Oven...Thus did the Lord judge among the Heathen.”

Slavery in Massachusetts

Because slavery was accepted in the Bible most Puritans did not see the institution as immoral.

ESTABLISHMENT OF SLAVERY

Massachusetts was the first English colony to legalize slavery. In 1638 the ship *Desire* landed in Boston bringing enslaved Africans from Caribbean plantations. They were exchanged for Pequot men and boys captured in war. Many Indians sold into slavery died of disease in the Caribbean.

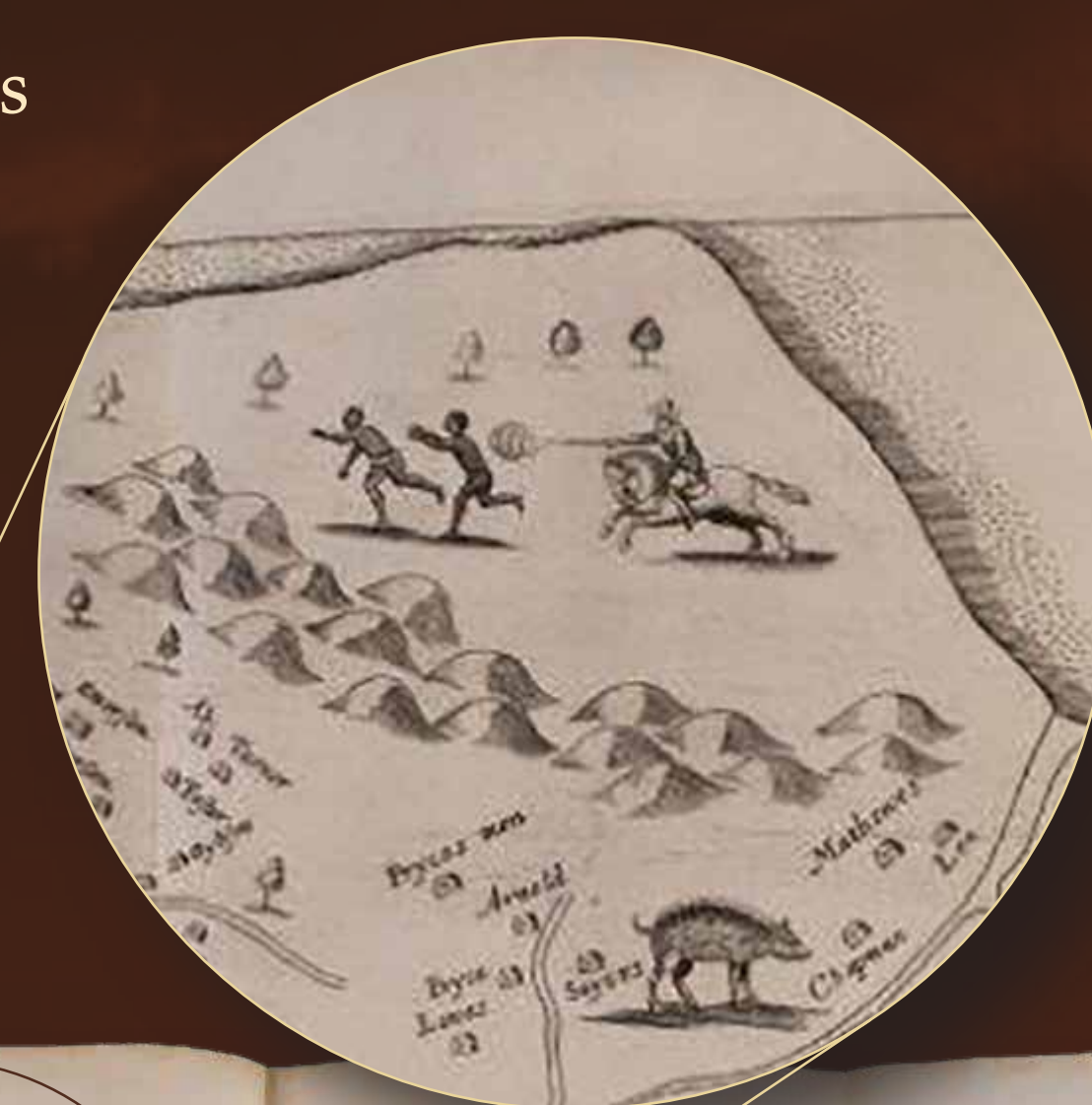


This Zanzibar memorial is near the site of African slave auctions. BROCKEN INAGLORY

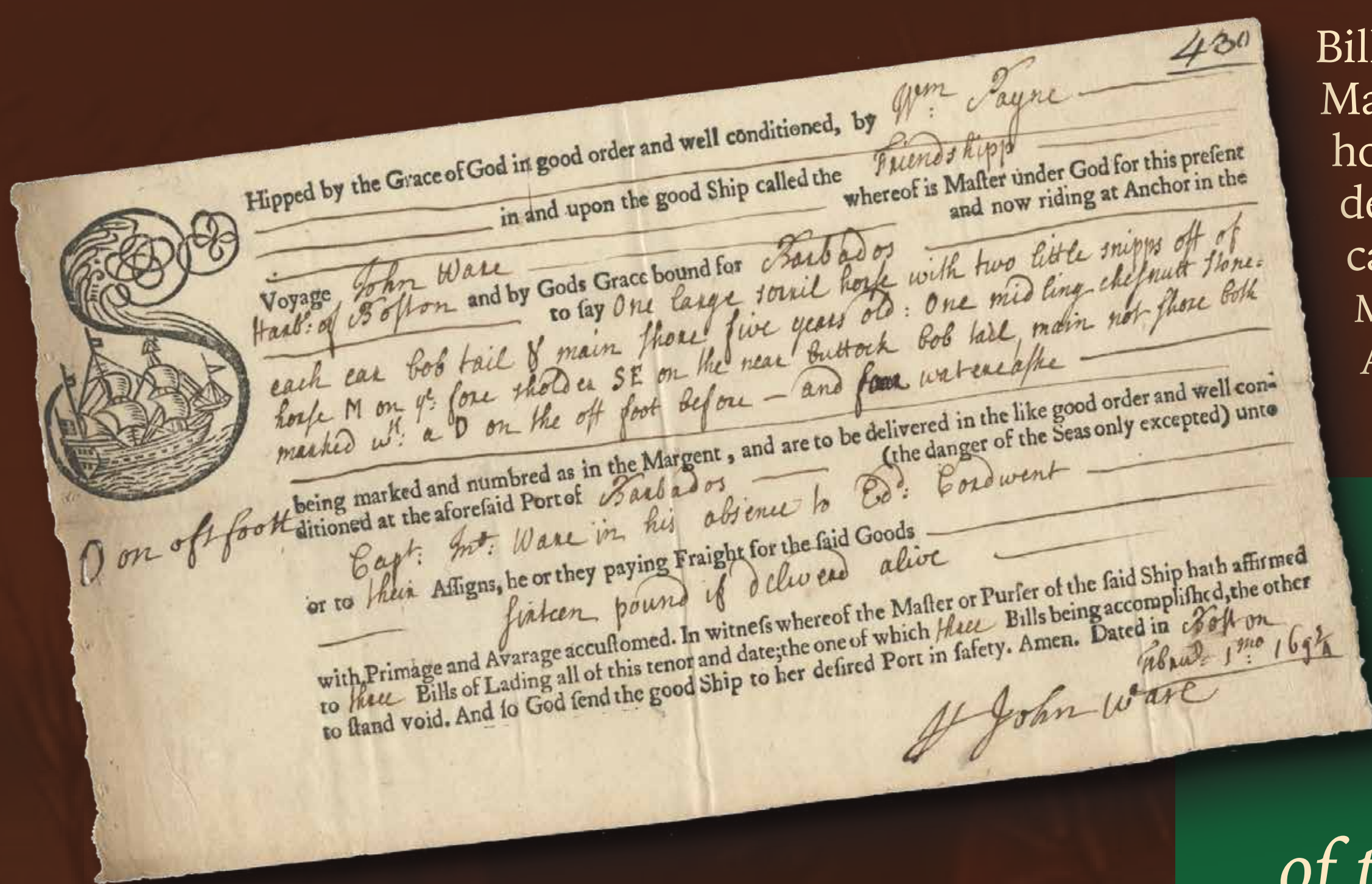
Slavery and the Massachusetts Economy

The Royal Africa Company had a monopoly on the trans-Atlantic slave trade in much of the seventeenth century. Massachusetts was not a major participant at that time (although some ship owners engaged in smuggling). In the Caribbean sugar planters maximized profits by planting mostly sugar cane and importing food and other products from mainland colonies. Islands like Barbados became important to the Massachusetts economy. On return trips some enslaved Africans were brought to Massachusetts for sale.

This detail depicts enslaved Africans attempting to escape an armed and mounted overseer.



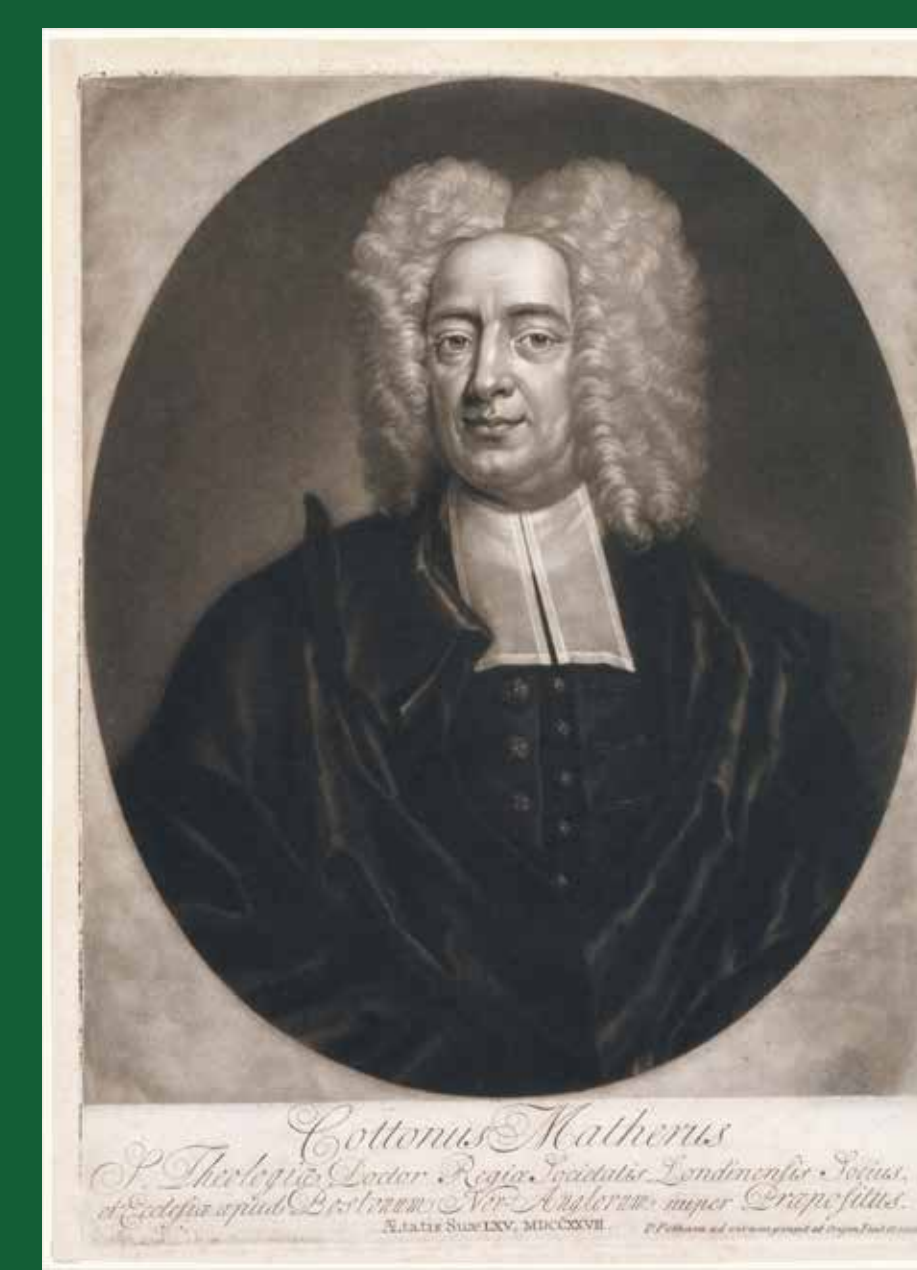
Seventeenth century map of Barbados. BRITISH LIBRARY



Bill of Lading for a Massachusetts ship delivering horses to Barbados. Other deliveries included fish, beef, candles, hoops, and nails. MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES

COTTON MATHER ON SLAVERY

Prominent minister Cotton Mather noted that Europeans were a minority of the world's population. "God...is not moved by the colour of the Skin; is not more propitious to one Colour than another." He also respected the ability and intelligence of Africans. However he argued that religious instruction would make Africans better "servants" because they would understand that it is God's plan for them.



Cotton Mather by Peter Pelham NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

"The Selling of Joseph"

Samuel Sewall was a judge in the Salem witch trials and the only one to admit that he was wrong. His life illustrates the moralistic strain in Puritan culture and the fact that injustice can lead to reform. After the Salem trials he wrote "The Selling of Joseph," the first anti-slavery tract, and advocated fair treatment of Native people. (He theorized that they might be the lost tribes of Israel.) In his diary Sewall wrote about the education of women.



Samuel Sewall by John Smibert

ONESIMUS

An African man, Onesimus, enslaved in the home of Cotton Mather, told of the African practice of inoculation to protect against disease. The method was eventually introduced in Boston and was effective against small pox. Several prominent families held enslaved Indians and Africans as servants.

Slavery was not abolished in Massachusetts until after the American Revolution.

Intolerance

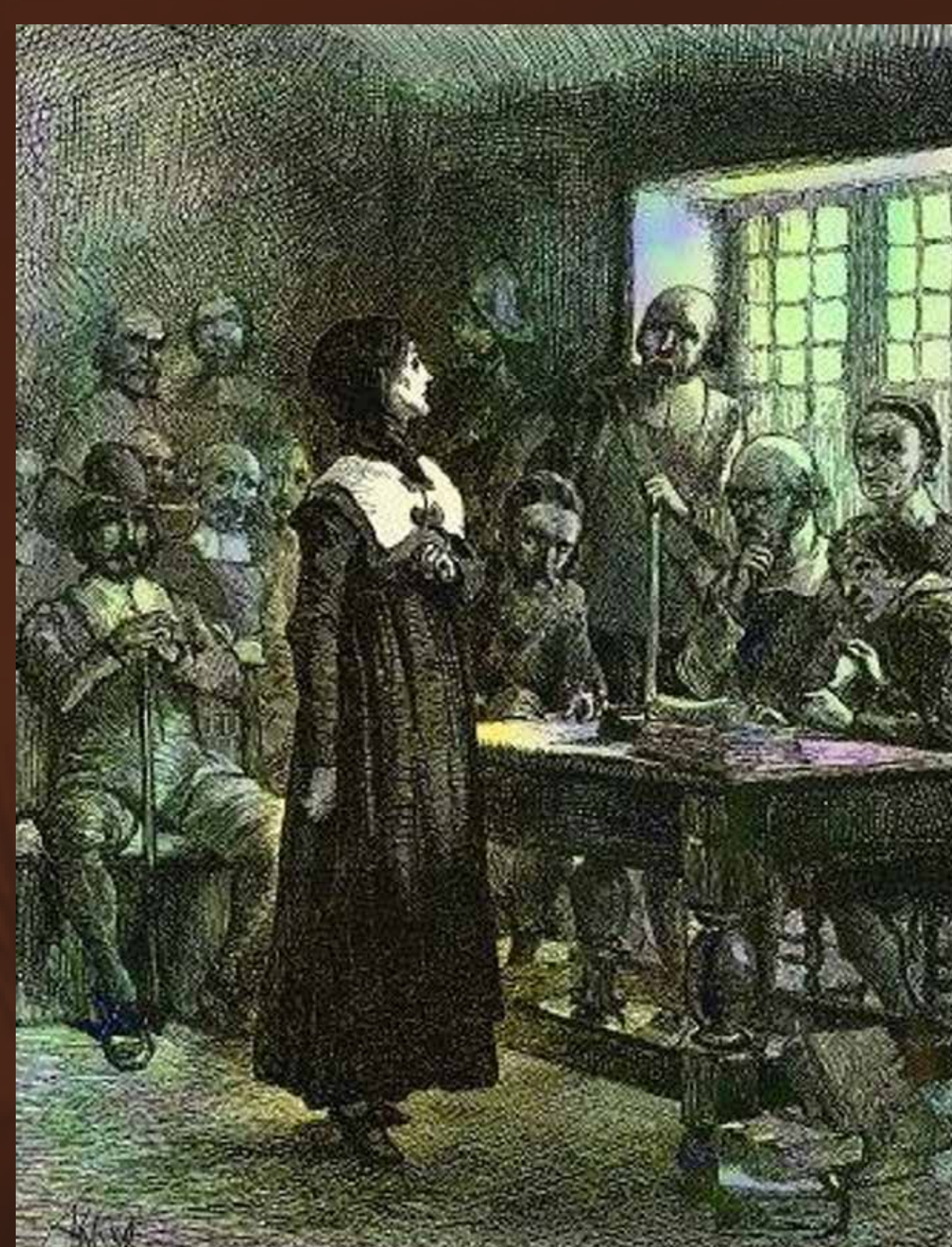
Puritans feared that a tolerant society would have low moral standards and banned Quakers, Baptists, Catholics and Religious Dissenters.

“A discussion carried out in a jargon...which has become unintelligible.”

Charles Francis Adams, Jr. on the Anne Hutchinson controversy

Anne Hutchinson

Anne Hutchinson attracted many prominent followers at religious discussions in her home where she challenged the teachings of ministers. Feeling became so intense that the colony was at risk for a violent split. She was banished and eventually killed by Indians in New York. Examining trial records today many feel that Governor John Winthrop was particularly frustrated at being challenged by an intelligent and clever woman, remarking: “We do not mean to discourse with members of your sex.”



The Trial of Anne Hutchinson
EDWIN AUSTIN ABBEY

JARGON DECIPHERED

Anne Hutchinson's dissent was called the Antinomian controversy. “Antinomian” means “against the norm.”

An Impressive Lineage

Descendants of Anne Hutchinson include Oliver Wendell Holmes, Franklin Roosevelt, the Bush family, and Mitt Romney. In the 2004 Presidential election John Winthrop's descendant John Kerry ran against Anne Hutchinson's descendant George W. Bush

Mary Dyer

Mary Dyer was a follower of Anne Hutchinson. Later she became a Quaker. Early Quakers were often disruptive, sometimes interrupting sermons or public meetings. Dyer was expelled from the colony several times and warned that returning would mean the death penalty. It is apparent that she was seeking martyrdom and was hanged on June 1, 1660.



Mary Dyer being lead to the gallows



Statues dedicated to Anne Hutchinson and Mary Dyer at the Massachusetts State House serve as a warning against religious intolerance.



AT ISSUE

At the center of the controversy was the Calvinist belief that salvation could not be earned. Some feared that there would be no incentive for good behavior. They argued that moral behavior might be an outward manifestation of God's grace. Anne Hutchinson disagreed. In a subtle way her argument could undermine the position of prominent leaders who claimed that relative wealth and status were signs of God's favor. Her claim that God revealed truth to her was seen as blasphemy.

END OF AN ERA

In 1691 William and Mary issued a new charter for the Province of Massachusetts Bay that combined the Plymouth and Massachusetts colonies. The Puritan experiment was over but the cultural influence remained. It is a complex legacy. Along with warnings against the dangers of intolerance there are enduring institutions, founded in seventeenth century Massachusetts that helped to create a culture of reform in later generations. Democratic practices, higher education, scientific inquiry, and economic innovation are often overlooked as progressive legacies from early Massachusetts.



The 1691 William and Mary Charter (on display in the Treasures Gallery)