

American Ancestors

Spring 2023 vol. 24, no. 1 \$6.95

Witchcraft Victims in Early America

SARAH GOOD
HANGED
JULY 19, 1692

2022 Annual Report inside



Pennsylvania Research: Four Centuries of History and Genealogy

May 10, 17, 24 & 31, 2023

6–7:30 p.m. (ET) • Cost: \$115, members save 10%

Presented by Kyle Hurst, Hallie Kirchner,
Ann Lawthers, and Kimberly Mannisto

From colony to statehood, Pennsylvania has always played an important role in the formation and development of our nation. It has been a haven for Quakers, the birthplace of American independence, the site of defining Civil War battles, a leader in industry, and a port of entry for many immigrants. This four-week online seminar will provide a century-by-century look at the records, resources, repositories, and research strategies essential to exploring Pennsylvania roots. We will also discuss the historical context of changes and events that transformed the state and influenced the lives of your ancestors.

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THE BRUE FAMILY LEARNING CENTER





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Above: Participants on our "Pilgrims in England: The Southeast Contingent" tour with Robert Charles Anderson explored Canterbury Cathedral in Canterbury, England. The cathedral was undergoing an extensive restoration during the October 2022 visit. **On the cover:** Image created by Carolyn Oakley. Photograph of Sarah Good memorial marker in Salem, Massachusetts, by Cindy Lindow/Shutterstock.

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A Message from the President and CEO

After many years of development, we are about to break ground to expand our Boston headquarters into a larger, multifaceted facility. This “Cornerstone Project” is a momentous milestone in the history of our institution and in the fields of genealogy and local history in America.

This ambitious project will connect our existing building to an adjacent five-story structure. In the new complex we will engage members and the public in unparalleled learning experiences. Our facility will serve both American and international audiences by making available the finest work of our expert genealogists, historians, educators, curators, and museum professionals. We will cater to both in-person and online audiences.

Our renovated and expanded headquarters will feature dynamic interactive learning spaces; activity areas for visitors, families, and children; collaborative workspaces; and a lively and attractive retail shop with a wide range of genealogical and historical books and products. Linking our two buildings will create an expanded campus with a new elevator and a staircase connecting all floors of both buildings. Essential fire suppression and critical safety technologies will also be installed.

While our library will be temporarily closed to visitors during these renovations, we will continue actively serving you online, by phone, and by mail, as well as through research and Heritage Tours and conferences around the United States and abroad. We will provide you with enhanced remote services, including online access to chat, databases, online programs, archived webinars, and personalized services.



We need your continued support to realize these ambitious goals. Your generous donation helps us in all the work we do. Please consider a gift today to support our Annual Fund. Contact Stacie Madden, our Director of Advancement, by phone at 617-226-1217, or by email at Stacie.Madden@nehgs.org.

In closing, I look forward to seeing many of you at conferences and events and on Zoom over the next few months. This is an exciting time to be a part of the great work going on—with your continued help—at American Ancestors/NEHGS!

Warmest regards,
D. Brenton Simons
President and CEO



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Visit AmericanAncestors.org/Give or make your check payable to New England Historic Genealogical Society and mail it to NEHGS Advancement, 99-101 Newbury Street, Boston, MA 02116.

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From our readers

We want to hear from you! Email magazine@nehgs.org or address letters to American Ancestors magazine, 99–101 Newbury Street, Boston, MA 02116. Letters will be edited for clarity and length. We regret that we cannot reply to every letter.

How exciting it was to read the article about “The Surprising Origins of the Coryell Family of Colonial New Jersey” [AMERICAN ANCESTORS (2022) 4:27–31]! My great-grandmother Alice Coriell (1859–1928) was a descendant of this New Jersey family. While I had heard and read of their supposed French Huguenot connections, I never found anything to support this. Finding out more of this family’s origins thrilled me. It’s always exciting to see one’s family written about in a widely respected publication. At the time I read the article, I was also taking an online course at American Ancestors called “DNA in Practice.” The course and the article dovetailed nicely since I could follow along with what I read without stopping to puzzle out what I was learning. Thanks for making my month!

Charlene Van Tassell Dean, Frederick, Maryland

Joan DeJean’s article “A Shipload of Women: When French Convicts Were Deported to the Gulf Coast” [AMERICAN ANCESTORS (2022) 4:32–37] took me to unexpected places. Early 18th-century European immigration to America—but not to New England, New York, or anywhere on the Eastern Seaboard? A shipload of French passengers—but all women? All French women—but only supposed convicts? What fascinating history! The telling of the tale is wonderfully punctuated by its final paragraph, which describes the geographic reach of the dynasties founded by five of the women of *La Mutine*.

Michael Bosworth, Brattleboro, Vermont

I was most interested to read Jean Powers’s interview with Patricia O’Malley on her fascinating new book, *So Far from Home: Letters from Ireland to Family in America* [AMERICAN ANCESTORS (2022) 4:54–57]. How fortunate Pat O’Malley was to have found so many family letters and photographs and be able to discuss it all with her mother. The correspondence of the Donovans and McCarthys confirm so much that we have long known, but also adds detail and texture to those stories. *So Far from Home*—which I have read—is a great treasure for scholars and students and for anyone wanting to learn what life was like for immigrants to this country and for those who stayed behind.

Donald Friary, Salem, Massachusetts



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Instagram

For visual updates on our Fine Art Collection treasures, events and tours, library recommendations, and more, follow [american_ancestors](https://www.instagram.com/american_ancestors).

In this issue

When I visited downtown Salem, Massachusetts, on a chilly day in March, I was struck by the number of people flocking to witchcraft-related attractions. I noticed a particularly large crowd in front of the Salem Witch Museum.

I was surprised to see so much interest in witchcraft history in the late winter, since Salem's peak visitation season happens in the weeks leading up to Halloween. Of course, historically speaking, visitors have no reason to confine their visits to October. The connection between so-called witches and Halloween doesn't actually fit with the Salem witchcraft timeline. The initial whispers of suspicion began in January 1692; by spring, the accusations had spun out of control. The first executions took place that June, the last in September. The tragic events of 1692 can be examined any time of the year.

My recent experience in Salem is one indication of our culture's continued fascination with colonial-era witchcraft episodes. Although the Salem trials happened very long ago in our national memory, interest in witchcraft-related historic sites, ancestral connections, stories, and scholarship might well be at an all-time high.

We are pleased to present some of this recent scholarship, beginning with several Salem-focused articles. The first, by Rachel Christ-Doane, shares new details about the life of Dorothy Good, who at age four was accused and imprisoned with her mother in 1692.

Marilynne K. Roach writes about the Salem and Boston jails where accused witches were held, and compares those structures to colonial-era jails that survive in Barnstable, Massachusetts, and York, Maine. David Allen Lambert provides useful resources in "Researching Salem's Witchcraft Victims."

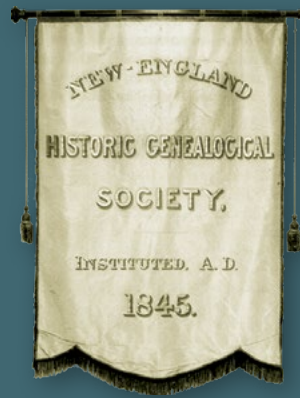
Moving beyond Salem, we feature an excerpt from Malcolm Gaskill's recent book, *The Ruin of All Witches: Life and Death in the New World*, which delves into the case of a mid-seventeenth century couple accused in Springfield, Massachusetts. A brief account of a 1680s witchcraft episode in Boston is summarized from D. Brenton Simons's *Witches, Rakes, and Rogues: True Stories of Scam, Scandal, Murder, and Mayhem in Boston, 1630-1775*. And Kimberly Mannisto offers historical context on witchcraft persecution in England and Europe, and examines the story of Grace Sherwood, who was tried (and "ducked") in colonial Virginia.

In our columns, Miriam Mora compares and contrasts the experiences of a father and son who served, respectively, in the First and Second World Wars; and Michael F. Dwyer describes the Irish research that connected him to a wide network of relatives in Kerry and Cork.

Finally, we invite you to peruse our comprehensive 2022 annual report, which is included with this issue.



Lynn Betlock
Managing Editor
magazine@nehgs.org



To advance the study of family history in America and beyond, we educate, inspire, and connect people through our scholarship, collections, and expertise.

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This publication is also funded in part by the Francis G. and Ruth (Wellington) Shaw Memorial Fund.

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Sarah Gunderson

“A passion for family history”

My father was more than a history buff—he was an over-the-top history fanatic. Historic relics and conversation pieces adorned our home, including a suit of armor, a cannon, a statue of a saint with his face chopped off (referred to as Saint What’s-His-Face), a Chinese altar, Navajo rugs, Lakota trinkets, and a statue of Hotei (the Japanese god of happiness). A certificate naming my great-grandfather as governor of South Dakota shared a wall with several generations of pictures. History was a frequent topic at the dinner table, but I knew little about my own family history.

Every summer, my mother took us to visit relatives in South Bend, Indiana, and Columbus, Ohio. On what turned out to be my last visit with her, my great-grandmother showed me a Laughter genealogy that traced her grandfather’s side of the family back to the Revolution. I scoured through that book. I was sixteen and hooked.

I began researching through the mail and learning by trial and error—mostly error. In my twenties, I took my first course: Beginning Genealogy with Lloyd Bockstruck. I didn’t know at the time that Lloyd was a giant in the genealogy community.

Although it was my passion from a young age, genealogical research often took a back seat to work and the demands of life. But there were frequent reminders of its importance. During a family visit, my father casually mentioned that my mother was adopted. My mother had found out by accident as an adult, but never told me. As far as I knew, she was an only child. Through my research, I learned that my mother was the oldest of 10 siblings, and I had 25 first cousins!

I’ve had many genealogy adventures. On a research trip to Hendricks County, Indiana, I searched for the burial site of an ancestor. After driving up and down the



road, I asked for directions at a nearby golf course. A staff member pointed to a spot with six-foot-high grass and recommended I visit in the winter. Later that year, I returned with family. I borrowed a golf cart, and, after some searching, we located my ancestor’s four-sided monument tombstone broken on the ground. With my brother’s help, we were able to turn the stone to find the dates of the wife on the other side. She was invisible no more!

I joined NEHGS in 2006 to access internet resources. Several years later, former CEO Ralph Crandall asked me to join the Council. I served on the Council and the Board of Trustees, “termed out” in 2022, and was then appointed to the Finance Committee. I have attended numerous American Ancestors galas, webinars, and courses. In November 2022, I joined Curt DiCamillo’s tour of Shropshire and had a fabulous time.

Genealogy can be a lonely hobby if your family does not share your interest. I am sparing about sharing my findings with my family so their eyes don’t roll back in their heads. I love finding scandalous things to tell them because it grabs their attention, if only for a few moments. It’s nice being part of a genealogy community like American Ancestors, where people share your interests and celebrate your triumphs. I’m starting to see some interest in the subject with a niece—someone I could potentially bequeath my research. Cross your fingers! ♦

Sarah Gunderson of Dallas, Texas, is a community volunteer and retired business professional in the multifamily industry. She serves on the boards of Austin College and North Texas Basset Hound Rescue, and she is an officer in her Daughters of the American Revolution and Daughters of the Republic of Texas chapters. Sarah joined American Ancestors/NEHGS in 2006. She served on our Board and Council and is a Life Benefactor.



Our Member Services team is here to help you!

See the answers to some of our most frequently asked questions below.

How do I view my membership status and update my account information?

On AmericanAncestors.org, click “My Account” in the upper right-hand corner, then select “My Profile” from the dropdown list. Update your mailing address by scrolling down or selecting “Account Info” on the left-hand side. You can renew your membership online or by calling our Member Services team at 1-888-296-3447 (choose option 1). You can also mail a check to Member Services, NEHGS, 99–101 Newbury Street, Boston, MA 02116.

If I register for a webinar or other online event, do I have to watch the program live, or will it be available to view afterwards?

All free online programs—including webinars, American Inspiration author events, and more—are available on our website. To view these archived videos, log into your account on AmericanAncestors.org, click on “Events” on our homepage menu, and select “View past events and videos.” From that page you can view all videos or filter by subject.

If you registered for an online course or online conference broadcast in September 2021 or later, the recorded sessions, as well as the course materials, can be accessed under your “My Account” page on the website. To access them, log into your account, click “My Account” in the upper right-hand corner, and select “Digital Content” from the left-hand menu. (Please note that if you attended an online course or conference broadcast prior to September 2021, the recorded sessions are not available.)

I’m having trouble logging into AmericanAncestors.org. What should I do?

On the AmericanAncestors.org homepage, click the “Log In” button in the upper right-hand corner. Use the email address associated with your American Ancestors account. (If you need to change the email address for your account, contact the Member Services team at membership@nehgs.org or 1-888-296-3447, option 1.)

If you do not remember your password, click “Forgot password?” on the log-in page or visit AmericanAncestors.org/locate. You will be prompted to enter the email address associated with your account and click “Email My Information.” You will receive an email with a link to reset your password. Click the link, and you will be directed to a page where you can enter a new password. Passwords must include at least six characters and contain at least one uppercase letter, one number, and one special character (!, @, \$, %, ^, &, *). If you require assistance, contact our Member Services team.

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News

Our Summer Benefit honoring Pulitzer Prize–winning author and historian Alan Taylor July 27, 2023

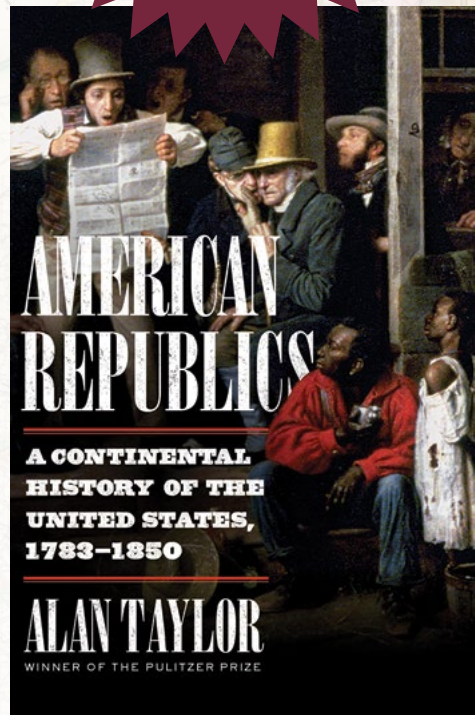
Join us **July 27, 2023**, as we honor American historian and scholar **Alan Taylor** with our Lifetime Achievement Award. Taylor has twice won the Pulitzer Prize in History, most recently for *The Internal Enemy: Slavery and War in Virginia, 1772–1832*, also a National Book Award finalist. Taylor has written extensively about the colonial history of the United States, the American Revolution, and the early American Republic. In 2020 he was elected to the American Philosophical Society. He is the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation

Professor of History at the University of Virginia. Taylor will speak on the topic of population and ethnicity in early America.

Our event will be held at the Museum of the American Revolution. Located just steps away from Independence Hall, the Museum of the American Revolution shares compelling stories about the diverse people and complex events that sparked America's ongoing experiment in liberty, equality, and self-government.



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To register, visit AmericanAncestors.org/Summer-Dinner-2023, or contact 617-226-1215 or signatureevents@nehgs.org.



Hosted by

D. BRENTON SIMONS, President & CEO of American Ancestors/NEHGS

RYAN J. WOODS, Executive Vice President & COO of American Ancestors/NEHGS

Henry S. Tanner, detail of *United States of America* (1829).
David Rumsey Map Collection.



NPR's award-winning legal affairs correspondent Nina Totenberg featured at our 2023 virtual Winter Benefit

On January 26, 2023, American Ancestors welcomed more than 100 attendees to our virtual Winter Benefit featuring Nina Totenberg. The event was moderated by Rita Braver, veteran newscaster and national correspondent for *CBS News Sunday Morning*.

Totenberg discussed her extraordinary new memoir, *Dinners with Ruth: A Memoir on the Power of Friendships*, which details her personal successes, struggles, and life-affirming relationships—including her friendship of nearly fifty years with Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Attendees received a signed copy of the book.

Following the discussion, President and CEO D. Brenton Simons and Executive Vice President and COO Ryan J. Woods presented Totenberg with our Lifetime Achievement Award in Broadcast Journalism and a membership to American Ancestors/New England Historic Genealogical Society.

Best known for her appearances on NPR's critically acclaimed news magazines *All Things Considered*, *Morning Edition*, and *Weekend Edition*, Totenberg's Supreme Court and legal coverage has won her every major journalism award in broadcasting. Recognized seven times by the American Bar Association for continued excellence in legal reporting, she has received more than two dozen honorary degrees. A frequent TV contributor, she writes for major newspapers, magazines, and law reviews.

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Top left: Nina Totenberg.
Top right: Nina Totenberg in
conversation with Rita Braver.

Tales of the British Crown Jewels at the fifth annual DiCamillo Companion Rendezvous

On January 19, 2023, American Ancestors/New England Historic Genealogical Society members, guests, and friends met at the Colony Club in New York City for the annual DiCamillo Companion Rendezvous, a jovial gathering that, this year, celebrated British bling and history.

The program began with welcome remarks by Steve Solomon, Assistant Vice President for Advancement. Then Curt DiCamillo, Curator of Special Collections, interpreted the British Crown Jewels as never before! Using this most remarkable collection of jewelry in the world as his starting point, Curt told the story of the rise and fall of dynasties, of beheadings, coronations, and history-changing events—all wrapped up with unparalleled magnificence and a bit of fun.

Curt is an internationally recognized authority on British country houses and decorative arts and the study leader for our popular Heritage Tours.



Christopher Forbes, Curt DiCamillo, and Christina Feicht.



Staff updates

We are pleased to welcome **KELLY NEAGLE** as our Special Events Manager. Kelly has several years of event management experience at various organizations, most recently with Public Sector Network. She received her BA in History from the University of Georgia. Kelly is also an enthusiastic family historian who has traced much of her own ancestry. In addition to managing and assisting on a variety of American Ancestors events, she will oversee logistics for the 36th International Congress of Genealogical and Heraldic Sciences, which we are hosting in September 2024.

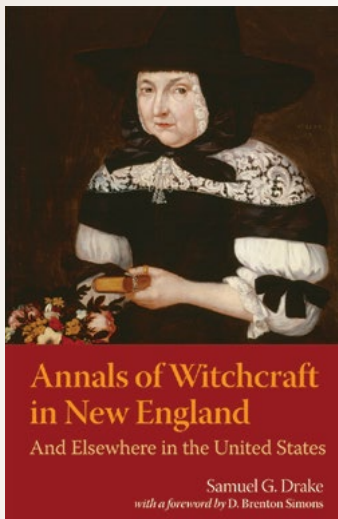


The Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center (JHC) welcomed **HENRY TREADWELL** as its new Digital Archivist in February. Henry received his MA in History and a Masters of Library and Information Science, both from the University of Maryland. He has had internships at the National Archives, Maryland State Archives, Royal Museums Greenwich, and the Lobkowicz Collections in Prague, and he most recently worked at United Ways of Vermont. Henry will be working with the JHC's Collections Management Archivist, Gabrielle Roth, on updating and maintaining the JHC's digital library and archive.



SARAH QUIAT joined the JHC in March as Programming and Outreach Manager. A graduate of Vassar College, Sarah has held program development and education positions at the Yiddish Book Center and Jewish Women's Archive (JWA), most recently serving as director of JWA's youth fellowship program. A trained oral historian, Sarah has also been a Fellow at the Tenement Museum in New York City. Sarah will manage JHC's programs in a variety of community and online settings.

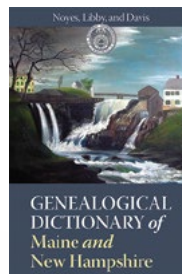
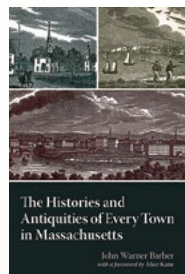
From our Experts' Choice collection



Annals of Witchcraft in New England, And Elsewhere in the United States

Samuel G. Drake, foreword by D. Brenton Simons, 2013; \$17.95.

First published in 1869, *Annals of Witchcraft* outlines each instance of the "alleged operations of witches" in the American colonies from 1636 through 1728. Using court records, statutes, and other documents from New England and elsewhere, Drake shows that anxieties about witchcraft were not confined to Salem or to 1692.



The History and Antiquities of Every Town in Massachusetts

John Warner Barber, foreword by Alice S. Kane, 2014; \$29.95.

Genealogical Dictionary of Maine and New Hampshire

Sybil Noyes, Charles Thornton Libby, and Walter Goodwin Davis, 2011; \$27.95.

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NEW Databases on AmericanAncestors.org

Journals

The Genealogist— 21 new volumes

This database, a collaboration with the American Society of Genealogists, presents fully indexed records and browsable issues of volumes 1 through 30 (1980–2016) of *The Genealogist*. The latest update added more than 134,000 records. This database is now complete.

Study Projects

Early Vermont Settlers, 1700– 1784—19 new sketches

This study project, researched by Scott Andrew Bartley, covers heads of households who lived within the present-day borders of Vermont by 1784. Information on spouses, children, children's spouses, and known vital records accompanies each sketch.

Early New England Families, 1641–1700—1 new sketch

This study project, researched by Alicia Crane Williams, FASG, focuses on post-Great Migration immigrants to New England, using Torrey's *New England Marriages* and its recent successors as a guide. The most recent sketch is of John Doane, Jr., who settled primarily in Plymouth and Eastham, Massachusetts.

Vital Records

Massachusetts: Roman Catholic Parish Cemetery Records, 1866–1940

American Ancestors and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston are collaborating to create a searchable database of select Catholic cemetery records in Massachusetts. These cemeteries are administrated by local parishes. Most of the volumes contain records of lot sales or interments, and

may list lot owners, date of burial, and burial location. Information is provided for some individuals who no longer have, or may never have had, headstones. Presently, 45 volumes of cemetery records from the following parishes are available to search: St. Mary (Ayer), St. Mary (Canton), Annunciation Cemetery (Danvers), St. Mary (Middleborough), St. Joseph (Plymouth), St. Mary (Quincy), and St. Joseph (Roxbury). Additional parish cemetery records will continue to be added.

Canadian Headstones: Cemetery Heritage Records of Canada

This database is the result of a collaboration with Canadian Headstones, a Canadian nonprofit working to provide access to cemetery heritage records across Canada. The database features an expansive searchable index of names, dates, and cemetery locations that links to the Canadian Headstones website for full transcriptions and headstone images. Currently, the database includes records from 104 Canadian cemeteries. Additional records will be announced throughout 2023.

Cambridge, MA: Wyeth Funeral Service Records, 1904–1964

This database contains sixty years of accounting records for the Wyeth Funeral Service in Cambridge, Massachusetts. These records provide vital record information, including date, location, and cause of death; cemetery name; funeral location; and burial date; as well as names of immediate family members, when available. In 1904, Benjamin Franklin Wyeth (1845–1909) assumed sole ownership of his family funeral home business. Benjamin's sons carried on after his death in 1909, introducing the name Wyeth Funeral Service. The

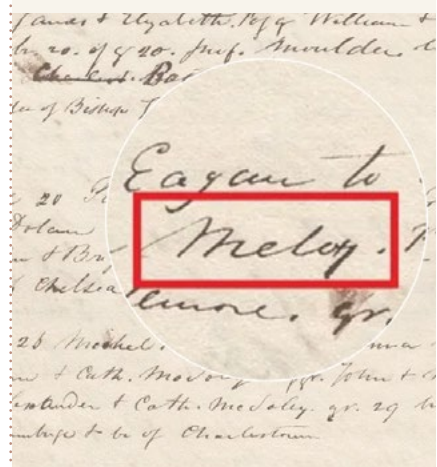
funeral home closed in 1964. The original volumes are held by the R. Stanton Avery Special Collections at NEHGS, call number Mss 223.

From the Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center (JHC)

This new database presents archival collections of the Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center (JHC) at New England Historic Genealogical Society as searchable databases. The first one is Lynn, MA: Harry Lipsky Company Records, 1934–1936. This collection, from a moving company in Lynn, Massachusetts, is primarily composed of residence records that provide both departure and destination addresses, and include inventories of belongings moved.

Transcription Challenge

We're excited to announce the revival of the Transcription Challenge on our *Database News* blog. We will regularly post samples of difficult-to-read handwriting that we find in original sources. We need your help with interpreting the text so we can add these names to our online databases. To take part in the challenge, visit dbnews.AmericanAncestors.org/transcription-challenge.



American Inspiration: Conversations with literary luminaries

See American
Inspiration events in
our calendar listings on
page 14

Hosted by Director of Literary Programs Margaret M. Talcott, our American Inspiration speaker series presents engaging discussions on newly published histories, biographies, and memoirs from renowned authors.

Upcoming lectures & events

Our spring lineup features a May event with Professors Chad L. Williams (Brandeis) and Kendra Field (Tufts) in dialogue about Williams's new book, *The Wounded World: W. E. B. Du Bois and the First World War*. This special hybrid event will be online and at the Boston Public Library's Rabb Lecture Hall.

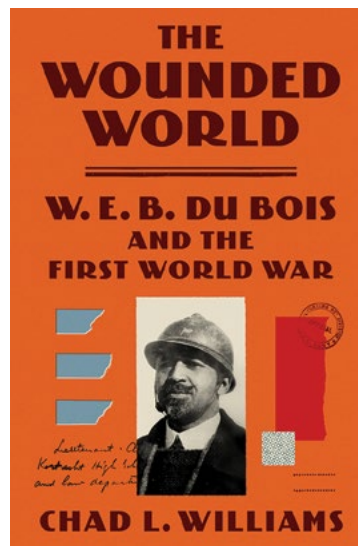
In May we welcome Mark Lee Gardner, award-winning author of *Rough Riders* and *To Hell on a Fast Horse* and other popular Western histories. He will present his latest work, *The Earth is All That Lasts: Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull, and the Last Stand of the Great Sioux Nation*. Heralded by *True West* magazine as Best Nonfiction Book of the Year, it examines the "Indian Wars" through the two most legendary and consequential American Indian leaders, who led Sioux resistance and triumphed at the Battle of Little Bighorn.

Catch up with American Inspiration!

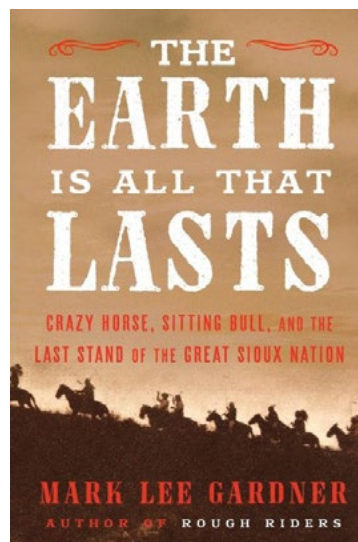
Visit AmericanAncestors.org/inspire to learn about upcoming events or view past programs. Recent highlights include:

- Stacy Schiff on *The Revolutionary: Samuel Adams*, with moderator Ryan J. Woods, Executive VP and COO of American Ancestors/NEHGS
- Paul Fisher on *The Grand Affair: John Singer Sargent in His World*, with moderator Meghan Weeks
- Malcolm Gaskill on *The Ruin of All Witches: Life and Death in the New World*

Our literary programs are often presented in partnership with other anchor cultural organizations, including the Boston Public Library, GBH Forum Network, the Museum of African American History, and the State Library of Massachusetts.



MIKELOVETT



Alex Prud'homme joins us in August to discuss *Dinner with the President: Food, Politics, and a History of Breaking Bread at the White House*. Prud'homme, who previously collaborated with his great-aunt Julia Child on her memoir *My Life in France*, brings his familial love of cuisine to America with this narrative history of American food, politics, and twenty-six presidents, from George Washington starving at Valley Forge in 1777 to Joe Biden's "performance enhancing" ice cream in 2022.

In August we will host a special event on "Summer Artist Colonies: Cape Cod and Cape Ann." John Taylor Williams, author of *The Shores of Bohemia: A Cape Cod Story, 1910-1960*, will be in conversation with Elliot Bostwick Davis, author and guest curator of the Cape Ann Museum exhibition "Edward Hopper & Cape Ann."



Brick Walls *submitted by our members*

We want to hear from you! Send a brief narrative (under 200 words) about your “brick wall” to magazine@nehgs.org or to *American Ancestors* magazine, 99–101 Newbury Street, Boston, MA 02116. Please include your member number. We regret that we cannot reply to every submission. Brick walls will be edited for clarity and length.

I am looking for information on the parents of my ancestor **George Francis Bailey**—particularly their marriage record. Although I’ve not located George’s birth record, his marriage record states he was born October 28, 1857, in Pembroke, New Hampshire, to John and Sophronia (Chase) Bailey. George immigrated to Canada in 1887 and married Henrietta Buzzell in 1890 in Derby, Orleans County, Vermont. The couple had ten children and lived in Saint-Jean, Iberville, and Magog, Quebec. George died in Magog on March 2, 1924.

Denise Couture, Montreal, Quebec
couden2014@gmail.com

I’m looking for information about the parents of my grandfather **John Fenwick Cullinen/Cullinan**, who was born March 13, 1876. On his 1919 marriage record, John gave his parents’ names as John Cullinen and Louisa Baxter; his birthplace as Kittery, Maine; and his religion as Episcopalian, but I have found no corresponding documentation. John said his parents were killed in a horse and buggy accident when he was six or seven years old and he was raised by an uncle, Michael J. Cullinan. In 1918, John was living in Patten, Penobscot County, Maine. He was widowed prior to marrying my grandmother, Mary (May) Agnes (Fitzpatrick) Kunzler, on November 3, 1919, in Woodstock, New Brunswick. I know nothing about his first marriage. John also lived in Vermont and Massachusetts. He died in Ayer, Mass., on March 9, 1951.

Carol Bernard, Clifton, Virginia
cbzid@aol.com

My ancestor **Timothy Conant** was born May 31, 1751, in Bridgewater, Massachusetts, and died March 5, 1826, in Rehoboth, Mass. He served in the Revolution. Timothy and his wife Sarah Perry (1752–1826) had five children. Some of their descendants claim

that Roger Conant—who founded Salem, Mass.—was Timothy’s ancestor. I would like to believe it, but I cannot identify Timothy’s father. Timothy’s birth record in Bridgewater describes him as Timothy “Conant alias Bassett son of Thankfull Bassett.” No father is listed. Another entry on the page for a different birth is similar in wording. Does this language imply something specific, like the father dying or abandoning the family? Frederick Odell Conant’s 1887 Conant genealogy lists Timothy in a section of “Conants Whose Origin is Untraced.” Some online trees appear to confuse our Timothy with “Timothy II (Blackman) Conant,” b. February 20, 1770, the son of another Timothy (b. 1732 in Bridgewater) and Hannah Blackman, who were married in 1754. This latter Timothy also served in the Revolution but died during the war. I am eager to resolve this brick wall. Every time I drive by Roger Conant’s statue in Salem, I’m pretty sure he smirks at me.

Eric Schultz, Boxford, Massachusetts
ericbschultz@gmail.com

I am looking for parents and siblings of my ancestor **John Nokes**, who was born about 1750, possibly in New York. John Nokes was in Rensselaer Manor, New York, during the Revolutionary War and was a member of Yates’s Regiment. His wife’s first name was Clement/Clemente. They had at least five children: George; Simon (wife Clarissa); Stephen (d. 1820 at Noyan, Quebec); and two unnamed daughters, one of whom was the wife of Joseph Summerix. John died in 1819 in Swanton, Vermont. The mystery of John’s origins has seriously vexed us for the past 60 years. We know of Nokes families in New England and New York during the 17th and 18th centuries, but we have never been able to make connections with them.

Gary Nokes
nokesg@myfairpoint.net

programs & tours

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MAY 2023

- 5/8 **AMERICAN INSPIRATION AUTHOR EVENT** Chad L. Williams with *The Wounded World: W. E. B. Du Bois and the First World War*, FREE
- Starting 5/10... **ONLINE SEMINAR** Pennsylvania Research: Four Centuries of History and Genealogy, 4 weeks, \$
- 5/11..... **ONLINE LECTURE** Huguenot Family History Resources, FREE
- 5/18 **ONLINE LECTURE** "Israel Is We": Jewish Americans and the New Nation State, FREE
- 5/23 **AMERICAN INSPIRATION AUTHOR EVENT** Mark Lee Gardner with *The Earth Is All That Lasts: Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull, and the Last Stand of the Great Sioux Nation*, \$
- 5/25 **ONLINE LECTURE** Getting Started in Lithuanian Family History Research, FREE

JUNE 2023

- 6/5 **AMERICAN INSPIRATION VIRTUAL AUTHOR EVENT** Dror Goldberg with *Easy Money: American Puritans and the Invention of Modern Currency*, FREE
- 6/8 **ONLINE LECTURE** What's New at American Ancestors, FREE
- 6/8–6/10..... **ONLINE SEMINAR** Spring Virtual Stay-at-Home, \$
See description on page 15
- 6/14 **ONLINE SEMINAR** Researching Impoverished Ancestors, 3 weeks, \$
- 6/15 **ONLINE LECTURE** Understanding Calendar Systems in Family History Research, FREE
- 6/20..... **AMERICAN INSPIRATION VIRTUAL AUTHOR EVENT** Jonathan Eig with *King: A Life*, FREE
- 6/29..... **ONLINE LECTURE** Self-Publishing Your Family History: A Panel Discussion, FREE

\$ indicates a paid program

JULY 2023

- 7/6 **ONLINE LECTURE** Researching Black Patriots and Loyalists During the American Revolution, FREE
- 7/7 **ONLINE LECTURE** Villa Astor: Paradise Restored on the Amalfi Coast, FREE
- 7/11..... **AMERICAN INSPIRATION AUTHOR EVENT** Alex Prud'homme with *Dinner with the President: Food, Politics, and a History of Breaking Bread at the White House*, FREE
- Starting 7/12 ... **ONLINE SEMINAR** Quaker Research, 3 weeks, \$
- 7/15 **ONLINE SEMINAR** Massachusetts Research: Four Centuries of History and Genealogy, \$
- 7/18 **AMERICAN INSPIRATION AUTHOR EVENT** Leah Myers with *Thinning Blood: A Memoir of Family, Myth, and Identity*, FREE
- 7/20 **ONLINE LECTURE** Getting Started in Ohio Research, FREE

AUGUST 2023

- Starting 8/2 ... **ONLINE SEMINAR** Researching Atlantic Canada, 5 weeks, \$
- 8/3–8/5..... **ONLINE SEMINAR** Genealogical Skills Bootcamp, \$
See description on page 15
- 8/8..... **AMERICAN INSPIRATION VIRTUAL AUTHOR EVENT** Elliot Bostwick Davis and John Taylor Williams with *Illuminating Summer Art Colonies*, FREE
- 8/10 **ONLINE LECTURE** Stories from the Archives: Scrapbooks, FREE
- 8/24..... **ONLINE LECTURE** Applying to Revolutionary War Lineage Societies, FREE
- 8/26..... **ONLINE SEMINAR** Getting the Lay of the Land: Using American Land Deeds in Your Family History Research, \$
- 8/29..... **AMERICAN INSPIRATION VIRTUAL AUTHOR EVENT** Dean King with *Guardians of the Valley: John Muir and the Friendship That Saved Yosemite*, FREE

At-Home Research Programs

VIRTUAL Spring Stay-At-Home

June 8–10, 2023

Cost: \$375; Members save 10%

Make real headway in your research! In this three-day online experience, you will learn about essential resources and new research strategies through staff lectures, real-time demonstrations, one-on-one consultations, and other activities. Whether you are an advanced researcher or a beginner, this virtual program will give you the necessary skills and knowledge to continue your family history research online from home.

This program includes:

- Six lectures and access to recordings
- Lecture handouts and materials
- Two one-on-one consultations
- Demo and activity sessions with our experts and other participants

VIRTUAL Summer Genealogical Skills Bootcamp

August 3–5, 2023

Cost: \$375; Members save 10%

Take your research skills to the next level! With the sheer number of online resources at your fingertips, you might be tempted to dive into your family history research without any formal genealogical training. This intensive three-day online program will set you on the right path to getting the most out of your family history research and teach you how to tackle genealogical problems like a pro. Topics include strategies for analyzing records, online research, breaking down genealogical brick walls, and more.

This program includes:

- Twelve lectures and access to recordings
- Lecture handouts and materials
- Demo and activity sessions with our experts and other participants

*Schedule is subject to change.

Archived webinars, subject guides, downloads, and more

Missed a past webinar? Want to learn more about a particular subject at your own pace? Looking for easy-to-use templates to help keep your research organized? Discover the hundreds of resources waiting for you at our Online Learning Center at AmericanAncestors.org/education/learning-resources. All of these resources are free and available to the public. You will need to log in to your member or guest account to access the content.

- Watch instructional videos and archived webinars at our video library: AmericanAncestors.org/video-library
- Read research guides on a variety of topics: AmericanAncestors.org/tools/research-guides
- Download charts, family group sheets, and other organizing templates: AmericanAncestors.org/tools/research-templates



Genealogical Travel Is Back! Upcoming Research Tours & Programs*

Not all records and family history resources are online! It's time to explore the archives, libraries, and other repositories essential to the success of your family history project. American Ancestors offers a wide variety of guided research tours and extended programs for family historians at all skill levels. Benefit from special orientations and tutorials, one-on-one consultations, informative lectures, cultural excursions, and more. Register at AmericanAncestors.org/events.

Upstate New York Research Tour, Albany, NY

May 16–20, 2023

Explore the New York State Library and the New York State Archives with experts from American Ancestors by your side. This popular tour includes individual consultations, lectures from experts, and group meals.

Members: Single \$1,750; Double \$1,500/each; Double with non-researching guest \$1,995; Commuter \$950. **Nonmember registration:** Add \$150 to the above prices.

Scottish Research Tour, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK

June 18–25, 2023

Have you dreamed of visiting Edinburgh to research your Scottish ancestors? Let American Ancestors be your guide! Receive research assistance and support as you comb through 500 years of Scottish history at the National Archives of Scotland and ScotlandsPeople.

Tour includes:

- Research at National Archives of Scotland and ScotlandsPeople Centre
- One-on-one consultations with our genealogists
- Lectures from our genealogists and local experts
- Seven-night stay in the heart of Edinburgh

Member registration: Single \$3,650; Double \$2,950/each; Double with non-researching guest \$3,900; Commuter \$1,995. **Nonmember registration:** Add \$150 to the above prices.

Salt Lake City Research Tour

November 5–12, 2023

Navigate the resources of the world's largest genealogy library with the help of experts from American Ancestors. Since we have more than forty years of experience leading researchers of all levels to Salt Lake City, you will benefit from our special orientations and tutorials, one-on-one consultations, informative lectures, and more.

"This was a really great introduction to the [library] for me. I had been afraid to tackle it on my own, but with the help of NEHGS I had a very productive week."

—Salt Lake City Research Tour participant

Program includes:

- Seven-night hotel stay at the Salt Lake Plaza Hotel
- Orientation and tour of the FamilySearch Library
- Lectures from American Ancestors genealogists
- Three thirty-minute consultations with expert genealogists
- Group meals (opening and closing dinner, plus mid-week lunch)
- Pre-program preparatory webinar and resources

Member registration: Single \$1,675; Double \$1,475/each; Double with non-researching guest \$1,925; Commuter \$850. **Nonmember registration:** Add \$150 to the above prices.

Join us on a genealogical day trip!

Explore a New England repository with experts from American Ancestors! Visits include pre-program online resources, a tour and orientation to the library or archives, and a one-on-one consultation with a genealogist. Upcoming day trips include:

- **May 2023** Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Massachusetts
- **June 2023** Boston City Archives, Boston, Massachusetts
- **July 2023** American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts
- **August 2023** Connecticut State Library and Archives, Hartford, Connecticut

*Schedule is subject to change.



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Course includes:

- Seven modules covering basics, research, and analysis
- Instructional videos, handouts, templates, and check-your-understanding exercises
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LEARNING CENTER

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Are you looking for ways to support New England Historic Genealogical Society while receiving a steady income stream? A **charitable gift annuity** may be the answer! In exchange for a gift of \$25,000 or more, NEHGS can provide guaranteed fixed payments to you (and an optional second beneficiary) for life.

There has never been a better time to create a charitable gift annuity! New benefits include:

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- Supporting the scholarship, collections, and educational offerings of NEHGS—this lasting legacy will benefit generations to come
- Potentially receiving tax-free portions of payments for a period of time
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How much income will I receive with a gift of \$25,000?

AGE	ANNUITY RATE	ANNUAL ANNUITY PAYMENT	CHARITABLE DEDUCTION
65	5.4%	\$1,350	\$9,658
70	5.9%	\$1,475	\$10,593
75	6.6%	\$1,650	\$11,614
80	7.6%	\$1,900	\$12,614
85	8.7%	\$2,175	\$13,974
90	9.7%	\$2,425	\$15,719

Please note that this information is for illustrative purposes and is not intended as tax or legal advice. Rates are subject to change. Charitable gift annuities may not be available in all states.



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— Judith Halseth, NEHGS Honorary Trustee

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Ted MacMahon, CFRE, Assistant Vice President | tmacmahon@nehgs.org | 617-549-0300



staff profile

MEET CÉCILE ENGELN Editorial Director

I began at NEHGS in November 2016 as the Assistant Publishing Director on the Publications team, editing and managing the production of many NEHGS and Newbury Street Press titles and the journal *Mayflower Descendant*. In 2022 I became Editorial Director, as I am responsible for maintaining editorial accuracy and consistency in all our books and marketing materials.

One day might consist of focusing on a manuscript and editing it to perfection. Another day I might meet with a patron to discuss a design sample of an upcoming book, provide feedback on a press release due by the end of the day, undertake photo research for the cover of the next issue of *Mayflower Descendant*, and then review dozens of indexer queries.

We have such a fantastic group of people at NEHGS and I find it incredibly inspiring to work with so many brilliant minds. There's a certain passion that is palpable here, and perhaps it is because of what we are doing—we are helping people develop their families' stories in a historical context. It is deeply personal work, and I think that unites us.

I had a magical childhood largely revolving around family and books. My paternal grandfather owned a book bindery a mere five-minute walk from our home in South Lancaster, Massachusetts. Upon entering the bindery, I could hear the whir and clunk of the giant book sewing

machines, the kerchunk of the cutters as they sliced through text blocks, the rustle of covers being pulled from the shelves and placed in the stamping machine. I could see stacks of books in various stages of production making their way along the rolling conveyor tables. It seemed like I had family in every nook and cranny of the bindery. They were making books—this is what my family did.

I even worked briefly at the bindery before I left for Andrews University in Michigan, where I majored in English Literature and minored in French. I knew I wanted to make books and tell stories. I returned to Massachusetts and earned a master's degree in publishing and writing from Emerson College.

I spent nearly a decade in educational publishing. I began as an editorial assistant and progressed to editor. I developed a variety of books, ranging from a guide to U.S. citizenship to graphic novels. I then moved to project management and orchestrated the production of complex foreign language programs. But I longed to return to content development and creation. And that is how I found my way to NEHGS!

My greatest joy is the creation of books. At NEHGS, it is especially rewarding as I get to work alongside fantastic colleagues and patrons as we build family histories and genealogical research guides and references. It truly is all about family and books. ♦



The Untold Story of *Dorothy Good*, Salem's Youngest Accused Witch

Studying the lives of those ensnared in witchcraft trials is often sorrowful work.

The personal stories found in these records are filled with misfortune and suffering. Due to their intensity and ferocity, the Salem witch trials of 1692 are remembered today as the most infamous witch-hunt in North American history. In just over a year, nineteen people were hanged, one man was tortured to death, at least five died in prison, and between 150 and 200 were arrested. The stories of each of these victims is heartbreaking, but Dorothy Good's tale is particularly tragic.

At just four years old, Dorothy was the youngest person arrested during the Salem trials. Her mother, Sarah Good, was one of the first to be accused. Sarah, whose life had been shadowed by hardship, was an easy

target in 1692. Born in July of 1653 in Wenham, Massachusetts, Sarah was the daughter of John and Elizabeth Solart (or Soulart). Although she came from a prosperous family, Sarah experienced one calamity after another—the suicide of her father, a prolonged inheritance struggle, and the death of her first husband, Daniel Poole—which left her in a drastically reduced state. Her second marriage, to William Good, did not improve her circumstances, since she faced debt from her previous marriage and her new husband failed to support their family. Eventually forced to resort to begging, Sarah was known to mutter or curse at those who turned her away.

Records from 1692 paint Sarah Good as vitriolic. When Sarah was tried for witchcraft, there was no shortage of neighbors willing to testify against her and recount stories of past confrontations and allegations of malevolence. Unfortunately, Sarah's story was not unique; women who made others feel uncomfortable,



Rachel Christ-Doane is the Director of Education at the Salem Witch Museum. She holds a BA in History from Clark University and an MA in History and Museum Studies from Tufts University. She began working at the Salem Witch Museum in 2015 and has been the Director of Education since 2018. Within this role she engages in an array of research, curates the museum's exhibits, works with students and teachers, and creates educational programming.

broke with social conventions, or lived on the margins of society often attracted suspicions of witchcraft. These women were the unlucky scapegoats for any manner of misfortune.

Sarah and William's eldest daughter, Dorothy, was born in 1688. As the Good family did not have a permanent home, it is difficult to determine where her birth occurred. She may have been born in Salem Village (today Danvers), as the family had begged for alms in this area before 1692. Dorothy's earliest years were spent following her mother from house to house seeking charity.

On March 23, 1692, only a few weeks after her mother's arrest, a warrant was issued for Dorothy. She was questioned by local officials and admitted to having a little snake (thought to be a familiar, a witch's animal companion) given to her by her mother. This was taken as tantamount to a confession. By April 12, Dorothy was in prison in Boston.

Although initially jailed there with her mother and infant sister, Dorothy was eventually deprived of their company. In June, Dorothy's mother Sarah Good was taken back to Salem for trial. She was found guilty and executed on July 19. And, although the exact date and location are unknown, Dorothy's baby sister perished in the harsh prison conditions before her mother's hanging—the youngest known fatality of the Salem witch trials.¹ Dorothy was left to languish in jail in Boston as other witchcraft suspects came and went.² Prison records indicate Dorothy was in jail for a total of thirty-four weeks and four days, and finally released in December when the Salem witch trials were nearly over.³

Opposite page: Image created by Carolyn Oakley. Photograph of Sarah Good memorial marker in Salem, Massachusetts, by Cindy Lindow/Shutterstock. Below: Order to warn out Dorothy Good, September 5, 1720. Salem Town Records 1680–1729, vol. 3.

A 1710 petition for restitution submitted by William Good, Dorothy's father, hinted at the lasting impact of these events, describing his then 22-year-old daughter as "chargeable having little or no reason to govern herself."⁴ The phrase "chargeable" seems to indicate the financial burden of caring for such a severely traumatized person.

Information on colonial women's lives is often brief or nonexistent. In Dorothy's case, even her name was misidentified, the result of a magistrate erroneously referring to her as "Dorcas Good" early in 1692.⁵ Though later corrected in the court records, this mistake lingered for centuries. Beyond the limited yet disturbing description offered by her father's 1710 petition, nothing more has been known about the life of Dorothy Good—until now. In the spring of 2022, I found records which revealed previously unknown details about Dorothy Good, including the fact that she became a mother.

While conducting research for Salem's Women's History Day in 2022, I was directed by the city clerk to the eighteenth-century records of the Salem Town selectmen. At the time, I was researching Ann Dolliver, another woman accused of witchcraft in 1692. Much like Dorothy, Ann seems to have been a troubled person. In 1698, Ann's father, Reverend John Higginson, described her as "overbearing[ly] melancholy and crazed in her understanding." After her father's death, Ann was placed with a local family that was compensated by the town for her care.⁶

This was not an unusual arrangement. Colonial New England's relief system tasked individual municipalities with providing for the "deserving poor," assessed as such by local selectmen or board of overseers.⁷ Although the circumstances differed slightly from town to town, indigent individuals were commonly placed in private homes. These arrangements typically lasted a year, with the custodial families paid by the town to provide food, lodging, and clothing.⁸ While combing through the selectman's records in search of Ann Dolliver, I

At a Meeting of the Selectmen Septemb^r 5th 1720
Sundry Orders On the Treasurer &c
To Supply the Wid^{ow}: Taply with ap^{pr}: of Sheets & lino Shifts —
To give Const^{able} Benj: Ives & By Abatements — — — — — 1:16:8
Sam^{uel}: Gold thrite hath approbation for being an Inholder —
Ordered That Doro^{thy}: Good be warn^{ed} out of this Town —
According^{ly} a Warrant is given to Const^{able} & Loot^{er} Wilson —

At a Meeting of the Selectmen, June 28. 16
Ordered, The Treasurer pay unto Mr. John Flint one of the Selectmen
of the Town of Concord, that Towns Charge, on Dorothy Good of this Town
in June 1725, when she strayed hence & laid in there of a Bast Child, £78-6
Ordered, The Selectmen & Constables have made choice of Miles
Ward Senr to be the Dealer of Weights & Measures in this Town
Ordered, The Clerke of the peace having transmitted to the Selectmen
a List of Innholders & Retailers, and said List having been considered the
Selectmen do Except, Samuel Putnam, & Samuel Giddings both Innholders

Order for payment to Concord for Dorothy Good's expenses, June 28, 1726. Salem Town Records 1680–1729, vol. 3.

encountered references to many such unfortunate people, including Dorothy Good.

Evidently, William Good was either no longer willing or able to support his daughter as she grew older. The few details known about William do not paint a favorable picture of his character. Sarah and William Good were married by 1683, and during their marriage William provided little support for his family.⁹ When Sarah was charged with witchcraft in March 1692, William told the magistrates “he was afraid that she either was a witch or would be one very quickly” and described his wife as “an enemy to all good.”¹⁰

In June 1693, just under a year after Sarah's death, William remarried. Perhaps this marriage was out of necessity, as he was now the sole caretaker of his severely traumatized child. How long Dorothy stayed with her father and stepmother is unclear. A reparation payment awarded to William Good in 1712 directed the sum to Benjamin Putnam, for his “share of the necessary charge.”¹¹ Salem selectmen records reveal Dorothy had been living with Benjamin Putnam prior to 1712, as he was paid for her care as early as 1708.

Unlike his cousin Thomas Putnam, whose family was at the center of the witchcraft accusations, Benjamin Putnam remained largely outside the maelstrom. The scant evidence of his involvement is limited to his signature on a petition in support of accused victim Rebecca Nurse. Notably, Charles Upham's 1867 book, *Salem Witchcraft*, hints at an early familiarity between Benjamin Putnam and Dorothy Good.¹² In describing Dorothy's arrest, Upham noted the task was passed from the marshal to someone else, as he “did not, perhaps, fancy the idea of bringing up such a little prisoner.” Upham continued, “Whoever performed the service probably brought her in his arms, or on a pillion. The

little thing could not have walked the distance from Benjamin Putnam's farm.”¹³ This brief aside is puzzling. As the Goods had no permanent home, had Dorothy been temporarily taken in by Benjamin Putnam after her mother's arrest? Had Benjamin Putnam opened his home to Dorothy long before 1708? Unfortunately, the source of Upham's intriguing statement is unknown.

Regular payments issued by the Salem selectmen indicate Dorothy lived with Benjamin Putnam for at least seven years, from approximately 1708 to 1715. Following Benjamin's death, his son Nathaniel appeared before the selectmen in January of 1716 to receive his father's last payment. Dorothy Good then disappeared from the records for four years.

The next mention of Dorothy provides an unhappy glimpse into what transpired during this period. On September 5, 1720, the Salem selectmen ordered “That Doro Good be warned out of this town.”¹⁴ To “warn out” meant the town refused responsibility for a transient person (nonlegal inhabitant), forcing them to leave and seek support elsewhere. Two months later, on November 7, 1720, the town treasurer was ordered to “pay unto Nathaniel Putnam for 11 weeks keeping and nursing Doro Good and agree to allow him 20 shillings for keeping Good and child one month longer.”¹⁵

Apparently, Dorothy was warned out of Salem because she was pregnant. Colonial New England towns commonly warned out unwed mothers to avoid bearing the cost of caring for an impoverished mother and raising an illegitimate child.¹⁶ The town's payment to Nathaniel Putnam implies that Dorothy may have been able to avoid being sent away because he volunteered to take her and her child into his home.

Dorothy remained in the Putnam household for two years.¹⁷ In July 1722, her child was indentured to

Nathaniel. Such arrangements were common for the offspring of impoverished women. An indentured person worked as an apprentice or servant for a specified period of time and, in return, was housed, fed, clothed, taught to read, and trained in an occupation.

Although no records identifying the father of Dorothy's child have been located, the indenture agreement reveals other important details. Dorothy's child was a daughter, also named Dorothy.¹⁸ As was standard, her term of service was eighteen years, or until the time of her marriage, and she was to be trained as a domestic servant. In her indenture contract, Dorothy Jr. is described as "about a year and nine months," meaning Dorothy Sr. was about eight months pregnant when she was warned out, and likely gave birth while in the care of Nathaniel Putnam—or more accurately, his wife Hannah.

A month before Dorothy Jr.'s indenture was finalized, an agreement was made that had Dorothy Sr. moving into the care of Robert Hutchinson, Nathaniel's brother-in-law. It is difficult to say what happened next, as selectmen records from later in 1722 note that Dorothy Sr. was housed for a time in the House of Correction. Although the structure adjoined the Salem jail, this was not a prison but more akin to a workhouse. The House of Correction was where the selectmen would send able bodied people who "loiter [and] [or] misspend his

or her time, wander from place to place, or otherwise misorder themselves."¹⁹ An order for the creation of a house of correction was issued on June 4, 1722, meaning Dorothy was sent there almost immediately after its construction.²⁰

Dorothy remained in the House of Correction for eighteen weeks. After her release, she seems to have gone to the home of Robert Hutchinson; selectmen records show a payment to him "for three months keeping Doro Good."²¹ Following this record, she again disappeared from the records, this time for three years.

Dorothy reappeared in the records in 1725 when she was sent back to the House of Correction. Dorothy had become pregnant again, either just before she arrived at the House of Correction or during her stay. Robert Hutchinson seems to have played a part in Dorothy's release, although the extent of his involvement is hard to ascertain. Robert Hutchinson was paid in October 1725, "relating to the case of Doro Good, her being with child before he took her out of the House of Correction last spring and her having a child."²²

Subsequent records show Dorothy did not give birth in Robert Hutchinson's home in Salem, but instead about thirty miles west in Concord, Massachusetts. How and why she traveled to Concord is unknown, although both the Salem and Concord selectmen records agree that she gave birth in Concord in June 1725. Six months



Concord (left) and Salem are indicated on this early eighteenth-century map detail. Map of eastern Massachusetts and vicinity, circa 1711. Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center.

At a Meeting of the Selectmen, June 5th . . . 30

Sundry Orders on the Treasurer —

To pay unto Jon^a Batchelder for taking to Apprentice Doro Good's Child 8:0:0
 To pay unto Geo Daland for the burying of y^e Wid^e Kingon 1725 . . . 0:12:0
 To pay unto In^a Holliman for the Tison Stocks Laiting . . . 0:8:0
 To pay unto M^r Manning his Aced, for some repair to the Stock Houses &c, 1:3:4
 To give the Constables 1726, & the 3^d pound for Collecting the Taxes
 Viz^t. Constable Thoro^{dike} Procter for Collecting, £ 133:14:9²3, \$ 1:13:5
 Theodore Atkinson — — — — — \$ 178:0:5 — \$ 2:4:6
 Benj^a Gray \$ 115:12:0 — \$ 1:8:10
 David Best \$ 105:19:0 — \$ 1:6:6
 Daniel Mackentive \$ 116:1:4 — \$ 1:9:0
 Skelton Felton \$ 70:17:9 — \$ 17:9
 Joseph Hutchinson \$ 126:15:7 — \$ 1:11:8¹/₂
 Sam^l Trask \$ 121:2:4 — \$ 1:10:3

Record of Jonathan Batchelder apprenticing Dorothy Good's child, June 5, 1727. Salem Town Records 1680–1729, vol. 3.

later, Concord selectmen issued a payment to Nathaniel Billing for the “entertaining and nursing of Dorothy Good in her lying in at his house.”²³ The Salem selectmen eventually issued payments to Concord to cover these costs.

Over the next several years, Dorothy and her second child were shifted from one house to another. After initially returning to Salem and living with Robert Hutchinson, they soon moved in with his son John Hutchinson Jr. This arrangement did not last long, as John died a year later, necessitating yet another move.²⁴ This time, Dorothy and her son were taken in by Jonathan Batchelder.²⁵ This particular arrangement is striking, as Jonathan Batchelder gave testimony against Sarah Good during the witchcraft trials. Both Jonathan and his uncle gave depositions describing a confrontation with Goodwife Good at the home of Zachariah Herrick in 1690. Fearing she would light his barn on fire with her pipe, Zachariah (Jonathan’s uncle and a relative of Sarah Good) refused her lodging. As Sarah left, she purportedly grumbled that this would cost him. Fourteen-year-old Jonathan testified that a week after this altercation his grandfather’s cattle appeared to be different, younger animals who “let loose in a strange manner.”²⁶

What motivated Jonathan Batchelder to take in Sarah Good’s daughter and grandchild can only be left to speculation. Perhaps he felt guilt and sought repentance. Perhaps he was motivated by Christian charity or empathy for a poor soul. In April 1727, one month after their arrival, Dorothy’s nearly two-year-old son was indentured to Jonathan Batchelder. His term of service was

21 years, as was standard for males, and he was to be trained as a housewright. The record of this indenture reveals this child’s name was William, almost certainly named for Dorothy’s father.²⁷

Dorothy lived with her son in Batchelder’s home for a little more than a decade. Although this was her longest consecutive period in one household since childhood, the selectmen records hint at Dorothy’s unsettled nature and the difficulty of supporting her. When Jonathan initially arranged to take her into his home, he not only agreed to provide lodging, food, and clothing, but also “to keep the said Doro Good from straying and rambling about as formerly.”²⁸ Six years later, Jonathan was paid for “the extraordinary expense” of keeping Dorothy Good.²⁹ Unfortunately, it is impossible to gauge the true situation through these brief statements. As with Ann Dolliver, these brief notations provide little information about Dorothy’s actual condition. At the very least, the records indicate she required considerable care and seemed to have had a habit of wandering away.

The last reference to Dorothy Good in the Salem selectmen records was made in September 1738. If Dorothy’s absence from subsequent records is due to her leaving the Batchelder household, her departure may have occurred because of a decline in Jonathan’s health, as he died two years later. No further accounts or references to Dorothy or either of her children have yet been found. Neither Dorothy Jr. nor William are listed in Massachusetts vital records. As William was thirteen at the time of Batchelder’s death and had eight years left in his indenture contract, he probably remained with the Batchelder family, perhaps taken in by Jonathan’s eldest



New London (bottom) and Salem (top) are shown on this map detail. Herman Moll, *A New and Exact Map of the Dominions of the King of Great Britain on ye Continent of North America* (London: Tho. Bowles, 1755). Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center.

son. Dorothy Jr. likely completed her indenture term, and either married or remained a spinster and worked as a domestic servant.

Although the deaths of other people supported by the town were recorded in the Salem selectmen records, Dorothy Sr.'s death was not listed—so perhaps she died elsewhere. Like many other transient people, Dorothy might have spent the rest of her life wandering from town to town after she left Batchelder's home. While perhaps entirely circumstantial, Dorothy Sr. disappeared from the records the same year her daughter's indenture was up. It is tempting to speculate the two women left Salem together.

On August 14, 1761, a notice published in the *New-London Summary* reported that a woman identified as Dorothy Good was found dead in a bog meadow in New London, Connecticut. In the days that followed, a newspaper in New York and two in Boston republished the notice. The report, printed identically in each newspaper, read "Friday last was found lying in a desolate bog meadow in the North Parish of this town, the dead body of a person almost consumed. Upon inquisition made, the jurors gave in their verdict, that it was the body of one Dorothy Good, a transient vagrant person, who had wandered [sic] into said desolate place and perished. After their judgment was taken, as decent a burial was given her as the circumstances would admit."³⁰

In the twenty-three years since Dorothy Sr. presumably left Salem, she could have wandered as far as New

London. Given that no further records of her daughter have yet been found, the deceased could also have been Dorothy Good Jr. Colonial New England vital records indicate the Good surname was not particularly common.

This research has shone further light on the lasting impact of the witchcraft trials on the youngest accused witch—and revealed a glimmer in this dark story. Sarah Good, previously believed to have no descendants beyond her two daughters (one of whom died as an infant), has now been revealed to have two grandchildren. Although further research is required to determine if the line continued to another generation, Dorothy Jr. and William may have lived to adulthood and perhaps had children of their own. It is remarkable to consider that Sarah and Dorothy Good might yet have descendants alive today. ♦

NOTES

¹ The exact date of Dorothy Good's sister's death is unknown. An April record lists two blankets provided for Sarah Good's daughter, meaning she was alive and in prison with her mother in Boston in early April. When William Good later submitted a petition for restitution, he noted, "A suckling child died in prison before the mother's execution." "Account for Payment Submitted by John Arnold, Jailkeeper [?]" and "Petition of William Good for Restitution of Sarah Good, Dorothy Good, & Infant" in Bernard Rosenthal, ed., *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 814, 871.

- ² Suspects were transferred between the four Essex County jails (in Salem, Boston, Cambridge, and Ipswich) throughout the witchcraft trials. The account kept by the Boston jail keeper indicates that at least a dozen witchcraft suspects were brought to Boston's jail the month before Sarah Good's execution and remained there until December. "Account for Payment Submitted by John Arnold, Jailkeeper," [note 1], 817.
- ³ Ibid.
- ⁴ "Petition of William Good for Restitution for Sarah Good, Dorothy Good, & Infant," in Bernard Rosenthal, ed., *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt* [note 1], 871.
- ⁵ According to historian Bernard Rosenthal, "The 'Dorcas' came from a common problem of people not knowing the name of the accused, especially the first names of females. When the error was caught in 1692 it was corrected to 'Dorothy.' And even though almost every surviving document refers to her as Dorothy, the error of Dorcas came through the ages as her name." Bernard Rosenthal, "Introduction," in *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt* [note 1], 38.
- ⁶ John Higginson, "Letter from Rev. Higginson to his Son Nathaniel Higginson, August 31, 1698," *Essex Institute Historical Collections*, vol. 43 (1907): 183; catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000681568.
- ⁷ Anne Decker Cecere and Eric Nellis, eds., *The Eighteenth-Century Records of the Boston Overseers of the Poor* (Boston: The Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 2006), 19; colonialsociety.org/node/3083#ch02.
- ⁸ Douglas Lamar Jones, "The Transformation of the Law of Poverty in Eighteenth-Century Massachusetts" (paper presented at *Law in Colonial Massachusetts, 1630–1800*, The Colonial Society of Massachusetts, Boston, November 1981); colonialsociety.org/node/893#ch03.
- ⁹ Marilynne K. Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials: A Day-By-Day Chronicle of a Community Under Siege* (Lanham: Cooper Square Press, 2002), 13.
- ¹⁰ "Examinations of Sarah Good, Sarah Osborn, & Tituba, as Recorded by Ezekiel Cheever," in *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt* [note 1], 127.
- ¹¹ "Petition of William Good for Restitution for Sarah Good, Dorothy Good, & Infant," in *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt* [note 1], 871.
- ¹² Charles W. Upham (1802–1875) was a minister of the First Church of Salem, U.S. Representative from Massachusetts, and noted Salem historian. Unfortunately, like many of his contemporaries, Upham did not use citations, making it impossible to identify some of his sources—in this case the assertion that Dorothy Good was arrested at the home of Benjamin Putnam.
- ¹³ Charles W. Upham, *Salem Witchcraft* (Mineola, N.Y.: Dover Publications, 2000), 364.
- ¹⁴ Salem, Massachusetts, Town Records 1680–1729, vol. 3, 373; records.salem.com/WebLink/DocView.aspx?id=235110&dbid=0&repo=CityofSalem.
- ¹⁵ Ibid., 374.
- ¹⁶ Ruth Wallis Herndon, *Unwelcome Americans: Living on the Margin in Early New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 17.
- ¹⁷ Born in 1686, Nathaniel Putnam was two years older than Dorothy. At the time Dorothy and her child joined his household, Nathaniel and his wife had five children under the age of ten. Eben Putnam, *A History of the Putnam Family in England and America* (Salem, Mass.: The Salem Press Publishing and Printing Co., 1891), 129; catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/100331622.
- ¹⁸ DeWayne Whitehead, *Compiled List of Indentured Servants in Essex County, Massachusetts*, (1999), at Phillips Library, Peabody Essex Museum, Rowley, Massachusetts.
- ¹⁹ *The Acts and Resolves of the Province of Massachusetts Bay, Volume 1, 1692-1714* (Boston, Wright & Potter: 1869), 67; archive.org/details/actsresolvespass9214mass/page/n5/mode/2up
- ²⁰ Essex County (Massachusetts) Prison Records, 1688–1858, MSS 341, Phillips Library, Peabody Essex Museum, Rowley, Massachusetts.
- ²¹ Salem Town Records 1680–1729, vol. 3 [note 10], 387.
- ²² Ibid., 402.
- ²³ "Lying in" was a common term that referred to giving birth and the subsequent period of recovery. *Ancient Records Volume II*, Concord, Massachusetts, 313; concordmass.archives.starter1ua.preservica.com/uncategorized/IO_d855cf27-f04a-4abf-9136-e57ee1d467b3.
- ²⁴ Salem Town Records 1725–1773, vols. 4–5, 17, records.salem.com/WebLink/DocView.aspx?id=235111&dbid=0&repo=CityofSalem.
- ²⁵ His name is also spelled Batchelor.
- ²⁶ "Deposition of Henry Herrick & Jonathan Batchelor v. Sarah Good," in *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt* [note 1], 424.
- ²⁷ DeWayne Whitehead, *Compiled List of Indentured Servants* [note 18].
- ²⁸ Salem Town Records 1725–1773, vols. 4–5, 25, 33; records.salem.com/WebLink/DocView.aspx?id=235111&dbid=0&repo=CityofSalem.
- ²⁹ Ibid., 180.
- ³⁰ *The New-London Summary*. August 14, 1761. Connecticut State Library, Connecticut State Archives Archival Record Group #003, box 44, Hartford, Connecticut; ctstatelibrary.org/connecticut-state-archives-archival-record-group-rg-003.



A Trip to the Suburbs of Hell

The Salem and Boston Jails During the 1692 Witchcraft Trials

“A Prison is the Grave of the Living, where they are shut up from the World and their Friends. . . . ’Tis a House of meagre Looks, and ill smells: for Lice, Drink, and Tobacco, are the Compound: Or, if you will, ’tis the Subburbs of Hell.” John Dunton, 1686.¹

Researching the Salem witchcraft trials for nearly half a century has taken me down some unexpected paths, and one of the odder ones had me locked into a seventeenth-century jail contemporary with those very trials—but more of that later.

“Att my arrival here,” Governor Sir William Phips wrote, referring to his May 1692 return to Boston with a new Massachusetts charter, “I found the Prisons full of people committed upon suspition of witchcraft.” The prisons in question were located in Salem and Ipswich (Essex County), Cambridge (Middlesex County), and Boston (Suffolk County).²

The Boston jail had served not only Suffolk County but also confined all felons about to be tried by the colony’s highest court. Normally the Governor’s Council handled all such cases in Boston. In 1692, while the government reorganized its laws in accordance with English Common Law, Phips ordered a temporary Court of Oyer and Terminer to handle capital cases. Due to the unprecedented number of witch-suspects, the new court tried all witchcraft cases in Salem, and prisoners found themselves shifted from one jail to another.

Seventeenth-century records use the terms prison and jail (also spelled gaol and goal) interchangeably. No jail was intended to hold anyone for long stays nor keep many prisoners at one time. Although not definitely stated, male and female prisoners were not necessarily segregated. In Salem “confessed witches” were housed in a separate chamber from those who insisted on their innocence. Boston apparently confined witch suspects among the general population. Captain Richard Short, arrested in January 1693 for brawling with Governor Phips, complained bitterly of having to share space “among witches, villains, negroes, and murderers.” (One of those “witches” may have been four-year-old Dorothy Good, the subject of the previous article.)³

Sanitation was primitive. A decade before he was arrested for witchcraft in 1692, fisherman Job Tookey spent at least fourteen weeks in an earlier Salem jail on charges of debt and disobedience to his employer. It was, he complained, “A Sad Dolesome Stinking place,” where he felt “almost poysoned with the stink of my Owne Dunge,” where he “never had so much as A minutes tyme to take the Air.”⁴

Image: Second-floor cell door. Old Jail, State Route 6A & Old Jail Lane, Barnstable, Mass. Historic American Buildings Survey, loc.gov/item/ma0961.



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Side and front views of the Old Jail, Barnstable, Massachusetts. Learn more at barnstablehistoricalsociety.org. Images by Swampyank (top) and Kenneth C. Zirkel, at Wikimedia Commons.

Prisoners had to pay two shillings and sixpence a week for room and board, plus other fees. Even the most indigent received bread and water, and the inmates were usually allowed to accept food and other supplies from families and friends. Prison keepers frequently had to petition for reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses as well as for their own back pay.⁵

In 1693 Boston jail keeper John Arnold submitted a bill totaling £415: 3: 10 that included his own £36: 13: 4 “Sallery for one Yeare & Tenn months.” His witch-trial-related expenditures ranged from chains for

Sarah Good and Sarah Osburne (seven shillings each) to “2 Blankets for Sarah Good’s Child,” “20 Cord of Wood Expended on Sundry persons Committed for Witchcraft in the Winter,” plus “Bedding Blankets & Clothes for sundry poore Prison[ers] Committed for Witchcraft.”⁶

Prison keepers generally had a fearsome reputation, yet after Arnold committed Captain John Alden, a man he already knew and respected, “he was after this more Compassionate to those that were in Prison on the like account.”⁷ Ipswich jailer Thomas Fosse and his wife, Elizabeth, both signed a written statement on behalf of suspect Mary Easty verifying her “sobor and civell” deportment during her imprisonment.⁸

Neither Salem’s wooden jail nor Boston’s stone prison are now extant but remarkably two early examples from the period *do* still exist. Barnstable County’s wooden “Old Jail” is likely comparable to Salem’s lock-up, while the oldest section of the “Old York Gaol” reflects conditions in Boston’s stone prison.

In 1683, with Salem’s prior jail deemed to be “altogether ruined,” the county court ordered construction of a new twenty-foot square structure with “13’ stud,” making it two (rather low-ceilinged) stories tall. Framed by John Flint, this building would stand in a fenced-in yard measuring seventy feet (fronting the present St. Peter’s Street, formerly Prison Lane) and stretch back 280 feet—a lot also meant to accommodate the jailer’s quarters and (eventually) a house of correction for lesser miscreants.⁹ Like Essex County’s earliest jail in Ipswich, Salem jail’s exterior walls may have been clapboarded and the roof shingled. It was prudently constructed with “Joyce [joists] thick set and well boarded, with partitions above and below.”¹⁰

Confessed “witch” Ann Foster confided her fear to Rev. John Hale that fellow suspects George Burroughs and Martha Carrier would kill her in revenge, “for they appeared unto her (in Spectre, for their persons were kept in other Rooms in the Prison).”¹¹ This statement implies that the Salem jail had at least three rooms, plus a guard room. A brick chimney “for one fire” provided a bit of heat. Original hardware included a lock for the door and iron bars for the few windows.¹²

The 1683 building lasted until about 1764, when the county contracted with Israel Hutchinson to frame and finish a much larger jail on the same lot. Although the agreement required “three thousand feet of good white Oak plank besides what is Already sawed,” the traditionally constructed building may have incorporated recycled timbers from the older structure.¹³ Decommissioned in 1813, this building became a private home that fell to the wrecking ball in 1956, when demolition

revealed massive vertical and horizontal oak timbers hidden within some of the ordinary walls. Only a few fragments remain.¹⁴

The surviving example in Barnstable on Cape Cod must resemble Salem's original wooden prison. Built between 1690 and 1700, the two-story wooden Old Jail served Barnstable County until about 1820, when it became an addition to a barn. In 1972 the Barnstable Historical Society moved the structure section by section to its present location on Cobb's Hill. Although damaged by arson soon afterwards, the mended interior clearly shows the traditional jail construction of its era.¹⁵

The exterior of the two-story building has clapboards on the front and wooden shingles on its nearly window-less sides. Entry is through a ground floor guard room separated from the cell area by a formidable iron-bound door of double-thick oak. (All the hardware is original.) The cell area is lined with thick timbers—like the joists referenced in the court order to Ipswich—so both walls and floors are slabs of oak rather than mere boards. Although the current window arrangement leaves the rear cell area dark, prisoners were able to see enough to scratch names and pictures of ships on the walls.¹⁶

Boston boasted a prison made of stone (on the present Court Street behind the old Victorian City Hall), a jailer's house, and house of correction all clustered within a fence frequently in need of repair.¹⁷ Arnold's 1692 expenses for upkeep included "500 foot of boards to mend the Goale and Prison House," four locks and 200 nails in April, and "3 large Locks" in May.¹⁸

A number of smaller more private cells set along an exterior wall could be accessed from the prison's larger common room. An inmate could spend the night in one of these for an additional fee. When the jailer's assistants unlocked one of these cells in July 1692 they found that the three resident French Canadians had cut the window grate to pieces and vanished during the night.¹⁹

Elizabeth Morse of Newbury was found guilty of witchcraft in 1680, then reprieved from her sentence of execution because the governor and magistrates disagreed with the verdict. Her husband William petitioned for

some privileges (available for an extra cost) that seem to have included one of those side cells.

Yo' Pitio' humbly prays that yo' Hono^{rs} be pleased to shew her so much Pitty as to grant her Liberty, in the Day Time to walke in the Prison Yard . . . and that in the Night Shee may have Priviledge of a Chamber in the Common Goale, and be freed from the Dungeon w^{ch} is Extreame Close and hott in this Season, and also Liberty on the Sabbath to goe to Meeting.²⁰

Similarly, Philip and Mary English paid for a room in the Boston prison keeper's house and for the privilege of attending Sabbath services—before they escaped to New York in August 1692.²¹

Boston's stone prison must have been comparable to the surviving "Old York Gaol" in York, Maine. Built in 1720, the oldest ground-level "dungeon" section of the much-added-to jail has two-and-a-half foot thick "coursed dressed rubble" stone walls lined inside with thick vertical and horizontal oak planks, some recycled from an older 1656 jail.²²

The interior, still bearing traces of whitewash, measures just over eleven by twelve feet. A small hearth near the door provided some heat in winter. One of the two tiny windows in the thick tunnel-like walls may have originally had an outdoor view. The other faces into the adjacent guard room, with a solid shutter on the jailer's side. Both windows are not only barred but edged with sections of old vertical saw blades. As in Barnstable, substantial boards line the floor. The guard room has plastered walls of a more normal thickness. Two layers



Dungeon door and hardware. Old York County Gaol, York, Maine, 1965. Historic American Buildings Survey, loc.gov/item/me0045.

of wide oak planks compose the iron-bound door between these areas and all the hardware—hinges, pintles, bolts, latches, and locks—is original. The upper story added later to accommodate debtors has plastered walls and larger outer windows. This area may resemble the better quarters available in the Boston jailer’s house for prisoners who could afford the fee.

After the prison closed in 1806, the building served, at different times, as a boarding house and a school. In 1900, a museum of colonial relics opened in the structure. Still located on its original site, the Old Gaol is now part of the Old York Historical Society’s complex of historic buildings.

Both the Barnstable and York jails, though grim, are now no longer suburbs of Hell. As for my brief incarceration in the Barnstable Jail during a research trip, that was only to keep passing tourists out—but a thrill all the same. ♦



Old Gaol, York, Maine. Learn more at oldyork.org/properties/the-old-gaol. Image courtesy of Old York Historical Society.

NOTES

- ¹ John Dunton, *Letters from New-England*, ed. W. H. Whitmore (Boston: Prince Society, 1867), 119.
- ² Letter of William Phips to the Earl of Nottingham, February 1693, Bernard Rosenthal, ed., *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), Document 836, p. 809.
- ³ J. W. Fortescue, ed., *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, America and West Indies, January 1693–14 May 1696*, vol. 14 (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1903), 68.
- ⁴ George Francis Dow, ed., *Records of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County, Massachusetts*, vol. 8, 1680–1683 (Salem: The Essex Institute, 1921), 331–332.
- ⁵ Edwin Powers, *Crime and Punishment in Early Massachusetts, 1620–1692: A Documentary History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966), 228.
- ⁶ Letter of William Phips [note 2], Document 841, pp. 818, 814.
- ⁷ Dunton, *Letters* [note 1], 120; Robert Calef, “More Wonders of the Invisible World,” in George Lincoln Burr, *Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases 1648–1706*, (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1914), 352–353.
- ⁸ Letter of William Phips [note 2], Document 552, p. 589.
- ⁹ Sidney Perley, *The History of Salem, Massachusetts* (Haverhill, Mass.: Record Publishing Company, 1928), 3:174–175.
- ¹⁰ Thomas Franklin Waters, *Ipswich in the Massachusetts Bay Colony* (Ipswich: The Ipswich Historical Society, 1905), 1:427. The first Ipswich jail was three stories.
- ¹¹ John Hale, *A Modest Enquiry into the Nature of Witchcraft* (Boston: 1702), facsimile reproduction with introduction by Richard Trask (Bainbridge, New York: York Mail-Print, 1973), 31.
- ¹² Perley, *Salem* [note 9], 3:174.
- ¹³ “Contract for Building the Prison in Salem for the County of Essex, 1764,” *Essex Institute Historical Collections*, 68 (1932), 299.
- ¹⁴ Carlton G. Lutts, “Salem Witchcraft Original Timbered Jail Cell Discovered,” typescript (1956?), in Peabody Essex Museum’s Phillips Library, Rowley, Mass.
- ¹⁵ Library of Congress: “Historic American Building Survey. Old Jail, State Route 6A & Old Jail Lane, Barnstable, Barnstable County, MA, 1933” at loc.gov/resource/hhh.ma0961.photos?st=gallery; “Old Jail,” barnstablehistoricalsociety.org
- ¹⁶ “The Old Jail,” barnstablehistoricalsociety.org and my site visit.
- ¹⁷ Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, ed., *Record of the Governor and Council of the Massachusetts Bay in New England*, vol. 5, 1674–1686 (Boston: City of Boston, 1854), 275.
- ¹⁸ Letter of William Phips [note 2], Document 841, P. 814, 817.
- ¹⁹ Suffolk Court Files #2754, 2672, Massachusetts Archives.
- ²⁰ Samuel G. Drake, *Annals of Witchcraft in New England*, (Boston: W. Elliot Woodward, 1869, reprint Boston: NEHGS, 2013), 147.
- ²¹ William Bentley, *The Diary of William Bentley, D. D., Pastor of the East Church, Salem, Massachusetts* (Salem: Essex Institute, 1907, reprint Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1962), 2: 24–25.
- ²² James Dillon, National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form, United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, The Old York Gaol, June 2, 1975, Item 7, page 1–2, npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/GetAsset/NHLS/68000016_text; “Historic American Building Survey, Old York County Gaol, Lindsay Road, York Village, York County, ME, ME-10” at loc.gov/item/me0045; “The Development of York’s Old Gaol: 150 Years of Construction History, 1656–1806,” oldyork.org/properties/the-old-gaol; and my site visit.

Witchcraft in Early Boston

Although not on the scale of the Salem episode of 1692 and considerably less well known, accusations of witchcraft occurred in seventeenth-century Boston, too. Individuals—usually vulnerable or outspoken women—were identified as witches from the late 1630s through the 1690s. In his book *Witches, Rakes, and Rogues: True Stories of Scam, Scandal, Murder, and Mayhem in Boston, 1630–1775*, D. Brenton Simons illuminates some of this compelling history.

The initial case in Boston happened in 1638, when Jane Hawkins, a midwife and medical practitioner, was publicly accused. In 1641, she was banished. Margaret Jones, another medical practitioner who was the defendant in Boston's first witchcraft trial in 1648, was not so fortunate. In his journal, John Winthrop listed six reasons for her conviction, which ranged from “a malignant touch” to visitation by an imp. Any one of these allegations might have been sufficient to turn the court against her, but six doomed her and she was executed. Three other Boston women—Alice Lake, Ann Hibbins, and Mary Glover—suffered the same fate as Margaret Jones.

The last case began in the summer of 1688, when thirteen-year-old Martha Goodwin suspected that some of her family's linens had been stolen by their laundress. Mary Glover—the laundress's elderly mother—was insulted on her daughter's behalf and “bestowed very bad language” upon Martha, who responded by becoming ill and having fits. Soon three of Martha's younger siblings, John Jr., Mercy, and Benjamin, were also suffering from fits. Their doctor declared that the only possible cause was witchcraft.

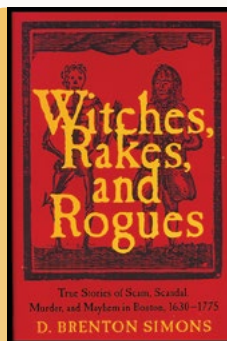
Mary Glover, an Irishwoman, was considered to be an “ignorant and scandalous old woman” well before this incident. Mary did herself no favors when she was questioned about the Goodwin children. Cotton Mather, who took an avid interest in the case, reported that “the hag had not power to deny her interest in the enchantment of the children.” When Mary was asked if she believed in God, Cotton Mather reported that her answer “was too blasphemous and horrible for him to print.” The evidence against Mary mounted and, in time, she confessed to her involvement in the possession of the children.



Mary Glover was executed on November 16, 1688, but, as she predicted, the three Goodwin children who still experiencing fits continued to suffer. Mather even brought Martha Goodwin into his own home, to help cure her. After many weeks, Martha improved, and so did her younger siblings.

In 1689, Cotton Mather published *Memorable Providences, Relating to Witchcrafts and Possessions*, which included a lengthy account of the suffering Mary Glover inflicted on the Goodwin children. News of the episode, disseminated in this popular and widely read volume, likely contributed to setting the stage for the Salem witchcraft hysteria that erupted three years later.

—Lynn Betlock, Managing Editor



“A fascinating set of tales, well told and based on extensive research. This book will please all readers interested in early New England.”

—Mary Beth Norton, author of *In the Devil's Snare: The Salem Witchcraft Crisis of 1692*

Witches, Rakes, and Rogues: True Stories of Scam, Scandal, Murder, and Mayhem in Boston, 1630–1775 (Commonwealth Editions, 2005) by D. Brenton Simons is available from shop.AmericanAncestors.org and other booksellers.

Woodcut from *The Prodigal Daughter* (Boston, 1790). American Ancestors/New England Historic Genealogical Society collection.



Researching Salem's Witchcraft Victims

A list of individuals executed in 1692 for the crime of witchcraft during the Salem witchcraft trials

Bridget Bishop ♦ Martha Carrier ♦ Giles Corey ♦ Martha Corey ♦ Rev. George Burroughs ♦ Mary Easty ♦ Sarah Good ♦ Elizabeth Howe ♦ George Jacobs Sr. ♦ Susannah Martin ♦ Rebecca Nurse ♦ Mary Parker ♦ Alice Parker ♦ John Proctor ♦ Ann Pudeator ♦ Wilmot Redd ♦ Margaret Scott ♦ Sarah Wildes ♦ John Willard ♦ Samuel Wardwell Sr.

Locating an accused ancestor or relative

- Review your family tree for relatives who were living in Essex County in 1692–93.
- Further build out your Essex County family lines using verified sources such as probate records and scholarly journals.
- Determine whether your relatives lived in locations where accused witches lived.
- Compare the surnames of accused witches—and their children—with surnames in your genealogy.
- Consult the titles below, which offer particularly useful research resources:
 - ♦ Kimberly Ormsby Nagy, *Associated Daughters of Early American Witches Roll of Ancestors* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Family Heritage Publishers, 2012) contains information on immediate family members of the accused.
 - ♦ Marjorie Wardwell Otten, *The Witch Hunt of 1692. A Tragedy in Massachusetts* (Del Mar, Calif.: Moko, 1990) features individual timelines for the accused.
 - ♦ Marilynne K. Roach, *The Salem Witch Trials: A Day-by-Day Chronicle of a Community under Siege* (New York: Cooper Square Press, 2002) provides an index and appendices that name a vast array of people associated with the Salem witchcraft episode.

Primary sources and articles

- AmericanAncestors.org provides a variety of resources, including Massachusetts Vital Records 1620–1850, Massachusetts Probate Files, *The Essex Genealogist*, *The Essex Antiquarian*, and *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*. Our database of *The American Genealogist* includes David L. Greene's genealogical studies on those involved in the Salem Witch Trials.
- Cornell University's Witchcraft Collection contains over 3,000 titles, with 104 books available in the Digital Witchcraft Collection, rnc.library.cornell.edu/witchcraftcoll.
- Massachusetts State Archives Collection, volume 135, Witchcraft Papers Index, 1692–1759 is available at FamilySearch.org. (Sign in to access the material.)
- The highly regarded Salem Witch Trials Documentary Archive and Transcription Project at the University of Virginia includes a substantial collection of primary source records and links to historical maps and archival collections, salem.lib.virginia.edu/home.html.

Guides and links

- A Guide to Primary Sources of the Salem Witchcraft Trials by Margo Burns, 17thc.us/primarysources/index.php
- Witches of Massachusetts Bay research resources, witchesmassbay.com/research
- Resources list from the University of Chicago, lib.uchicago.edu/collex/exhibits/salem-witch-trials-legal-resources/related-resources



David Allen Lambert is Chief Genealogist at American Ancestors/NEHGS.



Webinar

- “Verifying Descent from Salem’s Accused Witches” by David Allen Lambert, AmericanAncestors.org/video-library/verifying-descent-salems-accused-witches

Blogs

- The Salem Witch Museum blog, salemwitchmuseum.com/blog
- Witches of Massachusetts Bay blog, witchesmassbay.com/blog

Tours and travel

- Witch Trials Online Sites Tour from the Salem Witch Museum, salemwitchmuseum.com/witch-trials-guided-tour-list
- The Witches of Mass Bay Roadtrip page offers information on historic sites, memorials, libraries, and research centers connected to Massachusetts witch hunts, witchesmassbay.com/roadtrips

Recommended reading

- Emerson W. Baker, *A Storm of Witchcraft: The Salem Trials and the American Experience* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014)
- Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum, *The Salem Witchcraft Papers: Verbatim Transcripts of the Legal Documents of the Salem Witchcraft Outbreak of 1692* (New York: De Capo Press, 1977), 3 vols.
- Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum, *Salem Possessed: The Social Origins of Witchcraft* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974)
- Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum, *Salem-Village Witchcraft: A Documentary Record of Local Conflict in Colonial New England* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2015)

- Robert Calef, *More Wonders of the Invisible World, or the Wonders of the Invisible World Displayed in Five Parts* (London, 1700)
- John Putnam Demos, *Entertaining Satan: Witchcraft and the Culture of Early New England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982)
- David D. Hall, *Witch-Hunting in Seventeenth-Century New England: A Documentary History, 1638–1693* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1999)
- Carol F. Karlsen, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman: Witchcraft in Colonial New England* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987)
- Cotton Mather, *The Wonders of the Invisible World: Being an Account of the Tryals of Several Witches, Lately Executed in New England* (Boston, 1693)
- Mary Beth Norton, *In the Devil’s Snare: The Salem Witchcraft Crisis of 1692* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002)
- Marilynne K. Roach, *Six Women of Salem: The Untold Story of the Accused and their Accusers in the Salem Witch Trials* (Boston: De Capo Press, 2013)
- Bernard Rosenthal, ed., *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009)
- Bernard Rosenthal, *Salem Story: Reading the Witch Trials of 1692* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993)
- Stacy Schiff, *The Witches: Salem, 1692* (New York: Little, Brown & Company, 2015)
- Boston Public Library’s annotated list of recommended books (fiction and nonfiction), guides.bpl.org/salemwitchtrials/resourcesatthebpl

Detail of *A Map of New England* (Boston, 1677),
David Rumsey Historical Map Collection.



WHEN THE DEVIL LURKED IN SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

An Excerpt from *The Ruin of All Witches*

In January 2023, Malcolm Gaskill presented his newest work, *The Ruin of All Witches* (2022), to more than 1,000 online viewers as part of our American Inspiration author series. The book focuses on a mid-seventeenth-century witchcraft episode that centered around Hugh and Mary (Lewis) Parsons of Springfield, Massachusetts. We are pleased to present an excerpt from the book, along with an introduction and conclusion written for AMERICAN ANCESTORS.

Introduction

The year was 1645 and the town of Springfield, far out on the western frontier of Massachusetts, was nearly ten years old. Under the supervision of its founder, William Pynchon, the plantation had grown, but within his strict limits to maintain a sense of proportion between population and resources—arable land, pasture, and forest—and, through that, order and obedience, piety and prosperity.

Pynchon was a fur trader who had come to New England in 1630, in the vanguard of John Winthrop's "great migration." Within a few years he had decided that the best way to profit from the beaver pelts supplied by Native Americans was to move closer to their source, to the Connecticut River Valley,



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Excerpt taken from pages 47–52 of *THE RUIN OF ALL WITCHES: LIFE AND DEATH IN THE NEW WORLD* by Malcolm Gaskill, copyright © 2021 by Malcolm Gaskill. Used by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, an imprint of the Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, a division of Penguin Random House LLC. All rights reserved.

where more land was available for migrants to establish households. This led him to Agawam, high up the river, soon to be renamed Springfield. By the mid-1640s, the township was prospering, but the craving for land did not abate, leading Pynchon to divide up “the long meadow,” wetland to the south that could be used for grazing.

The mentality of Springfield’s English and Welsh settlers was shaped by three desires, each conflicted within itself: to remake the familiar old world in America and yet improve on it; to face up to both the perils and opportunities of this new country; and to do right by God, whose “errand into the wilderness” this was, while also doing well for themselves. The exploitation of what colonists saw as virgin territory was neither intellectually nor morally incompatible with godliness—but an individualistic hunger to accrue land and wealth inevitably chafed against charitable, communitarian ideals. And in that constant friction—in that feeling of helplessly falling short of Christian perfection—the devil was perceived to lurk, encouraging sinful hearts to commit ever greater sins, the greatest of all being witchcraft.



In Springfield, distrust between settlers and Indians was just one strain among many. Tensions with the Dutch, and with Windsor, Hartford, Saybrook, and other neighboring English settlements, shaped colonists’ beleaguered mentality, much as the topography of the town and its environs shaped their daily lives. Even more immediate were the resentments and recriminations felt toward neighbors with whom they lived cheek by jowl. Distance bred distrust, for sure; but familiarity and proximity nurtured paranoia and spite. When colonists feared and loathed the white person next door, the outbursts of rage were more frequent and intense than usually ensued from similar feelings toward dark-skinned strangers across the river. Few in Springfield’s history would prove this more vividly than Mary Lewis. [Born about 1610 in the Welsh Marches, an area steeped in mysticism and folklore, Mary emigrated in 1640. First placed in William Pynchon’s household in Dorchester, she was sent on to Springfield in 1641 to act as a maidservant to his daughter

Opposite: Detail of A Mapp of New England by John Seller. This 1675 map is based on William Reed’s 1665 survey. Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center. Right: “Witchcraft: witches and devils dancing in a circle.” Woodcut, 1720. Wellcome Collection.

Anne. Springfield was smaller, rougher, simpler and had only forty-five residents.]

Settler townships that grew out of migrant congregations suffered disputes, but found some unity in a common heritage, much as the life of English parishes was steadied by custom—a shared cultural ancestry. Springfield’s colonists, by contrast, came from all over Britain, including a significant number, like Mary, from Wales. The English mocked the Welsh for their savage manners—but then a man from Middlesex might jeer at a man from Yorkshire, and someone from Norfolk perhaps had little fellow feeling for someone from Cornwall (unless, perhaps, they were both ridiculing a Welshman). Colonial homesickness was firmly attached to place and only loosely to nation.¹ Accordingly, in America traditions and customs collided, dialects and accents jarred; varying rules for land tenure and inheritance led to disagreements. People even dressed differently. Puritans from Dorset had no love for Puritans from Chelmsford—but then not all Puritans from Chelmsford, like William Pynchon and Thomas Hooker, cared much for each other either. Welsh and West Country folk tended more toward the beliefs and rituals of the old religion than did their reformed compatriots from Essex and Kent.²

Rather than evolving haphazardly, like many townships, Springfield was planned, and planned for profit not freedom of conscience. Residents weren’t content with a mere “competency” or “sufficiency”: they all wanted to do better and have more. A yen for land, common elsewhere in Massachusetts, was rampant in Springfield.³ Nor was this desire some New World genius; rather, it nurtured England’s own growing habit





"A devil hacks a field with a scythe." Woodcut, c. 1700–20. Wellcome Collection.

of free enterprise (by contrast, the stable yeoman *society* aspired to in other plantations was already an anachronism back in the old country). While John Winthrop was dreaming of England's past, William Pynchon was envisioning its future—for himself and for hardworking migrants like Mary Lewis.⁴ And as in England and Wales, dynamism meant competition, and that meant friction. Pynchon made more farmland available after 1642, but rather than satiating appetites it whetted them. Early in 1645, he commissioned a survey of the long meadow to create new lots for luring new artisans and traders, and to extend the estates of existing tenants, who had been eyeing this land covetously. The selectmen allocated it according to taxable wealth, which, though fair, hardened the divide between the town's prosperous north end and the southern limits, where most new arrivals struggled to get established. The long meadow, the selectmen noted, caused much disagreement between the said neighbors.⁵

Pynchon, who saw industry and competition as virtues not vices, smoothly compatible with Christian morality, was from the outset determined that his town would be no mere trading post, but—in outlook at least—as pious as Hartford, or Roxbury, where he had founded a church. The routine of worship and moral instruction was, as Virginian colonies had found, vital for discipline in a workforce. Pynchon, craving God's favor for his plantation, took seriously the spiritual life of the community: for a man to have rancor in his breast, directed at rivals, was the devil's work. Moralizing rhetoric stressed amity between neighbors largely because so often the glaring reality was asperity.⁶

Back in Wales, Mary Lewis had known strife between neighbors. In England, too, it felt like a curse on every parish, every village and hamlet. Widening gaps between gentry and yeomen on one side and poor tenants and laborers on the other strained social bonds, a strain exacerbated by civil war in the 1640s. The most sensitive fault lines, however, lay between near neighbors of similar status. When they were uncivil—abusing boundaries, ignoring requests, forgetting favors—there was much fuming and glowering, scheming, and imagining others scheming. Grudges turned into feuds that simmered away for years in unbreakable stalemate.

In this climate, the idea festered that adversaries, naturally powerless and forbidden to use violence, might resort to magic to get their own way. Poor women who were refused alms on the doorstep, for instance, naturally mumbled harmless imprecations, which then were taken seriously by the refusers, especially if bad luck ensued. Misfortunes attributed to witches—maleficia—included ailing children and livestock, spoiled food, milk that wouldn't churn, boats sinking in calm waters, and windmills collapsing on windless days.⁷ Witchcraft was the antithesis of communal charity, and suspicions spread insidiously, like a virus. Fear incubated guilt, which was projected and returned as anger—much as colonists in New England imputed their own aggression to Indians, easing their own consciences and justifying drastic countermeasures. A vengeful God could only be humbly appeased; but a vengeful witch could be righteously repelled, and even, using the law, killed.⁸

Like the plague, witchcraft was usually first encountered as news from distant parts, then in reports creeping closer to home. In 1616, back in Old England, eighteen people in the Essex parish of Navestock, twenty miles from the young Pynchon's home, accused a widow and another woman—probably her daughter—of magical murder and entertaining demons. In the same year, not far from Navestock, a glover and his wife were accused of bewitching to death a man, a pig, and three horses; meanwhile, a woman was hanged at Chelmsford for using a skull taken from a grave to cast a spell which killed a father and son and consumed a woman's body.⁹ William Pynchon may have attended the execution. Ten years later, he certainly would have known the case of Denise Nash, a single woman, accused of laming a youth with witchcraft, because this happened in his own village. The witches in old Springfield's margins had advanced. Already, however, prosecutions were dwindling

and convictions harder to achieve, largely because of Charles I's mistrust of the evidence. Denise Nash was arraigned at Chelmsford, but acquitted.¹⁰

Not every suspicion matured into an accusation, not every accusation led to an indictment, and less than one in four trials ended in conviction. Though wicked, witchcraft was a slippery crime, suspended between fantasy and reality, credulity and skepticism. Most people believed in witches; the thornier question was whether an individual could reasonably be hanged on the testimony of her neighbors.¹¹ Various factors had to coincide to reach even a fleeting consensus at law: popular pressure, magisterial diligence, judicial receptivity, and a firm belief that witches were threatening life, limb, and property.

For the first twenty-five years of New England's existence, there was no appetite for witch-hunting, and in Old England first James I's skepticism, then the anti-Calvinist policies of Charles I and Archbishop Laud, had suppressed it for a generation. But in the mid-1640s fears stirred again: witch panics flared up in East Anglia, and across the Atlantic in Massachusetts, where so many East Anglians had settled. Near Boston, a minister deplored an "inundation of abominable filthiness," a wave of sin and dereliction of Christian duty indicating that the devil was thriving among colonists, much as he did among the wantonly godless people of the wilderness.¹² This was the decadent world that Mary Lewis thought she had left behind in Wales but which to her dismay thrived among Christians in their chosen paradise.

Native religion was a backdrop to colonial witch beliefs in a country as yet unconquered for Christ. Indian

culture was spiritualized, sensitive to nature, with unseen forces sensed in everything from bees humming and birdsong to tempests and dreams. But inevitably it was seen through an anxious Christian lens, which polarized goodness and evil. Therefore, like most colonists, Mary supposed that natives were, at least unconsciously, in league with the devil. According to Richard Baxter, an English Puritan writer admired by William Pynchon, in New England "it is a common thing to see spirits appear to men in various shapes day and night," and a minister at Pynchon's old plantation of Dorchester claimed to have witnessed a human sacrifice to Satan, "with many ugly ceremonies devoted to him." During the Pequot War, Indians had even been accused of casting spells on the English.¹³ Predictably, English and native witchcrafts were linked. In the summer of 1645 John Winthrop's brother-in-law returned to Salem from London, where reports of the East Anglian witches were rife, as was speculation that New England's calamities were divine punishments for tolerating native devil worship.¹⁴

But mainly the mood that made witchcraft plausible settled in New England because by the mid-1640s its economic and social woes had reached Old World levels. The increased size and complexity of the colony bred competition, and with that the envy and hostility that had long been commonplace in England, and which gave witchcraft its destructive energy. Envy was the emotion of the witch, personified as a cave-dwelling hag, pale and thin, squinting and black-toothed, "never rejoicing but in others' harms."¹⁵ It was also the emotion of melancholics, whose "false conceived want" made them discontented and so "desire that which they see others to enjoy." For devout Christians like Mary Lewis, such passions were profoundly spiritual. Neighborhood squabbles were not just events happening there on the surface: they were all-consuming inner struggles against diabolic wickedness in the heart.¹⁶



Conclusion

Mary Lewis was to marry in 1645, which in Springfield's typically self-conflicted way was the seed of her downfall as well as the fruition of her dreams. As a married woman, and before long a mother, too, the expectations put on her by the community, according to old world custom, were new and more onerous. She fell

"Witchcraft: witches giving babies to the devil."
Woodcut, 1720. Wellcome Collection.



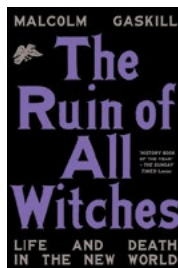
foul of these expectations, as did her irascible husband Hugh Parsons, and the malice and mischief attributed to their doomed family was framed by witchery.

The people of Springfield who turned against Mary and Hugh were not, in fact, so very different from them: greedy gossips, outwardly decent yet quick to anger, racked by secret guilt and apt to blame and shame others. Among the things they brought with them from the old country were their essential acquisitive selves, reliant on neighbors who were at once mutually supportive and in bitter competition. The flipside of belonging—to a local economic network and a Puritan covenant—were censure and ostracism. Viewed within a religious framework of understanding, this was the work of the devil, whose most precious objectives were the pricking of spite, the sowing of discord and widening the cracks in godly unity.

In so many ways these seventeenth-century lives belong to a picture-book faraway world—a world of ecological crisis, existential peril, communitarian self-reliance, and intense religiosity. But the characteristics that make them relevant today are the same things that make them intelligible to historians: the hopes and fears, desires and disappointments; the envy, anger, and pure rage of not just getting by but getting ahead in an age of anxious transition to modernity. ♦

NOTES

- ¹ Michael Zuckerman, "Identity in British America: unease in Eden," in Nicholas Canny and Anthony Pagden, eds., *Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World, 1500–1800* (Princeton, N.J., 1987), pp. 115–57; Norman Pettit, "God's Englishman in New England: his enduring ties to the motherland," *Proceedings of the MHS*, 101 (1989), pp. 56–70. On homesickness: Malcolm Gaskill, *Between Two Worlds: How the English Became Americans* (Oxford, 2014), pp. 123–4, 353–5; Susan J. Matt, *Homesickness: An American History* (Oxford, 2011), ch. 1.
- ² David Thomas Konig, *Law and Society in Puritan Massachusetts: Essex County, 1629–1692* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1979), pp. 69–70.
- ³ Cf. Daniel C. Beaver, "Politics in the archives: records, property, and plantation politics in Massachusetts Bay, 1642–1650," *Journal of Early American History*, 1 (2011), pp. 3–25.
- ⁴ Keith Wrightson, "Class," in David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick, eds., *The British Atlantic World, 1500–1800* (Basingstoke, England, 2002), pp. 142–43.
- ⁵ Town Records, Volumes 1 & 2: Selectmen's Records, 1644–82, City Clerk's Office, City Hall, Springfield, Mass., pp. 25, 26, 33, 34, 40, 43–44; Stephen Innes, *Labor in a New Land: Economy and Society in Seventeenth-Century Springfield* (Princeton, N.J., 1983), p. 440; Harry A. Wright, *Early*



The Ruin of All Witches: Life and Death in the New World by Malcolm Gaskill (Alfred A. Knopf, 2022) is available from a wide range of booksellers.

Springfield and Longmeadow, Massachusetts, with Special Reference to Benjamin Cooley, Pioneer (Rutland, Vt., 1940), pp. 26–28.

- ⁶ Samuel E. Morison, "William Pynchon: the founder of Springfield," *Proceedings of the MHS*, 64 (1931), pp. 77–79; George Selement and Bruce C. Woolley, eds., *Thomas Shepard's Confessions* (Boston, 1981), pp. 43, 59, 61.
- ⁷ Alan Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England: A Regional and Comparative Study*, 2nd ed. (London, 1999), chs. 10–16. On *maleficia*: Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (London, 1971), pp. 519–20, 540–43; John Putnam Demos, *Entertaining Satan: Witchcraft and the Culture of Early New England* (Oxford, 1982), pp. 171–72.
- ⁸ Ann Kibbey, "Mutations of the supernatural: witchcraft, remarkable providences, and the power of puritan men," *American Quarterly*, 34 (1982), pp. 125–48. Robin Briggs interprets this aggression as a projection of accusers' self-loathing, which "might endow their neighbor the witch with precisely those traits they most despised in themselves": *Witches and Neighbours: The Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft* (London, 1996), p. 168.
- ⁹ C. L'Estrange Ewen, *Witch Hunting and Witch Trials* (London, 1929), pp. 90–91, 207–9.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 213.
- ¹¹ On skepticism in the 1640s: Frederick Valletta, *Witchcraft, Magic and Superstition in England, 1640–70* (Aldershot, England, 2000), pp. 29–33.
- ¹² Thomas Shepard, 1645, quoted in Andrew Delbanco, "Looking homeward, going home: the lure of England for the founders of New England," *NEQ*, 59 (1986), pp. 376–77.
- ¹³ Richard Baxter, *The Certainty of the Worlds of Spirits* (London, 1691), p. 107; and *The Winthrop Papers, 1557–1654*, 6 vols. (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1929–92), vol. iii, p. 298.
- ¹⁴ Nathaniel Bartlett Sylvester, *History of the Connecticut Valley in Massachusetts* (Philadelphia, 1879), vol. 1, p. 22; *The Winthrop Papers* [note 13], vol. v, p. 38.
- ¹⁵ *The Country-mans New Common-wealth* (London, 1647), pp. 9–10. Francis Bacon thought envy the most dangerous emotion because it fed obsessively on body and soul: *Historie Naturall and Experimentall, of Life and Death* (London, 1638), p. 223.
- ¹⁶ Timothy Bright, *A Treatise of Melancholie* (London, 1586), p. 133. On the link between melancholy and witchcraft through "awakened evil and dark wrath": Thomas Tryon, *A Way to Health, Long Life and Happiness* (London, 1691), p. 24.



Witch-Hunt Fervor in Colonial Virginia

THE CASE OF GRACE SHERWOOD

In New England, and particularly in Massachusetts, mentions of witchcraft immediately evoke thoughts of the infamous Salem witch trials in 1692. However, the infectious hysteria and witch-hunt fervor was not isolated to this episode. The belief that the devil lurked behind neighbors' doors, often in the guise of women, and had the supernatural power to inflict great suffering was not a unique Puritan concept, nor did the witch-hunt craze start in Salem in 1692.

The foundation of witch-hunt madness was laid centuries, and even millennia, earlier. The Bible contained proscriptions against witches, reproduced here from the King James Version: "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live" (Exod. 22:18) and "There shall not be found among you and one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire . . . or a witch" (Deut. 18:10). An estimated 110,000 men, women, and children were tried for witchcraft between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries, with approximately 40,000 to 60,000 executed.¹ By the late 1400s, we find evidence that the witchcraft paranoia continued—and it was about to escalate at an alarming rate.

In 1486/87, Jacob Sprenger and Heinrich Kramer, German members of the Dominican Order, published

Joshua Shaw, *Witch Duck Creek*, 1820–1821. Courtesy of Reynolda House Museum of American Art, Affiliated with Wake Forest University, Gift of Charles H. Babcock, Sr.

the infamous *Malleus Maleficarum*, also known as *The Hammer of the Witches*. Released almost fifty years before the Puritan movement in England began, the *Malleus* became the ultimate guide for helping both Protestants and Catholics identify and eradicate witches and Satan's followers. The volume was immediately popular—28 editions were issued by 1600—and its relatively compact size, just shy of eight inches in length, implies the book was meant to be easily carried.² Publication of the *Malleus* had a tremendous impact in spearheading the witch-hunt fervor that peaked between 1580 and 1650.³

In the volume's three sections, the *Malleus* described the nature of witches and how to identify them, the harm witches could inflict on mankind, and the best way to interrogate and prosecute suspected witches.⁴ The modes and evidence used to identify and convict



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“witches” were strikingly similar over the centuries. Accused witches were often healers or midwives, and common “witch-like” traits included talking to oneself, a crone-like appearance, a freckled complexion, or the presence of dark or discolored “titt marks” (birthmarks or other skin marks), which were believed to be caused by the devil.⁵ The *Malleus* described how fairly innocuous actions, such as digging a hole or giving a look or a touch, were enough to invite suspicion of witchcraft. Sprenger and Kramer—the book’s authors and inquisitors themselves—believed in employing torture and extreme methods, such as “dunking,” to obtain a confession or prove a witchcraft accusation.⁶

When the Witchcraft Act of 1604 was passed by King James I, “maleficarum—causing harm to people or property by supernatural means”—was considered a felony in England and all her colonies.⁷ The Witchcraft Act stated that “a witch convicted of a minor offense could receive a year in prison, but any witch accused and found guilty a second time was sentenced to death.”⁸ One can almost envision copies of the *Malleus* being

tucked away in coat pockets and carried to the New World to appear as coveted volumes on bookcases or mantels across the British North American colonies.

The first accusations in the British American colonies

Colonists in Jamestown, Virginia—the first permanent English settlement in the Americas—believed they saw evidence of witchcraft in Native American rituals that resembled the practices of so-called witches and devil worshipers in Europe.⁹ Over time, different denominations of Christianity in Virginia propagated the ideology that “the role of a woman in Virginia’s society was to be a good, supportive wife who cooked, cleaned, entertained, and—most importantly—bore children for her husband. . . . Women whose behaviors contradicted the expectations of Virginia’s churches were often accused of being witches.”¹⁰

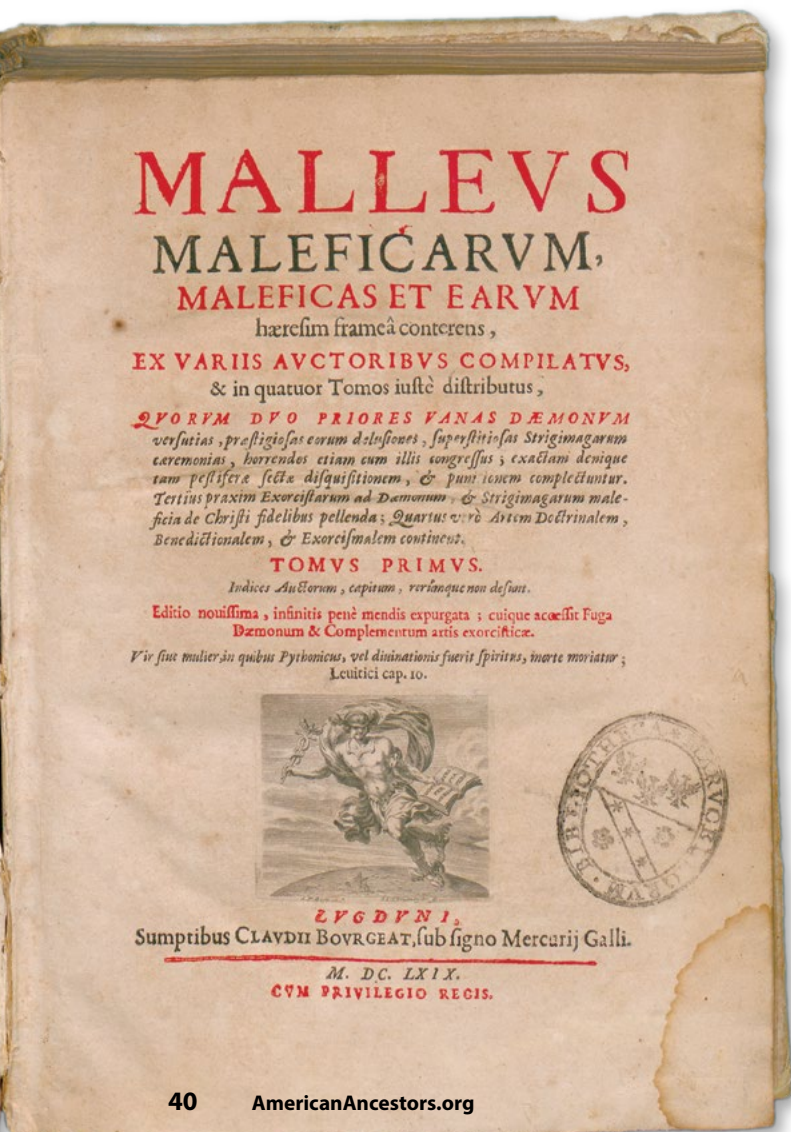
Historians believe that Joan Wright, a midwife from Jamestown, was likely the first person arraigned for witchcraft in British America. In 1626, Joan’s neighbors accused her of bewitching butter churns and chickens, making threats against a servant girl, and causing the death of a baby. Fortunately for Joan Wright, the process in Virginia allowed her husband to testify on her behalf, swear to her good behavior, and assume custody for her—likely after he paid a bond to the courts.¹¹

Unfortunately, most court records regarding Virginia witch trials were destroyed in the American Civil War or earlier natural disasters, and we will never know how many of these trials occurred in colonial Virginia. However, at least two dozen brief witchcraft-related court records survived, including an account of colonial Virginia’s most famous witch trial, the 1705/06 case of Grace Sherwood, the “Witch of Pungo.”¹²

Grace Sherwood, the Witch of Pungo

During its witchcraft trials, colonial Virginia kept to a level of order not seen in Salem, where a mass mania incited chaos and eighteen people were executed after weeks of informal hearings.¹³ Suspected witches in colonial Virginia appear to have been given the right to procedural due process of law, even as the courts still followed the Witchcraft Act of 1604 and people continued to be guided by the infamous and still influential *Malleus Maleficarum*.¹⁴

Title page of *Malleus Maleficarum*, 1669. Biblioteca Europea di Informazione e Cultura via Wikimedia Commons.

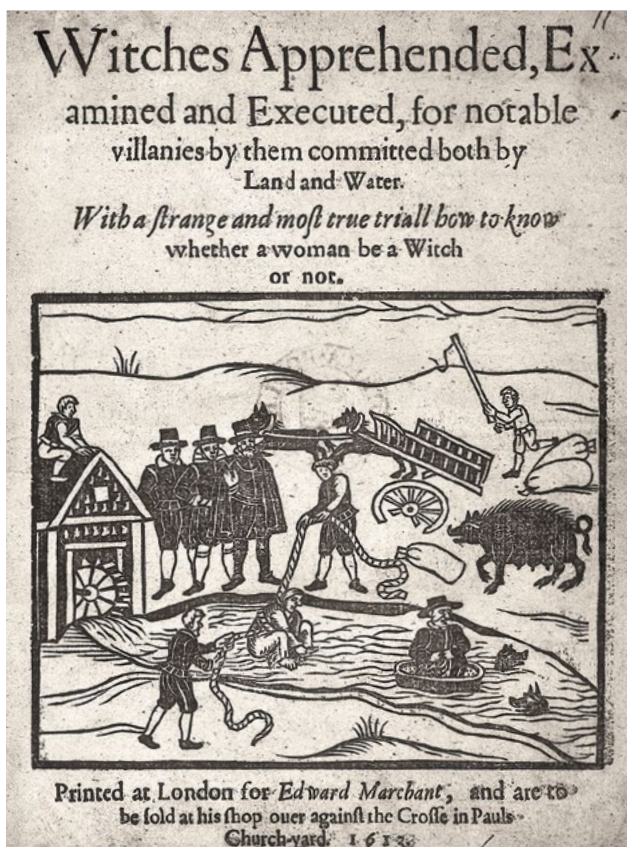
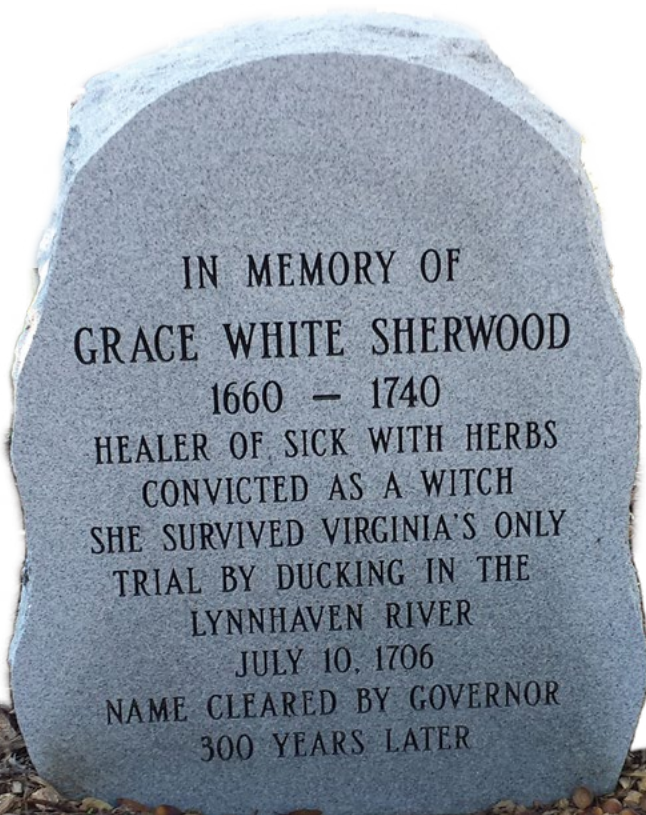


In 1697/98, Grace Sherwood, who has been described as a healer, lived with her husband James and their three sons on their plantation in Princess Anne County when the first claim of witchcraft against her occurred. Over a span of several years, she was accused multiple times of bewitching and killing neighbors' livestock, destroying crops, turning into a black cat, and slipping through keyholes at night.¹⁵ Grace and her husband took at least one of her accusers to court for slander and the case was settled in their favor, but that didn't end the slew of allegations.¹⁶

According to the sparse trial records, a "suite for suspicion of Witchcraft" was formally brought against Grace Sherwood, now a widow, on January 3, 1706, by her neighbors Luke Hill and his wife. Grace was a fiercely independent and, by multiple accounts, attractive woman who wore men's clothing, remained unmarried, and continued to run a successful plantation after her husband's death.¹⁷ She, like other accused women, did not conform to expectations.

After the suit was filed, Virginia's General Court records show that an investigation ensued. The court instructed twelve women from the community to search Grace Sherwood's body for marks made by the devil. Subsequently, on March 7, 1706, she was ordered to stand trial after two "titt marks" and several other suspicious spots were found.¹⁸

On July 5, 1706, the court deemed that all means necessary should be used to establish her guilt or innocence, recording that Grace consented to "be tried in



Title page of *Witches Apprehended, Examined and Executed* (London, 1613), showing a ducking. Wellcome Collection.

the water in ducking." Ironically, the court then claimed concern for her health and postponed the ducking due to inclement weather:

but ye. weather being very rainy & bad soe yt. possibly it might endanger her health it is therefore ordr. yt. ye. Sherr: request ye. Justices p e. essvly to appear on Wednesday next by tenn of ye. Clock at ye. Court-house & yt. he secure the body of ye. sd. Grace till ye. time to be forthcoming yn. to be dealt wth. as aforesd.¹⁹

The court reconvened on July 10, 1706, and specified the conditions of the water trial. Prior to entering the water, Grace would be searched by "some women" to ensure she wasn't concealing anything suspicious. Grace would then be put into water "above mans debth . . . [to] try her how she swims therein, alwayes having care of her life to pe.serve her from drowning." As soon as she emerged from the water, "as many antient & knowing women as possible" would again search Grace "carefully for all teats, Spotts & marks about her body not usuall on others" and report their findings to the Court.²⁰

Later that day Grace Sherwood was put in a boat and rowed out to the western portion of the Lynnhaven

Memorial to Grace Sherwood in Virginia Beach, Virginia, dedicated 2014. Photo by PumpkinSky, Wikimedia Commons.

River, then her hands were bound to her feet, and she was dropped into the water, which had been consecrated.²¹ Grace miraculously floated to the surface, proving in the eyes of the court that she was guilty of witchcraft. The five women who searched her body declared under oath that she was not like them nor any other woman that they knew, since she had two black marks “like titts on her private parts.” Weighing the evidence presented, the Court ordered the sheriff to take Grace Sherwood to jail, where she was to remain until she was brought to trial.²²

No record of a subsequent trial exists, but Grace was incarcerated after the ducking and spent seven to eight years in jail for the crime of witchcraft. After her release, she regained the rights to her land and, we can hope,

lived in peace until her death in 1740. Three hundred years after her ordeal, on July 10, 2006, Virginia Governor Tim Kaine observed that “with 300 years of hindsight, we all certainly can agree that trial by water is an injustice” and informally pardoned Grace Sherwood.²³

Evidence of witch trials in colonial Virginia as early as 1626 remind us that infectious witch hysteria did not begin with Salem Puritans in 1692. It arrived on the shores of the British American colonies after hundreds of years of stoking the fire of witch-hunt fervor. Unfortunately, tens of thousands of innocent souls—in Europe, the British Isles, and elsewhere in North America—were not as fortunate as Joan Wright and Grace Sherwood, who surely suffered, but ultimately survived, their witch trials in colonial Virginia. ♦

NOTES

¹ Jeff Wallenfeldt, “Salem witch trials,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, December 1, 2022, [britannica.com/event/Salem-witch-trials](https://www.britannica.com/event/Salem-witch-trials).

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³ Jone Johnson Lewis, “A Timeline of Witch Hunts in Europe,” *ThoughtCo.*, February 20, 2020, [thoughtco.com/european-witch-hunts-timeline-3530786](https://www.thoughtco.com/european-witch-hunts-timeline-3530786).

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⁵ Debbie Lord, “The ‘Malleus Maleficarum’: Ancient Book Offers Ways to Identify a Witch,” *WFTV.com*, October 26, 2021.

⁶ Arran Birks, “The ‘Hammer of Witches’: An Earthquake in the Early Witch Craze,” *The Historian* (projects.history.qmul.ac.uk/thehistorian), January 24, 2020; “Malleus Maleficarum: How to Torture a Witch,” *Worldhistory.us*, May 23, 2017.

⁷ Kat Eschner, “England’s Witch Trials Were Lawful,” *Smithsonian Magazine*, August 18, 2017, [smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/englands-witch-trials-were-lawful-180964514](https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/englands-witch-trials-were-lawful-180964514); Monica C. Witkowski and Caitlin Newman, “Witchcraft in Colonial Virginia,” *Encyclopedia Virginia*, Virginia Humanities, August 4, 2022, encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/witchcraft-in-colonial-virginia.

⁸ Gary Smith, “Witchcraft Law Up to the Salem Witch Trials of 1692,” *Massachusetts Law Updates*, October 31, 2017, [mass.gov/news/witchcraft-law-up-to-the-salem-witchcraft-trials-of-1692](https://www.mass.gov/news/witchcraft-law-up-to-the-salem-witchcraft-trials-of-1692).

⁹ Witkowski and Newman, “Witchcraft in Colonial Virginia” [note 7].

¹⁰ *History of Virginia: A Captivating Guide to the History of the Mother of States, Starting from Jamestown through the American Revolution and the Battle of Spotsylvania Court House to the Present* (Captivating History, 2021), 614.

¹¹ Eve S. Gregory, “Joan Wright, Surry’s Witch,” [surrycountyvahistory.org](https://www.surrycountyvahistory.org), January 22, 2019.

¹² Jonathan Peter Cushing, “Record of Grace Sherwood’s Trial for Witchcraft, in 1705, Princess Anne County, Virginia,” *Collections of the Virginia Historical and Philosophical Society* 95 (1833): 69–78, [archive.org/details/collectionsvirg00pittgoog](https://www.archive.org/details/collectionsvirg00pittgoog); and John McNeer, “Grace Sherwood, The Witch of Pungo—Truth and Fiction,” October 31, 2019, blog post at [History Arch](https://www.historyarch.com/2019/10/31/grace-sherwood-the-witch-of-pungo-truth-and-fiction), [historyarch.com/2019/10/31/grace-sherwood-the-witch-of-pungo-truth-and-fiction](https://www.historyarch.com/2019/10/31/grace-sherwood-the-witch-of-pungo-truth-and-fiction).

¹³ McNeer, “Grace Sherwood” [note 12].

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Witkowski and Newman, “Witchcraft in Colonial Virginia” [note 7].

¹⁶ McNeer, “Grace Sherwood” [note 12].

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Cushing, “Record of Grace Sherwood’s Trial,” 74 [note 12]; and McNeer, “Grace Sherwood” [note 12].

¹⁹ Cushing, “Record of Grace Sherwood’s Trial,” 77 [note 12].

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ McNeer, “Grace Sherwood” [note 12].

²² Cushing, “Record of Grace Sherwood’s Trial,” 78, [note 12].

²³ Denise Watson Batts, “Witch of Pungo’ Pardoned by Governor after 300 Years,” *The Virginian Pilot*, July 11, 2006, [Pilotonline.com](https://www.pilotonline.com).

Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center Spotlight

From One War to the Next: Antisemitism in the U.S. Military as Experienced by One Jewish Family



Dr. Miriam Mora is the 2022–2023 Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center Historian in Residence. She is also the Director of Academic and Public Programs at the Center for Jewish History in New York City, and the author of *Carrying a Big Schtick: American Jewish Acculturation and Masculinity in the Twentieth Century* (Wayne State University Press, anticipated fall 2023).

Recollections from American soldiers who served in World War I and II often include witnessing, experiencing, or even propagating antisemitism. Antisemitic actions and rhetoric were directed both towards fellow servicemen and European Jews. But attitudes towards Jews in the American military changed between the two conflicts. One family's collection of war-time correspondence in the archives of the Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center shows a father and son having distinctly different encounters with other American soldiers during the two World Wars.

For the Gorfinkle family of Boston, interactions with non-Jewish servicemen often included subtle or overt prejudice against the Jewish people. The motivation for antisemitism was quite different in the First and Second World Wars, and this change over time was reflected in letters home to family and friends. Bernard Gorfinkle (1889–1973) was first deployed in the Mexican Expedition that the United States undertook in 1916 against Revolutionary leader Pancho Villa, and he then served in the European theater in World War I. Bernard stayed close to his Jewish comrades in wartime, writing home often about their religious services, social gatherings, military successes and failures, and shared grief at Jewish losses.

Bernard rarely wrote home about antisemitic experiences among the troops. During the First World War, the most persistent anti-Jewish prejudice in the military was the accusation that Jewish men were cowardly and tried to evade service. Such assumptions about Jewish cowardice were long-standing tropes imported to the United States from across Europe, where many countries barred Jewish men from military service or advancement. Jewish men who were already established in the American military were less bombarded by claims of Jewish weakness, unsuitability for army life, or accusations of malingering. But discussions of those Jews unable to pass muster continued.¹

Captain Bernard Gorfinkle's pass issued by the American Commission to Negotiate Peace, established after World War I ended.





Above: Bernard Gorfinkle (left) and another soldier pictured with a World War I Jewish gravestone.
 Right: A letter and envelope dated January 9, 1917, from Bernard Gorfinkle in France to his sister Ida in Boston.

Jan. 9th-17
France

Hallo Ida:

An anxiously awaiting yours and Mother's arrival on the 10 o'clock train from Boston, as I just received your Oct 3rd letter until the war is over?

Your letter was among the big bunch of delayed mail. Was terribly sorry I did not get a chance to say good-bye, but I told you the reasons.

Did you get my letter a few weeks ago?

You want to spruce up on your French. I have some sort of an idea that you know it; maybe I will be some frog leg speakers

That's a good idea about your again studying short-hand, etc. If the store goes , what can't you get a government job of some sort, to help out. Don't hesitate to ask Mark or Max Mitchell

Whooh? Didn't I laugh to myself when I read of Mark's possibility of being on guard of the Atlantic Ocean or Deer Island. I bet he would rather be in France. Is he entitled to have a star hung out for him? Have you got one stuck up for me?

Tell the Oppenheims that I am going to write, but have been confounded busy.

What can I ship you from France. Don't hesitate. Is Men Cohen sore on me?

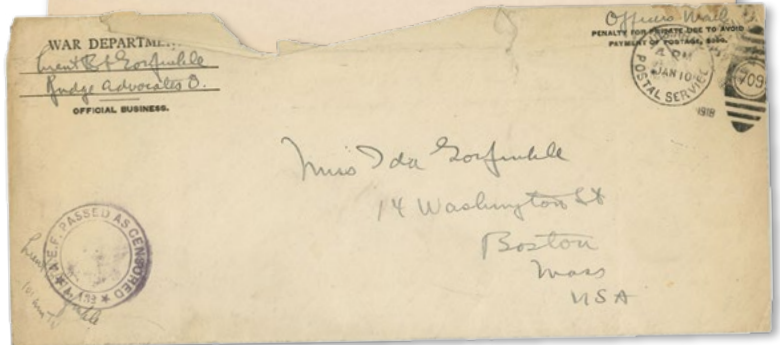
Did you give the \$50.00 check from Cohen to Mark to deposit? what was it for? I hope Mark is not allowing my few dollars to be idle in the bank.

Am writing home today, how be all?

Best of love, and write more often,

Ben.

Regards to the pedlars, individually and as a bunch if it will help business any.



When Bernard did communicate about his comrades' antisemitism, he wrote in broken Yiddish, to keep his profile low and under the radar of military censors. Bernard eventually advanced and received an appointment as a Summary Court Officer. Acting as a judge in military cases in his camp gave him a position of real power. Explaining this promotion to his brother, he added, "Yoi vill ich einreibben day goyem,"² meaning he would rub his new position in the faces of his non-Jewish comrades. This small hint of tension revealed the antisemitism in the ranks, and that Bernard Gorfinkle felt the need to prove himself as a Jew in Uncle Sam's Army.

Bernard kept up with Jewish rituals as resolutely as he could, even when the military failed to provide him access to religious rites and observances. Before Jewish chaplains arrived in his area, Bernard worked to inform families of Jewish soldiers killed in action of the gravesites of their loved ones, and ensured they received a Star of David (instead of the standard cross) on their grave markers.³ Bernard held services when his Jewish comrades died, sought out Jewish communities wherever he was stationed, and kept in touch with American Jewish organizations to help provide Jewish soldiers with the basic means to practice their faith. His determination to retain his Jewishness and keep up his religious observance is well summarized in his own words: "I sit in my little seat reading the siddur [prayer book] and reminding myself that I am a Jew yet and I

know that the Almighty is going to be with me the entire time. As yet I have not eat[en] ham or bacon and do not expect to."⁴

A generation later, in 1942, Bernard returned to the military to serve as New England Field Supervisor for the War Manpower Commission. His son, Herbert Gorfinkle (1923–2000), enlisted in the Army in 1943. Herbert's military experience was quite different from his father's.

Although some aspects had improved, like the services and religious observances available to Jewish enlisted men, Hebert eventually found it difficult to advance, despite his successes in each of his positions. In his early days of service, as he rose through the ranks from private to corporal, Herbert experienced little antisemitism in the training camps. He wrote to his father, "Some of the men resent Jews but I've had no trouble so far. Most of them don't think I am and at times make remarks. But when you figure the average mentality of

the American Army is that of a nine year old, one takes pity on them. My mental condition is so much higher than most of the men I can run circles around any of their conversations.”⁵

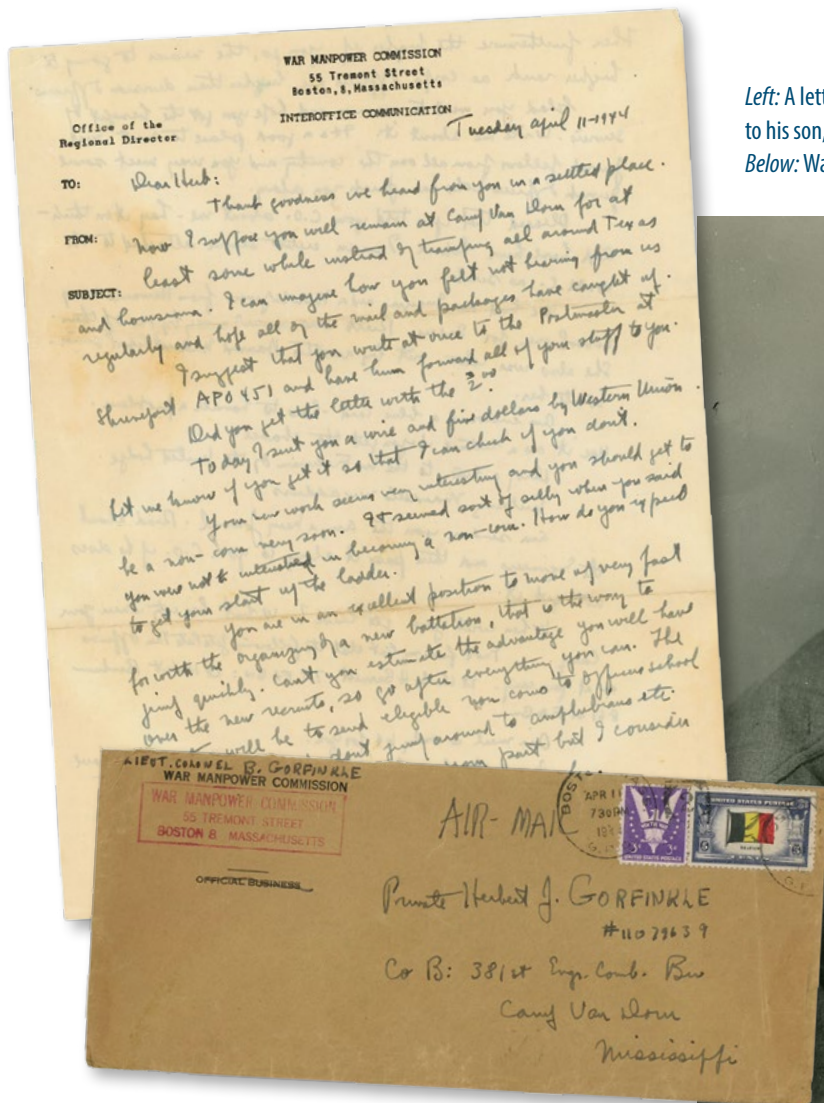
But only a few months later, he shared with his father the bad hand he was being dealt by jealous comrades and antisemites. He explained that of the seven non-commissioned officers in his platoon, “five are real Jew haters, and one partial, the other too stupid to know.” He added, “They know I’m Jewish, but they all think I’m only part due to their ignorant ideas on what a Jew is supposed to look like and act.”⁶ And, indeed, tension surrounding Jews escalated in the military during the war.

By the war’s end, many American GIs blamed Jews (both American and European) for dragging the United States into the conflict. These sentiments could be seen among soldiers in their platoons and in their off-duty behavior as well. Herbert sent a clipping from an army periodical that included an antisemitic diatribe from a

soldier who asked outright if the United States joined the war “solely to liberate the Jews,” and accused those placing memorial stones depicting a Star of David at the mass graves at Dachau of “trying to illustrate to the Germans that the Jews are superman and that the Star of David will replace the Swastika.”⁷

While Herbert struggled with anti-Jewish sentiment in his platoon, on the home front, his sister Ruth also experienced antisemitism from American military personnel. On July 4, 1944, Ruth wrote in a particularly tense account what a good time she and her two friends had been enjoying with a few “white and good-looking” sailors before a “diverting experience,” in which the sailors started harshly criticizing the Jewish people. As she and her friends had the surnames Gorfinkle, Cohen, and Greenberg, they left in a hurry.⁸

In April 1945, in his position as an Army photographer, Herbert arrived at Buchenwald as it was liberated by American forces. While documenting the



Left: A letter and envelope from Lieut. Col. Bernard Gorfinkle to his son, Private Herbert Gorfinkle, April 11, 1944.
Below: Wartime photo of Herbert Gorfinkle.





Ruth Gorfinkle.

concentration camp, Herbert was exposed to the effects of the most brutal and shocking antisemitism—the likes of which his father could have never imagined. Although he rarely wrote about these experiences—despite his father urging him to share what he was seeing—Herbert reported seeing people enslaved and murdered on a colossal scale.⁹ He was far less vague about his own disillusionment. “I always wanted the Army—always waved a flag, my hand is starting to get weak, it is drooping a little, but it is still clasping the flag.”¹⁰

Perhaps unable to comprehend the gravity of what his son had seen at Dachau, Bernard tried to reassure Herbert about the survival of the Jewish people. Responding to a letter Herbert wrote about the “Jewish question,” and in a rare moment of openness about antisemitism, Bernard asserted, “The older you get, the more you will learn that the Jews are a proud people and on the whole successful. This is what riles the Gentiles and they then try to take advantage of our minority in numbers.”¹¹ As Herbert’s original letter prompting this response from his father seems to have been left out of the collection, it is impossible to know if Bernard was

responding to Herbert’s own experiences with antisemitic prejudice, or the devastation he witnessed in Europe.

But Bernard’s assurances of Jewish survival imply that whatever his son had shared and whatever antisemitism he himself had experienced had not been so intense as to crush his spirit, or cause his flag-waving hand to droop, as it had Herbert’s. He philosophized, “The Jew has survived persecution for centuries and is still here, so overlook the ignorance of those who have not the brains to succeed. Prayer and respect for God should get a Jew over his toughest problems.”¹²

Bernard and Herbert’s joint experience, tied across the first half of the twentieth century by blood, love, and letters, shows two soldiers fighting for the same side, and always grappling with the tense relationship between their love of country and their country’s love of them. ♦

NOTES

- ¹ Bernard often wrote about the number of Jewish soldiers his unit still had, how they were faring, and how many had been killed. Another soldier represented in the Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center collections, William Marcus, wrote about how many Jewish men were rejected from the military and were unable to complete training. Marcus and Feldman Family Papers, P-1008, Box 1, Folder 4, letter dated July 2, 1918.
- ² Bernard Gorfinkle, P-664, Box 1, Folder 2, letter dated September 18, 1917.
- ³ Ibid., Folder 3, letter dated April 16, 1918.
- ⁴ Ibid., Folder 1, letter written en route to El Paso, 1916.
- ⁵ Herbert Gorfinkle, P-904, Box 1, Folder 19, letter dated May 17, 1944.
- ⁶ Ibid., letter dated August 6, 1944.
- ⁷ Ibid., Box 3, Folder 1, newspaper clipping, “The B Bag: Blow It Out Here.”
- ⁸ Ibid, letter dated July 4, 1944.
- ⁹ He mentioned, almost in passing, “the doctor who was sterilizing all the people of Europe” and “the boy whose job it was to execute 3000 people in a month.” Ibid., Box 1, Folder 20, letter dated June 20, 1945.
- ¹⁰ Ibid., 1945 letter with no day or month noted.
- ¹¹ Herbert Gorfinkle, Box 3, Folder 1, letter dated July 29, 1945.
- ¹² Ibid.

Riobard O'Dwyer and the Power of Family Lore



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My father's grandmother Kate (Dwyer) Dwyer (ca. 1857–1941) was born in Kilchrohane Parish, County Kerry, Ireland. Following her father's death in 1879,¹ she immigrated to join brothers and cousins in Newport, Rhode Island. She married fellow Kerry immigrant Patrick Dwyer (ca. 1862–1945) in Newport on October 15, 1889.

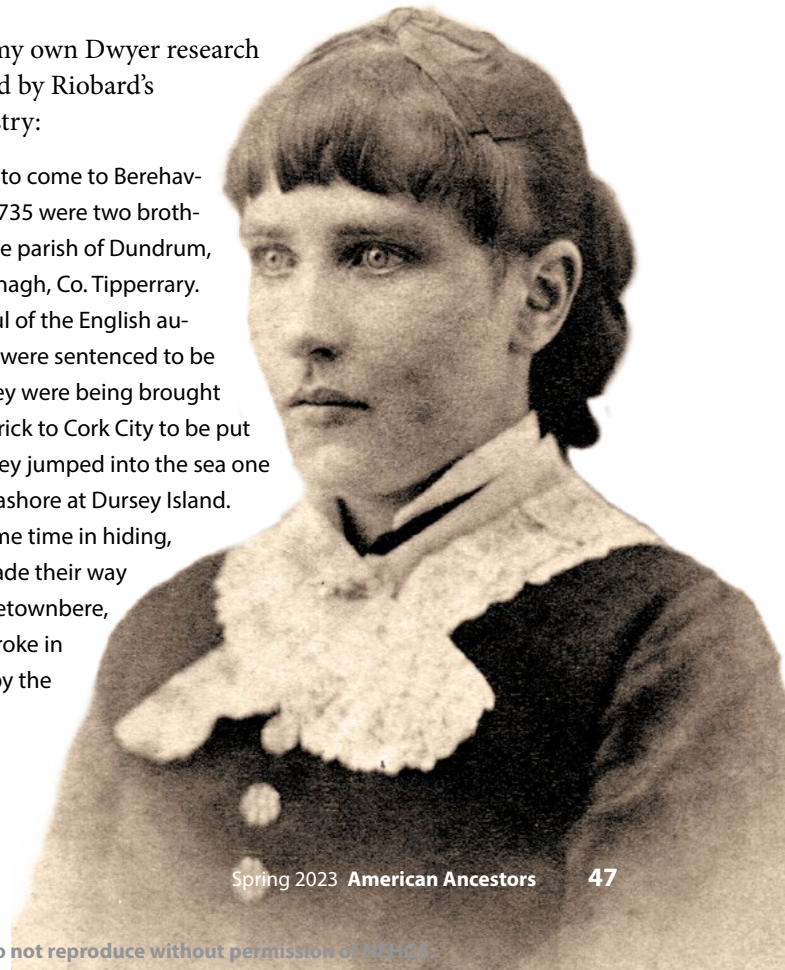
Kate's native parish stretched twenty-one road miles along the scenic Ring of Kerry, with two churches at Caherdaniel and Sneem. Caherdaniel's register of marriages and baptisms date only from 1831. Kate's parents, Michael Dwyer and Abbie "Gobinet" Brennan, were married there on February 26, 1835, but Kate's baptism was not recorded. When I began my research on the family in the early 1980s, I obtained the death certificates of Kate's older brothers—Philip, Michael, and Daniel, all of whom immigrated to New England—but I knew next to nothing about their parents' lives in Ireland or the extended Dwyer family.

In 1989, Kate's granddaughter (my first cousin once removed), Joan (Dwyer) Kelly, sent me a page from Riobard O'Dwyer's 1976 book, *Who Were My Ancestors? Genealogy of the Eyeries Parish, Castletownbere, County Cork, Ireland*. Joan's mother, born Johanna Harrington in Eyeries Parish, brought the book back after a home visit.² On a subsequent trip to Ireland, Joan met Riobard at a dinner in Eyeries where he provided accordion music. The two became fast friends and visited each other over the years, including when Riobard was the guest speaker at the Beara Society Banquet in Boston.

Joan hoped that my own Dwyer research would be augmented by Riobard's account of his ancestry:

The first O'Dwyers to come to Berehaven [in Cork] circa 1735 were two brothers from around the parish of Dundrum, Barony of Kilnamanagh, Co. Tipperrary. They had fallen foul of the English authorities, and they were sentenced to be transported. As they were being brought by boat from Limerick to Cork City to be put on a larger ship, they jumped into the sea one night and slipped ashore at Dursey Island. After spending some time in hiding, they eventually made their way to Toormore, Castletownbere, where they later broke in some rough land by the side of the hill.³

Kate Dwyer, circa 1881, after her arrival in Newport, Rhode Island.



Riobard related that the brothers then sent word to their cousin Robert O'Dwyer that there were carpentry jobs around Berehaven, Cork. Robert worked his way there on a boat from Arlow, County Wicklow, but the boat was wrecked during a storm. Robert survived, scrambled ashore, and "built a hut on top of Garnish Strand." Robert had at least eight sons. Most remained in Cork and Riobard descended from one of them. But three of Robert's sons made a rough crossing across the Kenmare River to Kerry sometime in the 1770s. These brothers came ashore at Coomatloukane, near Waterville. According to Riobard:

One of them, Mike, settled down in Seanacnoc [Shanaknock] about two miles from Waterville, and was the ancestor of Kerry footballer Mick O'Dwyer . . . the second settled in the Glencaragh, Lake Glenbeigh area, and some of his descendants moved to Killarney and Tralee;⁴ and the third remained in Coomatloukane, and his descendants settled along the South Kerry coastline from Cahirdaniel to Sneem.

At the time, with no firsthand knowledge of Ireland and little understanding of the distances between places, I concluded that Riobard's tale of transportation and jumping from ships possessed too many mythic elements. I did not take his account seriously. With a cold paper trail, I had little hope of finding more about the ancestors of the Caherdaniel Dwyers. My luck would have turned much more quickly if I had listened to my cousin Joan.

Several years passed and Joan continued to urge me to contact Riobard. At last, I relented and wrote to him. Riobard replied with a marvelously detailed letter written in careful penmanship. "All the Dwyers/O'Dwyers of this Beara Peninsula (of my relations) & the ancestors of the Dwyers of Waterville, Caherdaniel, Sneem, Co. Kerry (descended from brothers who went across to Co. Kerry from here) are all descended from Robert O'Dwyer." After repeating some of the information from his book, Riobard gave me some details on Dwyers listed in the Caherdaniel parish register.



In the 1770s, three sons of Robert O'Dwyer from Bearhaven, Cork, sailed from Scrahan, Cork, to Coomatloukane, Kerry. Two other Kerry townlands associated with the O'Dwyers/Dwyers (Shanaknock and Caherdaniel) are also shown. Detail of Ordnance Survey Ireland Quarter-inch Series, sheet 15, 1904. David Rumsey Map Collection.

These abstracts allowed me to begin identifying siblings of Kate’s father, Michael. Two other marriage records—Catherine Dwyer to John Gallivan in March 1832, and Gubnetta Dwyer to John O’Mahony in December 1836—place the brides as Michael’s sisters. Baptismal records listing names of godparents also tie together these family groups. Among Caherdaniel’s ten households at the time of Griffith’s Valuation in 1852, Deborah [also known as Gubnetta/Abbie] Mahony, by then a widow, and Michael Dwyer, shared plot 8; Deborah was another of Michael’s sisters.⁵ Margaret Dwyer, widow of Michael’s brother John, lived on plot 6.⁶

The father of these Dwyer siblings was likely “Mich” Dwyer, who appeared on the Tithe Applotment List of 1826 along with six partners,⁷ and their mother was probably Ellen Dwyer, “widow of a farmer,” who died in Caherdaniel on January 18, 1866, age 109!⁸

To assist me in extending the line one or two more generations, Riobard suggested that I contact an “excellent man,” Edward Colgan of Carlisle, Cumbria, England, whose mother, Mary Dwyer, came from Shanaknock. Riobard had already mapped out the lines of descent of his branch in Cork and more distant cousins in Shanaknock. According to Riobard, “Eamon”—he was known by his Irish name within the family—had “done a massive amount of research on

the Dwyers of that area. You & he would have been of the same Dwyers back along.” That connection proved providential.

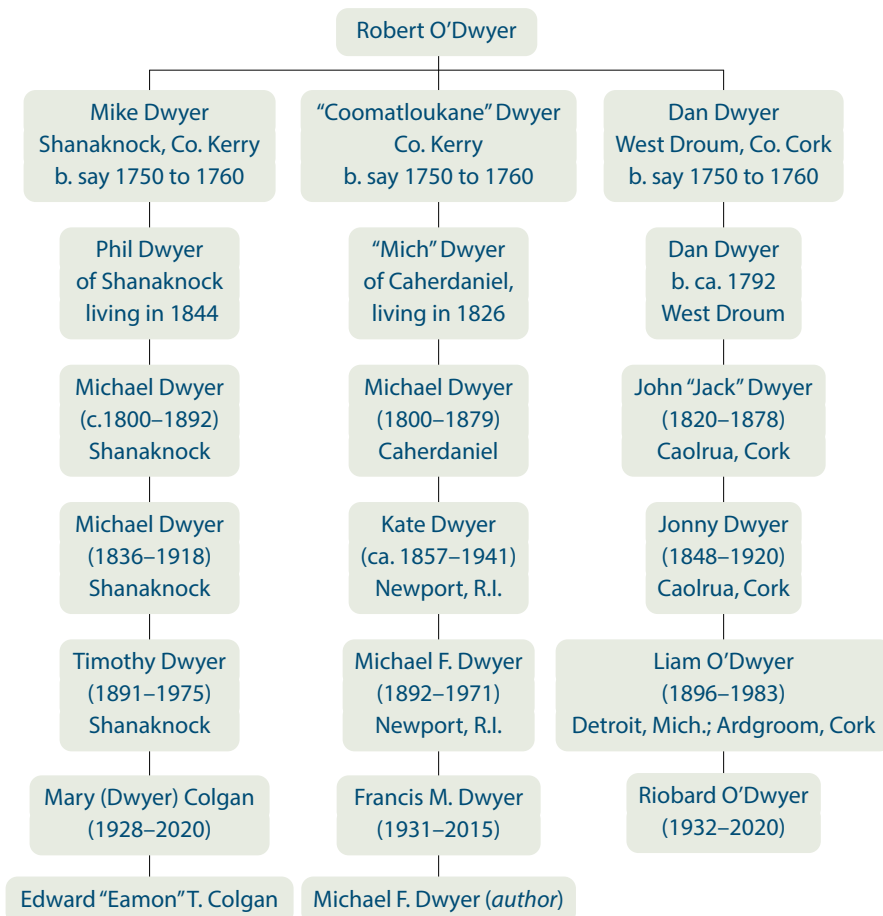
After my first letter to Eamon was returned, “address-ee unknown,” I wrote back to Riobard, asking him if Eamon was still alive. (I had wrongly assumed Eamon was an old man.) Riobard directed me to write to Eamon’s famous relative Mick O’Dwyer, who ran a hotel in Waterville.⁹ Mick’s wife contacted Eamon’s mother, who forwarded my query to him. Eamon, only a year older than I am, had moved to Dorset. He responded enthusiastically to my queries and thus began an enduring friendship. It would take us several years to unravel the link between our families.

In the mid-1990s, genealogy in Ireland was not yet an online pursuit and research was still slow and painstaking. Eamon graciously offered to consult records at Ireland’s National Library and Archives during his annual trips to Kerry and Dublin. To access the microfilms of Kilchrohane Parish, one needed permission from the Bishop of Kerry. One particular success was finding the site of the ruined Dwyer homestead, one mile outside Caherdaniel on the road to Waterville. Eamon also discovered a remarkable deed signed by “Mick Dwire” and “Phil Dewire” of Shanaknock on May 11, 1803—the earliest written document supporting his family’s



“Cahirdanil Co. Kerry,” circa 1890. This view shows the stagecoach stop in Caherdaniel on the road to Waterville. The Dwyer homestead is one mile outside town on the left. Image courtesy of the National Library of Ireland, call number L_CAB_06738.

**Three lines of descent from Robert O'Dwyer,
a native of Dundrum Parish, County Tipperary**



tradition that “Mike/Mick” and his son Phil were the first two Dwyer generations there.¹⁰

In the meantime, I pursued another family cluster from County Kerry to Willimantic, Connecticut, where Kate’s eldest brother, Philip Dwyer (1836–1917) had moved in the 1860s. Wondering if any of his descendants remained in the area, I consulted the phone book. “Mrs. Philip Dwyer” directed me to her late husband’s relative Walter Dwyer (1914–2010) of Chevy Chase, Maryland. Walt instantly recalled relatives in common from Newport. Walt’s father, Francis Dwyer (1868–1946), born in Willimantic, had lived in Newport. In the 1910 census, Francis is listed as a cousin in the household of Michael Dwyer (1839–1915), another brother of Kate.¹¹ Walt recalled *his* grandfather, Philip Dwyer (ca. 1816–1904) was born in Shanaknock! Fleeing the Famine, Philip “brought out” other family members, including Kate’s brothers, to Willimantic in the 1850s and 1860s.¹² My research had uncovered these forgotten ties of kinship and obligation from over a century ago.



Left: Edward “Eamon” Colgan and author Michael Dwyer with Derrynane in the background, 2001.



Right: Riobard O’Dwyer and Edward “Eamon” Colgan at Scrahan, Cork, where Dwyers crossed over to Kerry, 1995.



Riobard O'Dwyer playing the accordion for Rick and Joan (Dwyer) Kelly at his home in Eyeries Village in Cork, 2011. Photo by Rick Kelly.

In July 2001, Eamon acted as my historical tour guide when I stayed in Waterville. He brought me to Shanaknock and introduced me to his uncle Jack Dwyer (1920–2008), of the sixth generation to farm the land there. His version of the Caherdaniel crossing story had five men in the boat with one holding a pig to make it to shore. Jack described the Caherdaniel branch of the family as “Power Dwyers” because of their height, but he added the relationship between his family and the Caherdaniel Dwyers had “run out.” No Dwyers were left in Caherdaniel.

So, how do all these pieces fit? Two Michael Dwyers were born around 1800—one was Kate’s father of Caherdaniel, the other Michael Dwyer of Shanaknock, Eamon’s great-great-grandfather.¹³ Given all the kinship networks we studied in Ireland and the United States, Eamon and I, with Riobard’s concurrence, determined these two men were second cousins. The unnamed brother who landed and stayed in Coomatloukane almost certainly was the progenitor of the Caherdaniel branch.¹⁴

That brings us back to Robert O’Dwyer—the common forebear of Riobard, Eamon, and me—who figured so prominently in Riobard’s narrative. Without Riobard O’Dwyer’s gift for listening, gathering, recording, and preserving family lore, we may have missed the legendary ancestor in a tale that traced Dwyers from County Tipperary, to the Beara Peninsula, and then across the Kenmare River to South Kerry. Were it not for Riobard, glimpses of our eighteenth-century Dwyer ancestors may have vanished. ♦

NOTES

- ¹ Michael Dwyer, age 78, farmer of Caherdaniel, died February 23, 1879, of “old age.” Kate Dwyer, present at death, signed with an X. “Civil Records” database, IrishGenealogy.ie (superintendent registrar’s district Caherciveen, County Kerry), citing group registration ID 7042985.
- ² After the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922 some branches of the Dwyer family had added the ancestral O and assumed the name O’Dwyer.
- ³ Riobard O’Dwyer, *Who Were My Ancestors? Genealogy of the Eyeries Parish, Castletownbere, County Cork, Ireland* (1976), 121.
- ⁴ Descendants of this brother have not been traced as part of this study.
- ⁵ Griffith’s Valuation is available through the National Library of Ireland and Ancestry.com. Deborah [an anglicized version of Gubnetta/Abbie] Mahoney later married as her second husband, Cornelius Sullivan, and died in Holbrook, Massachusetts, on April 9, 1905. Her death certificate states her father was Michael Dwyer. Children of Catherine (Dwyer) Gallivan also moved to Holbrook. Descendants of both sisters share DNA with the author.
- ⁶ From decades of correspondence with John’s descendants, the author learned one of his sons went to Willimantic, Connecticut; one daughter went to Indiana; and two other daughters went to Arizona.
- ⁷ Tithing Applotment records are available through the National Archives of Ireland, tithingapplotmentbooks.nationalarchives.ie.
- ⁸ Michael Dwyer of Caherdaniel, present at death, was the informant.
- ⁹ Mick O’Dwyer (b. 1936) has been immortalized in his own lifetime with a statue in Waterville.
- ¹⁰ Ireland, Registry of Deeds, Co. Kerry, ref. 368609.
- ¹¹ Michael Dwyer (1839–1915), son of Michael and Abbie (Brennan) Dwyer, was Kate Dwyer’s older brother. Michael F. Dwyer household, 1910 U.S. census, Newport Ward 3, Newport County, Rhode Island, ED 42, p. 5B, Ancestry.com.
- ¹² See “An ‘extinct’ family,” *Vita Brevis* blog, December 24, 2018, at AmericanAncestors.org.
- ¹³ See note 1 for the death of Michael Dwyer, farmer of Caherdaniel. Michael Dwyer, farmer of Shanaknock, died November 1, 1892, age 92, IrishGenealogy.ie (superintendent registrar’s district Caherciveen, County Kerry), citing group registration ID 3848398.
- ¹⁴ DNA evidence supports further connections among Coomatloukane and Caherdaniel Dwyer descendants, as well as those from Cork’s Beara Peninsula.

The Riobard O'Dwyer Papers at NEHGS

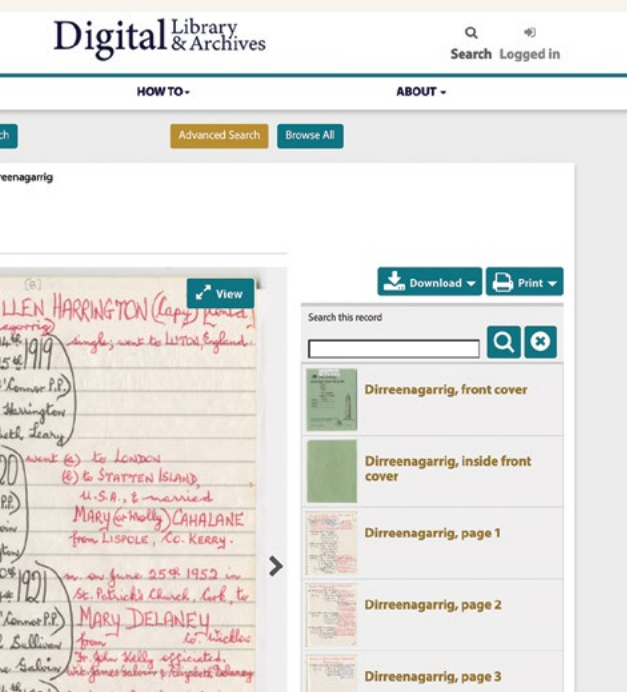
Judith Lucey is Senior Archivist at American Ancestors/NEHGS.

The Riobard O'Dwyer Papers, Mss 1097, at NEHGS represents nearly fifty years of research on families from the Beara Peninsula in southwest County Cork. Riobard O'Dwyer, a retired National School teacher, genealogist, and social historian, collected the material. According to the biographical note in the papers' online finding aid, "Riobard travelled the highways and byways, interviewed all those living and the several people long since dead and gathered their stories." He also studied all extant parish records in the Beara Peninsula and the headstones in many overgrown cemeteries.

The collection, purchased in 2012 by NEHGS, fittingly arrived just days before St. Patrick's Day that year. Processing began soon after its arrival and was completed in March 2013. The collection consists of twenty-six archival boxes (10.5 linear ft.) and is organized into five series or sections: genealogies, vital records (church and civil records), cemetery records, occupations, and notes.

Riobard recorded the genealogies in 155 composition notebooks, and these are organized by townland. The surnames treated in each notebook are listed on the front cover. Some of the area's most common surnames are (O') Brien, Connolly, (O') Connor, Cronin, Crowley, (O') Driscoll, Harrington, Lynch, McCarthy, (O') Sullivan, (O') Shea, and Twomey. The handwritten genealogical sketches focus on family groups: husband, wife, and their children, and contain genealogical data culled from church and civil records and Riobard's notes from the oral histories.

In addition to his extensive genealogical research, Riobard also studied and documented the branch names of these families. Branch names were used to differentiate families with the same surname that lived in close proximity.¹ Many descendants of Beara families believe Riobard's work on branch names was his greatest contribution to the history of the peninsula. The surname



Harrington, for example, has about thirty branch names, while the O'Sullivan family has over fifty branch names. Knowing the branch name is therefore essential when undertaking research on Beara ancestors.

In December 2019, the Special Collections staff began to prepare the collection for digitization. Scanning, describing, and uploading of documents occurred throughout 2020 and, despite building closures due to COVID-19, the digital version of the collection was published and made available to our members in late November 2020. Three of the five sections of the collection are available: genealogies, occupations, and notes. The vital records section, consisting of parish and civil registration data, is available online at irishgenealogy.ie/en. Some remaining materials were added to our digital collection in the winter of 2021, completing the work.

The collection is available to American Ancestors/NEHGS Research and Contributing Members on the American Ancestors Digital Library and Archive at digital.AmericanAncestors.org/digital/collection/odwyer.

NOTE

¹ Timothy G. X. Salls, "The Riobard O'Dwyer Papers," *AMERICAN ANCESTORS* 14 (2013) 2:52.



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Other books

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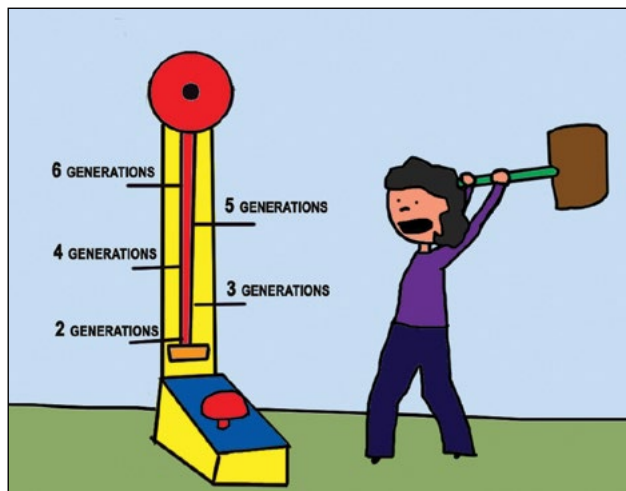
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"It looked so easy when they were demonstrating it!"

Caption submitted by Austin Spencer. Drawing by Jean Powers.

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