



The Colonial Society of Massachusetts

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Terror on the Maine Frontier

MORE DISTANT members may not have much of an idea about what goes on at a “stated meeting” of the Colonial Society, but from time to time we are lucky enough to have authors give us a preview of their forthcoming books. Last April Mary Beth Norton of Cornell University gave us a *precis* of her recent research into Salem witchcraft, the groundwork for a book on the subject to appear this fall.

Though the principal accusers are often portrayed as “girls,” Norton points out that several are better described as young women in their twenties and thirties. A number, both young and old, were refugees from devastating Indian raids that had decimated towns like York and Wells on the Maine frontier. The refugees crowded into Essex County households, traumatized by the scenes of horror they had witnessed (Norton tells several episodes every bit as gruesome as more recent atrocities in Bosnia or Rwanda). Given the providential mind set of seventeenth-century Puritans in Massachusetts, people were quick to link witches, the enemies within, to Indians, the external agents of Satan, who terrorized the Maine frontier.

Norton sees Tituba, Samuel Parris’s servant and one of the first accused, as embodying this frightening union of the forces of darkness. All contemporary evidence, Norton asserts, describes Tituba as an “Indian woman” and not a West Indian Black as she is often portrayed in the literature. Such care to original sources typifies Norton’s research.

Since the 1930s, when employees of the WPA reorganized the Salem case files, historians have been prone to read the record of each case separately. Norton, however, arranged her notes chronologically in order to develop a precise timetable for the

accusations and to better understand how the various cases were related. Norton asserts that the 1692 witchcraft outburst is best understood as an Essex County, rather than an exclusively Salem, phenomenon.

For other new insights, including the key role played by one of the few males accused, the Reverend George Burroughs, a former Salem Village minister who had since decamped to the Maine frontier, members will have to check the shelves of their local bookstore later this fall.

Historians without Attitude

IN THE MAIN, young historians do not lack for venues in which to present their work. The Colonial Society Graduate Student Forum, however, is a bit different from the usual speak-and-grill format. While the CSM membership would never shy away from challenging its youngest guests, the audience participating in the forum understands that challenge is but cruelty when support is not forthcoming.

“Historians without attitude” is the phrase CSM Editor John Tyler uses to describe the event. Indeed, April 5 was—for those of you not fortunate enough to have been there—a stimulating conversation among students, scholars, and practicing historians about new trends and old paradigms in early American history.

CSM members work a deal of sorts with the nine students selected to participate in the forum. In exchange for bringing us up to speed on the newest projects being undertaken in the field, students are offered advice on how to tackle dilemmas of research and conceptualization they have encountered in the course of their work.

Joe Cullon (University of Wisconsin) speculated about how he might draw useful *qualitative* information from the eighteenth-century account books of shipbuilding and allied trades he is examining, while Holly Mitchell (Brandeis) questioned whether her study of Portsmouth widows will yield insights that can be extended beyond that single town. Comparativists Ellen Hartigan-O'Connor (University of Michigan) and Emily Blanck (Emory) puzzled over how to fashion compelling narratives out of the diverse experiences of gender, economics, and slavery they have uncovered in north and south.

Martha Yoder (University of Massachusetts), who is exploring languages of politics and health in Revolutionary Boston, reflected on the historic validity of analogic reasoning, while Ben Irvin (Brandeis) simply wanted it all: race, class, and gender spun into a political history of great white men. (It must be added that moderator Robert Middlekauff held that if any student could perform such a task, Irvin had his bet.)

In the beginning stages of his study of the print culture of eighteenth-century suicide, Rick Bell (Harvard) joined his colleagues in pondering the virtues of comparative approaches and the challenges of incorporating race, class, gender, and, moreover, European influences into his analysis. Kathleen Donegan (Yale), exploring the allure of trauma as well, suggested with some modest hesitation that this twentieth-century concept can help us understand how *in extremis* seventeenth-century writing about settlement affected the colonial enterprise.

Julie Sievers (University of Texas, Austin), also working at the extremes, delves into seventeenth-century wonder literature with a fundamental uncertainty: when reading an edited text, such as Cotton Mather's *Wonders of the Invisible World*, "how can one know where the original writer left off and where the editor or appropriator took up?"

At the conclusion of the day, students and audience were treated to an address from resident scholar-commentator (and Fellow Member) Robert Middlekauff, whose expert survey of the field of early American studies set the tone for a final lively conversation at the proceedings' closing reception.

One measure of the event's success is how reluctant students were to leave 87 Mount Vernon Street. They lingered, talking with members and, finally, in a tight-knit band, with each other. E-mail addresses were exchanged and friendships forged. At the end of the day, each graduate student felt a little less isolated; each student was freshly (and rightly) convinced that his or her work was destined to be an important contribution to the study of early American history.

Graduate Student Forum 2003

The Graduate Student Forum will run again in the spring of 2003. Please look for our forthcoming announcement and mark your calendars as soon as it arrives. Join us as we urge on the next generation of early America's leading historians.

Mysteries of the Colonial Society Revealed: Part One

Those attending the Annual Dinner, eager to tuck in to the tasty comestibles arrayed before them, are frequently surprised to be held up while someone intones a few words in a long-dead language. In Volume LXIII of the *Transactions*, Henry W. Foote describes the origins of the Colonial Society's Latin grace. It appears he filched the text from the High Table of Christchurch, Oxford while traveling in England during the 1920s. He first used the grace when called upon by President Gus Loring to ask the blessing at an annual dinner. By popular demand, he repeated the performance every year until 1956 when ill health prevented him from attending. In his note, Foote does not address the more important question of why a society dedicated to the memory of the Endicotts, Cottons, and Mathers, should use the grace of Cardinal Wolsey's *alma mater*—just one more fascinating twist in the New England story of how Puritan sectaries transformed themselves, *mutatis mutandis*, into Anglophile, if not even Anglican, Brahmins.

The words of the Latin grace, for those not quick enough to catch them before dinner, are as follows:

Gratias Tibi agimus, Deus omnipotens,
pro his ac universis donis Tuis,
quae de Tua largitate accepimus
qui es Dominus Deus in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Freely translated by someone who never quite made it through Cicero, the grace would read:

We give Thee thanks, Almighty God,
for these and for thy other countless gifts,
which we receive from Thy bounty,
O Thou who art Lord God, forever and ever. Amen.

An Important New Acronym

Late in 2001, the Colonial Society of Massachusetts took its proper place among a stellar group of institutions dedicated to furthering the study of New England history. The New England Regional Fellowship Committee (NERFC)—a collaboration of 14 manuscript repositories, a university-based research center, and one learned society (CSM)—awards \$5,000, eight-week grants to fellows who will make use of the collections of at least three participating institutions. Although CSM has no materials to make available, our commitment to the scholarly enterprise is well demonstrated and ongoing. It is appropriate, therefore, that we have joined this group of worthies.

In March 2002 consortium representatives met to consider 58 proposals, out of which they awarded 9 fellowships for 2002-03. Sally Hadden, Assistant Professor of History and, concurrently, Assistant Professor of Law at Florida State University, received the NERFC fellowship carrying the name of the Colonial Society. Professor Hadden, author of *Slave Patrols: Law and Violence in Virginia and the Carolinas* (Harvard University Press, 2001) is working on a project tentatively titled “Legal Cultures in Early American Cities: Boston, Charleston, and Philadelphia in the Eighteenth-Century.” At the stated meeting on February 20, 2003, she will address the CSM membership about the project and the progress of her research.

New Members

Please welcome the following individuals elected as members during the past year:

RESIDENT MEMBERS

Robert Bellinger, of Boston, teaches history at Suffolk University, where he also serves as Director of the Collection of African American Literature. His research and teaching interests include all aspects of Boston history, as well as the African diaspora in the New World. Nominated by Robert J. Allison.

David Burnham, of Cohasset, is a partner at Burnham Rosen Group a firm that specializes in strategic business planning. He has a great interest in educational and historical organizations, serving as President and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Children’s Museum of Boston and as a trustee of the New England Historic and Genealogical Society. Nominated by Frederick D. Ballou.

Beverly Morgan-Welch, of Lexington, has been the Executive Director of the Museum of Afro-American History since October 1999. She is currently on the board of the Boston History Collaborative, the Old North Foundation, and the Amistad Foundation. Nominated by Robert J. Allison.

Stephen O’Neill, of Weymouth, is the curator and senior writer for the Social Law Library and the Supreme Judicial Court Historical Society. He is a trustee of the Pilgrim Society of Plymouth and is currently President of Plymouth’s Burial Hill Preservation Alliance. Nominated by Robert J. Allison.

Lionel Spiro, of Brookline, was a co-founder of the Charrette Corporation. He has served as a trustee or board member of many Boston art institutions, including the Museum of Fine Arts, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, and the Massachusetts College of Art. Currently he serves as a trustee of the Trustees of Reservations and the Boston Athenaeum. Nominated by Frederick D. Ballou.

Brian A. Sullivan, of Boston, is the Senior Reference Archivist at the Harvard University Archives. His present research interest is the journal of Harvard College Librarian John Langdon Sibley (1804–1885). Nominated by Harley P. Holden.

David R. Whitesell, of Cambridge, is currently the Rare Book Cataloguer in the Houghton Library, Harvard University. A member of the Grolier Club since 1995, he is a serious book collector and has an active interest in collecting materials on Harvard Library history. Nominated by W. H. Bond.

Non-resident Members

Gerald Rizzo, M.D., of St. Petersburg, Florida, is a practicing physician, who has been collecting rare maps and books of Africa for the past fifteen years. He may now have the largest private collection of African maps in the world, dating from the 1400s to 1900. Some of these maps pertain to the slave trade and others to the crusade against slavery. Dr. Rizzo has moved his collection to Beacon Hill, where he hopes to open it to scholars and to interested students of history and geography. Nominated by Robert J. Allison.

Publications Committee Approves New Volume of New England Church Records

Last spring the Publications Committee enthusiastically approved a proposal by Fellow Members Jeff Cooper of Oklahoma State University and Ken Minkema of the Jonathan Edwards Papers to publish a new volume of church records. CSM members will recall that Cooper and Minkema were the team who did such a fine job with Volume LXVI, *The Sermon Notebook of Samuel Parris, 1680–1694*. This time around, however, they will be preparing for publication the records of the Reading and Revere churches.

According to Cooper and Minkema, church

records “provide a window through which to study church practices, lay clerical relations, the decision-making process of local churches, and broader developments in society and culture.” Here, as virtually nowhere else, Cooper and Minkema argue, the voices of common citizens and churchgoers can be heard.

Although scholars have lavished attention on the first generation of New England Puritans, examining nearly every aspect of their religious lives, relatively little attention has been given to the second generation of settlement, a period in which the Reading and Revere records are particularly strong. The records indicate that lay participation in church affairs remained vibrant during the period, even as churches began increasingly to rely on church councils as a way of setting agreed upon limits to local church governance.

The Reading records also suggest an effort to reduce public controversy by conducting much church discipline through private meetings. Thus, offenders had an opportunity to apologize for minor offenses in order to avoid the humiliation of public (and possibly divisive) church hearings. The Revere records shed invaluable light on internal church affairs. In an age when religious dissenters were increasingly reluctant to accept the judgment of their own minister in ecclesiological affairs, parishes often sought advice from other churches. The Revere minister carefully transcribed letters he received from other churches explaining why an ensuing council had been called. Both Cooper and Minkema have extensive experience as scholars working with seventeenth- and eighteenth-century New England religious history, and we can be sure another fine volume will result.

Probably the volume likely to appear next in members’ mailboxes (sometime in 2003) will be the proceedings of the conference on “New England Indians and the Colonial Experience.” Its thirteen articles represent both the range of topics considered at the conference and the diversity of its participants (over fifty percent of the people attending the conference were Native Americans). Editors Colin Calloway of Dartmouth College and Neal Salisbury of Smith College have been hard at work revising the essays, ably assisted by Kate Viens of the New

England Museum Association acting as copy editor.

We also hope to receive a completed manuscript this spring from our industrious Vice-President Daniel Coquillette and Fellow Member Neil York of Brigham Young University who have been working for many years now on a multi-volume project on Josiah Quincy, Jr. Its features include a newly annotated edition of the *Reports of Cases Argued and Adjudged Before the Superior Court of Judicature* (the first example of systematic legal reporting in North America), two manuscript commonplace books not previously published (one legal and the other more political and literary in its orientation), and the diary of Quincy's travels to the southern colonies just before the Revolution to assess the depth of patriot sentiment there.

In an effort to push forward "The Eighteenth-Century Records of the Boston Overseers of the Poor" (the long awaited missing CSM Volume LXIX), the Colonial Society hired a new assistant editor this spring, Jane Ward, formerly of the Peabody Essex Museums. Jane is working on the project under the careful supervision of Assistant Editor Anne Decker Cecere.

Other CSM volumes further in the future include an anthology of New England elegies edited by Ron Bosco; "The Letters of John Cotton, Jr." edited by Sheila McIntyre and Len Travers; "The Select Correspondence of Sir Francis Bernard" edited by Colin Nicolson; and "The Select Correspondence of Thomas Hutchinson" edited by Editor of Publications John Tyler.

Conferences and Workshops

The Next CSM conference, "New England Slavery and the Slave Trade," will take place April 24-25, 2004, in Boston at the facilities of our cosponsors Suffolk University and the Museum of Afro-American History. Ira Berlin of the University of Maryland at College Park has agreed to chair the event and will be assisted by Joanne Melish of the University of Kentucky and James Horton of George Washington University. The local arrangements committee includes Editor of Publications

John Tyler and Marilyn Richardson representing the Colonial Society; Bob Allison, Robert Bellinger, and Beth Bowers from Suffolk University; Beverly Morgan-Welch from the Museum of Afro-American History; and Marty Blatt from the National Park Service. Calls for papers should be appearing on e-lists and in scholarly journals shortly.

The annual K-12 teacher workshop moved to a new spring date this year. Teachers heard presentations from Patrick Malone of Brown University on how readily Native Americans adapted European firearms to their own uses for hunting and forest warfare; from John Murrin of Princeton University on the perennially interesting topic of Salem witchcraft; and from David Hackett Fischer on the historiography of the American Revolution. One of the best features of these workshops is that they bring together a truly diverse group of teachers from inner-city elementary schools to elite private schools. The presentations, generally by CSM members, are designed to bring teachers up-to-date with the latest scholarship on things early American. Other members, feeling in need of a refresher course, are welcome to join in the fun. Check the CSM website (www.colonialsociety.org) after the first of the year, for details of the 2003 workshop.

2002 Whitehill Prize Awarded

This past May, the judges of the Walter Muir Whitehill Prize in Early American History—Fellow Members Edmund S. Morgan, Bernard Bailyn, and Robert Middlekauff—awarded the \$2,500 Whitehill Prize to Matthew Mason. Mason, a student of Ira Berlin's at the University of Maryland, submitted an essay entitled "'Nothing Is Better Calculated to Excite Divisions': Federalist Agitation against Slave Representation during the War of 1812." The essay is scheduled to appear in the December 2002 issue of *The New England Quarterly*.

*Mysteries of the Colonial Society
Revealed:
Part Two*

Among the most frequently asked questions of members attending stated meetings is the contents of the punch served at the reception accompanying each talk. The question might more candidly be rephrased as, “How is it that such a pleasantly fruity concoction can have such lethal aftereffects?” Or in a more severe manifestation, “How is it that I ended up in Ashmont when I thought I was taking the ‘T’ home to Cambridge?”

It’s perhaps not surprising that a generation weaned on white wine and sparkling water would

not recognize Fish House Punch, but the ingredients would have been well-known to Walter Muir Whitehill and his convivial confreres. For those who would like to test its alchemical effects at home, here is the recipe (in industrial quantities) straight from Sam Tringalli, our long-time butler, bartender, and friend:

- 3/4 of a pound granulated sugar
- 1 quart lemon juice
- 2 bottles Jamaica rum
- 1 bottle of brandy
- 2 quarts water
- 4 ounces peach brandy

Sam adds that half the above quantity is “usually sufficient” for Colonial Society gatherings!



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