

ABSTRACT

The Hopkins and The Browns: How Family Embodies History

Elizabeth S. Brown

Director: Julie Sweet, Ph.D.

This is an examination of the lives of my ancestors, the Brown and Hopkins families, who moved to the New World in the first half of the seventeenth century. I first examine the Hopkins family through whom I explore the Mayflower journey and the lives of the Pilgrims. I then explore the journal of a Puritan minister who exemplifies Puritan family life and beliefs about death. Finally, I examine the Brown family who were politically active, but also do not represent the typical Puritan and who also became involved in the Salem Witch Trials. They provide a starting point for further exploration into the lives of people who came to settle in Massachusetts Bay Colony. Some of the stereotypes of Puritans are exemplified by my ancestors while others are shown not to reflect the reality of the typical Puritan. Life in the New World, like it is now, was a varied experience. Through the experiences of my family and the people they interacted with, I attempt to provide a glimpse into the reality of the lives of Puritans living in the seventeenth century and how they do, or do not, live up to the modern stereotypes we have created in the centuries since they lived.

APPROVED BY DIRECTOR OF HONORS THESIS:

Dr. Julie Sweet, Department of History

APPROVED BY THE HONORS PROGRAM:

Dr. Elizabeth Corey, Director

DATE: _____

THE HOPKINS AND THE BROWNS:
HOW FAMILY EMBODIES HISTORY

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By
Elizabeth S. Brown

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To Stephen, Constance, Richard, Thomas and all the others who came before me

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My family

This project would have been impossible without the support of my family and all of the research they had already done that set the groundwork for my own investigation which made this project possible. Their constant questions and continual investment in my success always pushed me to want to make the end result better. I believe that through this endeavor the Browns can now understand a little bit more about where we came from. I hope I have done you all proud.

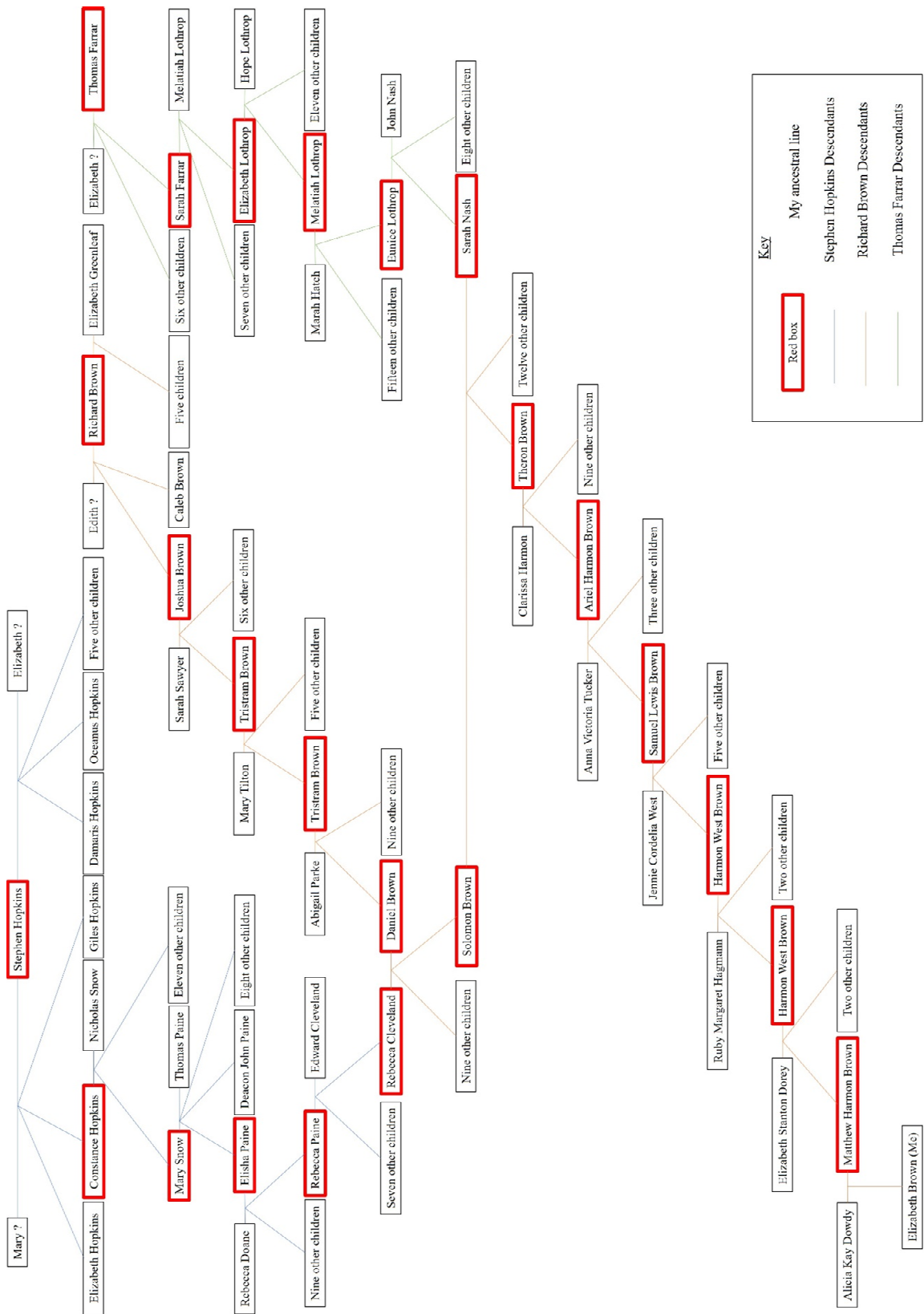
Dr. Sweet

Dr. Sweet is truly the one who sparked the idea to investigate more deeply my ancestral story. Her passion about colonial America, and history in general, made her the perfect thesis advisor. She was motivational at the worst of times and inspirational at the best. She truly shaped this project and it would have been impossible without her continual support and positivity.

Ashley

Throughout the insanity that defined the entirety of this adventure, Ashley was always there for me. She listened to me fume about piles of court records as well as rejoice in Thomas' madness. I feel like Toubert and Thomas might have been cut from the same cloth which I find amusing and terrifying in equal measure. Thank you for your enduring friendship!

Family Tree



INTRODUCTION

Ever since I was little, my dad told me stories about who my ancestors were and all of the famous people we may, or may not, have been related to. There was this enormous black binder filled with hundreds of pages of his family tree that he would occasionally take out and we would flip through it. He would point out the people he found most interesting and explain to me something he had learned recently about one of them. I heard stories of generations of distant relatives living in Switzerland, of settlers in remote South Dakota, and of Baptist ministers who fought in the American Revolution. One story that always stood out to me was about the Hopkins and how they made their way to the New World on the Mayflower.¹ Stephen Hopkins was an adventurer who brought along his young daughter, Constance, when he moved his family across the world. She always fascinated me because I imagined her being about my age and traveling across the Atlantic Ocean and settling in Massachusetts, which seemed to me like a wild experience for someone so young. There was a picture book about the daily life of a pilgrim girl in Plymouth that I read, and I could envision Constance doing the same things depicted in that book. For me, Constance always seemed to be a living, breathing person who I felt incredibly connected to, but this connection did not extend to any of my other ancestors. At university, I took a course about early colonial America and as I began to understand more about that time period, it made me reexamine my personal connection with people who had lived at this same time. How did their lives

¹ My ancestry and genealogical connection with the Hopkins family has been confirmed through my father's membership in the General Society of Mayflower Descendants.

compare to what I was learning in class? Did they fit the stereotypes about Puritans that are understood in popular culture today? These questions led to my closer examination of the Hopkins family and their move to New England, but I also realized that I had an even more direct connection with early colonial America – the direct male Brown family line came to America in 1634, meaning I had not only one, but in fact two family connections to this time period. I had to know how these people's lives exemplified or contradicted what I knew about Puritan life in Massachusetts Bay Colony during the seventeenth century. I had to bring these people to life and discover more about their stories for myself, but also on behalf of my family, who all had a vested interest in learning more about these people who lived nearly four hundred years ago.

I started this exploration of Puritan life in seventeenth-century Massachusetts by looking at the family I was most familiar with and who had come to the New World first – the Hopkins family. Not only did this include Stephen and Constance, but the rest of their family as well. Interestingly, Stephen was the only member of the *Mayflower* party who had visited the New World before and then was one of the few aboard who was not moving for religious reasons. Although their move was not because of religious freedom, Stephen, his wife, and their children all lived their lives according to traditional Puritan precepts. He participated in local politics, as was expected of any citizen, but also had his own run-ins with the law, also typical of the very litigious Puritans. Stephen Hopkins and his family stand as an example of the traditional Puritan life as people tried to survive and make their way in this strange new world.

Related to the Hopkins, Deacon John Paine further adds to the complicated image of Puritans. Though he lived a diligent, religious life, he directly contradicts the

traditional image of the Puritan father as an emotionless taskmaster. Through his journal entries, he makes clear the value he places on being a father, how much he loves his children and wishes the best for their lives, but he also writes about the pain he feels when someone he knew died. He shows how Puritans, though living lives dedicated to the practice of their religion, could also find value in their earthly lives. He also was not ashamed or fearful of expressing the deep emotions he felt in regard to the joyful or difficult times in his life. Deacon Paine presents the contradiction between past realities and modern perceptions.

Another branch of my family tree is the Brown family. Richard Brown, my direct male ancestor, came to the New England area in 1634 in order to start a new life. Similar to Stephen Hopkins, Richard led a diligent life, doing all of the things expected of a Puritan living in seventeenth-century America. He did live up to some of the stereotypes about Puritans, but in other regards, he does not align with other modern assumptions of how they lived. Another Brown relative, Thomas Farrar, lived a life in direct contradiction to Puritan stereotypes. He fulfilled some of the typical duties expected of Puritans, but he also was aggressive, mean, and abusive. His actions likely made him unpopular with his contemporaries, and that dislike ended with him being arrested as a warlock during the Salem Witch Trials.

The different experiences of Stephen Hopkins, his family, Deacon John Paine, Richard Brown, and Thomas Farrar provide varied examples of what life was like for people living in seventeenth-century Massachusetts Bay Colony. Some of the stereotypes of Puritans are exemplified by my ancestors while others are shown not to reflect the reality of the Puritan experience. Life in the New World, like it is now, was a varied

experience. Through the experiences of my family and the people they interacted with, I provide a glimpse into the reality of the lives of Puritans living in the seventeenth century and how they do, or do not, live up to the modern stereotypes we have created in the centuries since they lived.

CHAPTER ONE

The Hopkins Family

The Hopkins' family story begins with Stephen, who was born on April 30, 1581 and was the son of John and Elizabeth Hopkins. He was baptized at the Church of All Saints in Upper Clatford – a town just down the road from his family's farm where he had been born not long before. At the age of about 5 or 6, Stephen and his family moved to a nearby town named Winchester. In 1593, when Stephen was 12, his father died suddenly. Due to his unexpected death, he did not write a will, which left Stephen and his siblings in a state of limbo.¹ Sadly, there is little known about how Stephen and his siblings lived during their adolescence and teenage years.

In 1602, Stephen married a young woman named Mary. Their first daughter, Elizabeth, was born in March 1605. The couple's second daughter, Constance (my ancestor), was born in May 1606. The Hopkins' third child, a son named Giles, was born in May 1606. In a somewhat unclear turn of events, Stephen became involved with the newly formed Virginia Company that had plans to found an English colony at Jamestown in the newly discovered Americas.²

The Virginia Company was incorporated in 1606 and was granted a charter by King James I to colonize the New World after the West Country men, a previous group

¹ Johnson, Caleb H. *Here Shall I Die Ashore: Stephen Hopkins: Bermuda Castaway, Jamestown Survivor, and Mayflower Pilgrim* (Xlibris, 2007), 21.

² Glover, Lorri, and Daniel Blake Smith. *The Shipwreck That Saved Jamestown: The Sea Venture Castaways and the Fate of America* (New York: Henry Holt and, 2009), 9.

of colonizers, had suffered a major failure with the mysterious disappearance of the Roanoke Colony.³ In December 1606, three ships left England and headed for Virginia. They reached Chesapeake Bay in April of the following year. They chose to establish their new settlement, which they named Jamestown in honor of the current king of England King James I, in a marsh on the banks of the James River. Life in this newly formed colony was difficult and resulted in the deaths of many of the colonists. Under instructions of the Virginia Company, the settlers were not to let the Native Americans see that any Englishmen had died to try and propagate the idea that they were in fact immortals in order to scare the Native Americans to try and prevent them from attacking their settlements. Despite these instructions, the large numbers of deaths proved this plan to be impossible. Initially, there were 104 colonists, but nine months later, there were only 38 colonists still living. Between 1607 and 1622, the Virginia Company sent about 10,000 people to settle Jamestown, but in the end, nearly 80% of those people died. The lack of resources, the settlers' disinterest in working enough to support the colony, and rampant disease made the colony unsustainable.⁴

In 1609, given the opportunity to join the Jamestown experiment, but without knowledge of the hardships that the earlier settlers faced, Stephen boarded the *Sea Venture* which was headed for Virginia. It is likely that he was tempted by the offer of adventure, the opportunity to gain wealth, and the call to be a representative of England in the international race to settle the New World. He left his wife and their three children to fend for themselves while he embarked on what ended up being a seven-year mission

³ Taylor, Alan. *American Colonies: The Settling of North America* (New York: Penguin Books, 2010), 130.

⁴ Taylor, *American Colonies*, 131.

to Jamestown.⁵ The majority of the journey to the New World passed quietly until they were caught in a hurricane. The *Sea Venture* was separated from the rest of the fleet, and they were shipwrecked on the Bermuda coast in July.⁶

The first task for the 150 colonists who were now on Bermuda was to make sure there was enough food and drink for everyone so that they would survive until they could find a way to get to Jamestown. By the end of August, Governor Thomas Gates and a number of colonists had come up with their first escape plan. They created a small boat out of the wreckage of the *Sea Venture*, and they sent out a small crew that would sail to Virginia, tell them of the others who were stranded on Bermuda, and then send a rescue ship. No rescue ship ever came.⁷

After a few months of living in relative comfort on the island and everyone falling into a routine, some people decided they would rather stay there than try and reach Jamestown. The Governor decided to start building small ships to allow everyone to escape the island, but those who felt they wanted to stay in Bermuda refused to help. Because of their insubordination, the Governor banished them to a neighboring island. They asked to return only a few days after their banishment because they realized life without the store of supplies from the ship was much more difficult.⁸ In January, Stephen began to feel a growing discontentment with the Governor's leadership and their attempts at escape. He began to publicly deny the authority of the Governor saying that he no longer had any power because it had ceased upon their shipwreck in Bermuda. Puritans

⁵ Johnson, *Here Shall I Die Ashore*, 29.

⁶ Johnson, *Here Shall I Die Ashore*, 32-37.

⁷ Johnson, *Here Shall I Die Ashore*, 37-41.

⁸ Johnson, *Here Shall I Die Ashore*, 42.

were supposed to respect and obey their elders, but Stephen felt so strongly that the Governor was doing something to the detriment of everyone who was shipwrecked, he was willing to go against the Puritan ideal in favor of what he personally believed was right. Stephen's argument was that because the charter they had received from the King gave the Governor power specifically in Jamestown, and since they had shipwrecked outside of the Governor's official purview, the Governor no longer had any right to the power granted to him in the charter. He argued that since they were not under the power of the Governor, they should be able to do as they wished. He believed in every individual's right to personal liberty when not under direct governmental control. Stephen also saw no reason for them to rush trying to leave the island since they were living quite happily as they were. This resulted in Stephen being arrested for mutiny and being brought before the whole company. He was found guilty and was sentenced to death. Stephen was distraught and in tears, and he claimed that his wife and children would be ruined if he were executed. Stephen persistently begged for mercy. Surprisingly, the Governor pardoned him.⁹

Once Stephen miraculously survived being accused of mutiny and nearly being put to death, he began to blend into the background of daily life in Bermuda. The ships were built as planned, and in May 1610, ten months after being shipwrecked in Bermuda, Stephen and the rest of the crew made it to Jamestown only to find that it was in a worse situation than they had been in in Bermuda. Jamestown was struggling to provide enough to eat for the settlers who were already there, and then they were forced to find a

⁹ Johnson, *Here Shall I Die Ashore*, 44-45.

way to sustain 140 additional people.¹⁰ The situation in Jamestown continued to deteriorate. While Stephen was still trying to survive his adventures in Bermuda and Jamestown, back in England, his wife Mary died in May 1613. It is likely that their daughter Elizabeth died shortly after her mother did.^{11,12}

Eventually, the Jamestown settlers decided to abandon their mission and return back to England. Before leaving the New World, it is likely that Stephen attended the wedding of Pocahontas to John Rolfe in April 1614 because it was such a small and close-knit community and Stephen and John had been on the *Sea Venture* together when it was shipwrecked. In 1616, Stephen returned to England along with John Rolfe, his wife Pocahontas (also known as Rebecca), as well as their young son Thomas onboard.¹³

It is unclear what Stephen did upon his return to England, but in 1618, he married his second wife, Elizabeth. Stephen and Elizabeth's first child, a daughter named Damaris, was born in 1619. It was about this time that Stephen became involved with a second venture heading to the New World. The Puritans who had escaped England and had settled in the Netherlands had decided by 1617 that they would move their congregation to the New World. Their first attempts at securing transport was through the Virginia Company. Faced with financial difficulties, the congregation was forced into a joint-stock venture in order to fund their voyage. Due to Stephen's previous connection with the Virginia Company, it is likely he heard about this new adventure

¹⁰ Johnson, *Here Shall I Die Ashore*, 53-54.

¹¹ Johnson, *Here Shall I Die Ashore*, 57-59.

¹² It is also said that the stories of the *Sea Venture*'s shipwreck eventually reached Shakespeare and inspired his play "The Tempest."

¹³ Johnson, *Here Shall I Die Ashore*, 60-61.

from his remaining contacts at the Company. The deal that Stephen was offered to partake in the voyage was too good for him to pass up: he would gain a share of the joint-stock venture as well as land for every person he brought along who would be willing to commit to seven-year contract working for the company. After those seven years, the company planned on liquidating the stock in hopes of making a profit. Despite all the hardships that Stephen had faced on his previous voyage to the New World, he could not pass up the offer of land, which was something he would never be able to afford in England. But, instead of going alone, Stephen decided to bring his family with him and permanently relocate to the other side of the ocean.¹⁴

Stephen and his family were not a part of the Puritan cohort who traveled from the Netherlands, but they joined the Pilgrims' journey when the *Mayflower* stopped in England. This time, Stephen would not be adventuring to the New World on his own, but he was bringing his wife and his children Constance, Giles, and Damaris along. When the Hopkins family began their journey on the *Mayflower*, Elizabeth was already pregnant with her and Stephen's second child. The *Mayflower's* journey was not an easy one. The *Mayflower* was delayed on multiple occasions, which resulted in them being forced to brave stormy seas as well as not arriving in the New World until nearly winter. Despite all the difficulties these men and women faced, Elizabeth gave birth to a son on board the *Mayflower*, whom they named Oceanus in commemoration of his being born during their ocean voyage. Oceanus was the first child born during this journey to the

¹⁴ Johnson, *Here Shall I Die Ashore*, 62-64.

New World. His birth stood in stark contrast the immense amount of death that was to come.¹⁵

After a voyage that lasted more than two months, the *Mayflower* finally spotted land. They were too far north, but after failed attempts to sail further south, the Pilgrims were forced to make a decision about where to try and found their colony. A major problem was that the land the Pilgrims had reached was not a part of the charter given to the Virginia Company, but actually in New England. They had reasonable fears about the legitimacy of claiming land outside of the original charter and if any government they put in place would be legal. Dissent occurred amongst the passengers, but their solution was to sign what is known as the “Mayflower Compact,” where all men aboard agreed to submit to the government they would establish so that no one could contest its legitimacy later on. In order to resolve the matter of settling on land that was not in the original charter, they decided to write back to their partners in England and have them expand the charter to include the area of land that they eventually chose to occupy.¹⁶ Those aboard the *Mayflower* had resolved their immediate problems, but they then had to decide where they should land and found their settlement.

It was winter in New England which prevented the Pilgrims from fully establishing their settlement. In fact, most passengers of the *Mayflower* stayed aboard the ship throughout the duration of the winter. The ship anchored near Cape Cod. Small search parties were sent out to try and determine the best place for their town, and then once they had picked the spot they deemed best, they slowly began to build the most important buildings such as the common house and the store house. The winter that the

¹⁵ Johnson, *Here Shall I Die Ashore*, 65-66.

¹⁶ Johnson, *Here Shall I Die Ashore*, 67-69.

Pilgrims endured was harsh, even by New England standards. The passengers had been living on the *Mayflower* for six months by the start of 1621, and the horrible conditions on board combined with the cruel winter resulted in the death of nearly 50% of those who had made the transatlantic journey.

The extreme winter weather was not the only challenge the Puritans faced upon their arrival in the New World. Aside from Stephen, no one else had ever been to the New World before, which meant that nearly everyone was completely unaware about the difficulties they were facing as they tried to establish themselves in this new land. All other previous English attempts at colonizing the Americas had failed miserably, and there was no guarantee for the Pilgrims that their colony would not fail as well. Almost as soon as the *Mayflower* made landfall and sent out exploratory parties, the English met the mysterious Native populations who were already inhabiting the lands that the Pilgrims were now trying to occupy.

On December 6, 1620, Stephen was a member of the party that made the final search of the area before permanently deciding where they would settle in the New World. This fateful scouting party was the first group of Pilgrims to encounter Native Americans. This “first encounter” was by no means the first time the Pilgrims had seen the Natives since their arrival in the New World because scouting had begun at the beginning of November. This was the first time that the colonists had interacted with the Native Americans as opposed to seeing them at a distance or digging up their graves or food stores. This “encounter” was actually a brief battle that surprisingly resulted in no injuries on either the English or Native side.¹⁷ As the Pilgrims were trying to settle on

¹⁷ Bradford, William. *Of Plymouth Plantation: 1620-1647*. Edited by Samuel Eliot Morison. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), 68-72.

what the Natives considered to be their land, this would not be the last hostile interaction between these two groups of people.

On January 17, 1621, Stephen was privy to another encounter with the Native Americans in the area. Two months after their arrival in the New World, relations between the Native populations and the English remained tense, but the Pilgrims were making efforts to start a dialogue of some sort. During a meeting when they elected Miles Standish as their military leader, those who were attending saw two Natives standing at the top of a nearby hill. The Natives made signs for the Pilgrims to come and meet them, while at the same time the Pilgrims motioned for the Natives to come and meet them. Eventually, Captain Standish, their newly elected military leader, and Stephen, armed with one musket between them, made their way towards the Natives on the hill. As they approached, they put down the musket in a sign of peace, but the Natives left before Captain Standish and Stephen could reach them. Despite being able to tell that there were others hiding in the forest at the top of the hill, neither the original two nor any other Natives appeared.¹⁸

The following July, Stephen, accompanied by Squanto, had the opportunity to meet Massasoit, a local chieftan. Squanto was a Native American who had had experience with Europeans before he met the Pilgrims. He spoke English and made an effort to help the Pilgrims with their interactions with the Native tribes in the area. Before his death in 1622, he acted as the primary emissary between the Pilgrims and Massasoit. At this point, the Pilgrims had only recently established a working relationship with the Native Americans in the area, and in order to further solidify their

¹⁸ Fiore, Jordan D., ed. *Mourt's Relation* (Plymouth, MA: Plymouth Rock Foundation, 1985), 44.

relationship with Massasoit, the English decided it would be best to visit their new trading partners and encourage their partnership through the giving of gifts. They also felt the visit could be used to scope out where Massasoit lived in order to give them a better idea of the strength he may or may not have possessed. Upon their arrival to Massasoit's village, they found the population to have been decimated by disease, which had been brought over by the earlier European visitors and had swept through many of the Native populations in the area. Stephen and his companion remarked that so many had died that there was no one left to bury the dead, resulting in skulls and bones being visible lying around the village. In addition to their discovery about the weakness of this particular village, they found that the disease had not at all affected the Narragansetts, who lived on the other side of the bay from where the Pilgrims had settled. This trip that Stephen participated in may not have been especially helpful in strengthening their relationship with Massasoit, but it did provide them with a clearer image of the status of the Native peoples who occupied the area where they had settled.¹⁹

Before the arrival of Europeans in the New World, there had been a significant Native population. After Europeans brought over diseases to which the Native Americans had no immunity, their population was decimated and decreased between 50% and 90%. In the early seventeenth century, there were about ten different Native American tribes who were living in the area where the Pilgrims would eventually settle. The tribe that became most prominent during the settlement of Massachusetts Bay was the Wampanoags who were led by Massasoit, the leader whom the Puritans felt most compelled to have a good relationship with. When the Puritans arrived at Plymouth, the

¹⁹ Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation*, 87.

Pilgrims desired to establish a relationship with the local Native tribes because they believed that a trade relationship would be beneficial to both groups. Despite first meetings between the Native Americans and colonists being strained, the relationship became helpful to both sides. The Puritans and Natives established comfortable trade relations. The Natives received objects from Europe (ex. firearms, alcohol, tools, fabric, etc.), and the Puritans were taught how to fish and farm corn. Trade was not the only goal of the Puritans. They wished to convert the Natives to Christianity. In the Puritans' opinion, the Native Americans were heathens and uncivilized, which meant that it was only the Christian thing to do to help the lost Native peoples and guide them to Christ. For the first few decades after the Puritans arrived, they did not emphasize their goal of conversion. Only after the Puritans actively began trying to convert the Natives did they realize how difficult a task that would be. Despite many decades of trying to force the Native Americans to change to a more European and Christian way of life, their efforts eventually ended in failure. Native tribes also found it advantageous to sign treaties of protection with the colonists so that they would be allied with their military, which would help them in their fights with other tribes, but it also made the tribes subject to colonial law. Relations with the Native peoples were not always easy, and they sometimes did devolve into wars between the Pilgrims and certain tribes, but for the majority of the seventeenth century, relations remained civil.²⁰

In 1623, Stephen and his family received their own designated piece of land in Plymouth. Under their agreement with the Virginia Company and the joint-stock venture, all those who settled in Plymouth were entitled to a certain amount of land.

²⁰ Bremer, Francis J. *The Puritan Experiment: New England Society from Bradford to Edwards* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2013), 199-205.

During the division of land, they parceled out the territory equally according to each person's share. This made farming the land, especially in regards to the planting of corn, more efficient and allowed for more return on the work being used to plant their crops in the first place.²¹ In 1626, many members of Plymouth Colony participated in a buyout of the Virginia Company. This permitted the Pilgrims to be full owners of the land they were settling, as well as for the investors in the Company to make a return on their initial investment.

The next time that Stephen and his family are mentioned is in the 1627 Division of Cattle. During the division of cattle, the new livestock, provided by the Virginia Company, was equally distributed among the colonists. Some of the animals were designated for communal use but were to be taken care of by specific families, and then after a set period of time, the animal could be used solely for personal use. In 1627, the Hopkins family received "a black weaning calf," as well as another cow and two goats. It is also in the records of the 1627 Division of Cattle that Constance, Stephen's daughter from his first marriage, is cited as "Constance Snow," indicating that at some point before this she had married Nicholas Snow.²²

The Hopkins family continued about their normal lives for the next few years. They were doing their best to adapt to their new lives in Plymouth. During the 1630s, Stephen was chosen as one of the Assistants to the Governor. Like many other Puritans, Stephen was doing his duty to his community by participating in the government of the colony. Under the charter to establish Plymouth as granted by the English government

²¹ Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation*, 120.

²² New Plymouth Colony. *Records of Plymouth Colony*. Edited by Nathaniel B. Shurtleff and David Pulsifer. 12 vols. (Boston, MA: Press of W. White, 1855), Vol. 1, 30.

and the Virginia Company, it was the General Court that held primary power. This court only met four times a year, which meant that the governor and his nine assistants were in charge for the majority of the year. Despite the General Court technically having governmental supremacy, it was the governor and his assistants who in reality held most of the governing power, but everything was still in flux.²³ This was a new society, which meant that as the community grew and evolved, so did the government. Before 1632, it was the assistants to the governor who in fact elected the governor, but it was later determined that the freemen of the colony should vote to choose the governor, but the only candidates were the assistants. Local towns felt like their opinions were not being taken into account, so it was determined that every town could designate up to three deputies to represent them and work alongside the assistants so that these two groups would share legislative power. A few of the positions in the General Court were made lifetime positions, and they also granted permission for people to vote via proxies in the yearly elections. Power was largely centralized in the colonies, but it cannot be forgotten that, despite being separated from England, they did still consider themselves to be English citizens who were under English rule and were subjects of the king.

Stephen did not only participate in local government through his position as an Assistant to the Governor, but he was also the defendant in a number of legal cases, which was also a traditional role in Puritan New England. In June 1636, Stephen was involved in a case of battery where he was fined for injuring the plaintiff of the case. It is impossible to know exactly what happened, but it is obvious that the court felt that Stephen had clearly acted against the interests of society, and he was fined 5 pounds

²³ Bremer, *The Puritan Experiment*, 58-62.

sterling to the King, “whose peace he had broken,” as well as 40 shillings to the plaintiff. In October 1637, he was called before the court for allowing servants and other men to drink at his house on the Lord’s day, which was strictly against Puritan religious beliefs. Religion was incredibly important to all of the people who came over on the Mayflower, regardless of whether or not they were a part of original Pilgrim group from the Netherlands. As stated before, Stephen was not a member of the original Puritan congregation, but that did not exclude him from the religious requirements of living in the Puritan Plymouth colony. Stephen had a reputation as someone who was very religious and devout, but that did not prevent him from being involved in numerous cases where he acted against Puritan law.²⁴ As indicated by Stephen’s actions in Bermuda as a mutineer, he was not afraid of acting according to what he believed. In Bermuda, he denounced the power of those in charge in favor of people having individual freedoms.²⁵ He acted in accordance with what he believed was right, which was not necessarily in accordance with the theocratic law of the period.

In February 1638, Stephen was involved in a case with his servant where she became pregnant, despite being unmarried and the father of her child being a recently executed murderer. Stephen wanted to remove her from his service, but because of the agreement they had made upon his hiring her, the court determined that Stephen was not allowed to get rid of her. Stephen vehemently did not want her in his home, so in spite of

²⁴ Johnson, *Here Shall I Die Ashore*, 44.

²⁵ Johnson, *Here Shall I Die Ashore*, 45.

the court's ruling, he sent her away. Luckily, another household took pity on this young woman and hired her to work in their household.²⁶

Stephen represents a typical Puritan colonist. Puritans believed that they had to closely watch their neighbors in order to make sure that everyone was living according to the law. Their collectivist mindset instilled in them a need to make sure everyone was living correctly, because they believed that if anyone acted contrary to what God wanted for their society, it would negatively impact society as a whole. Since everyone was carefully observing the actions of their friends and neighbors, they knew exactly what everyone else was up to. They were not afraid to call out their neighbors since they felt that it was to the benefit of society. This created for a very litigious community. As evidenced by the numerous cases that Stephen was involved in, the courts tried cases covering a range of different issues. They handled both criminal and civil disputes, and tangentially religious disputes as well since the legal codes of the time were based on Puritan beliefs. It did not matter if people considered themselves Puritans or not; if they lived in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, then they were required to attend a Puritan church every Sunday, and they had to contribute to the income of the preacher. There was no separation between church and state, meaning people were bound by religious law, English law, as well as the laws of the colony.

In August 1638, Stephen was given permission to build a house and work the land in Mattachesse, which was a new town not very far from Plymouth. This permission was conditional on the fact that it did not take him away from his work in Plymouth.²⁷ Stephen obviously wanted to try and become more successful, but when he asked to be

²⁶ *Records of Plymouth Colony*, Vol. 1, 111-113.

²⁷ *Records of Plymouth Colony*, Vol. 1, 93.

able to work this new area of land, the court deemed that Stephen's contribution to his community was more important than his individual success. He was permitted to take on additional responsibilities, which would potentially be profitable for him, but it could not be at the cost of not being able to fulfill his duty to Plymouth. Stephen was a member of the Plymouth community and that had to be his priority above any potential gains from this new land.

In another instance of Stephen acting against the community interests of Plymouth colony, he was fined for selling wine and beer at exorbitant prices, and then he was fined again for selling "strong water" without a license. Stephen apparently had a desire to make a profit and was not afraid to act in his best interest, which was in direct contrast to the Puritan communal perspective that what is good for the majority is good for the individual. The desire for money which Stephen exhibits was not a desirable trait according to Puritan belief because it meant that his devotion to God was second to his desire for money, and he faced the consequences for his actions.

Stephen Hopkins died in June 1644 at the age of 63, an old age considering his many adventures during his lifetime. In July of the same year, his estate was inventoried. Captain Miles Standish and Mr. William Bradford, two of the most prominent men of Plymouth colony, were the executors of Stephen's last Will and Testament in August 1644. In his will, Stephen was very specific in what he left to each child. His wife had already died, so the entire estate was passed on to his children. He did specify that before the estate was distributed among his descendants that all debts were to be paid and the estate would pay for his burial. He then outlined what each child would receive in the

will. He gave his daughters the linens and different animals, and he named his son Caleb as his heir and as the executor of his estate.

Death was a primary focal point in Puritan life, and it seems that Stephen was no different. They led their lives according to God's wishes and dedicated their lives to Christ in order to be accepted into Heaven. Puritans believed that living a good life was not a guarantee of being admitted to Heaven, and so they did everything they could to try and feel certain about their after-life destination.²⁸ Especially as people approached their time of death, they became increasingly worried about whether or not they would be going to Heaven or Hell. Their inability to be absolutely sure where they would spend the after-life made dying and death an incredibly worry-inducing time in someone's life. Since Puritanism was a reaction against the excess and ceremony of the Catholic church, Puritan funerals and burials were very simple and understated. They wanted to make sure that they were the exact opposite of a Catholic burial.²⁹ For the first few decades that Pilgrims lived in the New World, people were not even meant to have funerals at all. A bell tolled to signal for people of the town to gather, and then they quickly and quietly buried the deceased. After lifting the ban on funerals, they developed into times for communities to gather together in reverence of the deceased, but it was still meant to be simple and not excessively emotional. As time passed, they did slowly become more elaborate with the inclusion of a community meal and the wearing of nicer funeral clothes.³⁰ It transitioned from a more secular event that involved simply placing the body

²⁸ Stannard, David E. "Death and Dying in Puritan New England." *The American Historical Review* 78, no. 5 (December 1973): 1305-330., 1326.

²⁹ Daniels, Bruce Colin. *Puritans at Play: Leisure and Recreation in Colonial New England*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005., 85-86.

³⁰ Daniels, *Puritans at Play*, 87.

in the ground, and over time, it became a religious “celebration” where the community could come together to commemorate the person who died.

William Bradford, who had been the governor of Plymouth Colony, gave a brief outline of Stephen’s progeny and how Stephen and his wife produced many children and grandchildren, which had been to the benefit of the colony. Bradford mentioned Stephen’s oldest surviving child of his first marriage, Constance.³¹ She had come over on the *Mayflower* at the age of 14 with Stephen and the rest of their family. Constance was married to Nicholas Snow in 1627 at the age of 21. Her husband, Nicholas, had arrived in Plymouth aboard the *Anne* in 1623.³² In May 1628, their first child was born. This was the first of twelve children that Constance would eventually bear. As is typical, Constance is almost nonexistent in the written records of Plymouth colony. Her name is only ever mentioned a handful of times. This is reflective of the typical female experience during seventeenth-century colonial America.

Massachusetts Bay Colony during the seventeenth century was a paternalistic society. Women, despite not holding most of the power, were still very important members of Puritan society. Their roles had an impact on every aspect of their culture. Even though men were the public face of power, women maintained significant influence in the private domain. The varied roles that women took on included being business partners, teachers, and doctors. They were wives, mothers, sisters, and daughters who were intimately involved in the running of the colony.³³ Just as there are standards of

³¹ Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation*, 443-445.

³² New Plymouth Colony. *Plymouth Colony Records, Deeds, &c., 1627-1651*. Vol. 1. Plymouth, MA., 1627-1651.

³³ Ulrich, Laurel Thatcher. *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650-1750* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 37-38.

womanliness and femininity today, the Pilgrims had their own ideas of how women were supposed to act. This primarily meant that they were supposed to play the role according to what they believed the Bible laid out as the correct hierarchy of power. Men, in their opinion, were supposed to be at the head. The women's biblical role was somewhat dichotomous. Women were associated with both Eve and Mary, and Puritan society found it difficult to accept these two opposing natures.

Eve, in the eyes of the Puritans, was evil. She was a seductress and the epitome of sin, and she was unable to control her evil desires. Because Eve had been the one to bring sin into the world, women were themselves associated with this inability to have self-control. Women were seen as the weaker sex, which made them even less capable in their battle to live Godly lives. Eve was strongly associated with sex which gave Puritan women the image of the seductress. They were the ones inducing men to sin, and men needed to protect themselves against the wily ways of women.³⁴

On the other hand, women were also associated with Mary the Mother of God. Mary was considered the ultimate woman. She was pure and had fulfilled her role as a mother. Mary had not only avoided the taint of sex, but at the same time had given birth to a son and acted as the perfect mother and wife. The roles Mary played exemplified the roles that Puritan women were meant to fulfill as well: being a good wife and producing offspring. The dichotomy is apparent in that in order to fulfill her role as a mother, a woman had to have sex. Sex, despite its strong association with the evil of Eve, became

³⁴ Ulrich, *Good Wives*, 93, 99.

acceptable in the confines of marriage. Within a marriage, it was acceptable because the goal of sex was to have children who could then be raised as followers of Christ.³⁵

A woman's role as a mother did not only entail conception and giving birth, but also the raising of those children while simultaneously also trying to have more children. She was responsible for their education and upbringing. In Puritan New England, a woman's primary domain was her home. The home was where she helped raise her children, but also where she had to fulfill all other duties that made sure that her home was running appropriately. Sewing, cooking, and cleaning for her family were only some of the chores that she had to complete on a regular basis. A woman's husband often spent most of the day outside working either as a farmer or in his chosen profession, which left the home primarily under his wife's care. Just as her husband was out fulfilling his role in providing for his family, the woman had to make sure that she was fulfilling her role in making sure the home was run in the correct manner that would allow for her family to live diligent and healthy lives.³⁶

A woman's role did not only involve being a good mother and a homemaker, but also involved her being a good wife. Her role as a good wife was tied to her producing children and being a good mother, but it also involved her being a partner to her husband. If her husband was running a business, she would literally have to act as her husband's business partner. For example, if her husband had to go on a trip she might have to be able to run the business in his absence. A husband and wife were also partners in the raising of their children. A woman was responsible for more of the day-to-day needs of

³⁵ Ulrich, *Good Wives*, 110, 117, 126.

³⁶ Ulrich, *Good Wives*, 147.

her children, but because a husband and wife were a team and were spiritually bound before God, they were equally responsible for the moral and religious education of their children. It is also interesting to note that the title by which a woman was referred to by other people was “good wife,” which meant that in terms of a woman’s role in society, she was defined by her acting as a good wife. These were the many roles that Constance was expected to fulfill.³⁷

Constance’s husband Nicholas, like her father, had an altercation with one of his servants. He had an indentured servant who had originally been bound to someone else, but his original master had decided this servant would serve out the rest of his contract with Nicholas Snow. After very little time of working for Nicholas, this servant said that he would prefer to return to his original master and increase the length of his indenture if he no longer had to work for Nicholas. The case is not expanded upon, but that indentured servant did return to his original master. There is no way to know exactly what happened between Nicholas and this servant, but the situation must have been bad enough that he would rather remain a servant for a longer term and get to return to his original master than continue working for Nicholas.³⁸

In order for Nicholas to fulfill his civic responsibilities as a member of this Puritan colony, he participated in a multitude of different public positions. In 1636, he worked as an arbitrator on an unspecified legal case. A few years later, he was a member of the jury trying to determine the cause of death of a man who had been found dead on

³⁷ Ulrich, *Good Wives*, 43.

³⁸ *Records of Plymouth Colony*, Vol. 1, 37.

the shore, and they determined that the death was accidental. These cases demonstrate Nicholas's contributions to his community and his role as a typical Puritan citizen.³⁹

As more and more colonists arrived in the New World, new towns were founded in order to accommodate the influx of people. These new towns expanded further inland as the desire for land overrode people's fear of the Native populations. Nicholas had a desire to join one of these burgeoning communities, so in 1645, he sold his land and house in Plymouth and moved his family to the town of Eastham.⁴⁰ Constance's husband had made the decision to move, which meant that in her role as a wife, she was compelled to follow. She had to fulfill her position as a good wife and as a good mother, which determined that she had to follow her husband to Eastham and leave the rest of her family who would remain in Plymouth.

In 1651, in William Bradford's history of Plymouth Colony, he remarks that all of Constance's twelve children were still living, which was an amazing rate of survival since at this time about 50% percent of children would not survive to adulthood.⁴¹ The mention of Constance by Bradford was primarily because he was listing her as a daughter of Stephen Hopkins, but he was also complimenting her on her success as a wife and a mother because she had so many children that lived to adulthood. She had fulfilled her primary roles, and that was something to be respected. Her success in birthing a large

³⁹ *Records of Plymouth Colony*, Vol. 1, 44.

⁴⁰ *Records of Plymouth Colony*, Vol. 12, 134-135.

⁴¹ Plimoth Plantation, and New England Historic Genealogical Society. "Raising Children in the Early 17th Century: Demographics." https://www.plimoth.org/sites/default/files/media/pdf/edmaterials_demographics.pdf.

number of children reflected well on her because she was helping increase the population of the colony.

Nicholas continued his civic participation by acting as a constable in Eastham in 1662 and then being selected to be a selectman, which was quite an honor, in 1668.⁴² Every town had a set of officer positions. These posts included jobs like constable, highway surveyor, and treasurer. The position of selectman was more prestigious than the aforementioned offices because there were only a few chosen for each town, and they helped manage town affairs in between the town meetings. They held a significant amount of responsibility in making sure the town ran correctly and efficiently.⁴³ Selectman were well respected members of the community, and Nicholas Snow being selected for this position was an honor to his family.

Nicholas Snow died in 1676 after having lived in the colonies for over fifty years. He gave the majority of his land holdings to his oldest son, Mark Snow. The rest of his land holdings he distributed among his other sons. His wife, Constance, received all of the livestock, a plot of land that she could use as she wished, and the moveable goods that had been in their home. Because Constance was still alive at the time of his death, Nicholas does not mention his daughters in the will at all.⁴⁴ This is because the moveable goods which were typically willed to the daughters, as Stephen Hopkins had done, were simply passed to his wife, who could later distribute these items as she pleased. At the time of his death, Constance was 70 years old. Sadly, after her husband's death,

⁴² *Records of Plymouth Colony*, Vol. 4, 14-15, 182.

⁴³ Demos, John. *A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 8.

⁴⁴ Bowman, George Ernest, ed. *The Mayflower Descendant*. 66 vols. MA: Massachusetts Society of Mayflower Descendants., Vol. 3, 167-169.

Constance did not live much longer, and passed away less than a year later in 1677.⁴⁵ What she had received in the will upon her husband's death was then passed on to her children.

By that time, much had happened both to the Hopkins families as well as to Massachusetts colony. When the Pilgrims first arrived in Massachusetts, they were unsure what they would face and what their lives would look like when they got there. Most of them were hoping for a new start. Stephen Hopkins was not the traditional Pilgrim, but he too wanted to start a new life with his family. The impetus for Stephen's journey may not have been that of the traditional Pilgrim, but the life he led does fit many of the stereotypes that are associated with the New England Puritans. Over the first two generations of colonists who made their lives in New England during the seventeenth century, everyone was just trying to adapt to this new land and establish a society that aligned with their views of the world. The Puritans were not perfect, but they were trying to do their best with what they had. Stephen's family and then Constance's family endured hardship and much uncertainty as they helped found what would one day become the state of Massachusetts. Their families participated in local government and religion was an incredibly important part of their lives. Stephen seemed to have had some individualistic ideas in his youth, but the life he lived in Plymouth does not break from the image we have of Puritans today. Though most of the details about their day-to-day lives no longer exist, by looking at the records that have survived, it is possible to get a glimpse into the world of my ancestors and understand how they might have lived and contributed to that history.

⁴⁵ Town of Eastham. *Eastham Records*. Vol. 1. Eastham, MA., 40.

CHAPTER TWO

Deacon Paine's Journal

The Puritan of modern imagination is someone cold, unloving, and legalistic. Their only focus is religion, and they make a point not to care too much about earthly possessions. They do not make any effort to bond with their children and they ruthlessly spy on their neighbors. This image is exaggerated and largely incorrect. Based on the journal of Deacon John Paine, the grandson of Constance Hopkins, many of these stereotypes prove false. The journal entries that have survived start in the mid-1690s and provide a snapshot into the life of a Puritan minister. He and his family faced both joyous and devastating situations. The Deacon's responses to everything that his family experienced humanize him and his family. It allows the reader to better understand what Puritans at this time were going through and provides a clearer picture of how they lived.

The journal begins in 1695 with a poem lamenting the death a woman who lived in their community. The biblical imagery used throughout the poem reflects both the community mourning her death as well as their hope about her life in heaven. The Deacon demonstrates the communal nature of Puritan society when he writes "She then with us Shall raised be to meet him in the air." It is their society as a whole that goes together towards God. Even in death, she is not alone as she walks the path towards the Almighty, but she is joined by other Puritans who desire to pursue the Lord as well. Deacon Paine compliments this unknown woman on being virtuous by saying that she was "fixed upon the lord above" and she imparted "sweet counsel...unto her friends." These were qualities that made her respectable and situated her as a "good" woman in

their community. Just as many people are today, Puritans worried about life after death. For the most part, death is associated with very negative images, but to Puritans, in death, not only was there fear and uncertainty, but there was also hope. Deacon Paine remarks “blest are the dead that die in christ,” which exemplifies how the wonderful prospect of spending eternity with Jesus in Heaven superseded their fear of death. It did not overcome their mourning for the loss of their friend. Puritans searched for a balance between the present and the eternal which is exemplified in the poem that Deacon Paine wrote because they could mourn in the moment, but then also feel joy at the prospect of meeting again and spending eternity together in paradise.¹

The next entry of the journal concerns the birth of the Deacon’s son John. His joy at his son’s birth is clear. He remarks that “children are the blessing of the lord,” which shows how much he values and feels blessed by his children, but it also reflects the idea that Puritans saw children as the inheritors of the church. Their children were gifts from God, and Deacon Paine felt so honored to have been blessed in such a way. The Deacon prays, “lord give me a thankfull heart for Such mercies And o blessed father as thou hast been pleased to bestow upon me thy unworthy worm three hopfull children,” which further confirms how pleasing he found his children. The fact that his children had not only been born but they were “compleat in wit & limbs” indicates the importance of having healthy children.² The infant mortality rate was quite high, so the Deacon understood the value of a child being fully healthy. In all of this he shows that he felt connected to his son and was not afraid to show the love he had for him. He ends the

¹ Bowman, *The Mayflower Descendant*, Vol. 8, 181.

² Bowman, *The Mayflower Descendant*, Vol. 8, 181.

entry with a prayer asking that God bless his children and that they may be saved and be under God's protection. As Deacon Paine had felt blessed by receiving his children from God, he proves his devotion to his faith by saying that he returns his children to the Lord's care in hopes that they may be blessed so that they would be capable of carrying on the church.³

The Deacon follows his comments on his son's birth with reflection on several deaths in the community that took place in 1696. Like he had done for the previous death he had written about, he expressed what he felt through a poem. Similar biblical imagery to what was present in the first journal entry is present in this poem as well. Unlike the first poem, this poem's tone is somewhat darker. The Deacon makes a point to contrast how horrible earth is with how great Heaven is. In traditional Puritan fashion, he does remark how one's time on earth is only a "sojourn" from their eternal home in heaven or hell. As one lives one's earthly life, one can never forget about the eternal ramifications of one's temporary time here. The poem closes with a reminder that death is the price of sin and is something that one can never escape. The previous poem lamenting the death of a community member was used to express how death offered hope of spending eternity with one's savior, but this poem, though still mourning the deaths, plays on the fear of death. Because death is inevitable and is the price we pay for our sin, we must ask for forgiveness and rely on the fact that Jesus sacrificed himself on our behalf in order to "Save our Souls from guilt."⁴

³ Bowman, *The Mayflower Descendant*, Vol. 8, 182.

⁴ Bowman, *The Mayflower Descendant*, Vol. 8, 182.

Deacon Paine continues his journal with an entry where he is enraged about an attempted assassination of King William of England. He expresses his distaste through his use of very strong language such as when he describes the plan itself as a “horrid and barbarous plot.” The Deacon sees the plot against the King as part of the battle between Protestants and Catholics. He designates the “popish party” as the ones responsible for the attempted assassination. It is the duty of a “true protestant,” he says, to stand up against those who wish to do harm to their monarch. Deacon Paine goes so far as to say that the rebels wanted, “to bring a forain enemy upon the Land and So enthrone the Late King James in the throne of England a thing most abhorred and detestable to every true protestant.”⁵ In the Deacon’s opinion, King James’ Catholicism made him not only an enemy of Protestants, but of England itself. King James had been an anointed monarch of England, but his religion excluded him as someone worthy of respect in the Deacon’s mind. After expressing his anger, he offers an exhortation to other protestants calling for them to pray for the deliverance of the King and to be thankful for the King’s safety.⁶ The tone of the entry is one of a sermon, which is not at all surprising due to his position as a puritan minister. A threat against the Protestant king was not only a threat against their personal beliefs, but against the nation. The protection of what they believed was of utmost importance, and anyone who stood against them was to be condemned. Deacon Paine felt he had to call the believers together in order to protect their country from those who he believed wished to do it harm.

⁵ Bowman, *The Mayflower Descendant*, Vol. 8, 182.

⁶ Bowman, *The Mayflower Descendant*, Vol. 8, 183.

During the winter of 1696, the Deacon writes about how many of his family members fell gravely ill. It was his daughter Mary's sickness that concerned him the most as her illness "brought her even to the very gates of the grave and Eternity but god was graciously pleased to Shew mercy unto her & unto me also in hearing my prayers and restoring her to health again." The love that Deacon Paine felt for his children was shown earlier in his journal, so his relief at his daughter's recovery is clear. He had prayed to God to allow her to recover. God had been merciful towards the Deacon and his daughter, and Deacon Paine felt the full force of the blessing that had been granted him. There is not only relief in their recovery that the Deacon expresses, but also joy. The inclusion of vivid imagery about the love of God turns the horror of sickness into a wonderful opportunity to rejoice. He writes, "his mercies endure for ever O that gods goodness might melt our hearts," which reveals how vehemently the Deacon feels that God has treated him and his family well.⁷

A few months after his family recovered, the Deacon's apprentice fell ill and unfortunately died. "The lord hath been trying us by various exercises," Deacon Paine writes. He felt that they had faced many struggles and that God was testing their faith. This entry ends with a plea to God asking that through these trials, "God would do us good by all & bring us near unto him Self."⁸ The Deacon knows that these struggles are inevitable, and his only request is that he and his family come out stronger for them. These difficult times, though painful to endure, are also times of hope for growth in their relationship with the Lord.

⁷ Bowman, *The Mayflower Descendant*, Vol. 8, 183.

⁸ Bowman, *The Mayflower Descendant*, Vol. 8, 183.

The next entry is not until more than a year after the death of their apprentice, and it is a poem that Deacon Paine wrote in response to all the deaths that had occurred within their community over the previous year. The poem emphasizes the significance of death and how it is impossible to escape when it says, “how loudly doth the lord by these things call / to young and old to one and unto all.”⁹ There is no anger towards God about the deaths of all of these people; there is only understanding that at some point, everyone will be called to leave the Earth behind. This entry expands upon the death of one person in particular: a local minister, Joshua Moodey. The Deacon calls him, “that faithfull minister of christ,” which is a strong compliment and shows how much the Deacon must have respected him. His response to the minister’s death proposes the idea that “the righteous are taken away from the evil to come when god removes Such bright lights from us may we not fear that a dark day is coming upon us.”¹⁰ This only adds nuance to the different interpretations of death that Deacon Paine has offered before. Not only is death somewhat scary and the punishment for sin, but it can offer hope to those who will spend eternity with God in Heaven. Death also allows God to provide protection and mercy to the righteous while leaving the less righteous on earth to suffer through whatever horrors may come. This plays on the hope that God protects those who are most devoted to him but will allow those to suffer who do not act according to his commands. This exemplifies the complicated relationship that Puritans had with death.

The Paine family story continues with the birth of his daughter Sarah in April 1699, almost two years after his previous entry. His prayer for his daughter is, “To us a

⁹ Bowman, *The Mayflower Descendant*, Vol. 8, 183.

¹⁰ Bowman, *The Mayflower Descendant*, Vol. 8, 184.

blessing Lord make her to be and faithfull Handmaid let her be to thee.”¹¹ The Deacon’s greatest desire for his daughter is for her to be “a blessing” in regard to both her family and the Lord – the two most important aspects of Puritan life. In his prayer, Deacon Paine asks not only on behalf of his daughter, but he pleads on his own behalf that God would “indow me with wisdom and grace that I might bring up these littel Lambs that he hath committed to my charge.” He desires to be able to raise his children the best he can, and asks that God grant him the skills necessary to do so. This shows such a strong love for his children, even using the endearing term “littel Lambs” to describe them. It is clear that he feels intense responsibility for his children and feels that it is only through God’s help that he can raise them well. The prayer and entry end with, “O lord I beg not riches nor length of days for them but I beg thy grace for them for thy christs Sake amen.”¹² In the Deacon’s mind, it is not earthly gains, such as riches or a long life, that have the most value, but it is grace from God. Not only is Deacon Paine praying, but he is begging for God to look favorably upon his children. As a Puritan, the eternal salvation of his children is what is most important to the Deacon, but he also does not fail to recognize that he wants to be capable of doing right by his children in the present during their lives on Earth.

A year later, the Deacon recorded a very traumatizing event in his life and that of his family. His wife was most of the way through another pregnancy when she became very sick. The Deacon describes in some detail how much she suffered. Her whole body was swollen, and she was in “greivous pain.” He knew that this was very dangerous for

¹¹ Bowman, *The Mayflower Descendant*, Vol. 8, 227.

¹² Bowman, *The Mayflower Descendant*, Vol. 8, 227.

both her and their unborn child. To alleviate some of his worry, he prayed for his wife's deliverance through "this time of our trouble."¹³ To the Deacon's great relief, his wife slowly began to get better, but then tragedy struck when she suddenly gave birth to a child that was already deceased. Deacon Paine expresses his conflicting emotions about what had passed. On the one hand, he was relieved and happy that his wife had survived and was now healthy, but on the other hand, he was devastated by the loss of their child. "God hath been intermixing mercyes and affliction and though he hath mixed our cup with Some gall and wormwood yet he put Songs of deliverance into our mouths,"¹⁴ writes Deacon Paine. The love he feels for his children has been seen in his previous journal entries, so it is clear that he was anguished by such a loss. Through such difficult times, he never waivers in his reliance upon the Lord. He still praises the Lord but finishes the entry with a poem: "Lord let thy mercys melt my heart / and move me to repent / and let affliction better me / and I will be content."¹⁵ The Deacon chooses to try and remain positive by asking that God allow him to grow and develop through the pain that his family had endured. In the face of such tragedy, he knows that it is better to look forward and remain steadfast in his devotion to his family and to his faith.

The next entry, nearly a year after the previous one, deals with another death that the community suffered. As with the previous entries that deal with someone's death, the Deacon includes a poem. Deacon Paine repeats sentiments that death is inescapable. The poem opens with, "Tis neither youth nor Strenth / that can us Save / from power of the all

¹³ Bowman, *The Mayflower Descendant*, Vol. 8, 227.

¹⁴ Bowman, *The Mayflower Descendant*, Vol. 8, 227-228.

¹⁵ Bowman, *The Mayflower Descendant*, Vol. 8, 228.

devouring grave.”¹⁶ Youth and strength were and are traits valued in life, but the Deacon believed that they were not things to be valued in the battle for one’s eternal soul. He also mentions that being born into a good family did not allow one to escape death, nor did being either rich or poor. This inevitability did not mean, the Deacon explains, that one should fear death because in death they are joining Christ in Heaven.¹⁷ The poem then offers a warning to those who are not saved, and it bemoans the fate of anyone who dies and faces eternity spent in Hell.¹⁸ In the contrasting portions of the poem, Deacon Paine shows the wonderful outcome of spending eternity in Heaven or the horrific outcome of spending eternity in Hell. The vivid imagery he uses creates a stark distinction between these two potentialities, making one incredibly appealing and desirable, and hopefully motivating people to live their lives in a way that would allow them to spend eternity with Christ in Heaven. The poem and entry end with a request of God by the Deacon: “Lord Save me from the power of Sin here and from / the misery of Sin here after Lord Jesus thou / camest to Save thy people from their Sin.”¹⁹ This request

¹⁶ Bowman, *The Mayflower Descendant*, Vol. 8, 228.

¹⁷ O blessed they ye blest for aye
in christ that have a part
they need not fear though death appear
and Strike them to the heart
they need not dread the place of the dead
though thither they descend
Christ will them raise to Sing his praise
when all things have their end (12-19)

¹⁸ but o wo wo their Souls unto
in christ that have no part
death will them Send world without end
unto Eternal Smart
o how can dwell in lowest hell
with ever burning fire
o who dare thinks gods wrath to drink
which never Shall expire (20-27)

¹⁹ Bowman, *The Mayflower Descendant*, Vol. 8, 228.

that the Lord save him in the present and in the afterlife precedes a reminder that Jesus had sacrificed himself in order to save people, which is something that the Deacon wishes, for himself and for any potential readers, will inspire hope in the face of death.

A year later, the Deacon again commemorates a death, but this time it is not the death of a community member, but the death of his beloved Protestant King of England. He calls the King their “Grattous Sovereign,” exemplifying his respect and love for the monarch. As Deacon Paine had done after the attempted assassination of the King, he calls on all “true protistants” to show their support for their leader. This time, instead of gathering together in prayer, they gather together in mourning. The Deacon continues the entry as if it were a sermon, instructing his followers on how to live now that the King is gone. He then offers up a prayer, asking God to allow them to mourn deeply. Deacon Paine then heartily enjoins his readers to pray: “let us as the Marter said pray pray pray pray never more need than now let us pray that god would revive the Spirit and power of godlyness so much decayed in the world let us pray that god would please to unite his people in Love and unity that they may all eye to eye and with one mind and one mouth glorifie god the father.” Prayer is how he believes they can change the world for the better, and he insists that they work together for that end. The love of God should be reflected in his disciples and should be used to bring the world together, in equal standing before God, in order to bring Him glory. There is no discussion of Protestant versus Catholic, man versus woman, or rich versus poor. Everyone, “eye to eye and with one mind and one mouth,” should join together with their common goal. The entry ends with a prayer for the queen who was still on the throne. He asks that God make her “a nursing mother to his people,” showing that in her role as a queen, she was still limited and

defined by her femininity. Because she was a woman, she was not the ruler of the nation, but was simply a mother to the nation.²⁰

Not long after the death of the King, Deacon Paine welcomed his fourth son. His journal entry mirrors the other entries in which he recorded the births of his children. It is a prayer for his children, thanking the Lord for what he has been given. He writes, “all this is with me praise his holy name and now O my good god as thou has been please to give and continue life to these my little ones.”²¹ This is the heartfelt prayer of a father who wants the best for his children. The Deacon asks that God protect his children and ends his prayer by saying that he dedicates his children back to the Lord because he feels so blessed to have been given them in the first place. As he had done before, Deacon Paine appreciates the present and earthly lives of his children, but never fails to ask God for their spiritual and eternal salvation and protection. He wants the best for them now and always.

The last entry in this portion of the Deacon’s journal concerns the death of his mother in April 1704. He gives a brief overview of what happened, saying that she had been healthy all day, then she suddenly fell ill in the evening, and was dead by the following morning. The poem he writes in commemoration of her passing starts with, “Yet hath not left us void of hope / that She is gone to rest,” which shows how much pain he is in because of her passing. Despite the pain of her loss, he does know that there is hope because she had gone to Heaven and is now with Jesus. He wants to honor his mother with the poem and does so by listing all of her best qualities and showing how

²⁰ Bowman, *The Mayflower Descendant*, Vol. 8, 229.

²¹ Bowman, *The Mayflower Descendant*, Vol. 8, 230.

wonderful a woman she had been. She had been a “faithfull wife...unto her dearest mate,” a “quiet neighbor,” a “carefull mother...teaching [her children] gods word to read,” she diligently read the Bible, she did not spend her time with “triffiling tatling talk,” and “her hands to labour were innured / even from her youth full days.” Deacon Paine felt that his mother exhibited the correct traits and lived life well according to the Puritan standard. The fact that she possessed all of these traits made her a woman to be praised. Further exhibiting why the Deacon felt his mother was a respectable woman was that, “she hath had marthas trouble / yet had also marys heart.”²² Despite all the trouble and difficulty that she had endured, she always lived a life dedicated to God, which endeared her to her son. He clearly took her example to heart and he made sure to live his life in the same manner, always dedicated to his service of the Lord, no matter the troubles that he faced.

Deacon Paine’s journal continues for many more years, but this snapshot from the first decade of his writing, lasting from 1695 to 1705 epitomizes several important themes about the Puritans and their lifestyle as well as debunks many of the myths that surround them. The Puritans had moved to the New World in hopes of finding a place where they could live according to their beliefs with no fear of reprisal. A few generations after the original Pilgrims and nearly a century later, Deacon Paine was still living according to those ideals which the Pilgrims held so dear. The Puritans’ beliefs were a reaction against the rituals and perceived excesses of the Catholic church. It was a return to what they felt the Bible told them was the correct way to worship God. The Bible was what guided peoples’ lives, and it was integral for people to be able to read and

²² Bowman, *The Mayflower Descendant*, Vol. 8, 231.

interpret the Bible for themselves. The core tenets of Puritan belief were “the sovereignty of God, salvation by faith in Christ, God’s election of people to salvation, the irresistibility of God’s grace, and human depravity.”²³ Puritans spent their time trying to live lives that reflected the way Christ had lived. They were a close-knit community, and they felt responsible for one another. Their watching over each other sometimes ended in a court case, especially when someone saw another act against the best interest of the community, which resulted in the litigious reputation of Puritans. The love they knew God had for them, they reciprocated by loving their families and their neighbors. Despite enduring many difficulties that would test many peoples’ faith, Puritans saw this struggle as the Lord testing them, and only further reason for them to remain devout. They saw God in all aspects of their lives, no matter how small, which meant that every part of their life had to reflect their devotion.²⁴

In popular culture, Puritans are seen as people who lived severe, repressed, austere lives. The extreme emotional language used by Deacon Paine both in joyful as well as mournful situations shows how Puritans did in fact experience and express the full range of human emotion. Especially in regard to his children, the Deacon never shied away from being incredibly joyful and showing how much he truly loved them. It is true that for the Puritans, “the primary purpose of a family [was] to glorify God.”²⁵ This idea did not prevent them from neglecting, “the idea that the purpose of a family

²³ Ryken, Leland. *Worldly Saints: The Puritans as They Really Were* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990), 14.

²⁴ Ryken, *Worldly Saints*, 10-20.

²⁵ Ryken, *Worldly Saints*, 73

[was] also the personal fulfillment of every member of a family.”²⁶ Puritan parents saw the relationship between parent and child as reflection of the relationship between God and the Children of God. For Puritan parents, “a deep-seated parental affection for children [was] the most common, normal and expected attitude.”²⁷ Children were deeply loved by their parents because first of all, Puritans were human and naturally cared for their children, but second of all, they saw children as a gift from God. Parents were responsible for their children who were in fact something precious that God had temporarily given them stewardship over. This does not take away from the fact that Puritans did see all people as inherently sinful, and that included children. Parenting required, “a balance between restraint and positive support.”²⁸ A child required the love of its parents, but that had to be balanced with making sure that children were raised correctly so that parents could say they had raised their children in accordance with God’s will.

Deacon Paine’s journal obviously includes some of the most important events that took place in his life, and death appears to be a central focus. The ideas of life and death were innately intertwined for the Puritans, and in fact, “much of the average Puritan’s life was centered about and predicated on the vision of death, the afterlife, and the expected manner in which the passage from this world to the next should be made.”²⁹ The core of Puritan life was trying to live a religious life wholly dedicated to God. Christianity’s focus is living well on Earth and glorifying God in order to be allowed to enter Heaven.

²⁶ Ryken, *Worldly Saints*, 74

²⁷ Stannard, David E. *Death in America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1974), 15.

²⁸ Ryken, *Worldly Saints*, 87.

²⁹ Stannard, *Death and Dying in Puritan New England*, 1305.

With the Puritans' primary focus being on how their lives determined where they would spend eternity, it is not surprising that Puritans were apparently obsessed with death since death was the end of their time on earth which was their opportunity to work towards entry into Heaven. Death meant the beginning of eternity spent either in Heaven or in Hell; it was the start of the rest of their life, a life not spent on earth, but spent either reaping the rewards or suffering the consequences of how they had lived on Earth. For Puritans, death was also a source of worry because nothing was guaranteed, even if they had lived a life totally dedicated to God. If they were not one of the elect, who God had predetermined for salvation, there was nothing they could do to change that. Adding to the natural fear and worry that death brings to most people, where Christianity now often brings a sense of calm in knowing that faith alone allows for assurance in one's salvation, that was not a belief that the Puritans held. Living a good life brought no assurance to the Puritans and they felt no security in their position as they approached death. This all resulted in Puritans who were left to constantly contemplate and worry about their post-death destination with no real guarantee as to whether they were going to be allowed to spend eternity in Heaven.

Overall, the Puritans of collective memory are very different from the ones that actually lived in early colonial America. Just because they focused their lives on trying to live in accordance with God's rules, that did not mean that they could not have fun or love the people around them. It was all about moderation and having the correct mindset. God always had to come first, above family and friends, but Puritans also understood that God called for them to love their neighbor. The Puritans lived in a very difficult time and place and suffered many hardships, yet Deacon Paine shows how they could remain

steadfast. They were people who were not perfect, but they did the best they could in light of their circumstances. Just as we live imperfect, yet fulfilled, lives today, so did the Puritans, even if their way of life seems foreign to those of us living in the twenty-first century.

CHAPTER THREE

The Brown Family

During this same time period, several more of my ancestors came to the Massachusetts Bay area to start a new life and contributed their stories to the history of seventeenth-century New England. Much like Stephen Hopkins, Richard Brown and his family epitomized the traditional Puritan household in terms of their daily lives and their interactions with their town and neighbors. Thomas Farrar, on the other hand, did not act like a stereotypical Puritan because he often misbehaved and frequently found himself on the opposite side of the law. Together, they represent the variety of the human experience that makes up my family and our history.

Richard Brown, whose parents are unknown, was born in England circa 1614. It is estimated that he was born in Southampton, but his exact location of birth and adolescence are not known. There is evidence that he received some sort of education as he was capable of signing his own name.¹ Richard came to the New World on the ship the *Mary and John* in 1634.² The ship, before it had left England, was detained until the passengers had sworn an oath of “supremacy and allegiance” to the king, which was necessary to prove their political loyalty because they were Puritans and as such they did not consider the King to be their spiritual leader, but they were required to recognize him

¹ Anderson, Robert Charles. *The Great Migration Begins: Immigrants to England 1620-1633*. Vol. 1. Great Migration Study Project. (Boston: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 1995), 432.

² Coffin, Joshua. *A Sketch of the History of Newbury, Newburyport, and West Newbury: From 1635 to 1845* (Boston: Samuel G. Drake, 1845), 9.

as their political leader.³ On board the *Mary and John* was Reverend John Parker with whom Richard first settled in Ipswich, which at that time was known as Agawam. His name is inscribed on a monument dedicated to the first settlers of Ipswich. Reverend Parker later moved his followers, of which there were about one hundred and forty, to a nearby area they called Newbury. The town was officially incorporated in 1635.⁴ In Newbury, colloquially termed “Ould Newbury,” there were four Brown families who were living there including Richard.⁵ In 1636, Richard was chosen as one of the first “town’s men” for Newbury. This position later became known as “selectman.”⁶ Richard served in this position a number of times during his time living in Newbury.

At some point between 1637 and 1640, Richard married his first wife, Edith. Her last name and background are unknown. In the first few years of their marriage, Edith gave birth to two children, a son and a daughter. On April 10, 1642, their son Joshua, my ninth great grandfather, was born. The couple later had one more son together. Unfortunately, in April 1647, Edith died. Less than a year later, which was not unsurprising for the time period, in February 1648, Richard remarried. He married Elizabeth Greenleaf, who was herself a widow. She had previously been married to Giles Badger with whom she had one son. Over the nearly thirteen years of their marriage, they had five children together – two sons and three daughters.⁷

³ Currier, John J. *History of Newbury Massachusetts: 1635-1902* (Newbury, MA: Damrell and Upham, 1902), 28.

⁴ Coffin, *A Sketch of the History of Newbury*, 9-11.

⁵ Coffin, *A Sketch of the History of Newbury*, 15.

⁶ Coffin, *A Sketch of the History of Newbury*, 19.

⁷ Anderson, *The Great Migration Begins*, 434.

Richard, like many Puritans living in New England at this time, was very involved in the political life of his town. Throughout his life in Newbury, he held a number of different positions, such as selectman and constable, and on numerous occasions he sat as a jury member for a variety of trials. During the winter of 1648, an unfortunate event occurred when a twelve-year-old boy named Thomas Smith fell into an open pit on his way to school and he drowned.⁸ In May 1649, Richard acted as a witness against the man who had the unfilled pit on his property where this boy had drowned the previous winter. Richard testified that this man, in fact, did not seasonably fill it in.⁹ This was a serious offence because it seemed that this unfilled pit had been a continuous problem that other citizens, such as Richard, had been keeping a watchful eye on. With the death of Thomas Smith, the community seemed to be suffering the consequences for this man's either laziness or apathy towards his responsibility. These were reprehensible qualities to the Puritans, and this man paid for his choice by being forced to pay a fine.¹⁰

In 1650, Richard acted as a witness in another case. This time, one of the town elders named John Tillson was being fined for "his many offences" and the court "bound [him] to good behavior." For most of Richard's life, he never seemed to step out of line and always did what he was supposed to, but in this case, he did not shy away from making comments about his displeasure with the elders of their town. Along with a number of other younger men, he commented that "the elders would transgress for a

⁸ Coffin, *A Sketch of the History of Newbury*, 50.

⁹ Dow, George Francis, ed. *Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County*. Compiled by Harriet S. Tapley. Vol. 1-7. 9 vols. Essex Institute., Vol. 1, 168.

¹⁰ Ryken, *Worldly Saints*, 16, 19.

morsel of bread.”¹¹ Respecting one’s elders was an important aspect of puritan society, extrapolated from the importance of children obeying and respecting their parents. The fact that Richard was willing to speak publicly and on the record this way about one of the town’s elders shows how strongly both Richard and the other men felt about the actions of those who they should have been able to look up to. The elders should have led by example, and since Richard felt that Mr. Tillson was not fulfilling this role, he was compelled to speak out about it.

Due to the litigious nature of Puritan society, the judicial system was an important part of the lives of the citizens of Massachusetts. The freemen, as exemplified by Richard, were required to sit on juries and do their civil duty in order to help their society run more effectively. The judicial system in Massachusetts was not established officially until after 1635 when many people living in the colonies at the time expressed their alarm at the amount of power that the magistrates, who were at that point in charge of their judicial system, were exercising. The freemen demanded a code of written laws to be put in place. In 1641, the Body of Liberties was enacted. This set of laws included one hundred statutes covering both civil and criminal law. Interestingly enough, there was not mention of English Common Law included in this set of laws, but they were based solely on the Bible, and in fact, in some instances, the exact chapter and verse were included for reference.¹²

In the colonies, there were three levels of courts. First was the Great and General Court. This court possessed legislative authority and it also limited the appellate

¹¹ Dow, *Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County*, Vol. 1, 200.

¹² Dow, George Francis. *Everyday Life in Massachusetts Bay Colony* (Magnolia: Peter Smith Publisher, Incorporated, 1988), 199.

authority of the Court of Assistants. Second was the Court of Assistants. This was essentially the supreme court or the court of appeals. It had exclusive jurisdiction in all criminal cases that extended “to life, limb or banishment,” as well as in all civil cases where there were more than £100 in damage. The Court of Assistants also had appellate jurisdiction for the Country Quarterly Courts.¹³ Third was the County Quarterly Courts. These courts had a jurisdiction in any case that did not fit the qualifications for the higher courts. They also had the responsibility to lay out highways, to ensure that the ministry was supported, to take care of probate matters, as well as, after 1664, to admit freemen.¹⁴ Trials at this time tended to be much shorter, and the juries had a lot of power in determining the outcome of the case. During the trials, there was counsel that could advise the person accused of a crime as well as the court, but the counsel was not allowed to help the accused person in their defense. This was based on the theory that “the facts in the case would appear without the necessity of counsel, that the judge could be trusted to see this properly done, and the jury would give the prisoner the benefit of the doubt.” In the end, justice was quickly served and then everyone moved on to the next case.¹⁵

In March 1655, Richard is noted in the court record as having a bond to pay to his wife Elizabeth’s son, John Badger, who was one of her children from her first marriage. John had turned eighteen, and so Richard paid £34 as well as gave him half of the land left to him by his late father. This was done according to the will of Elizabeth’s first husband. Originally, Elizabeth was to inherit two-thirds of the land while their son would

¹³ Dow, *Everyday Life in Massachusetts Bay Colony*, 200.

¹⁴ Dow, *Everyday Life in Massachusetts Bay Colony*, 201.

¹⁵ Dow, *Everyday Life in Massachusetts Bay Colony*, 222.

inherit one-third, but if Elizabeth remarried, like she eventually did, the land would instead be given half to Elizabeth and then half to John. In her first husband's will, her husband indicated that on his son's eighteenth birthday, he was to receive the amount of £34, and because Elizabeth remarried, it fell upon Richard to pay that bond, which had been set aside for John.¹⁶

In April 1660, Elizabeth gave birth to her last child, a daughter named Mary. This was her fifth child with Richard. Unfortunately, nearly exactly a year later, Richard died at roughly the age of forty-seven. He bequeathed portions of his land to each of his sons Joshua, Richard, and Edmund. Richard commissioned them in his will to provide a sum from his estate to their sisters Elizabeth, Sara, and Mary. Upon his daughters' marriages, Richard set aside a sum of money to be given to them as well. Richard made a point to provide for his widow in addition to his children. He provided her with livestock and parcels of land. If she remarried, that which she had inherited from her husband would be redistributed among Richard's children. Richard did display faith and confidence in his wife as he made her the sole executor of his will, which was a position often given to sons, but because none of Richard's sons were adults yet at the time of his death, that responsibility inevitably fell to his wife. The inventory of Richard's home and property contained the typical objects such as linens and livestock, but also included a number of uncommon objects such as books and an hourglass. The Brown family had a wide range of possessions that were valued at over £630, which was a significant sum for the time period and indicated that they had been relatively well off. After his death, based on

¹⁶ Dow, George Francis, ed. *The Probate Records of Essex County Massachusetts: 1635-1664*. Vol. 1. Salem, MA: Essex Institute, 1916., 78-80.

what was inventoried at his estate, Richard was able to successfully provide for his family.¹⁷

Though only a few years younger than Richard, Elizabeth survived until at least March 1678. It is unknown exactly when she died, but after her husband Richard passed away, she never remarried.¹⁸ Likely it is because she would have been too old to have any more children as well as the fact that Richard's estate would have provided her with a stable living. At the youngest, Elizabeth would have been thirty-nine when her husband died and the youngest estimate of her age at death would be fifty-six, but since her birth and death dates are unknown, these are only rough estimates.

Elizabeth remaining unmarried after her husband's death likely left her position in society somewhat tenuous. Since women's identities were subsumed into the identities of their husbands when they married, a widow, untethered to her husband, was left to try and make her way in a man's world. In Massachusetts during this time, when a woman's husband died, she became known as a "relict," which is simply an archaic term meaning "widow." By law, widows inherited at least one third of the household goods. The way a woman continued to live was through the income garnered from the estate. A wife was entitled to a third of the income from the estate until she died or until she remarried, and she would be able to live at whatever level the income from the estate allowed. If a widow's children were underage, there was the possibility for her to retain practical control of the estate until her children came of age, though this was not always the case. Historian Laurel Thatcher Ulrich explains that, "the death of a mother did not mean the

¹⁷ Dow, *Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County*, Vol. 2, 369-371.

¹⁸ Anderson, *The Great Migration Begins*, 433-434.

dissolution of the family; the death of a father did.”¹⁹ This goes to show that the husband provided the family structure, and upon his death, there was a complete reshuffling of the lives of the other members of his family. Because a widow was a woman without a husband but had also been sexually active, she was considered especially vulnerable to sexual dalliance. She was no longer tied to her husband, so society viewed her as being more susceptible to flattery and the temptation of an affair.²⁰

At this same time, a relative of Richard Brown and my tenth great grandfather, named Thomas Farrar, led a drastically different life. Thomas was born about 1614 in Burnley, Lancashire, England to father Thomas and to mother Athelred Farrar. He was not educated and was not literate because on legal documents, later in his life, he was only capable of making his mark and not his complete signature.²¹ It is unknown when exactly, but he married his wife Elizabeth before coming to the New World. Since these records no longer exist, the precise date that Thomas and his family came to the New World is also not known, but it is sure that he did arrive sometime before 1645. He is listed as a freeman and farmer living in Lynn, Massachusetts, which was a town near Salem. Thomas and Elizabeth, between 1641 and 1660, had seven children. Their daughter Sarah, my ancestor, born in 1648, was their third child.

Unlike Richard Brown and the Hopkins family, Thomas Farrar did not live a quiet and law-abiding life. In February 1650, he was fined for having attacked a man named

¹⁹ Ulrich, *Good Wives*, 7.

²⁰ Ulrich, *Good Wives*, 97.

²¹ *Essex County, MA: Probate File Papers, 1638-1881*. Online database. *AmericanAncestors.org*. New England Historic Genealogical Society, 2014. (From records supplied by the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court Archives.) <https://www.americanancestors.org/DB515/t/13765/9263-co2/30166656>

Benjamin Smith. The exact reasons for his actions were not included in the court record, but their disagreement led to Thomas throwing Benjamin down and then dragging him by his heels out of a barn.²² Thomas' record of problems with the other townspeople only started there. In September 1660, there were a series of cases and appeals about a highway that had been built. At one point along the road, it crossed some of Thomas' land, and this upset him greatly resulting in him blocking people who tried to pass through his property. Despite numerous appeals and causing much frustration to those who were simply trying to use the road to get to their final destination, Thomas lost his case, and the road across his land was left open for people to use.²³

A major case that took place in Lynn in 1670 was the accusation of a woman named Goody Burt for witchcraft. This was one of the earliest trials for witchcraft in the colonies. Thomas was directly involved in this case because he gave testimony on behalf of his daughters, Sarah and Elizabeth, against Goody Burt saying that she had bewitched them. In the end it is unclear exactly what happened with the case, but it seems as if Goody Burt was not punished and that the case was never fully tried.²⁴

In 1674, William Barber and his wife were sentenced to be whipped or fined because they had been found guilty of fornication before marriage. Thomas acted as a witness to William's testimony where he did confess to the crime, but in the midst of his testimony, he also attempted to convince the judges not to punish him or his wife. William claimed that enough time had passed, over a year, since they had committed

²² Dow, *Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County*, Vol. 1, 183.

²³ Dow, *Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County*, Vol. 3, 345, 348-9.

²⁴ Dow, *Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County*, Vol. 4, 207-9.

fornication and he and his wife were now married. In William's opinion, the punishment did not fit the crime.²⁵

Cases of premarital sex in Massachusetts were handled in the courts. Like with William Barber and his wife, they were accused of fornication. One common method of discovering this was when a child was born earlier than expected, indicating that it had been conceived before the parents were married. The punishment for this crime was either a whipping or having to pay a fine. The fine could be a large sum, making fornication an expensive crime to commit. Important to note is that being found guilty of this crime did not ruin a couple's reputation for life; once they had endured the consequences, they were accepted back into society as if nothing had happened.²⁶

For Puritans, sex and reproduction were a part of everyday life. Despite sex having well defined legal boundaries, because the home was largely a communal space, there was little idea or even possibility of privacy.²⁷ The idea of sex, in and of itself, was not something shunned by Puritans, but they did fear when it was done outside of the set boundaries of marriage because that meant they were going against God and the law. A woman's sexual purity was a reflection not only of herself but also of her family. The status of a girl's chastity, which was essentially the property of her father, could be damaged based on her sexual actions or even the accusations of others. If her chastity was damaged, the case could be brought to court because "chastity" was treated as property so it could gain or lose value.²⁸ Puritans believed that neither men nor women

²⁵ Dow, *Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County*, Vol. 5, 376.

²⁶ Ulrich, *Good Wives*, 31.

²⁷ Ulrich, *Good Wives*, 95.

²⁸ Ulrich, *Good Wives*, 94

were more sexually sinful, but the common sexual sins were different for each sex. Men were, “carnal, sensual, and devilish... [and] men required restraint, especially when drunk.” On the other hand, “Women needed protection, not because they were innocent, but because they were not. They were physically and sexually vulnerable, easily aroused, [and] quick to succumb to flattery.”²⁹ Both men and women had to maintain a watchful eye to keep themselves safe from sexual sin, but if they did succumb to temptation and commit adultery, there was a double standard that related the law to the marital status of the woman. If a man was married and was having an affair with an unmarried woman, it was fornication, so they only suffered a whipping or a fine. If a married woman had an affair, she faced death. On the other hand, if an unmarried man had an affair with a married woman, that man risked death, but if an unmarried woman did the same, she only faced a whipping or a fine. Sex was meant for marriage and for procreation, and when those limits were tested, they were met with consequences. Married women especially faced harsh repercussions if they dared indulge in a sexual relationship outside of their marriage.³⁰

In January 1680, at roughly the age of sixty, Thomas’ wife Elizabeth passed away. A year later, Thomas married his second wife, Abigail Johnson. She was a widow who had had sixteen children in her previous marriage, twelve of whom survived into adulthood.³¹ At the time of this marriage, Thomas was about sixty-seven and Abigail was about forty-seven. Their ages indicate that the purpose of the marriage was not to have

²⁹ Ulrich, *Good Wives*, 97.

³⁰ Ulrich, *Good Wives*, 94.

³¹ Friedman, Jane Thayer. *Richard Johnson of Lynn and Some of His Descendants*. Vol. 11., 84.

any further children, but likely for the stability that marriage offered. Both Thomas and Abigail would have benefitted from having a partner as they aged since Thomas could have a wife to take care of the house and Abigail would have a home to take care of and a husband who could work and have an income.

Despite Thomas' age at this point, this did not prevent him from continuing to cause problems for others. There was one incident where there was a couple that was travelling, and they had stopped temporarily to water their horses. While in the midst of watering their horses, the woman, who was in fact pregnant, caught the attention of Thomas, who happened to be passing by. For some unknown reason, Thomas decided to attack this couple. He did not have a physical altercation with them, but he shouted so aggressively that the heavily pregnant woman ended up falling off of her horse. This did not stop Thomas, but he continued to berate and verbally abuse the couple. He eventually stopped also for some unknown reason. No repercussions were listed in the court record, but it did not win Thomas any friends in Lynn.³²

In 1692, at the age of seventy-eight, Thomas had yet to go through the most trying time of his life. In May, Thomas was brought before the court accused of being a wizard. Massachusetts Bay Colony was in the midst of the Salem Witch Trials, and because Lynn was in close proximity to Salem, they also became a part of this hysteria that rocked the New England colonies at the end of the seventeenth century. Thomas was accused by Ann Putnam, Jr., one of the main witnesses who accused others of being witches, meaning he somewhat unintentionally found himself at the heart of the Salem Witch Trials. When Thomas was arrested, it was along with a number of other men and women

³² Dow, *Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County*, Vol. 7, 410

from Salem and its surrounding areas, most notably John and Elizabeth Proctor. Thomas had a complicated relationship with some of the others arrested from Lynn. A few members from the Bassett family were arrested along with him, primarily the wife and daughters of William Bassett. William's mother happened to be Goody Burt, who Thomas had accused, twenty-two years earlier, of witchcraft. Now, it was Thomas' turn to endure an accusation of witchcraft.

On May 14, 1692, a complaint of arrest was submitted by Nathaniel Ingersoll and Thomas Putnam against Thomas Farrar and a number of others where they were accused of witchcraft.³³ Two days later, on May 16, evidence was entered against Thomas. This was the testimony of Ann Putnam, Jr. Like with many other accusations of witchcraft, Ann claimed that Thomas had appeared before her as an apparition of an old man and demanded that she write in his "book". In her testimony, Ann said that she asked this apparition what his name was and where he came from. She claimed the apparition responded by saying he was from Lynn and that he was called "old father pharaoh," as well as claiming that he was her grandfather. She said she would not call him "grandfather" because he was a wizard and she told the apparition that she was going to report him. After telling him this, Ann claimed that he started "affecting" her by beating, pinching, and choking her, all the while continually urging her to write in his book.³⁴ On May 18, Thomas was transferred from the prison in Salem to the prison in Boston.³⁵ After enduring roughly five months in prison, Thomas was released in November 1692.

³³ Essex County Court Archives, vol. 1, no. 221, Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, Judicial Archives, on deposit James Duncan Phillips Library, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, MA.

³⁴ Essex County Court Archives, vol. 2, no. 114, Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, Judicial Archives, on deposit James Duncan Phillips Library, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, MA.

³⁵ *Essex County Court Archives*, vol. 2, no. 134, Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, Judicial Archives, on deposit James Duncan Phillips Library, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, MA.

In January of the following year, the deposition of Mercy Lewis was also entered as evidence against Thomas. In Mercy's testimony, she referred to Thomas solely as "old pharaoh." Though he did not take an active role in her account, he and others were present as apparitions, while a different woman accused of witchcraft attempted to force Mercy to sign the "book." When she refused, Mercy claimed that these apparitions attacked her, even choking her, to try and force her to sign, but she never yielded.³⁶ Shortly after, an indictment was submitted against Thomas for having afflicted Ann Putnam, but nothing came of it.³⁷ Thomas never suffered through a trial. He lived one more year, and then in February 1694, Thomas died at the age of eighty. His wife Abigail is estimated to have survived him by over thirty years, possibly dying in December 1726, at the age of ninety-two.

The Salem Witch Trials lasted from 1692 to 1693. Over that one-year period, more than two hundred people were accused of witchcraft and twenty were executed. The immense fear and suspicion of anyone who could have potentially been a witch derived from the Puritan and Christian belief in the very real presence of the Devil on Earth. They believed that he was actively trying to lead people astray, and because the sin of one person affected everyone, they felt compelled to weed out the sinful for the benefit of all of society. The economic and societal strains put on the New England colonies starting in 1692 led to increased agitation among the people of Salem, Massachusetts. That in turn led to an increased suspicion of their fellow citizens. When

³⁶ *Deposition of Mercy Lewis v. Philip English, Mary English, Lydia Dustin, Elizabeth Johnson Jr., & Thomas Farrar Sr.* Salem Selections, Massachusetts Box, Essex Co., Manuscripts & Archives, New York Public Library. New York, NY.

³⁷ *Suffolk Court Files*, vol. 31, docket 2667, p. 149, Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, Judicial Archives, Massachusetts State Archives. Boston, MA.

the first young girl started having fits and convulsions, it only seemed to be the natural progression of increased strain on the town. Now, they could blame the problems they were having on the Devil and witchcraft.

Two girls, Abigail Williams and Ann Putnam, were the first to start experiencing screaming and convulsion fits. A doctor who examined the girls blamed the supernatural. The two girls made their first claims as to who was affecting them, and they accused Tituba, who was a slave, as well as Sarah Good and Sarah Osborne, who were both poor, societal outcasts. These women were brought before the court and interrogated, and eventually Tituba confessed to having animal familiars and to signing her name in the Devil's "book." She also claimed that there were other witches working against the Puritans. All three women were imprisoned, and from there the paranoia and accusations only increased and spread. Few were able to defend themselves against accusations of witchcraft, and everyone was under suspicion. The spectral visions and dreams that the accusers used as evidence were nearly impossible to contradict, when the governor's wife was accused of witchcraft, finally realizing that things had gone too far, Governor William Phipps put a stop to the witch hunt and released those who were in prison. He eventually pardoned those who had been accused when, in retrospect, they realized the hysteria that had characterized the previous year. The Proctors, with whom Thomas had been arrested, were not as lucky as Thomas had been. John Proctor was executed in August 1692. Elizabeth Proctor was somewhat more fortunate to have received a stay of execution because she was pregnant. She remained in prison until May 1693 when the governor called for the end of the witch trials, and luckily, she survived. The story of John and Elizabeth Proctor was immortalized in *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller.

Even though the Salem Witch Trials seem to be directly associated with the position of women in Puritan society, the trials and the accusations of witchcraft actually allowed for some form of equality that is not often associated with this time period. All types of people were accused, which showed that people thought that men and women as well as children and adults were all equally capable of being witches. This possibly comes from the Puritan belief that all souls are equal before God, meaning that all souls are equally capable of being sinful, including being equally guilty of being a witch. Based on the historical record, there was a higher number of women accused and a higher number of women executed, which does reflect the strength of the association of women with witchcraft that did already exist at this point, and this should not be discounted. But, for men who were vocal with their questions about the witch trials or who had longstanding rivalries, they too were singled out, and suffered the consequences for standing out and asking questions that contradicted the actions of the majority. One example mentioned earlier is John Proctor. Though both he and his wife were accused of witchcraft, he was executed while his wife was not. John had spoken out against the witch trials, and this had been enough to make him a suspect for being guilty of witchcraft himself. Diane Foulds in her book *Death in Salem* explained that when someone was accused, “Often it was little more than a bad reputation or malicious gossip, repackaged and embroiled over decades. A human frailty or eccentricity might be trotted out as evidence. Sometimes it was the fruit of a protracted family feud, an insult uttered in haste, or a personal indiscretion...that the community refused to forget.”³⁸

³⁸ Foulds, Diane E. *Death in Salem: The Private Lives Behind The 1692 Witch Hunt* (Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press, 2013), 42.

Richard Brown and Thomas Farrar lived at the same time and in the same area but lived very different lives. Richard's dedication to his beliefs and his family allowed him to live a simple life fulfilling the roles expected of him as a Puritan in seventeenth-century colonial New England. Thomas, on the other hand, lived a much wilder and unexpected life. Despite also being a religious man, as he was expected to be, that did not keep him from being a drunk and attacking others who upset him in some way. He then was accused of witchcraft and survived the Salem Witch trials. These two men, their families, as well as the people they interacted with all reflect the variety of human experience in seventeenth-century Massachusetts Bay Colony.

CONCLUSION

Learning about my ancestors through the Hopkins and Brown families has allowed me to more broadly understand the lives of people living in colonial New England while looking at it through the lens of my family. They have served as examples of the different ways that people attempted to survive as well as prosper in the harsh New World. Though many stereotypes exist today about who the Puritans were and how they lived, based on the experiences of my ancestors, it is clear that some of those stereotypes stand true while others prove false.

Stephen Hopkins and his family came to the New World on the *Mayflower* in order to start a new life. Richard Brown and Thomas Farrar also came to have a fresh start. Stephen and Richard both lived lives dedicated to their families while also fulfilling their societal duties. They participated in local government and the church all the while providing for their families. Through these men's wives and daughters, such as Stephen's daughter Constance, the particular position of women in Puritan society is made clear. They may have been their husband's partner, but they were limited to their sphere of influence, which was primarily the house and home. They also had to endure the dangers of childbirth, and they placed their priority on caring for the family and raising the children, which were all expected duties for women in Puritan society. Thomas Farrar showed how even though many Puritans followed the rules as they were expected to, there were also those who did not, but who remained an integral part of society. Thomas was mean and aggressive, and he had many run-ins with the law, but that did not stop him from having a family as well as participating in the local judicial

system. Puritans did have general expectations for how people should live, but that did not limit people to one specific experience in colonial Massachusetts. Puritans lived varied lives, which often do not perfectly line up with modern preconceptions, but only further expand our understanding of who the Puritans were and how many of them were just trying to do the best they could given their circumstances. They had families whom they loved, friends who they watched out for, and jobs they had to keep up with. All of this just happened to be shaped by the New World in which they lived and their Puritan beliefs that they abided by.

The Brown and Hopkins families eventually met, over a century later in 1748, through the marriage of Rebecca Cleveland, the second great granddaughter of Constance Hopkins, to Daniel Brown, the second great grandson of Richard Brown. The couple then moved from Connecticut, where they had been living, to upstate New York. Their son, Solomon Brown, became a Baptist minister, much to the dismay of his Separatist family, and he even fought in the American Revolution against the British. Solomon passed on the Brown name to his son Theron, and through the next six generations, the Brown name continued to be passed from father to son until it eventually came to me, connecting me to this lineage including the Brown as well as the Hopkins families. All of these later generations were shaped by their seventeenth-century ancestors who had taken the risk to move to the other side of the world, and these ancestors continue to influence my life as well as the world we live in now, nearly 400 years after these families settled in what would one day become the United States of America.

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