

*Pilgrim "Others"*

Reclaiming the Agency and Identity of Women, Negroes and Indians in Puritan  
Massachusetts

BY

Julie Johnson Staples

B.A., University of Kansas, 1978

J.D., Georgetown University Law Center, 1994

M.Div., Union Theological Seminary, 2011

Th.M., Harvard Divinity School (expected May, 2012)

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## **Abstract**

This project is focused on the past, specifically a period between 1620 and 1799 in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. However, it is deeply rooted in contemporary concerns about building, bridging and restoring a multi-cultural existence in religious life and liturgy in the church. The idea for this paper is an outgrowth of my own lived experience as a descendant of Cherokees and Chinese and of blacks and whites. It was dually informed by my work as a seminary intern from 2009-2011 at The Riverside Church in the City of New York and my experience as a fellow at the 2011 Boston Seminar sponsored by the Congregational Foundation for Theological Studies (CFTS) and the Center for Congregational Leadership.

Examinations of “lived religion” have occupied scholars of religious history for more than a decade. Yet, this paper argues for a proposition that has not sufficiently been explored in the collective manner presented here. It is an ambitious project albeit with a relatively modest – although, perhaps, surprising – claim. This paper argues that colonists had inter-racial, multi-cultural liturgical experiences from the earliest beginnings of American religious life. Select examples from colonial churches across the Commonwealth – representing urban, suburban and rural congregations – show that women and Negroes and Indians, irrespective of gender, were involved in numerous aspects of the church as measured by admission, baptism, communion and marriage.<sup>2</sup>

This thesis attempts, in the briefest way, to add depth and contours to otherwise well-documented Puritan narratives and to add fresh detail to the historiography of this period.

“...More truth and light yet to breake forth from his holy Word.”  
-- *Farewell discourse of the Rev. John Robinson*<sup>3</sup>

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## A Brief Chronology

- 1536 Tyndale Bible is published. John Calvin publishes *Institutes of the Christian Religion*.
- 1560-61 Geneva Bible is published. First Calvinists settle in England.
- 1563 First usage of term "Puritan" to describe members of a socio-political and religious movement who believed the Bible was the true law of God and that it provided guidelines for Church governance; they sought reforms within the Church of England.
- 1602 William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* parodies the term "Puritan."
- 1608 Puritan separatists from Scrooby in the county of Nottinghamshire leave England and migrate to Holland.
- 1611 Authorized Version of the Bible is published by the Church of England on the authority of King James I.
- 1620 *Mayflower*, a privately commissioned vessel, steers off course and misses its target at the mouth of the Hudson River. Upon landing off the coast of modern-day Cape Cod, English settlers establish Plymouth Plantation.
- 1621 Indigenous American population on Martha's Vineyard is estimated at 3,000 people.<sup>4</sup>
- 1622-23 The Indian population in New England continues to be diminished by disease and plague.
- 1630 Puritan migration begins after a land grant is issued to the Massachusetts Bay colony, which was chartered a year earlier and led by John Winthrop.<sup>5</sup>
- 1638 First slaves arrive in Massachusetts on the ship *Desire*.<sup>6</sup>
- 1641 Massachusetts Bay colony and Plymouth Plantation "authorize slavery by legislative enactment."<sup>7</sup>

1642-43	English settlers arrive on Noepe, later renamed Martha's Vineyard. Hiacoomes, a Nunpaug Indian converts to Christianity.
1645	Two Massachusetts merchants join with London-based slavers to attack an African village. Although about 100 Africans are killed and others were left wounded, "two Negroes, one of whom was an interpreter, were brought to Massachusetts and sold." <sup>8</sup>
1661	Estimated date that "intermixture both with the whites and the blacks" commenced with the indigenous population on Martha's Vineyard. <sup>9</sup>
1670	Hiacoomes and John Tackanash, a Capowack-Wampanoag Indian, are ordained by Congregationalist minister Thomas Mayhew Jr. <sup>10</sup> to preach the gospel.
1689-92	Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay colonies merge.
1706	Members of Second Church (also known as "Old North" meeting house or church) present Cotton Mather with the gift of a slave, whom he names Onesimus. <sup>11</sup>
1709	Commonwealth population is estimated to be "56,000 souls, besides the blacks." <sup>12</sup>
1718	Population has nearly doubled to "94,000 souls...1,200 Indians; 2,000 slaves mostly Negroes." <sup>13</sup>
1720	Indian population on Martha's Vineyard is estimated at 800 people, or 155 families. <sup>14</sup>
1761	A kidnapped, nine-year-old girl is sold to Congregationalists John and Susannah Wheatley in Boston, a town of an estimated 15,000 people – about 800 of whom were "of African descent." <sup>15</sup>
1764	An estimated 440 mixed-race people live on Martha's Vineyard. <sup>16</sup>

- 1771 Woman listed as “Phillis” is baptized at Third Church<sup>17</sup> (also known as “Old South”).<sup>18</sup>
- 1790 More than 5,300 Negroes live in Massachusetts.<sup>19</sup>

**"...For the growing good of the world is party dependent on unhistoric acts; and...is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs."**

**-- *Middlemarch* by George Eliot<sup>30</sup>**

## Prologue

The silvery grey sky was overcast when I stood, last summer, on the deck of the 25-foot wide, 100-foot long square-rigged *Mayflower II*, moored at State Pier in Plymouth harbor. But the sky and sea were calm. Hardly comparable to the unforgiving mix of pewter and black that must have routinely churned beneath and blown over the 12-year-old vessel that brought 102 pilgrims<sup>21</sup> and a crew of 25 men on a privately chartered boat named for a chestnut tree's blossom. Until these religious separatists came aboard, the *Mayflower* commonly ferried Spanish salt, hops and wine between England, the Atlantic coast of France, and other European ports of call.<sup>22</sup> Can you imagine being on this boat? My answer, to the person who had queried me, was a smile. My reality was muffled by the shoving of a couple hundred years of chattel slavery deep into the background of American memory and cultural narrative. Had I answered, the reply would have been, "of course not." My passage, if lucky,<sup>23</sup> would have been supine, probably diseased and certainly contorted as slaves had "the worst accommodations of any humans ever transported across the Atlantic."<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, I was struck by the comment. It reflected how singularly and powerfully one particular story of journey and quest has been told in this country.

## Introduction

Thus I too, embarked upon this project as if on a quest – to understand journey, memory and accepted narratives while knowing that yet more truth might "breake forth." I ventured to grasp human experience and adventure but also to see, perhaps timidly, where I and others like me fit in. This project does not aspire to deconstruct or critique work already done, nor to revisit vividly told stories that were folded into American history far more intentionally than I had imagined.<sup>25</sup> In this way, George Eliot's words resonate with

me: the stories I went looking for are “unhistoric acts” solely because they have not made their way into the received history. Like Eliot, I believe the good of the world still is growing. And we owe a debt to those who, as she put it, lived faithfully a life that remains hidden because we haven’t dug. Early American women, black and indigenous Congregationalists rest in tombs unvisited because we haven’t known precisely where to look.

The storytelling social historian Margot Minardi warns latter-day worldly saints who rush to “rescue,” reclaim or restore “agency” to groups including women, workers and slaves. \* She worries that this very act of rescue is, itself, an act of subjectification. “The language of rescue suggests that a historian today can somehow reach back in time and pluck a forgotten actor from the debris of generations of historical narration, as though the histories that were written and not written about her, in her own day and in all the generations since, could somehow be brushed aside from her historical significance.”<sup>27</sup>

Where I take counsel from Minardi is to be clear about language, usage and intent.

### **Questions of Language and Methodology**

First, to address the language used in the title of this work. I “reclaim the agency and identity of women, Negroes and Indians,” only insofar as I endeavor to inform myself and my readers that these “other” pilgrims existed. I do not reclaim by re-imagining them. In the earliest days of this project I was guided by a seasoned historian who warned of the folly of stirring colored chips into a larger, already mixed batter of history. Thus, with this project, I challenge myself – even beyond this project – to dig deeper, learn more and stand alongside those who are willing to closely read church records where they can be found simply to understand history more fully. And it is equipped with this understanding

that I believe we can move forward together in modern worship. On the terminology used here to describe people of color, I, like others, find African American and Native American anachronistic for the colonial period.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, I dislike some of the subtle implications embedded within the term "Native." This paper uses the terms "Negro," mulatto and black somewhat interchangeably – as was done in the colonial era by blacks, whites and Indians, for whom identity was a fluid category.<sup>29</sup> I prefer indigenous American to describe the people who lived here before the arrival of Spanish, French, English and Dutch explorers and colonists. However, because of its cumbersome nature, this text will most regularly use "Indian" to describe Native Americans.

Underlying these terms are numbers, from which assumptions are drawn. I am guided here by the Bancroft Award-winning historian Jill Lepore who, in writing about King Philip's War and the origins of American identity, said: "Words about war are often lies."<sup>30</sup> Words about race are no less fraught with complexity. To extrapolate from Lepore's point, I kept in mind the fact that statistics counting Negroes, Indians and the numbers of people who crossed color lines during the colonial period typically were tallied with political objectives and biases that are difficult for the modern interpreter to ascertain. Similarly, reports of religious conversion among these groups vary widely. Religious conversions (then as now) sometimes are tied to dynamics that extend beyond spiritual motivation – both for the proselytizers and the converts.

Population statistics in Massachusetts compiled for the years between 1709 and 1731 demonstrate this variability in the data. The population nearly doubles, growing from 56,000 people to 96,000 between the years 1709 and 1715. A slight decline – to 94,000 – is reported in 1718. The figures hold steady for two years. Then, the white population for

1726 is recorded as 35,000 people, a steep drop that is unexplained.<sup>31</sup> By 1731 there are a reported 120,000 “white inhabitants.”<sup>32</sup> Similar fluctuations occur in the reported number of Negroes and Indians. In 1736, 2,000 Negroes and 1,000 Indians lived in the Commonwealth. By 1751, the number of blacks remains flat at 2,000. But the designation of indigenous Americans has been changed to “Praying Indians,” (from merely “Indians,” previously). Their number has grown to 3,000.<sup>33</sup> These numbers, however, also draw attention to the small size of the sample examined in this thesis and from which I draw conclusions.

Methodologically, this paper is not centered on quantitative analysis that tracks statistics over time. Rather, it relies on an admittedly small but significant sample to inform questions and reasonable analysis. For example, the records of the First Church of Christ Cambridge, established in 1632, are well preserved.<sup>34</sup> Church records list “persons adult [who] own’d the Covenant & were Baptized.”<sup>35</sup> Also tallied are those who were admitted to communion, or who were married or died. On a list of several hundred people, two Indian men and two Indian women were included during the years between 1727 and 1740.<sup>36</sup> On this same list, from 1698 to 1799 there are 77 blacks.<sup>37</sup> The records note, in a paragraph of explanation on Negroes, that the list did not include the names of people who had been mentioned only incidentally “as owing the church money, bringing in wood and so forth.”<sup>38</sup> This data is used to frame my core argument that First Church was a multi-racial congregation. And, these simple tallies of information found in the earliest membership lists revealed congregations that were diverse in every way that contemporary term is understood. Large numbers are not required to make that point. The records have not been relied upon to make claims about the level of participation that Indians or Negroes

exhibited in Cambridge church life. And this paper also does not rely on the numerical data to comment, inferentially or otherwise, about black or Indian influence on theological or liturgical practice.

In this sense this project stops short of a standard, common to established historical investigation, that presumes to fully answer the question of what actually happened.

Historians see it as their job to discern facts and derive sweeping meaning from a set of answerable questions that lie at the heart of their inquiry. Here, I take an ethno-historical approach, borrowing anthropological methodology to weave together a tapestry drawn from many disparate threads of primary source material. In the process, however, some questions have arisen and did not enjoy the clarity and finality of unambiguous reply. Time, and the scope of this project, did not allow more thorough burrowing into every possible question posed by the presented evidence. I tried to steer clear of pre-conceived answers, however. Among those commonly held assumptions, for example, is the notion that blacks who converted to Christianity came to the faith as empty vessels or, at best, imbued with a foreign "slave religion" wholly unfamiliar with the God of Israel.<sup>39</sup> These assumptions do not seem possible. Records of the Hollis Street Church established as Boston's eighth Congregational church in 1732, prove the point. Hollis baptismal records report that John Vingus brought his seven-year-old daughter, Sarah, to the church for baptism. Vingus is listed separately as owning the covenant. Beside Sarah's name, John Vingus's name is listed as the sponsoring parent. Also printed is the statement that Vingus was a "free negro, baptized in his own country by a Romish priest, who also owned the covencant with us."<sup>40</sup>

This project does not purport to tell the story of John or Sarah Vingus or others like him. Was Vingus previously enslaved? If so, how did he become free? Did he, like

many blacks who found their way to colonial New England, come via the Caribbean?" Or, was he from the Kongo? Hollis church records alone simply do not provide sufficient material for informed speculation along those lines. Yet it was illuminating to read the otherwise mute record of a black man, who had been Christian prior to his arrival in America and who sought Christian baptism for his young daughter. This adequately established his agency in an overall historical record where agency is in particularly short supply for black men in colonial America.

Church records, even when surprisingly complete cannot answer all questions. They fall short on countless measures of verifiability. The persons who created the documents are often unknown. The "why" behind a church record, rarely can be found. And, even if an audience can, with precision, be situated – say a congregation clearly is identified as the target of a preached sermon during the colonial period – a firm understanding of who actually heard the sermon and what they understood rarely can be excavated. Even when documents and church records are well preserved and found in reliable places, they can present enigmatic inconsistencies. The first record book of the Second Church in Boston<sup>28</sup> is one example. (See Figure 1.2 in the Appendix.) Also known as the Old North Church, the church record book transcribes the first covenant and lists founding members among other details. (See Figure 1.3.) In numerous church records spanning a voluminous collection at the Massachusetts Historical Society, Cotton Mather is cited as the author. However, the charming, pocket-sized tapestry-covered book, presents a fundamental question with no answer. Mather writes that the church was established June 5, 1650. This is, by all accounts, the founding date – ignoring minor discrepancies. (*E.g.*, sometimes founding date is noted as 1649 due to inconsistent use of the Julian and

Gregorian calendar in the Commonwealth at this time.) Yet Cotton Mather (1663-1728) was not yet born. His father, Increase Mather (1639-1723) did not become the settled minister in the Old North pulpit until 1664. Mather did not succeed his father until 1685. Nothing in the book or elsewhere in church records indicates that Cotton Mather copied another record or recorded oral testimony. There is nothing to shed light on why this early record is ascribed to his hand. It is a set of questions that I was unable to answer.<sup>45</sup>

So this project, notwithstanding its grand ambition, remains firmly grounded in simplicity - both in claim and proof.

### **Race and Identity in Puritan Massachusetts**

Finally to properly examine the complex set of interactions between Puritans and "others," the issue of slavery must come into the foreground. The rhetoric of slavery, extending a theory advanced by historian Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, functions as a "meta-language" for race more broadly.<sup>46</sup> Understanding black, Indian and Puritan interactions must be placed in the context of a complex historiography of slavery in New England.<sup>45</sup> According to colonial court records, the first slaves of the Massachusetts Bay and Plymouth colonists were Indians and Englishmen. Slaves, in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, served either for a specific term or for life.<sup>46</sup> In 1641 the first set of laws adopted by the colonies of the Massachusetts commonwealth removed Englishmen from the available pool of slaves.

The law provided that

there shall never be any bond slaverie, villinage or Captivitie amongst us, unles it be lawfull Captives taken in just warres, and such strangers as willingly selle themselves or are sold to us. And these shall have all the liberties and Christian usages which the law of god established in Israell concerning such persons doeth morally require. This exempts none from servitude who shall be Judged thereto by Authoritie.<sup>47</sup>

Following wars with the English, Indians taken into captivity were sent to the West Indies as slaves to work in bondage.<sup>48</sup> The concept of indentured – but temporary – servitude also existed in the Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay colonies. But within the first 20 years, indentured servants became less prevalent. According to A. Leon Higginbotham, by 1645 colonists demonstrated a “marked preference for black slaves as opposed to white indentured servants.”<sup>49</sup>

Incorrect perceptions persist nevertheless, that slavery somehow was “incidental to the region” of New England, notes colonial historian Wendy Anne Warren. A soft-pedal is pressed at every corner of this assumption. Slavery, if it did exist in Massachusetts, is somehow believed to have been kinder and gentler than that of the South. Moreover, it is commonly believed to have been dispensed with quickly. Such temporal judgments are arbitrary and subjective. Chattel slavery existed in the Commonwealth for more than 140 years.<sup>50</sup> Even I came into this project believing that the covenant theology of the pilgrims and Puritans might explain why church congregations were multi-racial – in other words that there was a level of equality and tolerance assumed in covenant – and that the Puritan’s theological framework may have somehow ameliorated the reality of human chattel and bondage for those suffering under such law and practice.<sup>51</sup> Warren underscores the “long-standing existence” of these types of beliefs.<sup>52</sup> And, she adds quoting Robert Desrochers: “Too great a focus on slavery’s negligibility in Massachusetts has perpetuated the New England studies tradition of exceptionalism by masking ways in which developments and trends in New England dovetailed with broader currents of slavery and political economy in the non-plantation societies of the mid-Atlantic and the North and in the larger Atlantic world.”<sup>53</sup> Former Federal judge Higginbotham, in his seminal *In the Matter of Color*, cited

records demonstrating varying strains of local slavery dating back to 1636.<sup>54</sup> Slavery also is incorporated in the colony's first set of laws, the Body of Liberties enacted in 1641.<sup>55</sup>

According to Warren, slavery was culturally and economically "crucial" to New England.<sup>56</sup>

In the meantime a rhetoric of slavery, alongside Enlightenment-propelled theories of liberty, was a central feature in pulpit expressions and sermons. Slavery is inexorably intertwined with the American history of race and religion. It is a history overlaid by notions of journey and stories of place; where slaves are set free to find promised lands. Identity formation nevertheless mingles with invisibility.

In America the birth of a nation was framed by religious rebirth, the propagation of God's gospel and the saving of souls. I have done my best to fairly draw conclusions from this challenging troika. But I begin and end this paper taking my own first challenge – to continue to dig. I have long known that whites, blacks and the indigenous people in America who preceded them all lived together intimately from the very outset – not only in Jamestown, but in Massachusetts as well. I now understand that these not always disparate groups, for a brief time, also worshipped collectively and together sought God, for many years longer than I had imagined.<sup>57</sup>

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**“What if it would be possible to stand on the extreme edges...and look toward the new worlds, the place of the resettled...and imagine what happens in the space of the travel, [to] the inhabitants and the space in between?”**

**– Cherokee Fine Art Photographer Thomas Joshua Cooper<sup>sa</sup>**

## Covenant and Identity

Thomas Joshua Cooper's selenium-toned, silver gelatin photograph of the water's edge at Plymouth Sound looks in a south-southwesterly direction from the Mayflower Steps in Devon, England. Just beneath it, is a hauntingly similar beachfront. The shore is shadowed with twin shades of black and grey, facing in a north-northeasterly direction toward "the Old World."<sup>59</sup> These modern water views from Plymouth, Massachusetts and Plymouth in the United Kingdom look eerily similar. Cooper, an American-born Cherokee Indian, lives and works in Scotland. He has spent the last 10 years on a quest "to set foot on all the physical extremities of the ancient and old worlds of Europe and Africa," what he calls the "classical worlds." Similarly he has made photographs at the companion landing spots in "the new world."<sup>60</sup> Cooper's work comes without narrative. Indeed Cooper, who prior to an August 2008 lecture in Glasgow had not publicly spoken about his work in 10 years, believes artists and their work should be seen not heard. But he openly challenges us to imagine, to ask ourselves, what happened at these special spots that shaped history?

In many ways we know a great deal about what happened to the group of pilgrims, and later Puritans who sought religious freedom. Their journey, which will not be rehearsed here, is a central part of the American story. Also it sits at the base of the communal religious narratives of Congregationalists, Unitarians and many others in the Reformed tradition. The pilgrim language of journey – from William Bradford's *On Plymouth Plantation*, to the rhetoric deployed in thousands of sermons preached well into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century – shapes the American consciousness. While travel is a universal metaphor – for life and, even, in humanity's search for God – the Biblically-laden

metaphors used by the early Massachusetts settlers resonated with explicit spiritual imagery. Boston was a city set on a hill (three hills, actually). Plymouth Plantation was a promised land. The Puritans and pilgrims – terms that are not precisely interchangeable – were unified in their call for reform of the Church of England.<sup>64</sup> Even as Puritanism changed over time, so too did the identities of British immigrants who consciously moved from being English to American. Their collective use of journey, wayfarer and sojourner narratives became the paving stones of an American freedom trail. It is natural to ask what, then, did they think of other sojourners – even those displaced from land<sup>65</sup> or countries?

Specifically the pilgrim settlers twice experienced displacement. First they left Scrooby, a small village in the English countryside, for Leyden, Holland. Later they returned to England, before departing for America. Did their first immigrant experience shape the second? Early confessions of faith, notably recorded by ministers not interested in this question, reveal little in the way of answers.<sup>66</sup> What was their understanding of women? Of non-white people?<sup>67</sup> Where did they form a consciousness of “savages”?<sup>68</sup> How did their covenant theology factor into the equation? What was the role of the church? At the time of its charter with Massachusetts Bay, for example, the Plymouth colony contained 17 towns. Congregational churches had been formed in all but three of them.<sup>69</sup> Congregationalism functioned, for all intents and purposes, as the state church in Massachusetts.

What I found, perhaps not surprisingly, is that the very nature of independence inherent in “the Congregational Way” made answers to those questions difficult to grasp. One avenue was to look at church covenants, those very same documents upon which church admission had been based and upon which admission was clearly extended to

blacks, women and Indians. There was absolutely no ascertainable uniformity, however. Although modeled after the 1648 Cambridge platform and the Westminster confessions, the numerous covenants adopted by new settlers upon their arrival in America differ considerably one from another. Some even pride themselves on being explicitly devoid of doctrine or explicitly religious overtones.

For example, the covenant of the Second Church (Old North) in Boston, which appears to be in the handwriting of Increase Mather states:

you do, in this solemn presence, give up yourselfs even your whole self you and yours to the true God in Jesus Christ, and to his people also, according to ye will of God; promising to walk with God, & with this church of his, in all his Holy ordinances, & to yield obedience to every truth of his, which has been or shall be made known to you as your duty; the Lord assisting you by his spirit & grace. We, then, the church of Christ in this place, do receive you into the fellowship, & promise to walk towards you, & to watch over you as a member of this church, endeavoring your spiritual edification in Christ Jesus our Lord.<sup>67</sup>

There is nothing within this covenant, beyond expressed belief in Jesus, that speaks to how a Puritan "walk with God" might inform interaction with one another (including women, blacks or indigenous people). Covenants of other early colonial churches similarly shed little light on this question.

The First Church at Cambridge, adopted a covenant in 1632<sup>68</sup> that reads:

We who are now brought together and united into one Church under the Lord Jesus Christ, our Head, in such sort as becometh all those whom He hath redeemed and sanctified to Himself, do solemnly and religiously, as in His most holy presence, promise and bind ourselves to walk in all our ways according to the rule of the Gospel, and in all sincere conformity to His holy ordinances, and in mutual love and respect each to other, so near as God shall give us grace.<sup>69</sup>

At Third Church (Old South) the covenant drafted in 1669 sounded similar themes:

We whose names are underwritten, being called of God to join together into a Church in heart-sense of our unworthiness thereof, disability thereunto, and aptness to forsake the Lord, cast off his government and neglect our duty one to another; Do in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, trusting only in His grace and help, solemnly bind ourselves together as in the presence of God. Constantly to walk together as a Church of Christ, according to all those holy rules of God's word, given to a church body rightly established, so far as we already know them, or they shall be hereafter farther made known to us.<sup>76</sup>

Across the board in these covenants, belief in Jesus Christ nominally is an indicator of interest in justice. However, there is nothing explicit in the church records to communicate how this belief was translated into lived experience in the pews. All three of the aforementioned congregations, however, were inter-racial and extended membership to individuals irrespective of gender. There is ample evidence that sermonic voices from the pulpit bridged vast logical inconsistencies and advanced a variety of theological interpretations to justify evident injustice and questionable personal behavior.<sup>77</sup> What congregants took from these sermons, has not yet been fully uncovered. Fundamentally, there is little to demonstrate how Puritan and pilgrim theological principles – especially those rooted in the Calvinist covenant theology embraced by Congregationalists – directly informed behavioral interactions between whites and blacks, men and women or slaves (or free blacks) with indigenous Americans. This presents an opportunity for further scholarship and study.

What church records do show, however, is a vast sweep of social and economic status – the bringing together of rich and poor; black, white and Indian and people of both sexes and spanning all ages – in the earliest membership lists.<sup>78</sup> For example, the earliest records from the First Church at Cambridge, list 48 founding members in 1632 when the church was established. Eighteen in this group are women. Among those, certainly, are widows and wives. Female servants, for example, also are on the list, such as “Katherine,

Mrs. Russels mayd.<sup>73</sup> The names, unfortunately, are not categorized by race or age.

Considerably later in the records, during the tenure of Revolutionary War-era preacher Nathaniel Appleton, for example, references to servants by race and, possibly even, ownership appear more frequently. Rev. Appleton, for example, baptized "Jane, a Negro woman of Elizabeth Nutting; Philip, a negro servant of Mr. Abraham Watson; and Dilla, a negro belonging to Mr. Sam White of Watertown."<sup>74</sup>

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**"Come over and help us..."**

***-Words Above an Image of an Indian in the Original Seal of the  
Massachusetts Bay Colony.***

**"And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was  
standing and appealing to him, and saying 'Come over to Macedonia and  
help us.'"**

**- Acts 16: 9 (New American Standard Bible.)<sup>75</sup>**

## Women, Negroes and Indians

The Harvard historian Jill Lepore writes that pilgrim authorities in Plymouth, “like their Massachusetts counterparts, saw Indians as pagan Macedonians who, at heart, were desperate for the light of the gospel.”<sup>76</sup> Blacks and women – although without comparable public, government-sanctioned illustration such as the first commonwealth seal that features an Indian seeking help – apparently were deemed to have similar needs. Cotton Mather, a generation after the colony’s establishment – when more blacks had become a part of colonial life – regularly preached sermons and wrote an essay “to excite and assist that good work, the instruction of Negro servants in Christianity.”<sup>77</sup> Mather challenged slaveholders, a category in which he was included, to provide religious instruction for their slaves relying for Scriptural justification on a verse from the book of Joshua: “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”<sup>78</sup>

Women, alone among these pilgrim “others,” were seen as having a special role in the life of the church and the life at home. Personal piety, was as Rosemary O’Day writes, “a virtue of which women...could legitimately boast.”<sup>79</sup> The role of women in contemplation, prayer, sacrifice and even martyrdom was well known to the Puritans long before anyone came to America. Geoffrey Chaucer’s *Canterbury Pilgrims* exemplified the degree to which women of varying statures played conspicuously public roles in church life and religious thought.<sup>80</sup> In this way, pilgrim women are distinguishable from blacks and Indians in their experience of religious life in colonial Massachusetts. From the earliest times of Christianity, including stories recorded in the Bible, women worshipped God openly, went on pilgrimages and played a key role, as Laurel Thatcher Ulrich posits, in their lone ability to birth children.<sup>81</sup> This understanding, in once sense, buttressed their

status in the New World.<sup>82</sup> Once children arrived, women in the colonies were responsible for their religious education. In a colony established on Biblical principles, the involvement of women is detectable from the outset. There were 17 women on the Mayflower, two of whom were pregnant during the crossing.<sup>83</sup> The importance that pilgrims and Puritans placed upon the family as a spiritual unit also intersects in curious ways with high pregnancy rates, piety and the "specter of death [which] hovered over childbirth."<sup>84</sup> This terrain warrants further interrogation as it relates to the lived religious experience of women.<sup>85</sup>

The key to church admission and participation for women,<sup>86</sup> as was the case for men, was total and willing submission to strict moral codes and church discipline.<sup>87</sup> The historian Mary Beth Norton, even in drawing sharp distinctions between gendered power in the colonial era, notes that 17<sup>th</sup> Century churches in New England explicitly "included female members as well as male members, and sometimes more of the former than the latter."<sup>88</sup> Although women were not commonly voting members, in some churches their sheer numbers reflected the degree to which they could exert influence on church life. A split that occurred at Boston's Second Church in the 1740s provides data to illustrate Norton's point.

The Old North church, established as a spin-off from First Church in Boston, initially suffered dissension and a split in 1714 when a group of members left to form the New North church. A second fracture followed the ordination of Cotton Mather's son Samuel, in 1732. Mather, (1706-1785), was married to Hannah Hutchinson, a sister to Loyalist Thomas Hutchinson (1711-1780), the man who would later become the colony's controversial Lieutenant governor. Sixty-nine of 112 members at Second Church voted to call Samuel Mather as their settled minister. But nine years later, in 1741, Mather was

dismissed with one year's severance.<sup>80</sup> Mather left, with 63 women and 30 men, to form a new church, called Tenth Church, in Boston's North End on North Bennett Street.<sup>81</sup> The congregation Mather left behind also was overwhelmingly female. There were 80 men and 183 women who remained at Second Church.<sup>81</sup> This is consistent with a trend Jon Butler draws attention to in his book *Awash in a Sea of Faith*. Butler cites a trend that developed between the years 1680 and 1740 - he calls it "a new spiritual couple...the member wife and the nonmember, or delayed-member, husband."<sup>82</sup> By the 1720s, women "dominated membership in virtually all known New England congregations," Butler found.<sup>83</sup>

This paper has endeavored to incorporate the stories of black men and women and their interaction with pilgrims and Puritans throughout. Noting the limited nature of this project's review of church records, it can nevertheless be stated flatly that many Congregational churches whether in urban, suburban or rural areas, routinely had one or two black members. Moreover the records of churches in Boston, Cambridge, Watertown, Weymouth and Dorchester, among others demonstrate this. The forthcoming work of George Washington University historian Richard J. Boles draws from considerably more data to more strongly make the point that Massachusetts churches were racially mixed. Boles also argues that the role of blacks was not passive or unconstructive.

Scholars of the history of religion also make numerous correlations between black involvement in Congregational church life and the Great Awakening.<sup>84</sup> For these scholars, the conversion impulse among slaves is unambiguously driven by theological concerns. My work is focused primarily on church reports and sermons (which do not necessarily address the religious concerns or experiences of converts). I did not spend meaningful time in this area. Published advertisements during the colonial period and Anglo-American

case law, however, suggest that a cautious approach should be taken by scholars who have relied on conversion statistics alone to draw theological conclusions about why slaves sought baptism. First, I start with the assumption that it is slavery alone that drew blacks to America. Because of that assumption, the connections between slavery and conversion become important. My attention was drawn especially to the legal and historical antecedents of the Yorke-Talbot decision in England.<sup>95</sup> Yorke-Talbot was an advisory opinion issued in London on January 14, 1729 in response to a request for a legal clarification that came from West Indian merchants. For nearly 100 years, in Britain and later in colonial America, perceptions were widely held that Christian baptism paved the road to manumission from slavery. This pervasive belief prompted Virginia, as early as 1667, to enact a law explicitly stating that baptism did not confer freedom.<sup>96</sup> Nevertheless, the view held. I believe this is why the Yorke-Talbot decision was issued. Moreover, its applicability to all colonies – not just those in the South – explain why a substantial advertisement was placed and appeared in *The Boston Gazette* on September 7, 1730. It read, in part:

We are of Opinion, that a Slave, by coming from the West-Indies to Great Britain or Ireland, either with or without his Master, doth not become free, and that his Master's Property, or Right in him, is not thereby determined or varied. And that Baptism doth not bestow freedom on him, nor make any alteration in his temporal Condition in these Kingdoms. We are also of Opinion, that his Master may legally compel him to return again to the Plantations.<sup>97</sup>

Much of the conversion activity that is alleged to tie blacks to the Great Awakening occurs immediately after the Yorke-Talbot period and after news of the ruling was widely disseminated in the colonies. Certainly there are slave narratives, and even correspondence – Phillis Wheatley's most prominently among them – that draw connections between evangelical preachers such as George Whitefield and black converts.<sup>98</sup> But Wheatley

biographer Vincent Carretta concedes that “no known record survives of Phillis Wheatley having heard Whitefield preach at either Old South or New North.”<sup>99</sup> Thus additional research is warranted to prevent newly written history from sinking into the sandtrap left by old racially-tinted tropes. Specifically to be avoided is the implication that the theological concerns of women, blacks and other people of color derive from emotional impulses while the spiritual understanding and expressions of whites (especially men) are intellectually centered.

The stories of Indian people and their encounters with pilgrims and Puritans also have been interspersed through various examples presented previously in this paper. This section draws special attention, however, to the research of William S. Simmons, David J. Silverman and Kenneth R. Mulholland who, in 1979, 2005 and 2010 respectively, labored extensively to recount the Christian experiences of the Wampanoag people on Martha’s Vineyard. By far the most comprehensive published work on this topic is Silverman’s *Faith and Boundaries: Colonists, Christianity, and Community among the Wampanoag Indians of Martha’s Vineyard, 1600-1871*. Scholarship in the area of Indian interaction with Puritans across New England is surprisingly deep although it seems not to have drawn the interest or attention of many Indian scholars. Nevertheless this body of work, including unpublished manuscripts by Vineyard descendants of the storied Mayhews, suggests that the relationships that existed communally and liturgically on Martha’s Vineyard differed markedly from the interactions between whites and Indians on the mainland. Overall, the stories are told in an overwhelmingly positive light. For example Silverman writes: “...the Wampanoags intended to co-exist with the English and honor their shared God.”<sup>100</sup> But it quickly should be pointed out that life on an island, by its very nature of limited boundaries

and resources, differed from life on the mainland. But, there were tensions, even if not as sharply drawn as those found elsewhere in Massachusetts.<sup>101</sup>

Seventeenth-century records from the church now known as First Congregational of West Tisbury are largely non-existent for the period commencing in the 1640s when English settlers begin to arrive on the magical, 87-square mile island Indians called Noepe, which means "land among the streams." Nevertheless, select records can be found – such as the decision in June 1679 to "rayse fiveten pounds yearly from year to yar for the worck of the ministry."<sup>102</sup> By 1700, a pay raise to "20 pounds for the preacher" was approved to entice the Rev. Jonathan Russell of Barnstable to leave the mainland for island ministry.<sup>103</sup> Also some land transactions can be found, such as one recorded on February 2, 1691-92 which authorized "James Allin & peter Robinson" to:

goe and discovr the Indian Steven and Joseph Skeetup...And to agree with said Indians, so that thay, said Indians do quit Claim of said neeks, to the town of Tisbury And yeld peasable possession to the English, as Resonable as thay Cann.<sup>104</sup>

This notation, unlike the plan to raise money for the minister's salary, makes no mention of the amount of money that the town was prepared to pay the Indians for "said neeks," a reference to a narrow or elongated piece of land, a peninsula or an isthmus. In the modern age, this word is pronounced and spelled "neck."

Also it is important to point out that Indians in Massachusetts were a diverse lot. Tribal allegiances were complex and varied. Strategic interests among tribes rarely existed in the monolithic manner loosely suggested by most scholarship in so far as the predominance of mainstream historical work has placed war between the Indians and whites, not peace or even religious conversion, as its first focus. So, in this regard, the examples presented here from Martha's Vineyard are not to be taken to represent

experiences elsewhere in the Plymouth or Massachusetts Bay colonies. It is only one case study. Nevertheless, the level of detail available in Tisbury town records, which provide a picture of direct Indian-English interaction, suggest that future researchers may profitably mine municipal histories to inform and glean fresh insight into 17<sup>th</sup> C. Indian interactions with whites.<sup>165</sup>

"N&shun Keesukqut quttiannatanmunach k&wesunonk. Peyaum utch kukketaff &tamonk, kuttentamoonk ne&n&nach okheit neane kesukqut. Nummeetsuongash askesutkokish assamainnean yeuyey keesukok. Kah ahquoan tamaiinnean nummatcheseongash, neane matchenenukqueagig nutaquontamoun nong. Ahquc sakompagunnaiinnnan en en gutchhaouganit, webe phoquokwussinnean wuth matchitut. Newutche kntahtaunn keetass &tamonk, kah menuhkesuonk, kah soh sumoonk mickene. Amen"

-- *The Lord's Prayer in the Wampanoag dialect.*<sup>106</sup>

## **Conclusion: A Future Hope**

Multi-racial congregations not only existed – from the earliest moments of American religious life in Puritan Massachusetts – they may have been the norm, and not the exception. This statement, even in its breadth, recognizes the relative sparsity of Negroes – slave or free – and the relatively brief span during which time Indians were actively Christianized by English settlers. It is a necessary admission that the historical period of focus in this paper also relies on antiquarian population estimates that vary widely. Data often are inconsistent. Church records while showing the baptism, admission or death of people of color, nevertheless reflect small numbers – sometimes no more than one person or two in a Congregation of many dozens. The search to reclaim the agency and identity of women, Negroes and Indians was an ambitious project, perhaps overly so for the amount of time that could be committed to it. Any one of these categories – women, Negroes and Indians – indeed could warrant independent study of primary source materials and likely would produce fruitful results.

Nevertheless I believe the evidence supports my argument that colonists had inter-racial, multi-cultural liturgical experiences from the earliest beginnings of American religious life. Select examples from colonial churches across the Commonwealth – representing urban, suburban and rural congregations – show that women and Negroes and Indians, irrespective of gender, were actively involved in numerous aspects of the church. Recorded marriages and baptisms among black members and congregants can be found in the records of numerous churches. The First Church in Cambridge, the Church in Brattle Square (also known as Brattle Street) and the Hollis Street church are just a few examples

cited here. Records of deaths among blacks in the church are more noticeable in the Second church records.<sup>107</sup>

When I set forth on this journey I wanted to understand an old world through eyes like mine. Generations of racial categorization and mixing and labeling began with interactions that rarely engender frank talk or historical scholarship. And excavating these relationships required sand-blasting historical bias, embedded and recorded racism and even my own cultural biases and lived experience. Some scholars are more willing than I am to highlight blind spots in existing history. My research deems the established historiography impoverished only in so far as the academy has tolerated and, perhaps perpetuates, the siloing of historical life stories in ways that are fundamentally inconsistent with the products of those lives and their descendants whom we see walking around beside us on the street.

The work here, as extensive and deliberative as I've tried to make it, admittedly provides only brief snapshots of three groups - women, blacks and indigenous Americans - and it does so in a qualitative, rather than quantitative way. An obvious critique of my work is that there is insufficient data to take my multi-cultural liturgical ball very far downfield.

But in this way, I hope other scholars in the Congregational, Unitarian and Reformed traditions will be inspired to look and to dig to find the inter-racial, multi-cultural stories that existed in faithfully lived lives. A continued need for research exists so that we can identify and visit their tombs. The growing good of the world depends on it. The quest to understand multi-cultural and diverse worship in the 21<sup>st</sup> C. depends on it. The world of men and women and old and young from all nations, a world that was envisioned by the 6<sup>th</sup>

Century B.C.E. prophet Zechariah<sup>108</sup> depends on it. And, perhaps, so too must the future. The spiritually rich, intellectually honest and communally meaningful church life hoped for in of all of our denominations depends on it.

### **Postscript**

A mottled grey sky, indifferent to northeasterly winds, had opened in a deluge last week when I returned to Plymouth. The ahistorical nature of bad weather was itself a welcome footnote to this project. The ship's deck of the *Mayflower II* was leaking. (See Figure 1.1 in Appendix.) That the parents of a *Mayflower* newborn could have traveled with an elaborate wicker bassinet (See Figure 1.5 in Appendix) also became a new puzzle.

Pouring rain propelled the flow of two small brown rivers, that emanated from piles of cow excrement, down the main street of Plimoth Plantation. A Wampanoag re-enactor noted that some elements of the English colony had been sanitized – specifically omitted was the head of Metacomet, the Indian widely deemed responsible for starting King Philip's War. The Indian was killed August 12, 1676. After his body was quartered and decapitated, his decomposed head remained on a fencepost outside Plimoth Plantation for decades.<sup>109</sup> The re-enactor commented that by 1640 nearly every home in Plymouth colony had a "native slave." I asked about blacks and was told the first black slave may have come on the second boat in 1621. That would have preceded John Withrop's recorded notation of slaves by 17 years. A film I watched spoke of two cultures with one story. Blacks were not mentioned at all in the History Channel-produced documentary on display at Pilgrim Hall. In telling the "conflicting histories" of two peoples with one story, the focus was solely on Indians and English colonists. I imagined the details the re-enactor had mentioned were a few of the details lost in the telling of this history in conflict.

But the experience was no less pleasant than my first visit. Indeed, I was more aware of the skills I need when encountering naturalized historical theme parks. The endeavor to seamlessly bridge the past and present for public consumption in national landmarks, indeed is a primary way many people connect with American History. My return visit simply was a reminder of the importance of this work and the depth to which digging must go. And it was a reminder that even as iconic as Plymouth is in the American imagination – and in the history of my religious tradition – church life and religious experience remains largely outside the scope of the plantation and museum exhibits.

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- CL** Library of the Congregational Christian Historical Society, Boston, Mass.
- HUA** Harvard University Archives, Cambridge, Mass.
- MHR** *The Massachusetts Historical Review*
- MHS** Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston
- MVM** Martha's Vineyard Museum, Edgartown, Mass.  
(Formerly Duke's County and Martha's Vineyard Historical Society)
- NEQ** *The New England Quarterly*
- WMQ** *William and Mary Quarterly* (All references are to the Third Series unless otherwise noted.)

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## Appendix

Figure 1.1     *Mayflower II*

Figure 1.2     Mather Record Book

Figure 1.3     First Page of Mather Record Book

Figure 1.4     Mather *Tremenda* sermon

Figure 1.5     Peregrine White bassinet

**Figure 1.1: *Mayflower II***



Figure 1.2



Figure 1.3 (First page of record book)

on Feb 4<sup>th</sup> 1650. the second church of Christ  
in Boston, was gathered. The Brethren that  
first embodied were  
Michael Powell.  
Samuel Atwood.  
Christopher Gibson.  
John Phillips.  
George Davis.  
Michael Wills.  
John Farnham. II  
Others there were soon added

Figure 1.4 Mather Tremenda Sermon

*at Dr. Gray's 26th St 1795*

**TREMENDA.**  
THE  
**Dreadful Sound**  
WITH WHICH  
The WICKED are to be  
**Thunderstruck.**  
In a SERMON  
Delivered unto a Great ASSEMBLY,  
in which was present, a Miserable  
**African**, just going to be Exe-  
cuted for a most Inhumane and  
Uncommon MURDER.  
At BOSTON, May 25th. 1721.  
*By Cotton Mather*  
To which is added,  
A CONFERENCE between a MINISTER  
and the **Prisoner**, on the Day  
before his Execution.  
Deut. xiii. 11.  
*All Israel shall Hear and Fear.*  
BOSTON: Printed by B. Green, for B. Gray  
& J. Edwards, & Sold at their Shops. 1721.

**Figure 1.5** Peregrine White bassinet



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<sup>1</sup> David D. Hall (ed.), *Lived Religion in America: Toward a History of Practice* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997), viii.

<sup>2</sup> The research presented here reveals that integrated congregations existed in urban, suburban and rural areas during the colonial period. Multi-racial congregations not only existed – from the earliest moments of American religious life in Puritan Massachusetts – they may have been the norm, and not the exception. Women, although barred from the ministry and preaching, were admitted to full membership of the church. The involvement in church life of women, blacks and indigenous people varied widely by congregation. This paper nevertheless makes a contribution to historical scholarship because it draws attention to these “others” whose inclusion in the Puritan story has been largely overlooked. For a more comprehensive and quantitative examination of inter-racial religious life in Massachusetts, see the forthcoming work by George Washington University historian Richard J. Boles. Boles has examined church records across the North focusing on hundreds of congregations in Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania in the Congregational, Dutch Reformed, German Reformed, Presbyterian and Anglican traditions. He argues that most Massachusetts churches had black and Indian congregants and members. Antiquarian “whitening” efforts, beginning in the 19<sup>th</sup> C. intentionally bleached the history, such that he asserts that “the entire ecclesiastical history of the commonwealth” should be reassessed. See Richard J. Boles “Divided Faiths: The Rise of Segregated Northern Churches: 1730 – 1850,” *BA-ACA Fellowship Lecture*, Boston Athenaeum, March 26, 2012.

<sup>3</sup> Edward Winslow (1595-1655), quoting the Rev. John Robinson (1575?-1625) from Robinson’s farewell discourse to departing pilgrims. Winslow, a 25-year-old printer, was among several private equity backers who financed the initial Plymouth venture. He sailed on the *Speedwell* and later the *Mayflower* when the first vessel had to turn back. *Old South Leaflets*, Vol. 6, Issue 142, 1923[?], 361. This publication was produced by an unknown author. Contemporary publishers also are uncertain about the original date. Winslow recounted Robinson’s farewell in his 1647 sermon *Hypocrisy Unmasked*. See also Nathaniel Philbrick, *Mayflower: A Story of Courage, Community, and War* (New York: Viking, 2006), 18.

<sup>4</sup> Milton A. Travers, *The Wampanoag Indian Tribute Tribes of Martha’s Vineyard: The Story of the Capowacks of Nope* (New Bedford, Mass.: Reynolds-DeWalt, 1962), 62. See also Jerome D. Segal and R. Andrew Pierce, *The Wampanoag Genealogical History of Martha’s Vineyard* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2003), 45. A census of indigenous people on Martha’s Vineyard estimated in 1674 by Thomas Mayhew Sr. totals 300 families. *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Winthrop (1588-1649), a wealthy lawyer, launched a colony that was chartered to “win and incite the natives of [the] country, to the knowledge and obedience of the only true God and Savior of mankind, and the Christian faith.” Missionary activity did not commence, however, for 13 years. Gary B. Nash, *Red, White and Black: The Peoples of Early North America*, Sixth edition (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 2000), 78.

<sup>6</sup> John Winthrop, *The History of New England, 1630-1649*, (James K. Hosmer, ed.), Vol. 1 (New York: C. Scribner’s, 1908), 260. According to Winthrop, Captain W. Pierce came from the Tortugas, where he traded an unspecified number of Pequot Indians for “salt, cotton, tobacco, and Negroes.” *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> A. Leon Higginbotham, *In The Matter of Color: The Colonial Period* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 60.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>9</sup> This is a retrospective assessment made by John Milton Earle (1794-1874), the Massachusetts State Commissioner of Indian Affairs in his 1861 Senate Report #96. Earle, a Worcester politician and newspaper publisher, was appointed in 1859 to investigate the social conditions of the state’s indigenous population. His 132-page census also is called “Report to the Governor and Council Concerning the Indians of the

Commonwealth Under the Act of April 6, 1859 (Boston, Mass.). Earle enumerated 291 families "(including non-Native spouses)." Earle's papers are preserved within the collection of the AAS. See also Travers, *sup.* Note 4, 64.

<sup>10</sup> William S. Simmons, "Conversion From Indian to Puritan," *New England Quarterly*, Vol. 52, No. 2, (June, 1979), 204.

<sup>11</sup> In a diary entry dated December 13, 1706, the Rev. Cotton Mather (1663-1728) notes that members of his congregation purchased for him "a very likely Slave; a young Man who is a Negro of a promising aspect of temper." Steven J. Niven. "Onesimus," *Oxford African American Studies Center* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.) The name is derived from Onesimus, a fugitive slave in the New Testament Epistle to Philemon. Church fathers throughout history interpreted the Biblical book as standing for the proposition that slaves needed to be obedient to their masters and that escaped slaves were not entitled even to the sanctuary (e.g., in a church) offered to common criminals. Hugh Thomas, *The Slave Trade: The Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade: 1440-1870* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997), 30. Sometime before 1721, Mather grants Onesimus his freedom. He later acquires slaves named Obadiah and Ezer. See Kathryn S. Koo, "Strangers in the House of God: Cotton Mather, Onesimus, and an Experiment in Christian Slaveholding," *American Antiquarian Society*, 2007, 147.

<sup>12</sup> This is the first official reference I could find enumerating the black population in Massachusetts prior to the census of 1790. Evarts B. Greene and Virginia D. Harrington, *American Population Before the Federal Census of 1790* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932), 14. The entry is attributed to Governor Joseph Dudley (1647-1720) and is dated March 1, 1709.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>14</sup> Travers, *sup.* Note 4, citing a census taken by Experience Mayhew, 62.

<sup>15</sup> Vincent Carretta, *Phillis Wheatley: Biography of a Genius in Bondage* (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 2011), 1. Of the estimated 800 people of color, Carretta estimated that about 20 persons likely were free. *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Census information was gathered by William Jernegan (1755-1840), who represented Edgartown in the Massachusetts legislature. Travers, *sup.* Note 4, 62.

<sup>17</sup> *The Form of Covenant, of the Old South Church in Boston, Massachusetts with lists of the Founders, the Pastors, the Ruling Elders and Deacons, and the Members*, (Boston: Crocker & Brewster, 1833), 22. Wheatley (1753-1784) was baptized Aug. 18, 1771 by the Rev. Samuel Cooper (1725-1783), then the minister of the Brattle Street church. See Carretta email correspondence and phone conversation. Richard Boles finds that Brattle Street, along with other so-called New Light Congregational churches, had particularly high numbers of black baptisms in the colonial period.

<sup>18</sup> The published copy of Old South records, which I reviewed, states only the name "Phillis." Wheatley's biographer cites another record that further identifies her as "servt of Mr. Wheatly." Carretta, *sup.* Note 15, 34. This citation appears in the *Records of the Church in Brattle Square Boston with lists of Communicants, Baptisms, Marriages, and Funerals 1699-1872* (Boston: The Benevolent Fraternity of Churches, 1902), 187.

<sup>19</sup> The 1790 Census recorded 378,556 people living in the Commonwealth, of which blacks constituted fewer than 2 percent of the population. Lorenzo Johnston Greene, *The Negro In Colonial New England* (New York: Atheneum, 1968), 76.

<sup>20</sup> George Eliot, *Middlemarch: A Study of Provincial Life* (London: Penguin Classics, 1994), 838.

<sup>21</sup> In describing the departure of religious separatists from Leyden, William Bradford called the travelers

"pilgrims." Samuel Eliot Morison, *Of Plymouth Plantation 1620-1647 by William Bradford Sometime Governor Thereof*, A New Edition (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1952), 47. This term was not used, however, by English colonists when they arrived in America and established their settlement on Cape Cod. Rather, the term "first comers" was used to describe colonists who came on the first of four ships that ventured to the Plymouth Colony from 1620 to 1623. English immigration began with the *Mayflower* and was followed by settlers on the ships *Fortune* (1621), *Anne* (1623) and *Little James* (1623.) The term "pilgrim" to describe any or all of these early settlers was not commonplace until the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. *Exhibit*, Pilgrim Hall Museum, Plymouth, Mass., May 9, 2012.

<sup>28</sup> William A. Baker, *The Mayflower and Other Colonial Vessels* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1983), 29.

<sup>29</sup> Of the 10 million to 15 million Africans forcibly shipped across the Atlantic, millions died either before arrival or during their confinement prior to sale. "Death books" for Portuguese and Spanish slavers during the two centuries beginning around 1500 have been lost. However, the British abolitionist William Wilberforce (1759-1833) estimated the slave trade mortality rate was around 12.5 percent in a series of parliamentary debates in 1788. Thomas, *sup.* Note 11, 423. In fairness, the *Mayflower*, hardly could be said to have offered luxury accommodations to its passengers. And the ship moored in the Plymouth harbor today, built in 1957, is not an exact replica of the vessel that sailed in 1620. Changes were made in deck heights and in structural specifications to provide both a hurricane-proof vessel and one that would be safe for an estimated 5,000 tourist visitors per day. Baker, *sup.* Note 22, 38-39.

<sup>30</sup> Charles Garland and Herbert S. Klein, "The Allotment of Space for Slaves aboard Eighteenth-Century British Slave Ships," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, Vol. 42, No. 2 (April, 1985), 238.

<sup>31</sup> Scholars of American literary criticism and a variety of critics whose focus has been close reading of William Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation*, assert that Bradford (1590-1657), from the outset, intended to make a very specific type of history. In so doing, he planned to narrate an important story about the Plymouth colony's place of prominence within a broad socio-political and religious framework that was made possible by the Protestant Reformation – irrespective of facts to the contrary. Michelle Burnham, "Merchants, Money, and the Economics of 'Plain Style' in William Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation*," *American Literature*, Vol. 72, No. 4, (December, 2000), 695. Until researching this paper, I was unfamiliar with Plymouth. Moreover, as a Midwesterner raised as a Methodist, I was unfamiliar with the intentionality with which Puritan fathers – augmented by a newly founded college that they had established to churn out learned ministers, merchants, diplomats and politicians – wrote history on a uniquely essentialist platform. Arguably, this tradition was carried forward by Puritan ministers and New England's finest orators for generations afterward.

<sup>32</sup> Margot Minardi, *Making Slavery History: Abolitionism and the Politics of Memory in Massachusetts*, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 5.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Daniel J. Silverman makes an interesting observation about the scholarly use of categories such as white, black and Indian in light of the broad consensus that has developed across social and scientific disciplines that race is a socio-cultural construct rather than a biological reality. He settles on usage of Indians, natives and indigenous people, in part because these terms are more likely to be used by the groups being described. Silverman is uncomfortable with the terms "Negro" or "Negroes" and chooses to use black instead. Although I did not follow Silverman's lead entirely, this paper does employ Silverman's capitalization paradigm, which is admittedly arbitrary. Daniel J. Silverman, *Red Brethren: The Brothertown and Stockbridge Indians and the Problem of Race in Early America* (Ithaca, N.Y. and London: Cornell University Press 2010), 9-10.

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<sup>20</sup> The case of Crispus Attucks (1723-1770) is but one example. Attucks, who was shot to death by members of the 29<sup>th</sup> Regiment in the Boston Massacre on March 5, 1770, variously was considered mulatto or molatto, Indian and black. Additionally, he also was named Michael Johnson. Hiller B. Zobel, *The Boston Massacre* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Co., 1970), 192-199.

<sup>21</sup> Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998), ix.

<sup>22</sup> Although a smallpox epidemic swept through Boston in 1721 and afflicted nearly 6,000 people, historical records show that only 844 people died. Moreover, the census report sent from the colony to the King in 1721 reported "94,000 souls." Thus it is unlikely disease accounted for the steep drop. Greene, *sup.* Note 12, 15. See also *A Narrative of the Method and Success of Inoculating the Small-Pox in New England, 1722*. This document is available online and may be found in the Houghton Library collection of the Harvard College Library.

<sup>23</sup> Greene, *sup.* Note 12, 14-15.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. I attribute these differences to the variety of sources that serve as the basis of the primary census data. Rarely are they unified or uniform.

<sup>25</sup> Some contemporary sources cite 1630 as the founding date. This paper, however will use 1632.

<sup>26</sup> First Church of Christ, Cambridge, Mass. *Records of the Church of Christ at Cambridge in New England, 1632-1830, Comprising the Ministerial Records of Baptisms, Marriages, Deaths, Admission to Covenant and Communion, Dismissals and Church Proceedings*, (Stephen Paschall Sharples, ed.), (Boston: Eben Putnam, 1906), 59. Hereafter this will be noted as Cambridge Church Records or First Church.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 548.

<sup>28</sup> There appear to be 25 women, however the breakdown by gender is imprecise based on uncertainty about whether certain names, (i.e., Anningdine, Bial and Achsay) belong to women or men.

<sup>29</sup> There is nothing added in the records to clarify this statement. Is not the intention of this paper to suggest that the category of persons indebted to the church or those providing menial duties for it all were Negro. Cambridge Church Records, *sup.* Note 35, 523.

<sup>30</sup> I am indebted to John Thornton and Linda Heywood, historians of colonial Africa and the newly published Muslim slave narrative by Yale scholar Ala Alryyes for helping me understand that this was never necessarily true.

<sup>31</sup> *Records of the Hollis Street Church Boston: Records of Admissions, Baptisms, Marriages and Deaths 1732-1887*, (Robert J. Dunkle and Ann Smith Lainhart, transcr. from the copy by Ogden Codman, 1918), (Boston: The New England Historic Genealogical Society, 1998), 230.

<sup>32</sup> Alexandra Antonia Chan, "The Slaves of Colonial New England: Discourses of Colonialism and Identity in the Isaac Royall House, Medford, Massachusetts 1732-1775, *Dissertation*, presented to Boston University, Anthropology, 2003, 107. See also Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1998), 47.

<sup>33</sup> Cotton Mather, Table Book of Slate and Record Book, List of Members. Second Church (Boston, Mass.) Records 1650-1970, *Massachusetts Historical Society*, Ms. N-2037 (Tall), Box 1, Folder 1. Vol. 2.

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<sup>40</sup> To satisfy my curiosity I traveled to the American Antiquarian Society repository in Worcester, Massachusetts, where the Mather papers are kept. I concluded that the handwriting in the Second Church pocket-book is properly attributable to Cotton Mather based on my comparison of the writing samples in the Second Church book and the numerous sermon fragments and other correspondence on file at the AAS.

<sup>41</sup> Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, "African-American Women's History and the Meta-language of Race," *Signs*, Vol. 17, No. 2, 1992, 251.

<sup>42</sup> I use the term "complex" because even such historical basics as a timeline – establishing when slavery was enacted and abolished in Massachusetts – has been contested. See generally Helen Tunnicliff Catterall (edit.), *Judicial Cases Concerning American Slavery and the Negro*, (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1936), 455.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 455.

<sup>44</sup> William H Whitmore, *Colonial Laws of Massachusetts – from the Edition of 1660 with the Supplements to 1672 Containing also the Body of Liberties of 1641* (Boston: Rockwell & Churchill City Printers, 1889), 53.

<sup>45</sup> Margaret Ellen Newell, "Indian Slavery in Colonial New England" in *Indian Slavery in Colonial America*, (Alan Gallay, ed.), (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 2009).

<sup>46</sup> Higginbotham, *sup.* Note 7, 71.

<sup>47</sup> This figure assumes that slavery indeed was abolished with the case of Quok Walker v. Jemison, which first was brought in 1781. The case, which ultimately was decided in 1783 originated when a slave sued his master for criminal assault. Among other legal intricacies is the fact that this criminal assault case was not decided on constitutional grounds. The legal history is reviewed by Arthur Zilversmit in "Quok Walker, Mumbet, and the Abolition of Slavery in Massachusetts," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, Vol. 25, No. 4 (October, 1968), 614.

<sup>48</sup> Sadly, that bias could not be borne out by the evidence.

<sup>49</sup> Wendy Anne Warren, "Enslaved Africans In New England, 1638-1700," *Dissertation*, presented to Yale University, History, 2008, 16.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> Higginbotham, *sup.* Note 7, 66.

<sup>52</sup> *The Colonial Laws of Massachusetts Reprinted from the Edition of 1660, with the Supplements to 1672 containing also, The Body of Liberties of 1641*, Boston: 1889.

<sup>53</sup> Warren, *sup.* Note 43. *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> In part, the segregation of black and white congregations is a function of economics and architecture. First, the original meetinghouses were wood. In the 17<sup>th</sup> C. prior to the arrival from England of motorized equipment that improved fire-fighting techniques, churches routinely burned down. Typically, second constructions brought galleries and more elaborate pew boxes that separated blacks from whites and designated seating commensurate with an unmistakable social hierarchy even among whites. Moreover, by the 18<sup>th</sup> C., when racial categories had firmly hardened, church bequests included specific covenants and use designations. The only claim made here is that multi-racial liturgical interaction occurred for a time. Also in colonial Massachusetts, due to a variety of factors primarily associated with land sale and loss so-called "praying Indians" eventually aggregated into separate "praying towns" with their own churches. In other cases,

theological differences separated Christianized Indians from whites. For example, on Martha's Vineyard a dispute over the calling of a minister prompted Wampanoags to bolt from the Congregational church in 1693 and to permanently align with Baptists. See Daniel Cabot, "Vineyard Baptists consider a crossroads," *The Martha's Vineyard Times*, December 22, 2011, 33. And, finally by the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, segregationist policies within churches across multiple denominations became sufficiently intolerable such that blacks began to form denominations and worship spaces of their own.

<sup>28</sup> Thomas Joshua Cooper, "The World's Edge: The Atlantic Basin Project, *Lecture*. Glasgow School of Fine Arts, August 24, 2008. <http://www.gsa.ac.uk/life/gsa-events/events/thomas-joshua-cooper/#tjc>.

<sup>29</sup> Cooper's photographic diptych is entitled "A Premonitional Work" and is part of his continually-evolving Atlantic Basin project - *The World's Edge*. Through April 29, 2012 it can be seen in "Shapeshifting: Transformations in Native American Art," an ambitious exhibition curated by the Peabody Essex Museum of Art in Essex, Massachusetts.

<sup>30</sup> Cooper, *sup.* Note 58.

<sup>31</sup> David D. Hall (ed.), *Puritans in the New World: A Critical Anthology* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004), ix.

<sup>32</sup> Historical scholarship addresses the transactions that occurred between indigenous people and the Dutch, French and British settlers. Firmly, within the accepted Congregational narrative, exists a view that land was sold and purchased, not forcibly taken. I cannot address those arguments here. Huge differences exist in myriad cases. Much as Africans themselves were involved in selling countrymen and women, Indians were involved in land swaps and sale for personal gain. Avarice existed on all sides. Sufficient evidence does exist about the spiritual understanding held by many indigenous people regarding land, nature and ownership. That may suggest an inequality of expectation or understanding between participants in these sales. Evidence also exists about early contemplations of trouble between settlers and Indians. Writes Nash of instructions given to John Winthrop by his Massachusetts Bay Company backers: "All men were to be trained in the use of firearms; Indians were to be prohibited from entering the Puritan towns; and any colonists so reckless as to sell arms to the Indians or instruct them in their use were to be deported to England where they would be severely punished. While ordering that Indians must be fairly treated, the company reflected the garrison mentality that settlers, once landed and settled, displayed. No missionary activity was to be initiated for thirteen years." See Nash, *sup.* Note 5, 78. Thus, it is hard for this researcher to support claims that pilgrim and Puritan land acquisition was conducted entirely in fairness and with an intent that the two peoples would live in peace. Self-defense claims also have been widely rehearsed in myriad tomes - from Herbert Milton Sylvester's *Indian Wars of New England* to more modern analyses such as *King Philip's War: The History and Legacy of America's Forgotten Conflict* by Eric B. Schultz and Michael J. Tougas. Lepore's *The Name of War* draws different conclusions on the same evidence such that I am more fully persuaded by her evidence. See Lepore *sup.* Note 30.

<sup>33</sup> Continued work to reclaim stories of Congregational women, particularly, should look to immigration experiences in Holland. Additionally trying to understand the shipboard experiences of women would allow for fertile research. This project, in its focus on church records, was unable pursue a search for the individual diaries or letters written by captains, crew or passengers.

<sup>34</sup> Early interaction with blacks, at least, was casually noted. For example, John Winthrop's journal entry on the *Pierce* cargo of "cotton, and tobacco, and negroes" makes no value judgment other than to implicitly consider blacks of no greater value (and, perhaps less if the list is read sequentially) than a plant to be harvested for smoking. See Winthrop, *sup.* Note 6. See also Bernard Rosenthal, "Puritan Conscience and New England Slavery," *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 46, No. 1, (March, 1973), 65. Joseph H. Hall also explores Puritan understandings about Indians. See Joseph H. Hall, "Puritan Encounter with the American Indians," *Covenant Seminary Review/Presbyterian*, Vol. 1, No. 2, (Fall 1975).

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<sup>66</sup> The progression of Anglo-American understanding about Indian identity is explored in Alden T. Vaughan, *Roots of American Racism: Essays on the Colonial Experience* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 7.

<sup>68</sup> Albert Dunning, *Congregationalists in America* (New York: J.A. Hill & Co., 1894), 155.

<sup>69</sup> Author unknown, *Records of the Second Church*, Second Church (Boston, Mass.) Records 1650-1970, *Massachusetts Historical Society*, Ms. N-2037 (Tall), Scrapbook, 1912-1916, Vol. 132. A facsimile of portion of the covenant from page 9, Vol. 3 of Second Church manuscript records also appears in "The Second Church in Boston 1649-1930 Commemorative Exercises in connection with the celebration of the Massachusetts Bay Tercentenary 1630-1930...Oct. 19, 1930."

<sup>70</sup> Records vary on the date of establishment from 1630 to 1633.

<sup>71</sup> This covenant was readopted and reaffirmed in 1872.

<sup>72</sup> William Eleazar Barton, *Congregational Creeds and Covenants* (Chicago: Advance Publishing Co., 1917), 83.

<sup>73</sup> The list of congregational luminaries who owned slaves, for example, is too long to list. Nevertheless, the description of Jonathan Edwards's purchase of "a Negro Girl named Venus" from armed slavers in a New England seaport tavern came as a particular surprise. Kenneth P. Minkema, "Jonathan Edwards's Defense of Slavery," *The Massachusetts Historical Review*, Vol. 4, 2002, 23. And for all the attention given by scholars to the Great Awakening and the degree to which this may explain black and Indian conversions, relatively little attention is paid to the ownership of slaves by Great Awakener George Whitefield, to his fund-raising activities on behalf of southern plantations, or to what blacks thought at the time. See generally Alfred O. Aldridge, "George Whitefield's Georgia Controversies," *The Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (August, 1943), 357.

<sup>74</sup> Again, this is another reason the 17<sup>th</sup> Century is fertile terrain for research into multi-racial life and activity. "New World" mission creep, away from early egalitarian ideals, began in earnest in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century as "society became more stratified, and wealth became less evenly distributed" and "individualistic modes of thought and behavior" became commonplace. Nash, *sup.* Note 5, 182.

<sup>75</sup> First Church, *sup.* Note 35, iv.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 172-173.

<sup>77</sup> Lepore, *sup.* Note 30, xvi.

<sup>78</sup> Lepore, in examining the early interaction between Plymouth authorities and Indian leaders, asserts that the English colonists' renaming of the Algonquian sachem Metacom was a reflection of their Biblical understanding. Metacom (also called Metacomet) and his brother Wamsutta, extended a gesture of friendship to the Plymouth Court in 1660. At this time colonists named the two men Philip and Alexander. Lepore asserts that this nominal parallel to the "ancient leaders of Macedonia was most likely a reference (oblique to us but obvious to them) to the seal of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, an engraving of an Indian mouthing the words, "Come Over and Help Us." *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> Cotton Mather, *Rules for the Society of Negroes, 1693* (Boston: T.J. Holmes, 1714). For a more detailed summary on Mather's religious instruction of African slaves, see Allen Dwight Callahan, *The Talking Book: African Americans and The Bible* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), 140.

<sup>80</sup> Joshua 24:15b (KJV). See also Callahan, *Ibid.*

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<sup>79</sup> Rosemary O'Day, *Women's Agency in Early Modern Britain and the American Colonies: Patriarchy, Partnership and Patronage* (Harlow, U.K.: Pearson, 2007), 338.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 339.

<sup>81</sup> Correspondence between women about their fertility and their New World status as measured by the fruitfulness of their womb is explored more fully in O'Day, *Ibid.*, 363-364.

<sup>82</sup> In no way, however, did this establish "agency" beyond very specifically defined boundaries of subordination to men. There is considerable scholarship on the role, status and experience of women during this period that draws attention to their sublimation. This examination is limited to asserting their membership and participation in church life and religious affairs during the colonial period even within these widely known and studied limits.

<sup>83</sup> Oceanus Hopkins (1620-1623) was born during the crossing. Peregrine White (1620-1704) was born when the ship was anchored in Provincetown Harbor. See White's bassinet, which is preserved at the Pilgrim Hall Museum in Plymouth, Massachusetts, in the Appendix. Virginia Dare often is cited as the first baby born to English parents in the New World. Dare (1587-?) was born to Ananias Dare and Elinor White, who was pregnant when she left Plymouth, England in May, 1587. Virginia Dare was born on Roanoke Island in the colony of Virginia. Virtually no details remain about her life.

<sup>84</sup> Marilyn J. Westerkamp, *Women and Religion in Early America, 1600-1850: The Puritan and Evangelical traditions*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 25, 29. Investigating this question of how the demand to produce children affected the religious life of colonial women is outside the scope of this paper, but would make for fruitful research for further scholarship.

<sup>85</sup> An estimated 20 percent of women died in childbirth and women commonly lost half of their children in infancy. *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>86</sup> Here, and in the examples that immediately follow, references to women concern those who are not black or Indian.

<sup>87</sup> The confessions recorded by Cambridge minister Thomas Shepard are instructive here. See Shepard, Thomas. (Bruce C. Woolley, and George Selement, eds.), *Thomas Shepard's Confessions*, Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, Vol. 58, (Boston: Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 1981).

<sup>88</sup> Mary Beth Norton, *Founding Mothers & Fathers: Gendered Power and the Forming of American Society* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), 219. Norton is unambiguously clear, in expressing her view that Puritan congregations "were wholly male-dominated." *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> See Samuel Mather in *American National Biography*. <http://www.anb.org/czp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/articles/01/01-00583.html?a=1&n=samuel%20mather&d=10&ss=0&q=3>

<sup>90</sup> Harold Field Worthley, *An Inventory of the Records of the Particular (Congregational) Churches of Massachusetts Gathered 120-1805*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), 59.

<sup>91</sup> At the Second Church it is worth noting that there were varying degrees of membership in that one could be considered part of the congregation and yet not a full member. The distinction between members and congregants refers to congregational status that occurred in Congregationalism shortly after 1650, when a dispute developed over baptism. Originally "full" congregational participation by members who had "owned the covenant," was granted only to those who testified or made public confession to the minister of "God's work in their lives." Secondary membership status was granted to those adults who had been baptized but

who had not yet "owned the covenant" and thus, were considered only half of the way there. A congregation, in some lesser way, also might afford voting rights to the unbaptized children of baptized "half-way" covenant members. Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990), 60.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 170.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Albert J. Raboteau is among the prominent African American scholars who draw a connection between the Great Awakening and black participation in church life. But this assertion tends to be the rule rather than the exception. See Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in The Antebellum South*, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 128-129.

<sup>95</sup> Although widely referenced and published in secondary works, I have not yet been able to secure an English law citation for this original decision issued by Sir Philip Yorke, then the King's Attorney General, and Charles Talbot, his Solicitor General. See generally George Van Cleve, "Somerset's Case and Its Antecedents in Imperial Perspective," *Law and History Review*, Vol. 24, No. 3, 601 and Ruth Paley, "Imperial Politics and English Law: The Many Contexts of Somerset," *Law and History Review*, Vol. 24, No. 3, 659.

<sup>96</sup> Paley. Ibid., 660.

<sup>97</sup> Advertisement in order to rectify a mistake, *The Boston Gazette*, Issue 561, August 31 to September 7, 1730.

<sup>98</sup> Carretta, *sup.* Note 15, 34.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Daniel J. Silverman, *Faith and Boundaries: Colonists, Christianity and Community Among the Wampanoag Indians of Martha's Vineyard 1600-1871* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 86.

<sup>101</sup> The scholarship tends to tell an overwhelmingly positive story. Nevertheless, I found in researching town records, evidence of distance. Specifically, island authorities in 1699 voted "at a Leagall town meeting that the select men Impoured forthwith to defend this Towns Right against any Indian or Indians that shall Intrude, upon the same." Records of the Town of Tisbury, Mass. Beginning June 1669 and Ending May 16, 1864, Arranged and Copied by William S. Swift and Jennie W. Cleveland (Boston: Wright & Potter Printing, 1903), 32.

<sup>102</sup> Records of the Town of Tisbury. Ibid., 13.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>105</sup> The church itself, now called First Congregational Church of West Tisbury, does not have any records dating to the 17<sup>th</sup> Century and none are on file at the Martha's Vineyard Museum, the repository for historical records. So, in this sense, town records offer the only avenue into a reconstruction of church and town life during this period and the multi-cultural dimension therein.

<sup>106</sup> Ampersands (&) in the text represent an Indian vowel sound that is not reproducible in English transliteration. See Travers, *sup.* Note 4, 49.

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<sup>107</sup> Marriage, baptism, admission and death records are kept in various ways by the churches. Those relied upon in this research principally look to the records of churches that have been donated to historical societies and other antiquarian repositories. Additional work can be done at churches that have retained their records and by researching town records during the colonial period. Also, criminal law proceedings and capital punishment involved the church insofar as Congregational ministers also preached at executions. These materials could produce additional avenues for exploration of the intersections between race and religion. For example, one of Cotton Mather's notable execution sermons was entitled, *Tremenda* (See Figure 1.4 in the Appendix). In it Mather, pastor of Boston's Second Church, chastised slaves for wanting to "live comfortably in a very easy servitude." But the sermon reveals Mather's complex thinking about race, sin and equality. Mather, who authored *The Negro Christianized*, was one of the best known proselytizers of blacks, both slave and free. His *Tremenda* sermon was preached in 1721 at the execution of Joseph Hanno, a freed Christian slave who had confessed to the murder of his wife. Mather, who called Hanno "a miserable African," nevertheless seemed genuinely concerned about Hanno, the depth of sin inherent in his crime and, more broadly the sins perpetuated by numerous men in the colonial period in their use of violence against women. See Cotton Mather, "Tremenda. The Dreadful Sound with which The Wicked are to be Thunderstruck," *Sermon delivered unto a great assembly in which was present a Miserable African, just going to be Executed for a most inhumane and uncommon murder* (Boston: B. Green for B. Gray & J. Edwards, 1721).

<sup>108</sup> Zechariah 8:3-9. (NASB).

<sup>109</sup> Lepore, *sup.* Note 30, 174. Lepore's account also includes a description of a visit by Cotton Mather who on a pilgrimage to Plymouth, "took off the Jaw from the Blashemous exposed Skull of that Leviathan." Ibid.