Maine History

Volume 40
Number 4 *Women, Politics, and Religion*

Article 2

1-1-2002

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Recommended Citation

Norton, Mary Beth. "George Burroughs and The Girls From Casco: The Maine Roots of Salem Witchcraft." *Maine History* 40, 4 (2002): 258-275. https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/mainehistoryjournal/vol40/iss4/2

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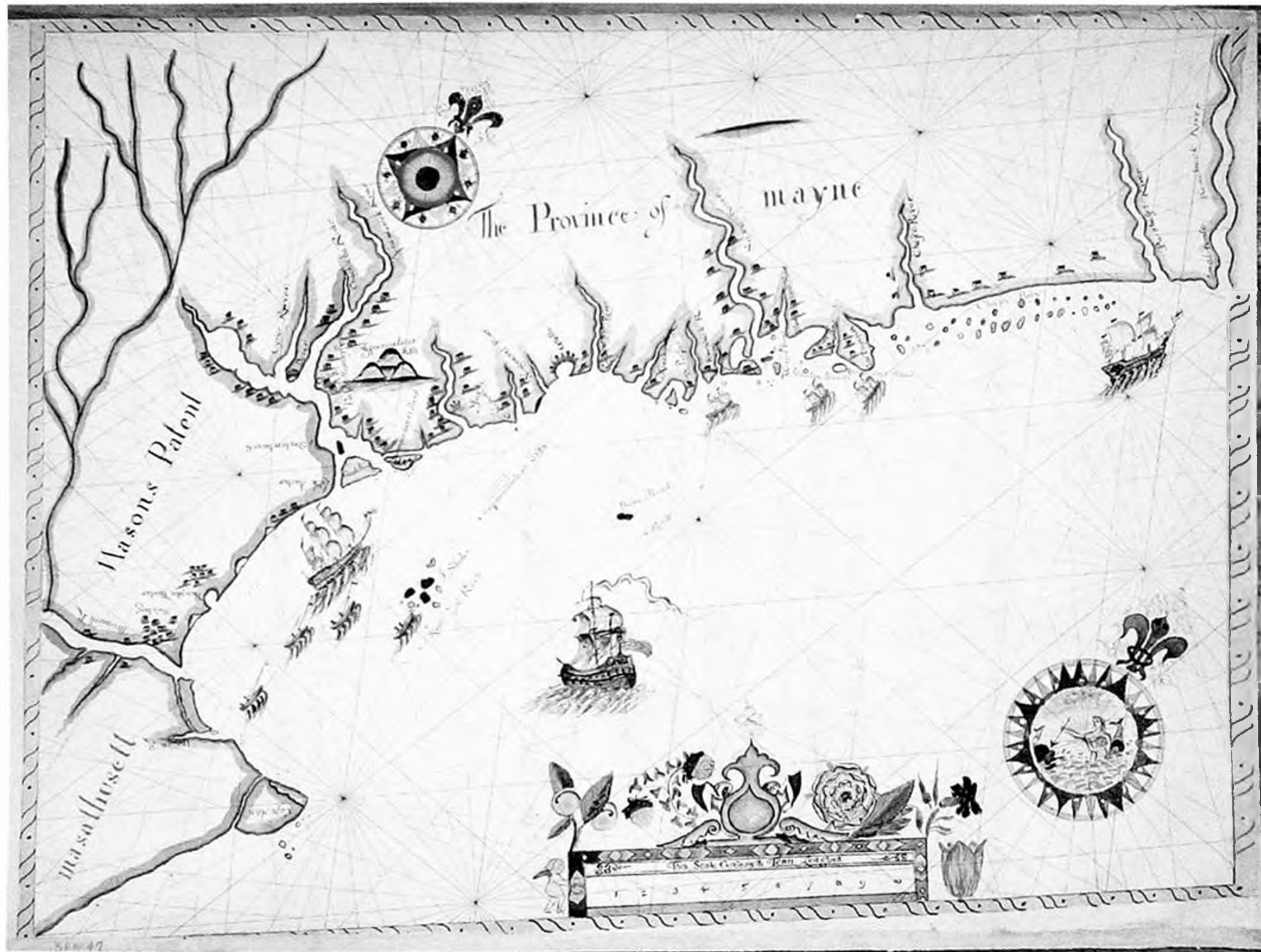

Seventeenth-century Maine's English settlements hugged the coast and waterways from the Piscataqua to the Kennebec Rivers as seen in this 1653 map of the "Province of Mayne." *Courtesy Maine State Archives.*

GEORGE BURROUGHS AND THE GIRLS FROM CASCO: THE MAINE ROOTS OF SALEM WITCHCRAFT

BY MARY BETH NORTON

Although few books about the Salem witchcraft crisis of 1692 have paid much attention to him, the Reverend George Burroughs (who was accused in April, examined in May, and convicted and hanged in August) was the key figure in the episode, along with three young women who numbered among his principal accusers: Mercy Lewis, Susannah Sheldon, and Abigail Hobbs. All four lived in Maine for far longer than they resided in Salem Village. Burroughs spent most of his ministerial career in Falmouth (Portland), Black Point (Scarborough), and Wells; Lewis was born and raised in Falmouth, where Hobbs spent most of her childhood; and Sheldon was born and raised in Black Point. All fled the frontier during the Maine Indian wars. Their crucial roles in the witchcraft crisis inextricably link that iconic episode to events on the Maine frontier during King Philip's and King William's Wars. Mary Beth Norton is the Mary Donlon Alger Professor of American History at Cornell University. This essay is taken from her latest book, In the Devil's Snare: The Salem Witchcraft Crisis of 1692.

ON April 19, 1692, Abigail Hobbs, a fourteen-year-old girl from Topsfield, Massachusetts, became the third person that spring to confess to being a witch. Questioned in the Salem Village meetinghouse by John Hathorne and Jonathan Corwin, the Salem Town magistrates, she declared that the devil had recruited her into his ranks in Maine about four years earlier, after meeting her in the woods near her house at Falmouth on Casco Bay. In return for Satan's promise of "fine things," she had signed a covenant to serve him for several years. The devil had then ordered her to afflict people, and she had done so, attacking a little Salem Village girl, Ann Putnam, and Mercy Lewis, a servant in the Putnam household.[1]

The following evening, Ann Putnam, probably the most active of the so-called "afflicted girls" of Salem Village, had a remarkable vision of

"the Apperishtion of a Minister," at which, she said, "she was greviously affrighted and cried out oh dreadfull: dreadfull here is a minister com: what are Ministers wicthes to"? The specter tortured the twelve-year-old Ann while she carried on a dialogue with him. "It was a dreadfull thing," she told the apparition, "that he which was a Minister that should teach children to feare God should com to perswad poor creatures to give their souls to the divill." After repeatedly refusing to tell her who he was, the specter finally revealed his identity:

> presently he tould me that his name was George Burroughs and that he had had three wives: and that he had bewitched the Two first of them of death: and that he kiled . . . Mr Lawsons child because he went to the eastward with Sir Edmon and preached soe: to the souldiers and that he had bewicthed a grate many souldiers to death at the eastword, when Sir Edmon was their. and that he had made Abigail Hobbs a wicth and: severall wicthes more. [2]

The roots of Ann Putnam's 1692 vision of a spectral George Burroughs lay not in Salem Village, the small community which has been the primary (or in some cases the only) focus of scholarship on the witchcraft crisis of 1692. Rather, the apparition had its origins in events that had taken place more than one hundred miles to the north, in the much-fought-over soil of Casco Bay, Maine—once home to George Burroughs and Abigail Hobbs, and birthplace and long-time residence of the Putnams' afflicted servant, Mercy Lewis. Moreover, a settlement just a few miles south of Falmouth, Black Point (Scarborough), where Burroughs had also ministered, produced another accuser who chimed in later that spring, Susannah Sheldon. Although their centrality has not previously been recognized, the three young women I have herein dubbed "the girls from Casco"—Abigail Hobbs, Mercy Lewis, and Susannah Sheldon—and George Burroughs, their former pastor and the man they accused of being a witch, played crucial roles in the 1692 crisis.

Only after April 20 did what had been an unusual though not wholly unprecedented witchcraft episode (with fourteen accused prior to that date) explode into the burgeoning crisis that it quickly became. Within a week after the accusation of George Burroughs, fifteen more suspects had been accused; within a month, another forty had been named and jailed. By early November, over 140 New Englanders been formally charged, and many more had been identified as witches, at least in popular gossip. What had happened to cause this incredible outburst of accusations of witchcraft, and what was its connection to Maine and specifically to the Casco Bay region?

To understand the origins of Salem witchcraft, it is first necessary to review the history of New England's early northeastern frontier, where all four of the subjects of this article had lived for much of their lives, and where they had known each other long before their encounters in Salem courtrooms.

By the late 1660s, English settlers had established fur-trading posts, fishing stations, and farming communities of varying sizes from Pemaquid in the north to the Piscataqua River in the south. Most of the coastal English settlements lay between Casco Bay and Kittery, but one large trading and farming community had grown up further north, near the mouth of the Kennebec River. Dotting the coastline southward from Falmouth, on Casco Bay, to the Piscataqua were the towns of Black Point, Saco, Wells, and York. On the Piscataqua's south shore in New Hampshire lay Portsmouth (or Strawbery Banke), the major northern port. Inland, up the river, were such communities as Cocheco, Oyster River (now Durham), and Salmon Falls (now Berwick), the sites of large numbers of sawmills.[3]

Although the region was inhabited only by about 3,600 English people, its scattered settlements flourished before the mid-1670s. Exports of peltry, fish, and timber from the "eastward"—that is, Maine and New Hampshire—fueled the Massachusetts economy, providing the colony's major source of income. In 1675, about 440 fishing boats operated off the coast between Boston and the Kennebec, employing perhaps a thousand men; and at least fifty sawmills each produced up to a thousand feet a day of white pine boards. The timber industry also supplied shipbuilders in the colonies and the home country with valuable masts and spars. One Bostonian pronounced "the Eastwards . . . the best Land in New England," with "Good harbours" well-situated for fishing and predicted that the settlers there "may Soone outdoe this people." In large part because of such profitable potential, Massachusetts fought first to seize control of the region (originally governed by other proprietors) and then, after the mid-1660s, to maintain its dominance there. Northeasterners, many of whom were not Puritans, chafed at the authority of "the Bostoners" but simultaneously recognized the value of the protection that subordination to the Bay Colony afforded them.[4]

The Wabanaki who also inhabited the region were most commonly identified by the name of the river valleys in which their villages were located: Sacos, Androscoggins, Kennebecs, Penobscots, and so forth. Such villages consisted of multiple groups of family bands organized around older men and their wives, children, and other relatives. The villages were simultaneously intertwined and autonomous; no single Wabanaki

chief sachem ruled the whole, but sachems of the different villages were related to one another by blood or marriage, and they often cooperated in both peace and war. By the final quarter of the seventeenth century, the Wabanaki had become heavily reliant on the manufactured items they obtained by trading furs to the Europeans (French as well as English) who had moved into their territory. Vital as that commerce was to both peoples—for the settlers in the region needed the income they earned by selling furs in Europe as much as the Indians needed guns and knives—the fur trade nevertheless was a source of constant friction, for each side regularly suspected the other of cheating. [5]

The presence of French settlers and Catholic priests in the region northeast of Penobscot Bay complicated such commercial relationships, for English and French traders competed for the same pelts and moose hides. From the mid-1620s on, l'Acadie (as the French called the area) or Nova Scotia (as the English referred to it) changed hands repeatedly as the two nations struggled for preeminence along the northeast coast. After the 1650s Acadians—by the 1670s a mixed group of French, Scots, and Wabanaki—traded primarily with "les Bastonnais," despite the fact that under the Treaty of Breda in 1667 France had once again regained control of the region. From the New Englanders' perspective, the greatest threat to their well-being was posed by Jean Vincent d'Abbadie de St.-Castin, Baron de Castine, whose headquarters at Pentagoet on Penobscot Bay (now Castine) was located dangerously close to their northernmost outpost at Pemaquid. Castine married the daughter of Madockawando, chief sachem of the Penobscots, and was an adopted Wabanaki, which made him all the more dangerous.[6]

Yet in all likelihood war would not have erupted in the region had it not been for the armed struggle between Indians and Anglo-Americans that broke out in southern New England in June 1675, when the Wampanoag King Philip (Metacom) led his forces in a series of attacks on settlements in Plymouth Colony, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts Bay. The Wabanaki, who would have preferred to remain neutral in King Philip's War, found themselves pulled inexorably into the conflict by the demands of the opposing forces. On the one hand, the English distrusted their Wabanaki neighbors, making peaceful relationships nearly impossible to sustain; on the other, the Wampanoag, Nipmuc, and Narragansett sought assistance and shelter from their fellow Algonquians in the north, especially after the death of King Philip in August 1676, which essentially marked the end of the southern conflict.[7]

King Philip's War (or, as it was known in the region, the First Indian War) began in Maine in September 1675; through that fall, Indian as-

Sir Edmund Andros, governor of the Dominion of New England, tried to defend Maine's settlements against the Wabanaki and the French. His overthrow in 1689 brought an end to assistance for the frontier communities. Engraving SIR EDMUND ANDROS, late nineteenth century. *Courtesy Maine Historical Society.*

saults on Anglo farms and towns intensified, with the fort at Black Point a particular focal point for conflict. A tentative truce negotiated in December did not hold, and the Indians once again launched attacks on settlements in the area starting in August 1676. In October, the Wabanaki successfully captured the Black Point fort. Anglo settlers fled the region en masse, abandoning Maine north of Wells to the Wabanaki. Even when the Indians abandoned their Black Point prize and the English subsequently reoccupied it, they did not return to their homes. The Casco Bay area continued to be contested throughout 1677. Finally, in April 1678 the Treaty of Casco nominally ended the war.[8]

Over the next decade and especially in 1680 and thereafter, Maine was slowly resettled. By 1688, old timber mills had been rebuilt and new ones constructed on rivers up and down the coast, especially near Casco Bay; farms had been restocked with cattle; and the major settlements—Falmouth, Black Point, Saco, and Pemaquid—had been reoccupied. Yet everyone was nervous, for some new settlements were encroaching on Wabanaki land. Consequently, militia leaders in Maine overreacted when reports reached them in mid-August 1688 that several settlers had been killed in western Massachusetts. They seized twenty Wabanaki, many of them women and children, evidently planning to use them as hostages. But instead of preventing a war, they started one, for the Wabanaki engaged in retaliatory kidnappings, eventually killing several of their captives. That winter, Sir Edmund Andros, governor of the Dominion of New England (into which Massachusetts had been administratively incorporated), led an ineffective expedition to Pemaquid against the Indians.[9]

But Andros was overthrown in the Glorious Revolution in April 1689 soon after his return to Boston, and the result was catastrophic for the frontier communities. The local men who thereafter took charge of the colony did not want to expend scarce resources defending the northern settlements, instructing frontier dwellers to defend themselves. Seizing the initiative, the Wabanaki launched a series of attacks on communities in both Maine and New Hampshire throughout the rest of 1689, taking the fort at Pemaquid (established by Andros the previous winter) in August and barely being repulsed at Falmouth in September.

The year 1690 then brought one disaster after another during the Second Indian War. On February 8-9, Schenectady, New York was wiped out. On March 18, Salmon Falls met the same fate. In May came one of the greatest blows: Ft. Loyal, constructed in 1680 to protect Falmouth, the largest town in the north, fell to the French and Indians after a four-day siege. In the wake of that devastating defeat, all the English residents in Maine north of Wells again fled southward, many of them to Essex County. Meanwhile, the leaders of Massachusetts organized strikes of their own against the Wabanaki's French allies. They took Port Royal, Acadia/Nova Scotia, in May, but failed to take (or even to attack) either Montreal or Quebec, despite mounting major expeditions against both.

By 1691 both sides were exhausted, with limited resources. The war became primarily one of attrition, particularly after a major Wabanaki assault on Wells was fended off in June. But then near the end of 1691 in the Julian calendar the colonists used, although at the beginning of 1692 by the modern Gregorian reckoning, came another great blow—the de-

Map reconstructing the seventeenth-century settlement of Black Point and showing the location of Joshua Scottow's garrison. From William Southgate, "The History of Scarborough," *Collections of the Maine Historical Society* 3 (1853): 9-237, drawn by H.G. Storer. *Courtesy Maine Historical Society.*

Henry Jocelyn and Joshua Scottow wrote to Massachusetts Governor, John Leverett pleading for reinforcements to be sent to the Black Point garrison. The fort fell to the Wabanaki the following month. Letter from Henry Jocelyn and Joshua Scottow to John Leverett, Governor of Massachusetts, 15 September 1676. *Courtesy Maine Historical Society.*

struction of York on January 25 by a combined force of French and Indians, with the loss of 50 dead and more than 100 captured.

Four moments during the two destructive Indian wars were of particular significance for George Burroughs and his eventual accusers, the three girls from Casco: October 10-11, 1675; August 11, 1676; September 21, 1689; and May 16-20, 1690. On the first of these, the Wabanaki attacked outposts near Black Point, the home of Susannah Sheldon; on the other three, they assaulted the town of Falmouth, the home of Mercy Lewis and George Burroughs and sometime residence of Abigail Hobbs.

October 10-11, 1675. "When the Indeans came first it was on a Lords day in the morning," Eleanor Barge recalled some months later, describing how the Wabanaki killed two men near Richard Foxwell's garrison house. Early the following day the Indians "went to dunstone & fell upon Left. Alger, & the Dunston people, . . . which made the wime[n] that lived at blew poynt much afrayd, & the most part of the wimine & the children [including herself] fled away to bla[ck] poynt." There she personally asked Captain Joshua Scottow, commander of the Black Point garrison, to send some men to help the people at Dunstan, including Lt. Arthur Alger and his brother Andrew. But Captain Scottow replied, "there should not a man goe of[f] the Necke, for sayd Mr Scottow, they had warening enough & lyberty Enough [to have escaped] they & Arther

Map reconstructing landholdings in seventeenth-century Falmouth. From William Willis, *The History of Portland, From 1632 to 1864* (Portland: Bailey & Noyes, 1865). *Courtesy Maine Historical Society.*

Alger too . . . if they perish they perish." Some of those who had taken refuge at Scottow's garrison volunteered to aid the people under attack at Dunstan, but Scottow stopped them by declaring that "we hade brought our wifes & Children there & if we were killed whoe should Maintain them." Goody Barge recounted Scottow's explicit threat: "if the men goe away, I will turne away the wimine & children after." One of the would-be volunteers sharply rebuked Scottow, calling it "a verry unhumain thing that men should be in distres and we should not see to [have?] them Releved."[10]

Among the alarmed people in the Black Point garrison that day were William Sheldon, his wife Rebecca, and their little daughter Susannah, who would then have been under two years old. Rebecca Scadlock Sheldon must have been particularly terrified by the news of the attack on Dunstan, for her sister Anne was married to Arthur Alger. Rebecca and

her husband were surely dissatisfied with Captain Scottow's refusal to aid the outlying settlement and with his decision instead merely to dispatch a messenger to Saco to ask for assistance from that larger town. In the event, help arrived too late. Andrew Alger died in the assault on Dunstan on October 11, and Arthur Alger was fatally wounded at the same time. Brought with other injured men to Black Point after the battle, Arthur died at William Sheldon's garrison on October 14. The young Susannah must have witnessed both her uncle Arthur's death agonies and her aunt's and mother's consequent grief. In the 1680s, when her family returned to Black Point after having lived elsewhere between 1676 and 1681, she must also have heard her parents frequently denigrate their nemesis Joshua Scottow. Because Scottow seems to have been the prime mover in an attempt to persuade George Burroughs to leave his pastorate at Falmouth and relocate permanently to Black Point during the mid-to-late 1680s, the Sheldon family would have regarded the clergyman as Scottow's ally.[11]

August 11, 1676. When the Indians assaulted Falmouth for the first time, Mercy Lewis was a three-year-old toddler, living with her parents and surrounded by her father's extended family. Her grandfather George Lewis had brought his wife and three children to Maine from England by 1640; four more children—including her father Philip—were born in America. All her father's siblings had land, spouses, and children on Casco Bay. But early in the morning of August 11, the Wabanaki attacked Anthony Brackett's farm, located at the base of Cleeves' Neck, a peninsula that ran roughly east-west and housed the main settlement in its southeastern quadrant.[12]

The Indians then moved systematically through Back Cove, the area just north of the peninsula, striking one farm after another. At Robert Corbin's, they surprised him and his brother-in-law Benjamin Atwell while they were haying in the fields, killing them and capturing their wives and several children. Next they slew James Ross and his wife, taking some of their children captive. As the day wore on, the losses of people killed and captured mounted. Mercy's parents managed to escape with her to an island in the bay, along with their minister George Burroughs and others, but her father's siblings were hard hit. The dead men Benjamin Atwell and James Ross were her uncles by marriage, the captured Alice Atwell and the dead Ann Ross her father's sisters. Her paternal grandparents also numbered among the slain. Many of her cousins were killed or captured, including all but one of the children of another of her father's sisters, Mary Lewis Skilling. Mercy and her parents proba-

bly moved temporarily to Salem Town, where Thomas Skilling, her aunt Mary's husband, died a few months later, possibly from a wound suffered in the attack. By 1683, though, they had returned to Maine rebuild their lives in Casco Bay. She was then ten years old.

The Reverend George Burroughs, who also survived that attack on Falmouth, was twenty-three in 1676. Born in Virginia but raised in Roxbury, Massachusetts, he attended Harvard as a member of the class of 1670. In 1674 he moved his new wife and baby from Roxbury to Casco. In the wake of the August 11, 1676 assault, the Burroughs family retreated to Essex County, specifically to Salisbury, where the young clergyman assisted the aged local pastor, the Reverend John Wheelwright, and possibly hoped to be able to take over the congregation upon Wheelwright's death. Conflict in the church rendered that outcome impossible, and so he began to look elsewhere. At about the same time, Salem Village ousted its first minister, and in late 1680 the community recruited Burroughs to fill the vacancy. But the clergyman's tenure in Essex County was both brief and unpleasant. By the summer of 1682, dissatisfied Villagers were refusing to pay his salary. In early March 1683, Burroughs moved his family back to the recently reoccupied Falmouth, which was protected by Fort Loyal, newly constructed to help defend the region.[13]

September 21, 1689. Before the Wabanaki attacked Falmouth in the Second Indian War, the colonists received a timely warning of the impending assault. Boston authorities thus had time to reinforce Ft. Loyal with a sizable contingent of militiamen under the command of Colonel Benjamin Church. Sylvanus Davis, the fort's commander, later reported "a fierce fight" lasting about six hours on September 21, in which the New Englanders "forced them to Retreate & Judge many of them to bee slaine . . . there was Grate firings on Both sides." The English lost eleven soldiers killed and ten wounded, some of whom died later. How many townspeople were among the casualties went unrecorded; they might have included Mercy Lewis's parents (her father is last known to have been alive in April 1689). But the Reverend George Burroughs again survived the attack; on September 22 Church declared himself "well Satisfied with" Burroughs, who had been "present with us yesterday in the fight."[14]

In the aftermath of the battle, the by-then orphaned Mercy Lewis seems to have moved in with George Burroughs as his servant. How long she lived with her minister's family is unknown, but it was probably no more than a few months. When Burroughs, seeking a safer place to live,

moved south to Wells some time during the winter of 1689-1690, Mercy appears to have gone to Beverly, Massachusetts, again as a servant. After about nine months there, she moved on to Salem Village, where her recently married sister lived, and where she was hired out to the Putnams. Even before Mercy arrived in Salem Village, William Sheldon had moved his family there from Black Point. They left Maine soon after the Second War began and had settled in the Village by November 1688.[15]

May 16-20, 1690. Thus none of these former residents of the Casco region was present when the Wabanaki launched their third and most devastating attack on Falmouth in mid-May 1690. After a siege of five days, with almost all of its male defenders dead or wounded, Ft. Loyal surrendered to a combined force of French and Indians. Promises of quarter were not fulfilled, and most of the 200 or so survivors were slaughtered on the spot, with a few being carried off into captivity by the Wabanaki. Among the dead and captured were three more of Mercy Lewis's relatives. Black Point and all other settlements north of Wells were quickly abandoned once more.[16]

What of Abigail Hobbs, the third "Casco girl"? Her family seems to have been present in Falmouth during only the third of these attacks, that of September 1689. The Hobbs clan did not move to Maine until after 1682; probably Abigail's father, William (who was perhaps born in New Hampshire) was one of a number of settlers lured to the reoccupied town by dreams of new prosperity on the frontier. Abigail's statements to the judges in 1692 indicated that she almost certainly lived in the town center, close to Mercy Lewis's home and not far from Burroughs's household. Surely the three eventual participants in the witch trials saw each other frequently, perhaps even on a daily basis, in the tiny community. In Falmouth in 1688, when Abigail said she first became a witch, her pastor Burroughs was in his mid thirties, while she herself was about 11 and Mercy about 16. Just to the south, in Black Point, where Burroughs occasionally preached, Susannah Sheldon was then approximately 14 years old.[17]

It is now appropriate to return to Ann Putnam's vision of April 20, 1692. Other than its accusation that Burroughs had killed his first two wives (he wed his third in Wells in 1691), which is a charge beyond the scope of this article, its three major (interrelated) themes revolved around his conduct in Maine. The first accused him of killing "Mr Lawsons child because he went to the eastward with Sir Edmon and preached soe: to the souldiers," the second, of bewitching "a grate many souldiers to death at the eastword, when Sir Edmon was their"; the third,

of recruiting Abigail Hobbs as a witch. That last should need no further explication beyond noting that Ann's charge, offered a day after Abigail had confessed to malefic activity, created the logical link between the Maine minister and the Maine witch. Abigail Hobbs had not yet accused Burroughs of enlisting her in the devil's ranks, but instead had described a direct encounter with Satan himself. In another confession offered about three weeks later, though, she joined Ann Putnam in indicating that Burroughs had approached her in Falmouth to ask her to practice witchcraft.

Ann's first two charges underscored Mercy Lewis's influence on the impressionable young girl, for Mercy was the only person in Ann's life who had lived "at the eastward" while Sir Edmund Andros was the governor of the Dominion of New England. (I can easily imagine the two sharing a bed in the Putnam household, and Mercy after dark filling Ann's head full of tales of the frontier and the war.) As was already noted briefly in the summary above, the events specifically referred to in the vision took place during the winter of 1688-1689, when Andros personally led a troop of militiamen into Wabanaki territory, attempting to quell the violence that had erupted in late August 1688. Andros later proclaimed his expedition a success, but colonists generally regarded it as a failure because Andros's men failed ever to engage the enemy directly. The "Mr. Lawson" of Ann's vision was the Reverend Deodat Lawson, Burroughs's immediate successor as minister in Salem Village, who had served as the chaplain to Andros's troops that winter after he left the Village. Lawson's first wife and child both died at about that time (evidently during his absence), and others too later repeated Ann's charge that Burroughs had bewitched them.

But why would Ann Putnam—that is, Mercy Lewis—think to charge Burroughs with killing his successor's child because Lawson had been hired as chaplain to Andros's men? In September 1689 Benjamin Church alluded to a possible reason for Burroughs's purported malefic act. In his remarks on the minister, he commented that Burroughs "had thoughts of removeing" from Falmouth because "his present maintainance from this Town by reason of thier poverty, is not enough for his livelihood." So, Church declared, "I shall Encourage him to Stay promissing him an allowance from the publique Treasury for what Servis he shall do for the Army."[18]

That observation suggests a motive for Burroughs's possible anger about Lawson's employment with Andros: perhaps he had wanted the job himself. It is easy to speculate that Burroughs expressed his jealousy

or frustration about Lawson's chaplaincy in the hearing of Mercy Lewis when she lived in his household. She then later passed that on to Ann Putnam, who consciously or unconsciously (more likely the latter) incorporated the information into her spectral vision of the minister.

Burroughs's specter also told Ann that "he had bewicthed a grate many souldiers to death at the eastword, when Sir Edmon was their." The malevolent killing of soldiers in Maine during Andros's campaign could have had only one purpose: assisting the Wabanaki in their war against God's people. But why would Burroughs do that? And why would that treachery help to reveal his identity as a witch?

New Englanders had long thought of Native Americans as devil-worshippers. North America had been "the *Devil's* territories," Cotton Mather later wrote, before the Christian English settlers had arrived. That George Burroughs had indeed spectrally allied himself to Satan and the Wabanaki could well have appeared likely to anyone who contemplated his uncanny ability to survive the attacks on Casco in August 1676 and September 1689, followed by his remarkably prescient decision to leave Falmouth sometime in the winter of 1689-90, mere months before the town fell to the Wabanaki in May 1690. And the "anyone" in that sentence was not, of course, just *anyone*—it was a very specific *someone*, Mercy Lewis, whose large extended family had essentially been wiped out in the same devastating attacks from which Burroughs had so stunningly escaped unscathed.[19]

He was, therefore, a witch. Mercy Lewis knew it because of her experiences on the northeastern frontier, and she, Ann Putnam, Abigail Hobbs, Susannah Sheldon, and others said it. At the clergyman's formal examination by the two Salem magistrates and two members of the colony's council on May 9, 1692, Mercy and Susannah took an active role in the proceedings, with Susannah describing how Burroughs's specter had appeared to her the day before to confess killing not only his wives but also two of his own children and "three children at the eastward." Susannah also mentioned "the soldiers," but what she said has unfortunately been lost. For her part, Mercy described an encounter with the minister's apparition two days earlier. Burroughs's specter "did greviously tortor me and urged me to writ in his Book," Mercy reported, and continued:

> Then he brought to me a new fashon book which he did not use to bring and tould me I might writ in that book: for that was a book that was in his studdy when I lived with them: but I tould him I did not beleve him for I had been often in his studdy but I never saw that book

> their: but he tould me that he had severall books in his studdy which I never saw in his studdy and he could raise the divell: . . . also he tould me that he had made Abigaill Hoobs: a wicth and severall more.[20]

When George Burroughs was tried in August, Mercy and probably Susannah joined other witnesses in accusing the clergyman of witchcraft. Before the grand jury on August 3, Mercy repeated under oath what she had said informally in May. Moreover, after Elizar Keyser, a resident of Salem Town, testified that Burroughs had bewitched his house after he had had an unsettling encounter with the imprisoned suspect in early May, Mercy eagerly interjected a confirmation: "Mr. Borroughs: told her: that he made lights: in Mr Keyzers chumny." At the trial two days later Abigail Hobbs surely added her accusing voice to those of the other Casco girls. Because she had confessed to being a witch, Abigail was not allowed to swear to the truth of her testimony, and so no written record of her words survives. But she must have been one of the eight confessors Cotton Mather noted as having appeared against Burroughs. And in that capacity she in all likelihood formally repeated to the court what she had revealed in a confession on May 12. Although she said she did not know whether the malefic clergyman had bewitched "the Eastward Souldres," Abigail indicated that Burroughs had brought her the devil's book to sign and that he had ordered her to afflict a number of residents of Falmouth, especially young people and members of families with which he had quarreled. In one case, "Before this Indian Warr," he had used her as an intermediary to bewitch the daughter of one of his enemies.[21]

Although other witnesses also testified against Burroughs at his trial (including many who had known him in Maine), it was the Casco girls—Abigail Hobbs, then Mercy Lewis (initially through her surrogate Ann Putnam) and Susannah Sheldon—who had first pointed the authorities' attention toward the former minister of Salem Village and, more significantly, of Falmouth. A witch conspiracy of the extent that seemed to be operating in Essex County in 1692 needed a leader, and Burroughs fit the bill perfectly. Stereotypical female witches could hardly serve that function; why would the devil turn to an elderly, querulous widow to direct his forces? But a frontier clergyman who had briefly served the parish in Salem Village could easily link the malevolent forces of the visible and the invisible worlds, doing the devil's bidding in both. He would bewitch the soldiers sent against Satan's Wabanaki allies while simultaneously "encouraging" his English followers, whom he summoned to devilish sacraments "with the sound of a diabolical trumpet."

At those satanic communions he predicted (recalled Deodat Lawson, who attended his predecessor's trial and recorded the content of the confessions repeated there) that "they should certainly prevail."[22]

In the end, what prevailed was not the witches but rather the Casco girls' accusations of their former minister. They made him—a man who had, evidently through diabolical means, escaped unscathed from the war that had destroyed the lives and properties of so many members of their families—what his descendants later termed "the Head & Ringleader of all the Supposed Witches in the Land."[23] And in doing so they also were the chief instigators of the widespread crisis referred to today by just one word: *Salem.*

NOTES

1. The record of Abigail Hobbs's examination is printed in Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum, eds., *The Salem Witchcraft Papers: Verbatim Transcripts of the Legal Documents of the Salem Witchcraft Outbreak of 1692* (New York, 1977), 2:405-409 (hereafter cited as *SWP*). The earlier confessors had been Tituba, slave of the Reverend Samuel Parris, and Dorcas Good, the four-year-old daughter of one of the first three accused witches, Sarah Good.

2. Ibid., 1:164-65. Salem Village is present-day Danvers, Massachusetts and Salem Town is now known simply as Salem. Falmouth became Portland in 1786. This account is from Ann's deposition offered in early August, first at grand jury proceedings and then at the trial of George Burroughs. Stories of Burroughs's mistreatment of his wives abounded in the evidence against him (not just in Ann Putnam's vision), but are beyond the scope of this article. They are discussed at length in my book, *In the Devil's Snare: The Salem Witchcraft Crisis of 1692* (New York, 2002).

3. Descriptions of these communities written in 1660 and 1677, respectively, are Henry F. Waters, ed., "Maverick's Description of New England," *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* 39 (1885):33-47; and William Hubbard, *A Narrative of the Troubles with the Indians in New-England.* [part 2] *From Pascataqua to Pemmaquid* (Boston, 1677), 1-4.

4. Quotation: unnamed Boston merchant to London friend, 16 May 1690, Colonial Office 5/855, f 3, Public Record Office, London. See, on the fisheries: Daniel Vickers, *Farmers & Fishermen: Two Centuries of Work in Essex County, Massachusetts, 1630-1850* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1994), chapter 3 passim, esp. 100; on timber: Charles F. Carroll, *The Timber Economy of Puritan New England* (Providence, R.I., 1973), chapter 6 passim, esp. 110; and on the struggle to control Maine: Mary Beth Norton, *Founding Mothers & Fathers: Gendered Power and the Forming of American Society* (New York, 1996), 308-12, and Carroll, *Timber Economy,* 115-19. Population estimate from Emerson Woods Baker III, "Trouble to the Eastward: The Failure of Anglo-Indian Relations in Early Maine" (Ph.D. diss., College of William and Mary, 1986), 179.

5. My understanding of the Wabanaki derives largely from the excellent work of Emerson Baker, Alice Nash, and Jenny Pulsipher. See Nash's succinct description of Wabanaki social structure in her "The Abiding Frontier: Family, Gender and Religion in Wabanaki History, 1600-1763," (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1997), 17-18. I also thank Baker, Nash, and Pulsipher for generously sharing unpublished essays with me.

6. For a brief discussion of Acadia, see John Mack Faragher, "'Without these compromises it would be impossible to exist in this country': Acadian 'Neutrality' in the Age of Empire, 1604-1755," paper delivered at the conference on Greater American Histories, Huntington Library, San Marino, California, March 2001. My thanks to Johnny Faragher for sharing this unpublished essay with me. On Madockawando and Castine, see also Alvin Morrison, "Dawnland Directors' Decisions: 17th-Century Encounter Dynamics on the Wabanaki Frontier," in William Cowan, ed., *Papers of the Twenty-Second Algonquian Conference* (Ottawa, Canada, 1991), passim, esp. 232-34, 238-39. I owe this reference to Maria Lepowsky.

7. This analysis of the origins of King Philip's War in the north largely concurs with Nash, "Abiding Frontier," 5-6.

8. Historians of King Philip's War have paid very little attention to the destructive war in Maine. One of the few modern published treatments is chapter 6 of Russell Bourne's *The Red King's Rebellion: Racial Politics in New England 1675-1678* (New York, 1990).

9. This paragraph and the next three summarize a much longer narrative from chapter 3 of *In the Devil's Snare.*

10. Ellner Barge, deposition, 17 July 1676, Suffolk Files #1526, Judicial Archives, Massachusetts Archives, Boston, Massachusetts (hereafter cited as JA, MA); Ralfe Allanson and Joseph Oliver, deposition, 18 July 1676, ibid. Henry Brookens recalled the exchange with the refugees differently, declaring that the men had refused to go to Dunstan, citing fears for their families' safety if they left Black Point essentially undefended. (Brookens, deposition, 2 August 1676, ibid.)

11. On the Sheldon, Scadlock, and Alger families and their relationships and Arthur's death at the Sheldon garrison house, see the entries in Sybil Noyes, Charles Thornton Libby, and Walter Goodwin Davis, *Genealogical Dictionary of Maine and New Hampshire* (1928-31; reprint, Baltimore, 1996) (hereafter cited as *GDMNH*). For the attempt to lure Burroughs to Black Point, see n. 18, below. Susannah is designated as "c. 18" in the Salem records, so she was born about 1674 in Black Point. Although *GDMNH* and other genealogies do not so list Susannah, she clearly was the daughter of William and Rebecca Scadlock Sheldon. The name "Susannah" did not appear elsewhere in the Sheldon family, but it was common among the Scadlocks; Rebecca Scadlock Sheldon had both a sister and a niece named Susannah. Subsequent Sheldon genealogists apparently concealed Susannah's relationship to the family, an enterprise facilitated by the fact she seems to have died unmarried and without children. Such genealogical suppression is not unique among notorious participants in the Salem trials; for ex-

ample, John Willard, condemned and hanged as a witch in September, cannot be definitively linked to the large Willard family of Groton (Nashaway), Massachusetts, although he undoubtedly was a member.

12. The only detailed contemporary description of the attack, used as a basis for this paragraph and the next, is Hubbard, *Narrative of the Troubles*. . . [part 2] *From Pascataqua to Pemmaquid*, 31-34 (quotation 32). Information on the extended family of Philip Lewis is from *GDMNH*. Precisely where Philip Lewis resided in Casco during the 1670s is not clear; the family lived "a considerable time" after 1663 on Hog Island, but he also owned land on the mainland. For his residence on the island and the quotation, see William Willis, *The History of Portland, from 1632 to 1864* (Portland, 1865), 134.

13. Basic biographical information about Burroughs is from *GDMNH;* John Langdon Sibley, *Biographical Sketches of Graduates of Harvard University* (Cambridge, Mass., 1881) 2:323-34; and Enders A. Robinson, *The Devil Discovered: Salem Witchcraft 1692* (New York, 1991), 78-81, 90-91, 325-26. On Burroughs's experience in Salem Village, see Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum, eds., *Salem-Village Witchcraft* (1972; reprint, Boston, 1993), 170-79, 319. On the resettlement of Falmouth, see Willis, *History of Portland*, 200.

14. Davis to Massachusetts Governor and Council, 22 September 1689, in James P. Baxter, ed., *Documentary History of the State of Maine* (Portland: Maine Historical Society, 1897), 4:455; Church to same, 22 September 1689, ibid., 456-57 (hereafter cited as *DHSM*). See Church's descriptions of the battle in ibid., 459-63; and Thomas Church, *The History of Philip's War . . . Also, of the French and Indian Wars, at the Eastward*, ed. Samuel G. Drake (Exeter, N.H., 1839), 160-71.

15. This paragraph is admittedly speculative, but it accords with all extant documentation. Mercy lived with Burroughs at some time; she was a servant in Beverly for nine months in approximately 1690; Burroughs had certainly left Falmouth for Wells (where he was still living in 1692) before the town fell to the Indians and French in May 1690. On Mercy's movements, see *SWP* 1:168, 2:537; and "Book of Eastern Claims," *Maine Historical and Genealogical Recorder* 5(1888):156-57, for proof that her father was alive in April 1689. One of the Sheldon children died in Salem Village in November; see "Rev. Samuel Parris's Record of Deaths at Salem Village during his Ministry," *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* 36 (1882): 188. the Hobbses reappeared in Topsfield on the November 1689 tax list (see the unpublished record in Essex County Court Records, ser. 2, 50:80/2, Philips Library, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem).

16. The fullest description of the attack and the surrender of Ft. Loyal is in "Declaration of Silvanus Davis," n. d. [after 15 October 1690], *DHSM* 5:145-46. Davis and a handful of others captured at Falmouth were taken to Quebec and redeemed by the English in fall 1690.

17. I speculate at length about the nature and location of Abigail Hobbs's Falmouth residence in chapter 4 of *In the Devil's Snare.* See that discussion for details of documentation.

18. Church to Mass. Governor and Council, 22 September 1689, *DHSM* 4:457. Burroughs had already been negotiating a move to Black Point, but although he occasionally preached there he never fully relocated. On his dealings with Black Point, see *Sibley's Harvard Graduates* 2:326 (a 1686 description of him as being minister there); Scarborough [Black Point] Town Records, volume 1, ff 34-36, 38-39, Collection 1229, Maine Historical Society, Portland (negotiations with him); and a 1688 Burroughs petition about some land given him there, in *DHSM* 6:346. Black Point seems never to have built him a promised house, which probably halted his intended move.

19. For Mather's statement in context, see *Wonders of the Invisible World* (1693), in Samuel G. Drake, ed., *The Witchcraft Delusion in New England* (Roxbury, Mass., 1866) 1:15-18. On the Indians as devil-worshppers, see generally Elaine Breslaw, *Tituba, Reluctant Witch of Salem: Devilish Indians and Puritan Fantasies* (New York, 1996), 167-70; Richard Godbeer, *The Devil's Dominion: Magic and Religion in Early New England* (New York, 1992), 191-92; William S. Simmons, *Spirit of the New England Tribes: Indian History and Folklore, 1620-1984* (Hanover, N.H., 1986), 37-64 passim, esp. 37-38. David S. Lovejoy, "Satanizing the American Indian," *New England Quarterly* 67 (1994):603-21, examines the general theme but dismisses any connection to Salem witchcraft. Alfred A. Cave, "Indian Shamans and English Witches in Seventeenth-Century New England," *Essex Institute Historical Collections* 128 (1992): 239-54, makes the link to Salem but focuses primarily on the nature of shamanic acts.

20. For the voluminous evidence in Burroughs's case, see generally *SWP* 1:151-78. Susannah's statements are on 1:153; and Mercy's on 1:168-69.

21. The full text of Mercy's statement was omitted from the transcript printed in *SWP* but may be seen in the copy of Elizar Keyser's May 3 deposition in the manuscript collections of the Pierpont Morgan Library. Susannah's participation is uncertain since there is no clerical notation on her May statements indicating that they were also offered in August. Cotton Mather described Burroughs's trial in his *Wonders of the Invisible World* (1693), reprinted in full in Samuel G. Drake, ed., *The Witchcraft Delusion in New England* (Roxbury, Mass., 1866); see 1:152-63. He states that eight confessors testified; although he fails to name them, they—including Abigail Hobbs—can readily be identified from documents printed in *SWP*. For Abigail's May 12 confession, see *SWP* 2:410-12.

22. Lawson's account is contained in recollections appended to a 1704 reprinting of a 1692 pamphlet, reprinted in Charles W. Upham, *Salem Witchcraft* (Boston, 1867) 2:529.

23. Memorial of Thomas Newman et al., 31 May 1749, as printed in George H. Moore, "Notes on the Bibliography of Witchcraft in Massachusetts," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, new ser., 5 (1887-88): 270.