

1984

## "Cry Havoc and Let Loose the Dogs of War": Canines and the Colonial American Military Experience

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"CRY HAVOC AND LET LOOSE THE DOGS OF WAR":  
CANINES AND THE COLONIAL AMERICAN MILITARY EXPERIENCE

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A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of History  
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts

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by

Mark A. Mastromarino

1984

APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts



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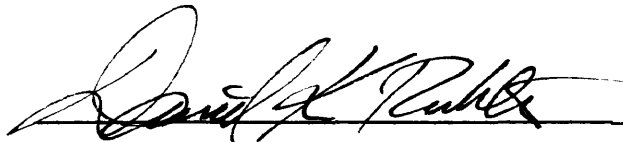
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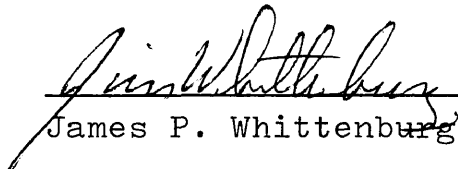
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James L. Axtell



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Daniel K. Richter



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James P. Whittenburg

For my parents,  
for their understanding encouragement  
and loving assistance.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The fact that this work is more than merely an antiquarian collection of colonial dog tales and puns without pause can be attributed to the efforts of Professor James Axtell. His guidance, advice, and inspiration provided my studies with a proper perspective. I owe him my thanks and feel myself compelled to reveal that his bark is much worse than his bite.

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to bones.

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## ABSTRACT

An investigation of the military role of the dog in early American history furnishes valuable insights into the lives and attitudes of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century native and Anglo-Americans. Archaeological, graphic, and documentary evidence demonstrates that the canine played an important part in native American society, but never participated actively in Indian warfare.

In Europe, the dog's effectiveness as an offensive weapon had been earlier limited by the introduction of firearms. Large dogs such as the mastiff were then trained chiefly to fight bears and bulls as a spectator sport. But after the discovery of the New World, Spanish and English explorers and settlers learned how highly serviceable the mastiff was against native Americans.

In Virginia and New England, mastiffs at first served only as deterrents, but Anglo-Americans soon clamored for their use against Indian guerrillas. Practical considerations, such as the acquisition of firearms by the Indians and the scarcity of well-trained mastiffs in America, limited the effective use of the English Mastiff as an offensive weapon in Anglo-Indian warfare. The moral implications of the mastiff on colonial American society were much greater than its military impact.

"CRY HAVOC AND LET LOOSE THE DOGS OF WAR":  
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Figure 1. THE OLD ENGLISH MASTIFF. From Vero Shaw, The Illustrated Book of the Dog (London, 1881). John Caius asked in 1570, "What manner of beast stronger? What servant to his master more loving? . . . What watchman more vigilant? What revenger more constant?"

INTRODUCTION  
WHY LET SLEEPING DOGS LIE?

The dog days of summer had come early to New England in 1603. It was not even August, but the few tourists visiting the Massachusetts oceanfront that year had already begun to feel the effects of the heat. Englishman Martin Pring, commander of a forty-man expedition sent there by Bristol merchants to harvest wild sassafras, therefore allowed his men to sleep "for two houres in the heat of the day." One afternoon, suddenly "there came downe about seven score Savages armed with their Bowes and Arrowes." Until that moment, relations between the natives and the English sassafras harvesters had been good. Pring reported that a youth of his company "play[ed] upon a Gitterne, in whose homely Musicke they [the Indians] tooke great delight, and would give him many things. . . . [They] danced twentie in a Ring, and the Gitterne in the middest of them." Pring had a chance to observe the dress, appearance, and customs of the natives. He noted that some of the Indians had with them "Dogges with sharpe and long noses" which frolicked with their masters, traipsing about their heels.<sup>1</sup>

The Englishmen also had canine companions, but these bore



Figure 2. THE FIRST ANGLO-AMERICAN DOGHOUSES, built by Martin Pring for his two mastiffs, Foole and Gallant, at Plymouth in 1603, seventeen years before the arrival of the Pilgrims. From Pieter van der Aa's book of voyages, De Aanmerkenwaardigste en alomberoemde zee-en landreizen (Leyden, 1706) in W.P. Cumming, R.A. Skelton, and D.B. Quinn, The Discovery of North America (New York, 1972).

little resemblance to their native American counterparts. Pring wrote, "We carried with us from Bristoll two excellent Mastives, of whom the Indians were more afraid, then of twentie of our men. . . . And one Master Thomas Bridges a gentleman of our company accompanied only with one of these Dogs, [had] passed sixe miles alone in the Countrey having lost his fellowes, and returned safely. And when we would be rid of the Savages company wee would let loose the Mastives, and suddenly with out-cryes they would flee away."<sup>2</sup>

The exploits of the fierce English dogs and the carefree caperings of the more pacific Indian dogs in this little-known episode of early American history are representative of the roles which canines played in the subsequent conquest of the continent. When the Indians menacingly surrounded Pring's "barricado" and threateningly approached his two ships at Plymouth, the master of one of the ships fired off a cannon in order to warn the men sleeping in the woods and to frighten the natives. After a second shot, the drowsing harvesters "beganne a little to call for Foole and Gallant, their great and fearfull Mastives . . . [and] betooke them to their weapons and with their Mastives, great Foole with an half Pike in his mouth drew down to their ship: whom when the Indians behelde afarre off, with the Mastive which they most feared, in dissembling manner they turned all to a jest and sport, and departed away in friendly manner."<sup>3</sup>

The adventures of Martin Pring on that Plymouth beach

almost twenty years before the arrival of the Pilgrims suggest that pawprints as well as moccasin tracks and bootprints mark the sands of time. By concentrating upon reconstructing the lives of the human makers of footprints, historians have neglected the accompanying canine tracks. When scholars talk of pieces of cultural baggage which the European invaders brought with them to the New World, they do not usually consider the canine. Nor do they think of European advantages in military technology in terms of dog-power, but usually only in terms of horsepower and firepower. In short, for better or worse, scholars of early American history have been content to let sleeping dogs lie.

This disregard of colonial American canines by traditional historians is inexcusable, for dogs have been an integral part of the colonial experience ever since the beginning of the European presence in North America and deserve serious study on those grounds alone. An investigation of the dog's place in the history of America is long overdue and should furnish valuable insights into the lives and attitudes of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century native and Anglo-Americans.

Not only did the Spanish, French, and English explorers and settlers of North America use dogs in gaining mastery over the continent and its peoples, but also the native Americans depended upon the domesticated dog for survival long before the European invaders ever arrived. A canine comparison will

prove valuable in analyzing the cultural frontier between the invading and indigenous populations. Moreover, an examination of European dogs in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century America will illustrate similarities and differences between Spanish, French, and English efforts at conquest and colonization of the New World.

More than this, an analysis of the English employment of dogs as tactical weapons in Anglo-Indian warfare and of the use of mastiffs and other breeds as instruments of terror on the frontier, will exemplify English adaption of old cultural artifacts in an attempt to preserve traditional English society in the New World. Finally an impartial look at the military use of dogs against the Indians will demonstrate that the claims of moral superiority with which the White Anglo-Saxon Protestants justified their winning of America from the "bloodthirsty savages" must be re-examined. It will show that assertions of "It's a dog-eat-dog world" do not automatically legitimize the more unsavory aspects of the conquest of the Americas.

Is the species Canis familiaris even worth consideration as a proper subject for historical study? If the dog is looked at as a cultural artifact, and not just as comic relief, I believe that a canine study has much to offer the historian. Many anthropologists and historical archaeologists would consider the dog as just another part of the material culture world deserving a closer examination. James Deetz



considers animal domestication to be a process of material culture production, while Steven M. Beckow sees artifacts simply as the works of man. "Artifacts are produced, reduced, or reassociated by men acting in a purposeful fashion." Another scholar of material culture, William B. Hesseltine, defines artifacts as "the tangible evidences of man's ingenuity, his craftsmanship, and his art. The houses in which men lived, the tools they used, the materials which they mastered and bent to their service are the conventional measures of civilization and progress."<sup>4</sup>

The domestication of the dog is but one way in which man has mastered and bent nature to his service. He has reassociated natural material, in this case, a complex life form, in a purposeful fashion, to serve his needs. Dogs fulfilled many different functions in Indian, English, and Anglo-American cultures. On the most basic level, they served as watchdogs, hunting companions, beasts of burden, herd dogs, weapons in warfare, messengers, and food. On a higher level, they were also pets, status symbols, and sources of popular entertainment. The dog was even important to some native American peoples on the ideotechnic level, playing major parts in many religious ceremonies and beliefs.

My research has focused upon the dog as a military machine on the American frontier. A study of combative canines is much more interesting than a study of the peaceful pets of England and of the more settled areas of the colonies.

The nature of the sources facilitate such a study. The military use of dogs was a novel revival to seventeenth-century Englishmen and consequently elicited a good deal of contemporary comment. Pet dogs, on the other hand, were such an accepted part of daily life in New and old England that their existence was often overlooked and was not extensively documented in colonial written sources.<sup>5</sup>

This work, then, in no way pretends to be a definitive history of the colonial American canine. But hopefully, the new social history's emphasis on re-evaluating the importance to American history of groups whose contributions are not usually considered by traditional historians, along with the new interest in ecological history, has created a scholarly atmosphere which will lend validity to the study of dogs in American history. Otherwise, I am indeed barking up the wrong tree.

Notes

<sup>1</sup> Martin Pring, "A Voyage set out from the Citie of Bristoll at the charge of the chiefest Merchants and Inhabitants of the said Citie with a small Ship and a Barke for the discoverie of the North part of Virginia" in George Parker Winship, ed., Sailors' Narratives of Voyages along the New England Coast, 1542-1625 (New York, 1968), pp. 56, 60-61. Sassafras was regarded as a "plant of sovereigne vertue for the French Poxe, and [was] . . . good against the Plague and many other Maladies," p. 59.

<sup>2</sup> Pring, "A Voyage from Bristol," p. 57.

<sup>3</sup> Pring, "A Voyage from Bristol," pp. 61-62.

<sup>4</sup> James Deetz, "Material Culture and Archaeology-- What's the Difference?" in Leland Ferguson, ed., Historical Archaeology and the Importance of Material Things (Columbia, S.C., 1977), p. 12; Steven M. Beckow, "Culture, History, and Artifact," Canadian Museums Association Gazette 8 (1975): 14; William B. Hesselstine, "The Challenge of the Artifact," in The Present World of History (Madison, Wisconsin, 1959), p. 65.

<sup>5</sup> That is not to say that there are no references at all to dogs in colonial American records. Howard M. Chapin found enough to publish a short antiquarian work, Dogs in Early New England (Providence, R.I., 1920). Dogs appear time and again in many seventeenth-century court records. See Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County, Massachusetts, 8 vols. (Salem, Mass., 1911-1921), 1:18, 59, 65, 118, 174; 2:6, 101, 236, 279, 309; 3:132, 396; 4:15; 6:97, 105, 128; 7:424; and John Noble, ed., Records of the Court of Assistants of the Colony of the Massachusetts Bay, 3 vols. (Boston, 1901), 1:66.

## CHAPTER I

### EVERY DOG HIS DAY: THE INDIAN DOG IN NATIVE AMERICAN SOCIETY

"Six of the enemy shewed themselves in the Twilight, uttering several insolent and barbarous speeches, calling our Men English Dogs, etc," complained William Hubbard of an incident of King Philip's War in 1677. "Yet all this, while out of reach of their shot, and then they ran all away like Dogs after they had done barking." This passage illustrates several commonly held notions of seventeenth-century Anglo-Indian warfare. The Indians were accustomed to making military maneuvers in the dark of night when they were practically undetectable. The original English settlers and the first few generations of their children were generally on the defensive behind garrison walls and were frustrated by their inability to pursue and successfully punish Indian raiders. Hubbard's remarks illustrate the English attitudes toward the Indians that resulted, in part, from this military frustration.<sup>1</sup>

These comments also show that New Englanders did not respect dogs very much, or more accurately, that they considered the appellation of the term to a human being (or at

least an Englishman) extremely derogatory. Does the historical record show that Hubbard was correct in attributing the same feelings to his Indian enemy? Did native Americans look at their dogs in the same negative light as Hubbard and other Anglo-Americans seemed to have looked at theirs? Or did Hubbard's Indian raiders merely use "fighting words" which they felt would compel the aroused English to sally forth from their garrisons into the forests where they could be easily defeated? How familiar with dogs were Indians, and what part, if any, did the canine play in native American societies, both before and after the coming of the Europeans?

These are not easy questions to answer. If it is difficult to examine the role of the dog in English and Anglo-American society because of scant references to dogs, then it is practically impossible to discover much of historical value about the native American domesticated dog. Indian societies were chiefly oral cultures: few written Indian records survive. The first Europeans to encounter native Americans, however, did leave written descriptions of Indian society. Although most of these contemporary accounts of early-contact Indian life are ethnocentric, much useful information can be gleaned from them if care is taken to control for cultural biases.

Fortunately, sources other than written ones can tell much about past societies to the historian willing to use them. For instance, John White and other artists painted

generally accurate depictions of Indian life before it was altered by extended contact with the European invaders. Many paintings and sketches of the flora, fauna, and natives of the newly-claimed North American lands were commissioned by English New World publicists. The archaeological record also provides information about domesticated dogs. But such evidence is not always easy to find, and it is usually difficult to analyze. When published (if published at all), archaeological investigations do not always readily yield answers to historical questions. Anthropologists, natural historians, and zoologists do not necessarily consider the domesticated dog in its cultural or historical context.<sup>2</sup>

There are other problems in examining the archaeological evidence in order to learn about Indian dogs. The most troublesome one concerns dog bones. It is extremely difficult to distinguish between the skeletal remains of the domestic and wild members of the Canid family. Comparative zoologists have formulated elaborate keys which depend upon minute differences in bone structure. According to Stanley J. Olsen, "A series of proportions including relative length of the muzzle, size of teeth relative to total skull size, width of palate, and degree of inflation of the bullae, all have to be taken into consideration" when identifying canid remains. When most faunal remains are excavated, however, they have either deteriorated too much or are otherwise not complete enough for detailed osteological analysis.<sup>3</sup>

There are other types of archaeological survivals besides faunal remains, however, which can teach us about early American dogs. Many surviving artifacts of pre-contact Indian culture were fashioned in the shape of dogs and other animals of the natives. Although the most common of these zoomorphic artifacts are tobacco pipes, usually of clay or carved stone, dogs were also often painted on pottery. But caution must be used when interpreting such representations, as these zoomorphic figures are usually as ambiguous as the cloud animals which can be imagined while gazing at the summer sky.<sup>4</sup>

With so little solid evidence of pre-contact domesticated dogs of North America surviving, it is easy to see why the subject has not generated much recent study. Only a few earlier chroniclers considered the dog worthy of their interest, but their writings were colored by more than a tinge of Eurocentricism. Benjamin Smith Barton claimed that the historians and naturalists Acosta, Gomara, Herrera, Joannes Fabri, Buffon, and Pennant all wrote that there were no dogs in America before the arrival of the Europeans. James Sullivan wrote in 1795 that English chroniclers like Purchas and Ogilby implied that, because the Indians were extremely frightened by the appearance of the first European dogs they saw, they were totally unfamiliar with such a beast. The chronicler Charlevoix, on the other hand, claimed just the opposite: the native Americans had dogs, which they treated cruelly, long before the invasion of the Europeans. And in

general, neither French nor English writers thought North American "savages" civilized enough to domesticate or to appreciate fully such a useful animal as the dog.<sup>5</sup>

When Anglo-American historians finally admitted the obvious, that Martin Pring and other early English explorers actually were greeted by native Americans with dogs, they still could not credit the Indians with domesticating the animal by themselves. The English were well aware that the Spanish had been in Mexico and South America for more than a century before they themselves had come to the Atlantic seaboard; obviously, then, the Spaniards must have introduced the first canines to the natives of the New World. "No doubt the tribes had handed the use of several species of animals from one to another, towards the northern regions," concluded James Sullivan in 1795.<sup>6</sup>

Even after naturalists accepted the fact that native Americans were capable of domesticating their own dogs, cultural biases affected their scientific observations. If there were domesticated dogs native to North America, they must have been inferior to European breeds. One Jesuit admitted in 1653 that "even the domestic dogs are different from ours." The first English explorers thought that Indian breeds of dogs were merely domesticated wolves or foxes. James Rosier wrote in The Last Discovery of the North Part of Virginia (1605) that he saw "two or three savages, every one with bowe and arrowes, with their dogges and wolves which they



keepe tame at command." Captain John Smith's description of native Virginian dogs in his 1612 A Map of Virginia echoed that in William Strachey's Historie of Travaile Into Virginia Britannia of the same year: "The dogs of the country are like their woules, and cannot barke, but howle. . . . Their woules are not much bigger than our English foxes." John Josselyn claimed in 1675 that "the Indian dog is begotten between the wolf and the fox, which they make use of, bringing them up to hunt. . . ." <sup>7</sup>

James Sullivan refuted this theory in 1795 by doing something which many others never considered worth doing: he questioned the Indians themselves about their dogs and other aspects of their culture and their past. "There is great reason to doubt the truth of this piece of natural history [wolf-fox crossbreeds]: for there has been none of this mongrel species of animal found lately in the woods, and old Indians have said that they never heard of any such. . . . [I have] made particular inquiry of them." <sup>8</sup>

Still, in 1803, using the same ethnocentric terms that Anglo-Americans had applied to the Indians in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, B.B. Smith wrote: "Every thing shows that the Indian dog is a much more savage or imperfectly reclaimed animal than the common dog." Half a century later, natural historians displayed the same proclivity. W.C.L. Martin wrote in 1845: "In their habits these [native] dogs are sneaking and cowardly, biting

at the heel, but never making an open attack, unless in packs, upon any animal; and may be singly put to flight by a little Scotch terrier." <sup>9</sup>

Only in this century was the first truly scientific study of the native American dog published. In an article entitled "Dogs of the American Aborigines," Glover Allen objectively analyzed archaeological and other evidence and concluded that the domesticated dogs of the Indians were neither tamed wolves or foxes, nor a cross between the two. An examination of the skulls and teeth of ancient American and European dogs showed that there were more similarities between the two than between Indian dogs and wolves. Allen theorized that instead of domesticating various dog or fox species native to the Americas, the original settlers of North America must have brought dogs with them in the late Pleistocene Period. The first American dogs, therefore, did not sail to America with Martin Pring, Hernando Cortez, or Christopher Columbus. They, in fact, accompanied the Asiatic wanderers over the Alaskan land bridge from about 40,000 to 15,000 B.C. <sup>10</sup>

What exactly were these animals like? Allen described as many as seventeen distinct breeds of domesticated dogs kept by the aborigines of North, Central, and South America. The English came into contact with only some of these species in the seventeenth century: the Larger or Common Indian Dog, the Short-legged Indian Dog, the Short-nosed Indian Dog, and the Techichi. These breeds did not retain their purity for long,

for they soon interbred with European dogs, to the great dismay of the latter's masters. Only a few of today's American dogs would be recognizable to a sixteenth-century native American. These would include the chihuahua and the various breeds of Eskimo sled dogs.

The Larger or Common Indian Dog was the second largest native dog in the Americas, being only slightly smaller than the Plains Indian Dog which the Sioux and other nomadic peoples used for hauling travois. Either solid black or marked with black and white patches, it had a high forehead, a slender skull, and legs a little shorter than an English greyhound's. The Common Indian Dog, which the Europeans believed to resemble a wolf, at one time could be found from Alaska to Florida and the Greater Antilles. In 1587 Thomas Harriot received or captured some wolves or wolfish dogs from the natives of North Carolina, and William Strachey described Virginian dogs in 1612 as wolves or Turkish jackals. Even as late as 1803, dogs among the Creek and Chickasaw tribes were compared to black wolves.<sup>11</sup>

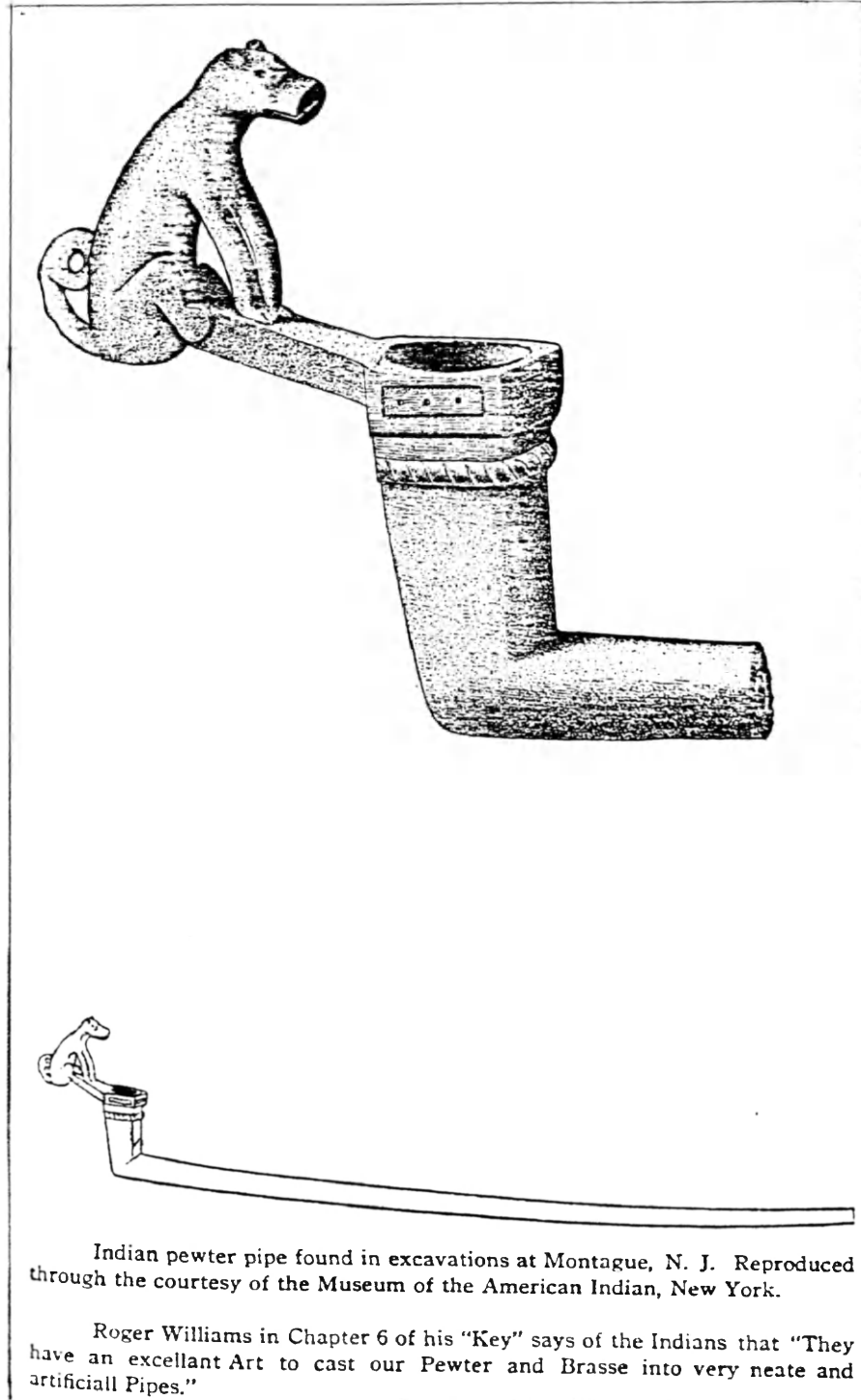
W.C.L. Martin quoted Colonel H. Smith's description of "the black wolf-dog of the Florida Indians" as follows: it "is higher at the shoulder than a Newfoundland dog . . . but shorter in the body, and in aspect very like a wolf. . . . the nose [was] rather sharp, the forehead broad and rather arched; the ears erect, pointed, and open; the tail full, like that of a wolf, hanging down, not curled. . . .

[T]he whole animal [was] glossy black, excepting a small spot on the breast, and tips of the fore-toes, white." All of these dogs were probably of the Larger or Common Indian dog breed.<sup>12</sup>

The Short-legged variety was much smaller. It had a relatively large head with erect ears, a long body with short, sleek fur, and short, but undistorted, legs. It was found chiefly with the Northeastern Woodland Indians. The "Dogges with sharpe and long noses" which Martin Pring saw cavorting at the heels of the Indians at Plymouth were most likely Short-legged Indian Dogs.

The Short-nosed Indian Dog was the size of a small terrier, but more stoutly built. Its head, with its short, heavy muzzle and high forehead, its short body with its long legs, and its strong tail were all covered with fur of black and white or black and yellow with dark blotches. Its remains have been found from Virginia to southern California and Peru. In New England, archaeologists have unearthed at least two Indian pipes bearing animal effigies upon their bowls, identifiable as the Short-nosed Indian dog.<sup>13</sup>

Finally, the Techichi was a small black, black and white, or brownish-yellow close-haired dog of slender proportions. It had light limbs, a narrow, delicate head, erect ears, and a well-developed tail. Before the Spanish conquests, it could be found from Cape Breton and the Elizabeth Islands off the coast of New England, down through the Yucatan, and all the



Indian pewter pipe found in excavations at Montague, N. J. Reproduced through the courtesy of the Museum of the American Indian, New York.

Roger Williams in Chapter 6 of his "Key" says of the Indians that "They have an excellant Art to cast our Pewter and Brasse into very neate and artificiall Pipes."

Figure 3. THE SHORT-NOSED INDIAN DOG, on a cast pewter animal effigy pipe, probably of early seventeenth-century native American manufacture. From Howard M. Chapin, Dogs in Early New England (Providence, R.I., 1920).

way to southern Peru. John White, who was commissioned by Raleigh to make studies of the inhabitants of the New World in 1585, painted a picture of the Indian Village of Pomeiock. In the painting is a small, barely discernible illustration of a dog. This depiction is extremely important as one of the few pieces of evidence showing the non-osteological aspects of the pre-contact native American dog. White's dog resembles a Techichi. It is solid brown in color, and is about the size of a fox. It has short hair, a long muzzle, a long, upraised tail, and pointed ears. There is another surviving graphic illustration of a possible Techichi which dates to the seventeenth century. The mark with which the Narragansett Indian Tomanick signed his name to English land deeds and legal documents in 1644 was a small dark dog with pointed ears, a strong-looking tail, and a sharp muzzle.<sup>14</sup>

The above paragraphs merely describe the dogs of the American aborigines. In order to gain a better understanding of the role of canines in different native American societies, the seventeenth-century sources must be examined. A critical analysis of such sources will demonstrate that the domesticated dog played a much more significant part in pre-contact Indian cultures than previously suggested by earlier writers.<sup>15</sup>

For instance, William Wood noted in 1634 that the New England natives had no "swift-foot greyhounds to let slip at the sight of the deer" nor any "deep-mouthed hounds or

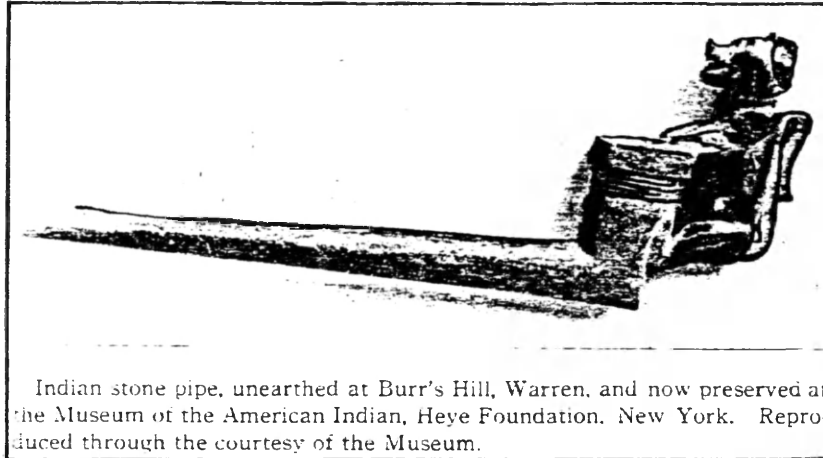


Figure 4. THE SHORT-NOSED INDIAN DOG, carved on a stone Indian pipe, from Chapin, Dogs in Early New England. A more clear representation can be found in Susan B. Gibson, ed., Burr's Hill: A 17th-Century Wampanoag Burial Ground in Warren, R.I. (Providence, R.I., 1980).



Figure 5. THE TECHICHI, as drawn by Tomanick and copied by Gorton in Simplicities Defence. From Chapin, Dogs in Early New England.



Figure 6. THE TECHICHI (northwest of center) in a 1585 painting by John White of the Indian town of Pomeiock, from Cumming, The Discovery of North America. A larger, full-color print can be found in Paul Hulton and D.B. Quinn, eds., The American Drawings of John White, 1577-1590 (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1964).



Figure 7. SMOKED DOG (on the far left of the grill) being prepared for food by Southeastern Indians in a 1591 painting by Le Moyne. From Cumming, The Discovery of North America.



scenting beagles to find out their desired prey," but performed these hunting tasks themselves. Obviously, Wood never observed an Indian hunt in person. And even if he did, he would not have been able to get past his unshaken belief in the superiority of things English. Indian artifacts, such as wigwams and dogs, were considered inferior merely because they were not produced in the same fashion or did not fulfill the same functions as European material goods. Ethnocentric settlers could not accept the fact that Indian products were usually effective responses to the environmental conditions of North America.<sup>16</sup>

People other than Wood mentioned that the natives of the New World (like the gentlemen of the Old World) did hunt with dogs. "As concerning your request of Bloudhoundes," Peter Wynne responded in 1608 to Sir John Egerton's queries about native Virginia fauna, "I cannot learn that there is any such in this Country; only the dogges which are here . . . [and are kept] to hunt theyr [the Indians'] land fowles, as Turkeys and such like." Similarly, William Bradford recorded in his history of Plymouth that in November 1620, Captain Miles Standish led a reconnoitering expedition on Cape Cod where the group sighted a hunting party of six Indians and a dog who all fled into the woods.<sup>17</sup>

French writers also saw dogs being used by North American natives to hunt game as diverse as the bear and the beaver. "Sometimes when the dogs encounter the Beaver outside its

House, they pursue and take it easily," Jesuit missionary Paul LeJeune wrote of the native Canadian canines in 1634. "I have never seen this chase, but have been told of it; and the Savages highly value a dog which scents and runs down this animal." Many other stories about Indian hunting dogs appear in the Jesuit Relations. One tells of Ouatit, a noble beast who was slain in a bear hunt, and whose loss was mourned as much as "the death of one of the brave Captains of the country." Northeastern woodland tribes such as the Montagnais made extensive use of dogs in their winter hunting expeditions, and would have been lost without the aid of their canine comrades.<sup>18</sup>

The dog was more than just a companion, beast of burden, and expert tracker on hunting trips. He also provided warmth to the natives of the Northeast and the Midwest during the cold winter nights, as LeJeune discovered while he lived among the Montagnais and their canines in 1634: "These poor beasts, not being able to live outdoors, came and lay down sometimes upon my shoulders, sometimes upon my feet, and as I only had one blanket to serve both as a covering and mattress, I was not sorry for this protection, willingly restoring to them a part of the heat which I drew from them." Five years later he reported similar conditions while he served a mission to the Hurons: "[I]n their cabins . . . [were] naked bodies, black and half roasted, mingled pell-mell with the dogs, which are held as dear as the children of the house, and share the beds,

plates, and food of their masters." <sup>19</sup>

The domesticated dog was also cherished as a pet by many native Americans, just as most of today's dogs are. One Jesuit father gave the French equivalent of a gift of a dog from one Indian woman to another: "This is just as if in France one were to give a friend a fine Spanish horse." When Christopher Levett sailed to York, Maine in 1623 with an Indian chieftain, he realized how much the man esteemed his dog. Their boat could carry only a few things which the Indian held most dear: his wife, son, bow and arrows, kettle, and his pet dog. <sup>20</sup>

Different Indian tribes treated their domesticated dogs differently. LeJeune described native feasts of 1636 where the participants partook of the usual foods, except when their dreams compelled them to eat an occasional dog, "a dish as shameful in the eyes of our Montagnes as it is rare and delicious in those of the Hurons." Other Europeans observed Indian cultures which depended upon the domesticated dog as a regular source of meat. DeSoto's expedition was presented with dogs, probably Techichi, from Florida to Louisiana, and the animal "was consumed almost to its extermination." As early as 1550 Richard Hakluyt wrote "For trueth it is, that there were dogs [in the Canary Islands], but such as are in all the Northwest lands, and some part of the West India, which served the people in stead of sheepe for victuall. . . ." Frobisher compared the dogs of the

natives of the far North to English oxen, as they served as both beasts of burden and as a fresh meat supply. And George Best described two different types of Eskimo dogs in 1578: the larger kind were used to pull sleds, and the smaller kind were fattened and kept for eating.<sup>21</sup>

The dog also had major ceremonial significance in many native American religions. According to William Wood, the New England Indians believed that a great dog stood guard at their heavenly portal and, by snarling churlishly, denied entrance to unworthy intruders. Earth-bound native American dogs usually suffered more for their participation in Indian rituals such as funerals and other celebrations. Father Biard observed in 1616 that the Indians killed the dogs given to the deceased as last gifts in order to send them before him into the other world. "The said dogs are afterwards served at the Tabagie [feast], for they find them palatable." Another Jesuit told of one occasion in 1702 when the "charlatans" of the Mascoutens sacrificed as many as forty dogs to their Manitou and "carried them on the tops of poles while singing, dancing, and assuming a thousand absurd postures." Perhaps the most noted religious use of Indian dogs was the White Dog Ceremony of the Iroquois. As an offering of thanks to Tarachiawagon, the Creator, they would strangle and burn a pure white dog every September and January and sprinkle its ashes at the door of every dwelling.<sup>22</sup>

Europeans condemned these canine ceremonies as pagan

superstitions. Most Anglo-Americans were also disgusted by the regular and ritual consumption of dogs as meat. The English settlers of North America, however, soon resented the native American dog for a much more practical reason. The animal was responsible for frustrating countless numbers of surprise attacks against the Indians. Accounts of the experiences of New England soldiers during the Pequot War of the mid-1630s and during King Philip's War of the 1670s demonstrate that Indian dogs served as tireless sentries and instantly alerted a sleeping village or camp to the approach of strangers in the night. This canine early warning system was functioning on the evening of Captain Mason's attack on Sassacus's Pequots in 1637, but it failed to prevent a total Indian defeat. In an engagement in 1677, however, it completely disrupted an English night assault upon a camp of King Philip's men near present-day Marlborough, Massachusetts.<sup>23</sup>

Such frustrating occurrences probably contributed to the "brutal slayings" of "noncombatant Indian dogs" by the Anglo-Americans. Dissatisfied by the small number of Indian casualties incurred by John Endicott's 1636 expedition against the Pequots, the Massachusetts troops satisfied themselves with destroying some of the Indian dogs before they left. And even as late as 1677 there seemed to have been plenty of the animals to kill. When Major Savage searched for King Philip on Mt. Hope, his men "retreated back to their Quarters at

Swanzy, in the Way meeting with many Indian Dogs that seemed to have lost their Masters."<sup>24</sup>

But the native American Indian dog soon went the way of its master. Many were killed by the European invaders, usually in surprise attacks upon native civilians. Many more were probably killed by the European diseases which decimated the native populations of North America in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. That the canine population was not immune to the same diseases which ravaged Indian societies is shown by the Jesuits' experiences at the St. Marie du Saulte Mission in 1670. "The most common malady was the bloody flux, which spread through the whole Village, so infecting the atmosphere that even all the dogs were going mad with it, and dying " The relatively few Indian dogs that survived pillage and pestilence ended up interbreeding with the pets of the Anglo-American victors, and eventually became indistinguishable members of the great American canine melting pot.<sup>25</sup>

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>William Hubbard, The History of the Indian Wars in New England, (1677), ed. Samuel G. Drake (New York, 1865), p. 116.

<sup>2</sup>An early article entitled "On Indian Dogs" was written by amateur naturalist Benjamin Smith Barton and was published in The Philosophical Magazine 15 (Philadelphia, 1803). This served as the only serious scholarly work on the subject until Glover M. Allen published "Dogs of the American Aborigines" in the Bulletin of the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard College 63 (1920):431-517.

<sup>3</sup>Stanley J. Olsen, "Archaeologically, What Constitutes An Early Domestic Animal?" in Michael B. Schiffer, ed., Advances in Archaeological Method and Theory, 2nd edition (New York, 1979), p. 181. Most of the archaeological studies of the dog to date are technical osteological treatises such as: W.E. Howard's, "A Means To Distinguish Skulls of Coyotes and Domesticated Dogs," in Journal of Mammalogy 30 (1949):169-171; Raymond E. Chaplin's, The Study of Animal Bones from Archaeological Sites (New York, 1971); Stanley J. Olsen's, Mammal Remains from Archaeological Sites: Part 1, Southeastern and Southwestern United States (Cambridge, Mass, 1973); and B. Miles Gilbert's, Mammalian Osteology (Laramie, Wyoming 1980).

<sup>4</sup>Olsen, "What Constitutes an Early Domestic Animal?", p. 190.

<sup>5</sup>Barton, "On Indian Dogs," p. 1; James Sullivan, History of the District of Maine (Boston, 1795), p. 10.

<sup>6</sup>Sullivan, History of Maine, p. 10.

<sup>7</sup>Bressani's 1653 Relation in Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents, 73 vols. (Cleveland, 1896-1901), 38:291 (hereafter cited as JR); Rosier quoted in Edward C. Ash, Dogs: Their History and Development, 2 vols. (London, 1927), 1:31; Smith quoted in Lyon Gardiner Tyler, ed., Narratives of Early Virginia, 1606-1625, Original Narratives of Early American History (New

York, 1907), p. 94; Strachey in David B. Quinn, ed., New American World: A Documentary History of North America to 1612, 5 vols. (New York, 1979), 3:355; John Josselyn, An Account of Two Voyages to New-England... [London, 1675] (Boston, 1865), p. 94.

<sup>8</sup> Sullivan, History of Maine, p. 11.

<sup>9</sup> Barton, "On Indian Dogs," p. 6; William C.L. Martin, The History of the Dog (London, 1845), p. 126.

<sup>10</sup> Allen, "Dogs of the American Aborigines," pp. 436, 439-440; see also Frederick E. Zeuner, A History of Domesticated Animals (New York, 1963), pp. 109-110.

<sup>11</sup> Allen, "Dogs of the American Aborigines," pp. 465-466; Thomas Harriot in Richard Hakluyt, The Principall Navigations, Voiages, and Discoveries of the English Nation [1589] (Cambridge, 1965), p. 757; William Strachey, Historie of Travaile Into Virginia Britannia (1612) in Quinn, New American World, 5:355; Barton, "On Indian Dogs," p. 6.

<sup>12</sup> Martin, The History of the Dog, p. 125.

<sup>13</sup> Glover Allen identified the non-prehistoric dog remains excavated by Dr. J.A. Allen in Ely Cave, Lee County, Virginia in 1885 as belonging to this domesticated breed: Allen, "Dogs of the American Aborigines," p. 495. One pipe, of carved steatite, was found at a Wampanoag site and is pictured in Susan G. Gibson, ed., Burr's Hill: A Seventeenth-Century Wampanoag Burial Site in Warren, Rhode Island (Providence, R.I., 1980). Another similar pipe, this one of pewter, in the collections of the Museum of the American Indian, was excavated at Montague, N.J. and can be found sketched in Chapin, Dogs in Early New England.

<sup>14</sup> Allen, "Dogs of the American Aborigines," pp. 468-470; Paul Hulton and David B. Quinn, The American Drawings of John White, 1577-1590, 2 vols. (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1964), 1:82 and 2: plate 34; see also Martin, History of the Dog, p. 126; Tomanick's signature copied from Gorton's Simplicities Defence, p. 160 in Howard M. Chapin, Dogs in Early New England (Providence, R.I., 1920), p. 5.

<sup>15</sup> Douglas English's chapter on dogs in his Friends of Mankind: A Study of Our Domestic Animals (New York, 1924) blatantly lacks ethnohistorical sensitivity, for the author considered the many different peoples of North America as one homogeneous population. He claimed that before the Indians acquired horses, they were "a race of trappers, who treated



such dogs as attached themselves to their service with harshness and disdain, setting greater store by their skins than by their assistance," p. 256. This book has a bit more scholarly merit than another one which English penned, entitled Wee Tim'rous Beasties. Carl Ortwin Sauer's poorly-edited Sixteenth Century [sic] North America (Berkeley, Calif., 1971), is only slightly more reliable. Sauer claimed that neither the Eskimoes nor the Plains Indians "trained dogs for hunting, nor did any other people of North America," p. 293.

<sup>16</sup> William Wood, New England's Prospect (London, 1634), p. 106.

<sup>17</sup> Wynne's letter in Philip L. Barbour, ed., The Jamestown Voyages Under the First Charter, 1606-1609, 2 vols. (New York, 1969), 2:246; William Bradford, Bradford's History of Plimoth Plantation (Boston 1901), p.98.

<sup>18</sup> JR, 6:299, 14:33-35; see also 6:209, 303; 14:7, 35; 17:13, 197; 23:125; 57:299, 319; see 2:77; 3:79; 5:133; 6:295-297, 299, 305-307, 313-315; 7:47, 51, 109-111, 161, 181; 8:21; 9:253 for more on how dogs contributed to the hunting patterns of the Montagnais in the early seventeenth century.

<sup>19</sup> JR, 7:43 17:13-15; see also 14:7.

<sup>20</sup> JR, 23:125; Christopher Levett, My Discovery of Divers Rivers and Harbours... [1628] in George Parker Winship, ed., Sailors' Narratives of Voyages along the New England Coast, 1542-1625 (reprint, New York, 1968), p. 273.

<sup>21</sup> JR, 9:111; Sauer, Sixteenth Century North America, pp. 183-184; Martin Frobisher True Reporte of the Last Voyage. . . [London, 1577] in Quinn, New American World, 4:213; George Best, True Discourse [1578] in Sauer, Sixteenth Century North America, p. 239; see also pp. 163, 167-168. Henry F. Dobyns in Their Number Became Thinned: Native American Population Dynamics in Eastern North America (Knoxville, Tenn., 1983), p. 78, also mentions the importance of dogs to Southeastern Indian cultures as "converters of meat scraps and offal into tender flesh with a distinctive flavor." Martin Sahlins's dictum "Edibility is inversely related to humanity," in his Culture and Practical Reason (Chicago, 1976), pp. 171-175, succinctly explains why the dog is taboo as food in modern American society. The seventeenth-century Southeastern tribes, however, considered their Techichi in the same light as we consider our hogs and cattle today.

<sup>22</sup> Wood, New England's Prospect, p. 111; JR, 3:127;

66:241; see also Calvin Martin, Keepers of the Game: Indian-Animal Relationships and the Fur Trade (Berkeley, Calif., 1978), p. 78; Ash, Dogs, 2:7, 667-668 and Anthony F.C. Wallace, The Death and the Rebirth of the Seneca (New York, 1969), pp. 53, 58. One fairly recent archaeological find in Hopewell, Virginia should be mentioned here. Leverette B. Gregory and the Archaeological Society of Virginia have excavated at the Hatch Site over eighty Indian dog burials. The tail of each animal had been removed, signifying that the dogs had been skinned before being buried, and all of the canines had been placed in the ground upside down with their legs sticking straight up in the dirt. Under some of the bodies were found the remains of the left arms of human beings. These factors contribute to the hypothesis that the dogs played some part in a major religious ceremony or social ritual; personal communication with Theodore Reinhart, Anthropology Department, The College of William and Mary; Leverette B. Gregory, "The Hatch Site: A Preliminary Report (Prince George County, Virginia)" in Quarterly Bulletin: Archaeological Society of Virginia 34 (1980): 239-248.

<sup>23</sup> William Hubbard quoted Mason on his encounter: "So it pleased God we came up with the Palisade within two Rod, before we were discovered; at which Time a Dog began to bark, and an Indian cried out," (pp. 25-26); Hubbard also described the failed English attack of November 1675: "Riding up ten Miles into the woods . . . they came near the Wigwams . . . and dismounted, and intended presently to march up and give an Assault upon them. . . . But when they came within a Quarter of a Mile of the Place, . . . Dogs began to bark . . . [and] They were repulsed by the Indians," (p. 130); see also Massachusetts Archives, 68: no. 50.

<sup>24</sup> See the Boston News-Letter 10-17 February 1706 as cited in Chapin, Dogs in Early New England, p. 6; Endicott's expedition is described by John Underhill in his "News from America. . ." in Massachusetts Historical Society Collections, 3rd Series (Boston, 1837), 6:264; Hubbard, History of the Indian Wars. . . , p. 72.

<sup>25</sup> JR, 55:123.

## CHAPTER II

### MAN'S BEST FIEND: THE ENGLISH MASTIFF IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY BRITAIN

Errol Flynn's rollicking bucaneer films told of the exciting lives of the salty seadogs of Elizabeth's era. But the daring adventures of Captain Blood are no more colorful than the story of Elizabethan dogs ashore. Nor is the history of the British canine in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries any less violent than those old Hollywood swashbucklers. Domesticated dogs fulfilled many more various functions in English society than they did in native American societies of the same period. There were also many more different canine breeds in the British Isles than throughout the Americas. Although most of these breeds played roles similar to their American counterparts, at least one noteworthy English exception existed. The English Mastiff was a most powerful brute celebrated since antiquity for its bloody exploits at home and abroad.

A survey of the paintings of such masters as Steen, Borch, Van Dyck, and Vermeer shows that the various seventeenth-century English breeds, including the mastiff, were not remarkably different than English dogs of today. As

seen above, anthropologists and archaeologists do consider dogs as cultural artifacts, and Ivor Noël Hume has claimed that English and British colonial artifacts were often identical to those in use "across the Channel in Europe, [where] the Dutch and Flemish schools produced scores of painters who reveled in depicting every facet of daily life." Dogs were such an accepted part of everyday life that they routinely appear in hundreds of canvases, both English and continental.<sup>1</sup>

References to English dogs also abound in a multitude of written sources of the day, such as lawbooks, hunting manuals, journals, travel accounts, diaries, petitions, court and church records, and even literary works like popular plays and narrative poems. This evidence helps to show how the canine fit into early English society. For instance, some of the laws which the English commoner found most oppressive were those passed to preserve game for royal pleasure, as hunting for sport and for food was one of the favorite pastimes of the upper classes. And since dogs were the chief instruments of the hunt, these laws often concerned the animal. The mastiff was expressly mentioned by name in the forest laws of Henry III as a valuable watch-dog, and every two villeins were required to keep at least one of them in feudal times. But to prevent them from running down deer, the mastiffs were supposed to be muzzled and expeditated, that is, to have the claws or the ball of each of their forepaws removed. The

ummuzzled or unexpeditated mastiff's owner was responsible for its actions and suffered harsh penalties if it killed any game.<sup>2</sup>

Although villeins were encouraged to keep mastiffs, only gentlemen could keep the finer breeds, such as greyhounds and setters. Laws which enforced these breeds' significance as status symbols continued to be passed well into the eighteenth century. Under James I, no Englishman without a ten pound per annum freehold or two hundred pounds in personalty or who was not the heir to an esquire, knight, or "superior person," could keep a greyhound or a setter, on pain of imprisonment or of being fined ten shillings. Nor could any person who earned less than forty pounds a year or who possessed less than two hundred pounds of property keep "any Conny Dogges or deer, or bunny parks." Under the warrant of two justices of the peace, the houses of any who were suspected of having any setting dogs or pheasant nets could be searched, and any such goods could be confiscated and destroyed.<sup>3</sup>

Charles II prohibited anyone "not having one hundred pounds per annum, or having ninety-nine year or longer leases, or not being an Esquire, or being of high degree, or not owning forests, parks, chase, warrens, etc." from possessing "any guns, bowes, grey-hounds, setting-dogs, ferrets, cony-doggs, . . . or lurchers," (a lurcher was a cross between a greyhound and a collie). Any unqualified person convicted of having greyhounds, setting dogs, or lurchers

during Queen Anne's reign was fined five pounds or imprisoned for three months for the first offense.<sup>4</sup>

Hunting handbooks and dog-training manuals found a ready audience amongst the English nobility. One of the bestsellers, George Turberville's Noble Arte of Venerie, or Hunting [London, 1576] contained, for the less literate members of the British aristocracy, over thirty plates showing harriers, retrievers, and mastiffs. Robert Pynson's engravings in the four tomes of Antibossicon, published in London in 1521, showed "mastiffs and unartfull bull dog [s]" in action. Gratius the Faliscian's Cynegeticon, or A Poem of Hunting, translated into English and illustrated by Christopher Wase, and published in London in 1654, is an extremely important work, for it tells of the various dogs found in the different parts of Britain.<sup>5</sup>

Dogs appear to have been so popular with the nobility that rules had to be passed to limit their presence at court. At one time, the king had to forbid courtiers from keeping "anie grey houndes mastickes houndes and other dogges in the court (other) then some small spanyells for ladies . soe as the premises . . . may be sweete wholesome cleane and well furnished as to a princes honor and state doth appteyne."<sup>6</sup>

The man who penned the lines "That which we call a rose/  
By any other name would smell as sweet" was probably much more familiar with doggy scents than floral essences. William



Figure 8. THE MASTIFF WAS "SERVICEABLE AGAINST THE FOXE AND THE BADGER," according to John Caius. George Turberville's 1575 engraving shows mastiffs setting out on the hunt. From Charles Berjeau, The Varieties of Dogs As They Are Found In Old Sculptures, Pictures, Engravings, and Books (London, 1863).

Shakespeare had a house in London near the Bear Garden and was probably a frequent spectator at the bear-baitings and bull-baitings held there, popular spectacles where dogs would be set loose upon hapless animals for entertainment. There are at least fifty-five references to dogs in the Bard's plays, including one in King Lear: "Mastiffe, Greyhound, mongrill grim,/ Hound or Spaniell, Brache, or Lym;/ Or Bob-taile tike, or trundle-taile . . ." and one in Macbeth: "Ay, in the catalogue ye goe for men;/ As Hounds, and Greyhounds, Mungrels, Spaniels, Curres / Shoughes, Water-Rugs. and Demy-wolves are 'clept/ All by the name of Dogges: the valued file/ Distinguishes the swift, the slow, the subtle,/ The Housekeeper, the Hunter, every one. . . ." All in all, Shakespeare mentions almost twenty different breeds: the greyhound, bloodhound, lym hound, brach, beagle, spaniel, water spaniel, curtail dog, setter, mastiff, bandog, shough, water-rug tike, trundle-tail, cur, and the mongrel.<sup>7</sup>

The most valuable contemporary work concerning the early English dog, however, is Of English Dogges..., written by Johannes Caius (or John Keyes, physician to Queen Elizabeth) and first published in London in 1570. Caius described twenty-eight different breeds of British dogs, considerably more than the number of all known native breeds then dispersed throughout North and South America. His book was the first attempt to study the canine in a logical manner, and it is basically organized around the different functions which



British dogs performed.

The first chapter of Caius's book characterizes the Generous Dogges or thoroughbreds. These consisted of Hounds, Hunters, and Hawkers and Fowlers, all used in hunting, and Delicate dogs. The three chief types of Hounds were the Harrier, Terrier, and Bloudhounde. The first possessed a keen sense of smell. The second was small enough to creep underground after the fox and badger. And the third was used extensively in the rugged border country between England and Scotland where it was trained to find straying livestock and to hunt pestiferous cattle thieves.<sup>8</sup>

Caius lists four different breeds of Hunters: the Gazehound, Greyhound, Lyemmer, and Tumbler. The sharp sight of the first made it an incomparable fox and hare hunter. The Greyhound, "a spare and bare kind of dogge," was famous for its swiftness and was used to start rabbits and deer. The Lyemmer or Leviner was a light hound which was a good smeller and almost as fast as the greyhound. And the Tumbler surpassed "all by craftes, fraudes, subtleties and deceiptes."<sup>9</sup>

Hawkers and Fowlers were also used in hunting. Caius divided these breeds into two categories. The first consisted of dogs which hunted birds on land, such as the Spaniell "with white skin and red spots" and the Setter which made "no noise with foot or tongue" but just sat when it discovered its quarry until its master came and cast his net. The second

category consisted of dogs which hunted birds in the water, such as the Water Spaniel or Finder, a rough, curly-haired duck-hunter "with a natural towardness for water" which also proved adept at retrieving stray arrows.<sup>10</sup>

The fourth type of throughbred which Caius described was the "Delicate, neat, and pretty kind," such as the Spaniel gentle or Comforter from Malta. Caius did not exactly approve of these "pretty wormes" which were "sought for to satisfie the delicateness of daintie dames and wanton womens wills, instruments of folly for them to play and dally withall, to tryfle away the treasure of time, to withdraw their mindes from more commendable exercises, and to content their corrupted concupiscences with vaine disport."<sup>11</sup>

Caius's second and third chapters discussed the two other groupings of English dogs besides the Generous Dogges or thoroughbreds. These were Country Dogges or "dogges of a course kind serving for many Necessary uses" and the degenerate "Curres of the mungrell and rascall sort." The Country Dogges consisted of the Shepherds Dogge and the Mastive or Bandog. The former breed had degenerated in size, for, according to Caius, the wolf menace had almost been completely eliminated in England by the time of Prince Edgar, and the latter will be discussed more fully below. Caius described several different breeds of the "rascall sort": the Warner, the Turnspete or Wappe, the Daunser, and supposed various half-breeds, such as the offspring of a bitch and a

wolf, a bitch and a fox, and a bear and a mastiff.

The Warner was "practically useless," barking only at day visitors. The Turnspete or Wappe, also known as a jackdog, was "in kitchen service excellent. For when any meate is to bee roasted they go into a wheel which they turning rounde about with the waight of their bodies, so diligently looke to their businesse, that no drudge nor skullion can doe the feate more cunningly." The Daunser was taught by "vagabundicall masters" "to daunce in measure at the musicall sounde of an instrument" and was the star of many a travelling show.<sup>12</sup>

The mastiff may not have been so light on its feet, but what it lacked in grace, it made up in strength, size, appearance, loyalty, and general utility. The breed survives today little changed from John Caius's day. The mastiff, apart from the taller but less massive Irish wolfhound, was, and always had been, the largest dog in the British Isles. With over one hundred and fifty pounds of flesh distributed over its two-and-a-half-foot-tall frame, the animal had been valued even before the Roman occupation as a practically unstoppable engine of war. An idea of the animal's imposing bulk can be gained from a 1637 van Dyck painting of the children of Charles I. The young Charles, Prince of Wales, a handsome seven year old, stands center stage, his hand resting nonchalantly on the muzzle of a seated mastiff, whose head reaches the boy's chest.<sup>13</sup>

Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century descriptions of the

beast show clearly why the English mastiff so often found itself drafted into military endeavors. The size of the animal was imposing, and its appearance was intimidating. Caius described the dog as "vaste, huge, stubborne, ougly, and eager, of a hevvy and burthenous body . . . terrible, and frightfull to beholde . . . and . . . he might give occasion of feare and terror by his bigge barking." A seventeenth-century description of the mastiff, or bandog, tells that it had a large and mighty body and a great and shrill voice. Its head was large, its eye sharp and fiery, its lips darkish, its mouth black and wide, and its lower jaw fat, with fangs protruding from each side of it. Its "countenance [was] like a Lion, [its] breast great, and shag hayrd. . . and [its] shoulders broad."<sup>14</sup>

The seventeenth-century poet Bargeus also described the mastiff as man's best fiend. From its broad, hanging ears, blunt snout, and loosely-drooping lips to its large feet and curved claws, the beast's fierce aspect showed it to be every bit a whelp of Cerberus's. "He fills the woods with his bark, and runs with sudden anger conceived in his ample chest. Then, too, his eyes gleam, and his neck swells up, and he often twists his tail round to his hairy back." Another later writer more generously presented the dog's countenance as "grave, stern, and even melancholy."<sup>15</sup>

The character of the English mastiff, as well as its overwhelming physical presence, befit it for fighting. One

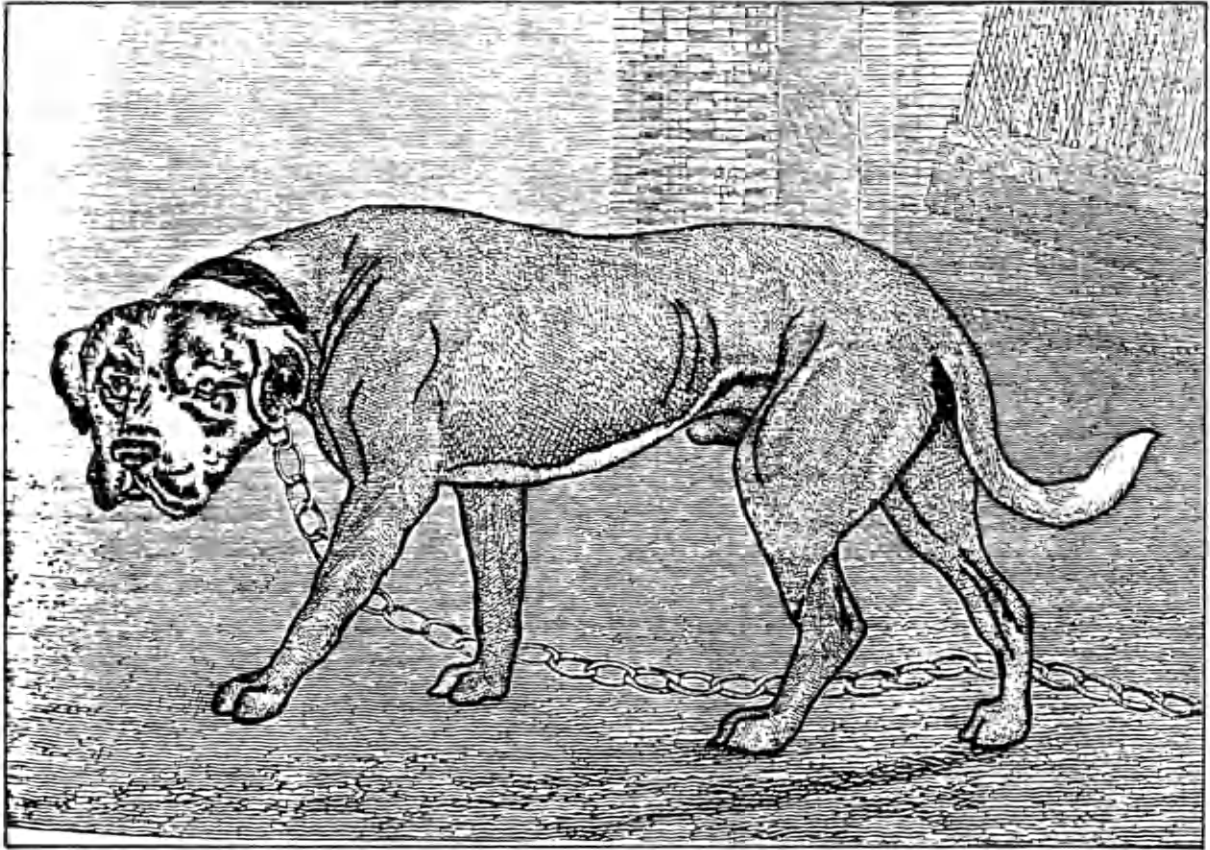


Figure 9. "THERE ARE MASTIFFS WITH SINISTER AND SCOWLING FACES, EXHIBITING THE FEROCITY OF THE COWARD AND THE BULLY," wrote Dalziel in 1888. This 1820 engraving of such a dog was published in the Sportsman's Repository and reprinted in Shaw's The Illustrated Book of the Dog.

commentator observed that "it is a kinde of dogge capable of courage, violent and valiaunt, striking colde feare into the harts of men, but standing in feare of no man, in so much that no weapons will make him shrinke nor abridge his boldness." This same writer added that mastiffs "have the understanding merit of loving their masters and hating their enemies. And so they guard them on journeys, defending them from thieves and keeping them safe and sound. . . ." Another chronicler described mastiffs "of such gelousie" as to their masters and their households that if "a stranger did imbrace or touch anie of them, the dogs would attack furiously and cause great mischief unless quickly controlled." This man himself once owned a mastiff "which would not suffer anie man to bring in his weapon further than my gate; neither those that were of my house to be touched in his presence."<sup>16</sup>

The mastiff, then, was huge, powerful, ugly, and strong-voiced, fearless, ferocious, intelligent, patient, and loyal. These qualities enabled the animal to assume many different functions beyond the pet role usually reserved for smaller dogs, Caius's "pretty little wormes." The mastiff was a total renaissance dog and had many aliases. As the "Bandog," "Dogge keeper," or Villatici, he served as a highly effective watchdog. As the "Butcher's Dogge," he kept watch over herds of cattle. As the "Dogge messinger," he acted as a courier, carrying letters in his leather collar. As "the Mooner," he "kept watch and ward at night bawing and wawing at

the moon." As the "Defending Dogge," he guarded his wounded master or warned him of nocturnal dangers. As "Aquarius, the water drawer," he turned wheels which pumped water out of wells and deep pits. And under the name of the "Tynckers Curre," the mastiff served as a patient beast of burden.<sup>17</sup>

But the mastiff was born to fight, and its masters were more than happy to indulge it in its belligerent bent. Caius wrote, "Our Englishe men (to th'intent that theyre dogges might be the more fell and fearce) assist nature with arte use and custome . . . and oftentimes they traine them up in fighting and wrestling with a man having for the safeguard of his lyfe, eyther a Pikestaffe, a clubbe, or a sworde and by using them to such exercises as these, theyre dogges become more sturdy and strong." Since classical times, well-trained English mastiffs had been noted the known-world over as effective war dogs. Gratius Faliscus wrote in the first century A.D.: "set aside the form and colour, which in British dogs are the worst points, but, when the tug of war and inbred courage spur them to their work, then is their mettle seen." The mastiffs showed their war-worthiness by guarding the horses and chariots of the Ancient Britons. Dogs which were taken prisoner by the Romans were brought back to Rome to fight in the Coliseum.<sup>18</sup>

In medieval times too the mastiff defended convoys and guarded baggage trains. Dogs resembling mastiffs were pictured on the Bayeux Tapestry which depicted the story of

William the Conqueror's invasion of England. Later, canines clad in mail with scythes and spikes attached were used to break up enemy cavalry charges. Loyal war dogs protected their wounded masters from plundering battlefield scavengers. In 1518 Henry VIII sent four hundred of the dogs to his ally Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor. These animals contributed to the rout of Francis I's French forces, which also included dogs, at the siege of Valencia. In the sixteenth century Ulysses Aldrovandus published a training manual for dogs and dog-handlers which was used extensively by Italian soldiers.<sup>19</sup>

The mastiff fought elsewhere than on European battlefields. Caius wrote that his countrymen "teach theyre dogges to baite the Beare, to baite the Bull and other such like cruell and bloody beastes . . . without any collar to defend theyre throtes." More than one seventeenth-century Englishman called for letting the mastiff "attack and stop huge bulls and bears, and stay them in fight with an inflicted wound," even though there was no strictly practical reason to teach the animal how to fight bears and bulls. Although bears still wandered the wilds of Britain, they could not be considered a dire threat to person or property. As a herd dog, a mastiff might occasionally have had to have dressed down unobliging bulls, but an owner would probably have wanted his livestock subdued harmlessly, and not made into ground beef by his eager dogs. Mastiffs were set on the bull and





RICHARD PYNSON 1521

Figure 10. A SIXTEENTH-CENTURY VIEW OF AN ENGLISH BEAR-  
BAITING. From Berjeau, The Varieties of Dogs...

bear merely to entertain Englishmen, from king and queen to commoner. <sup>20</sup>

By the beginning of the seventeenth century, when English plantations were first being successfully settled in North America, bear-baiting and bull-baiting had become a well established and exciting institution of popular entertainment. As early as Henry VIII's reign, Sunday bear-baitings had begun to draw people away from Sabbath church services. Sir Thomas More mentioned the collapse of a church roof during evensong one Sunday, but reported that few parishioners were injured because most of the congregation had been attending a local bear-baiting. Other voices were raised in protest. A poet of the age penned The Bear-Garden. Certain Rhimes against these Sports... because of "the foulness of these rude Sights" and because "these beastly Combats were usually performed on Sundays, and that so much Money was idly thrown away, that might have been better given to the Poor." <sup>21</sup>

Even Queen Elizabeth was fond of such amusements. Her noblemen would have a bear baited for her royal pleasure whenever she visited them. At Kenilworth on July 14, 1575, for instance, "a great sort of bandogs wher thear tyed in the outter Court, and thyrteen bears in the inner. . . . It waz a sport very pleazaunt of theez beasts: to see the bear with hiz pink nyez leering after hiz enemiez approach,. . . and when he waz lose, to shake hiz earz twyse or thryse with the blud and slaver about his fiznamy [physiognamy], was a

matter of goodly releef."<sup>22</sup>

Because of the "stout heart of good Queen Bess" and her fondness for the bloody animal combat, bear-baiting naturally came under royal patronage, and the procurement of mastiffs became more closely regulated by the Crown. A 1591 order of the Privy Council prohibited the exhibition of plays on Thursdays because on that day bears and bulls were traditionally baited. In 1573 Elizabeth appointed Sir John Darrington as "Chief master, ruler, and overseer of all and singular her majesty's games, of bears, and bulls, and mastive dogs, and mastive bitches." Ralph Bowes succeeded Darrington in 1586 and served in that position for ten years.<sup>23</sup>

By 1598 at least two permanent establishments in the city of London required a steady supply of battling beasts, ursine, bovine, and canine: Paris Garden and the Bear Garden at Bankside. Both of these contained cages for bears, pens for bulls, and kennels for dogs, as well as "Plots of Ground scaffolded round for the Beholders to stand safe." On contemporary maps of Elizabethan London, these bull-rings resemble theatres and are located along the Thames riverside.<sup>24</sup>

Visiting foreign dignitaries were often treated to the uniquely English spectacles of bear- and bull-baiting. In 1559 the French envoys "were entertained with the baiting of bears and bulls with English dogs. The Queen's Grace herself and the Ambassadors stood in the gallery looking on the

pastime till six at night." A few days later, the entourage took a barge to the Garden on Bank-side in Southwark where "The Captain, with an hundred of the Guard, kept room for them . . . that they might have place to see the sport." When the Frenchmen returned to France, they "carried with them many mastiffs given them, for hunting their wolves." <sup>25</sup>

In 1586 the Danish ambassador was entertained at Greenwich by battling bears and bitches. "[U]pon a green, verie spacious and large, where thousands might stand and behold with good contentment, there beare-bating and bull-bating . . . were exhibited . . . whereat it cannot be spoken of what pleasure the people took." The Spanish envoy in 1623 could not bear the thought of returning to his native land without first witnessing the English style of bull-fighting. One writer reported that "he was much delighted in bear-baiting. He was the last week at Paris-Garden, where they showed him all the pleasure they could both with bull, bear, and horse, besides jackanapes [apes], and then turned a white bear into the Thames, where the dogs baited him swimming; which was the best sport of all." <sup>26</sup>

Bear-baiting's popularity did not end with the death of Elizabeth. An undated early seventeenth-century broadside, probably from the reign of James I, advertised: "Tomorrow being Thursdaie, shal be seen at the bear-garden at Bank-side, a great match plaid by the gamesters of Essex, who hath

challenged all comers whatsoever, to plaie 5 dogges at the single beare, for 5 pounds; and also to wearie a bull dead at the stake." For the added viewing pleasure of the audience, there was also to be "sport with the horse and ape, and whipping of the blind bear." Of course, the notice closed with "VIVAT REX," not vivat canis nor vivat ursa.<sup>27</sup>

When James I came to the throne in 1603, he appointed Sir William Steward, or Stuart, to the post of "master of his Majestie's Games of Beeres, Bulls, and Dogges." The patent granted Steward the sole privilege of obtaining dogs, bears, bulls, and any other "meete and convenient" beasts "at and for such reasonable prices as our said servaunte . . . can agree with the owner or owners of the beares and bulls." Steward was also bestowed with the power "to stay, or cause to be stayed, at . . . his discretions, all and every such mastiffe dogges and bitches as . . . he shall fortune at any time hereafter to take or fynde goinge, passinge or conveyinge, or to be conveyed in any wise into any parts of beyond the seas without our special warrant and commission for conveyinge of the same."<sup>28</sup>

Edward Alleyn, proprietor of the Fortune Playhouse on Whitecross Street in London and co-owner with Philip Henslow of the Bear-garden at Bankside, purchased the office from Steward for 450 pounds. This was a wise investment for a consummate show business promoter, but it unexpectedly turned sour when James prohibited bears and bulls from being baited

on Sundays. Such a move cut into his profits so much that Alleyne was forced to petition the King in 1604 for relief.<sup>29</sup>

Bear-baiting and bull-baiting were still considered polite diversions in the middle of the seventeenth century. But by the 1660s more reform-minded citizens viewed the amusements with growing distaste. Perhaps this was tied to the earlier rise of Puritanism and the growing influence of the new middle-class morality. In 1666 Pepys called bear-baiting "a rude and nasty pleasure," and complained in his diary of Bear-garden spectators who had no class. "We had a great many hectors in the same box with us, and one very fine went into the pit, and played his dog for a wager, which was a strange sport for a gentleman." A few years later, John Evelyn saw "those butcherly sports" as "barbarous cruelties," and he was "most heartily weary of the rude and dirty pastime."<sup>30</sup>

The monopolistic nature of the king's dog decrees and their probable abuse by despotic royal deputies was also responsible for London bear-baiting's growing disrepute. Charles II granted to Sir Sanders Duncombe the "sole practising and profit of the fighting and combating of wild and domestic beasts within the realm of England." As were his predecessors, Duncombe was given the right to purchase at a "reasonable price" any dog whatsoever in Britain, whether or not its owner wished to part with it. His efforts undoubtedly met with much resistance, for few Englishmen were willing to

sell at any price their masterful mastiff watchdogs and loyal companions. The fact that the dogs were destined for the bloody London bear-gardens from which few returned unbutchered made the owners more obstinately opposed to dealing with the dog collectors.<sup>31</sup>

James I's patent to Alleyn and Henslowe prohibited all other Englishmen from transporting mastiff dogs and bitches across the seas without written royal permission. In 1631 Charles I extended this ban to include hounds, beagles, and hunting dogs. But no evidence has been found to suggest that the law was ever successfully enforced. For it did not take long for New World colonists to discover how necessary mastiffs and other dogs were in helping to subdue the North American wilderness. Not only was there plenty of game to be taken for food, but there were also bears and wolves in abundance which had to be eliminated. The mastiffs, however, were soon desperately needed to defend the settlers from a more fierce and cunning foe. As Englishmen at home would not let a law which had at heart only royal amusement take their pets from them, neither would Anglo-Americans allow the same law to stand in the way of their wresting of America from the native Americans.<sup>32</sup>

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Ivor Noël Hume, A Guide to the Artifacts of Colonial America (New York, 1980), pp. 38-39. The following art books concern themselves with seventeenth-century Dutch painting, and on their pages can be found many paintings of dogs: Christopher Brown, Carel Fabritius (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1981) and Van Dyck (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1982); Bruno Bushart, Rudiger Klessmann, Ann Tzeutschler, and Louise S. Richards, Johann Liss: An Exhibition Catalogue (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1976); Lawrence Gowing, Vermeer (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1970); Hans Koningsberger, The World of Vermeer, 1632-1675 (New York: Time, Inc., 1967); Gregory Martin, National Gallery, London: Dutch Painting (Munich: Knorr and Hirth Verlag GMBH, 1971); J.M. Nash, The Age of Rembrandt and Vermeer: Dutch Painting in the Seventeenth Century (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972); Franklin W. Robinson, Dutch Life in the Golden Century (St. Petersburg, Florida: Museum of Fine Arts of St. Petersburg, Inc., 1975); Leonard J. Slatkes, Vermeer and His Contemporaries (New York: Abbeville Press, Publishers, 1981); and John Walsh, Jr. and Cynthia P. Schneider, A Mirror of Nature: Dutch Paintings From the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Edward William Carter (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1981).

<sup>2</sup> Edward C. Ash, Dogs: Their History and Development, 2 vols. (London, 1927), 1:500, 670.

<sup>3</sup> George R. Jesse, Researches into the History of the British Dog, 2 vols. (London, 1866), 2:307.

<sup>4</sup> Jesse, Researches, 2:308.

<sup>5</sup> "Besides our Mastiffe which seems to be . . . a native of England; we train up most excellent Grey-hounds (which seem to have been brought hither by the Gauls) in our open champaines. Then for hounds, the West Country, Cheshire and Lancashire . . . breed our Slow-hound; which is a large, great dog, tall and heavy. Then Worcestershire, Bedfordshire and many well mixt soiles . . . produce a middle-siz'd dog of a more nimble composure. . . . Lastly, Yorkshire, Cumberland, and Northumberland . . . breed the



light, nimble, swift, slender Fleet-hound. . . . After all of these the little Beagle is attributed to our Country. . . . Only the fighting Dogs seem to have been known to the antient Authors. . . ." in Jesse, Researches, 2:342-343.

<sup>6</sup> Harley, Manuscript 610, folio 69, quoted in Ash, Dogs, 1:676.

<sup>7</sup> Jesse, Researches, 2:201, 266-267; William Shakespeare, King Lear, Act III, scene vi, lines 67-69 and Macbeth, Act III, scene i, lines 93-98. Edmund Spencer's The Faerie Queene also contains some refererences to the mastiff bandog, hound, limehound, spaniel, shepards cur and cur.

<sup>8</sup> Johannes Caius, Of English Dogges... (London, 1576), pp. 1-7; see also Jesse, Researches, 2:233.

<sup>9</sup> Caius, Of English Dogges..., pp. 7-14.

<sup>10</sup> Caius, Of English Dogges..., pp. 14-21.

<sup>11</sup> Caius, Of English Dogges..., pp. 21-22. His tirade against foo-foo dogs continues for almost another page: "These puppies the smaller they be, the more meete play fellowes for mising mistresses to bear in their bosoms, to keepe company withal in their chambers, to succour with sleepe in bed, and nourishe with meate at bourde, to lay in their lappes, and licke their lippes as they ryde in their waggons and good reason it should be so, for courseness with fyneness hath no fellowship, but featness with neatness hath neighbourhood enough. . . . [T]hese kind of people . . . delight more in dogges that are deprived of all possibility of reason, then they doo in children."

<sup>12</sup> Caius, Of English Dogges..., pp. 23, 34-38.

<sup>13</sup> Apparently, the breed underwent minor changes in the course of the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries and almost faced extinction several times in the twentieth century. H.D. Kingdon wrote on p. 12 of The Old English Mastiff (London, 1873) that in the 1870s there were "only four ancient seats of the mastiff in his purity." Other mastiffs evidently were interbred with different breeds in order to increase their size. Marie Moore quotes from James Watson's 1906 The Dog Book in her How To Raise and Train A Mastiff (Jersey City, N.J., 1964), p. 18, that "the mastiff has been elevated to the dog he became twenty years ago [1886]" by crosses with Great Danes or St. Bernards. An 1888 quotation from a Mr. Dalziel's work is found in volume 1, page 514 of Ash's Dogs: "In recent years a desire for immense bulk seems

to have led exhibitors of mastiffs to obtain by fleshiness rather than increase of frame . . . and so overfat are some mastiffs when exhibited that, far from suggesting that they are a race of dogs of war, their appearance shows that they would be of use only to the commissariat department of an army when besieged." Ash shows that two- and three-year-old mastiff showdogs of the 1880s weighed in at one hundred and eighty pounds and were as tall as thirty-one and a half inches. He claims that their near extinction during World War I was caused by the difficulty of obtaining sufficient food (1:515). Another reason could be because many served and died as auxiliaries to the British armies on the French battlefields. The Allies also depended upon mastiffs and other breeds as guard dogs, sentries, and patrol dogs during World War II: see Thomas Young, Dogs For Democracy (New York, 1944). Technical Manual No. 10-396 issued by the U.S. Quartermaster Corps of the U.S. Army (Washington, D.C., 1943) stated that a fit Bull Mastiff recruit would be between twenty-four and twenty-seven inches tall and would range from one hundred to one hundred and fifteen pounds in weight (p. 20). In examining the minutes of the Old English Mastiff Club, Moore discovered that only twenty thoroughbred mastiffs could be found in Great Britain in October 1946. Most of these were too old for breeding. By 1948, there were only seven surviving British mastiffs. In America, the breed was also nearly extinct, and the few living specimens were of such a poor quality that the secretary of the mastiff club did not bother to buy any for breeding when she visited the U.S. Two puppies were sent to the club from Victoria, British Columbia in 1948, and the issue from this couple numbered fifteen by 1949 and fifty by 1950 (p. 23). Tudor King, one of the most famous of the mastiff showdogs of the 1970s, tipped the scales at two hundred and fifteen pounds (p. 26).

<sup>14</sup>Caius, Of English Dogges..., pp. 23-26; Barnaby Googe's 1631 translation of Conrad Heresbatch's Whole Art of Husbandry, cited in Jesse, Researches, 2:340-341.

<sup>15</sup>Bargeus cited in Ash, Dogs, 1:502; William C.L. Martin, The History of the Dog, (London, 1845), p. 208.

<sup>16</sup>Caius, Of English Dogges..., p. 25; John Caius to Conrad Gesner, 1570, cited in Ash, Dogs, 1:80; William Harrison, Description of England [1586] also cited in Ash, Dogs, 1:104. In The History of the Dog, Martin attributes other positive human quality traits to the mastiff: "Conscious of their great power, these dogs are quiet, and bear the petty annoyances of snarling curs with cool indifference; but once roused to combat, they become terrible" (p. 208).

<sup>17</sup>Caius, Of English Dogges..., pp. 26-30, 32-33.

<sup>18</sup>Caius, Of English Dogges..., pp. 26; Faliscus quoted in Jesse, Researches, 1:346; Moore, How To Raise And Train A Mastiff, p 13.

<sup>19</sup>Ash, Dogs, 1:502; E.H. Richardson, War, Police, and Watch Dogs (London, 1910), p. 3; H.D. Kingdon told the story on pp. 12-14 of The Old English Mastiff behind the stained glass "portrait" of Sir Percy Legh of Lyme Hall [near Stockport in Cheshire, seat of one of the few remaining pure mastiff bloodlines]. . . who fought at Agincourt [in 1415], and also the likeness of the mastiff bitch, who is alleged to have defended him from the assaults of camp marauders as he lay bleeding on the field;" John Grier Varner and Jeannette Johnson Varner, Dogs of the Conquest (Norman, Oklahoma, 1983), p. 34; Ash, Dogs, 1:665.

<sup>20</sup>Caius, Of English Dogges..., p. 27; Ash, Dogs, 1:502.

<sup>21</sup>Sir Thomas More's folio, p. 87, cited in Jesse, Researches, 2:146-147; Stowe, Survey of London [1598], quoted on 2:195.

<sup>22</sup>Jesse, Researches, 2:193-194; Laneham states that "Elizabeth and her sister were recreated with a grand exhibition of bear-baiting" at Hatfield House "with which their Highnesses were right well content," cited on 2:193.

<sup>23</sup>Jesse, Researches, 2:192, 198.

<sup>24</sup>Stow's Survey of London cited in Jesse, Researches, 2:194; see also 2:195 and Paul Hentzner, A Journey into England [1598] quoted on 2:207.

<sup>25</sup>Nichols's Progresses cited in Jesse, Researches, 2:191-193.

<sup>26</sup>Jesse, Researches, 2:208.

<sup>27</sup>Jesse. Researches, 2:196.

<sup>28</sup>Jesse, Researches, 2:201-202.

<sup>29</sup>The petition read in part: "And whereas in respecte of the great charge that the keping of the saide game contenevally requireth, and also the smalness of the fee (16 d a day), in the late quenes tyme fre liberties was permitted

with out restraunte to bayght them, which now is tacken away frome us, especiallye one the sondayes in the after none after devine service, which was the cheffest meanes and benyfite to the place; and in the tyme of the sicknes we have bene tetrayned many tymes one the workey days. . . . And whereas ther ar divers vagrantes and persones of losse and idell liffe, that usualley wandreth through the countreyes with beares and bulles with out any lycence, and for owght we know serveinge no man, spoyllinge and kyllinge dogs for that game, so that your Majestie cane not be served but by great charges to us, fetchinge them very fare, which is directly contrary to a statute made in that behalfe," in Jesse, Researches, 2:198-200.

<sup>30</sup> Pepys Diary, 14 August 1666 cited in Jesse, Researches, 2:253; John Evelyn, Memoirs, 16 June 1670 quoted in Ash, Dogs, 1:504.

<sup>31</sup> Pat. 14, Car. II, pt. 4 Oct. 11, cited in Jesse, Researches, 2:354; see also 2:201-202.

<sup>32</sup> An. 7, Car. I, cited in Jesse, Researches, 2:311-312: "Wee do hereby straightly charge, prohibit, and forbid, that noe person or persons whatsoever . . . doe at any time or times hereafter, carry over, convey and transport, or cause to be so carried over, conveyed or transported out of this Realme . . . any Hounds, Beagles, or other kind of hunting Doggs . . . without the license and consent of the masters of the hounds under their or some or one of their Hands and Seales in writing, thereunto first had and obtained, upon pain of our high Indignation and displeasure, and such Paines, Penalties, Punishments and Imprisorments, as by the Lawes and Statutes of this Realme can or may be inflicted upon the offenders for contempt of our Royall command."

### CHAPTER III

#### TEACHING OLD DOGS NEW TRICKS: MAD-DOGS AND ENGLISHMEN ON THE COLONIAL AMERICAN FRONTIER

By the time New England and Virginia became going concerns in the first half of the seventeenth century, the English Mastiff had gained fame throughout Britain for its bear-baiting and bull-fighting, and earlier, for its valorous exploits on ancient and medieval battlefields. English colonists in North America, in sore need of a way to neutralize the deadly effectiveness of Indian guerrilla warfare, recalled the earlier employment of English war dogs. Anglo-Americans also soon became aware that Spanish conquistadors had used the English mastiffs extensively against the natives of the New World.

With these precedents to guide them, English colonists in the seventeenth century revived the use of dogs as irregular auxiliary troops. But as time passed, and as the Indians acquired firearms of their own through trade, diplomacy, and pillage, dogs were effectively used militarily only to track the enemy, and not to intimidate him. Just as in medieval European warfare, mastiffs in America had been made obsolete as effective military machines by the use of firearms. One

blast from a matchlock or trade musket could dispatch the fiercest of mastiffs long before it lunged forward in a final fury of flesh and fangs. Bloodhounds, and other tracking dogs then became the most important breeds of dog on the American frontier.

Despite laws to the contrary, English dogs had accompanied their masters to the New World from the beginning of English exploration of North America. But initially the dogs were not necessarily used there as military instruments. Richard Hakluyt was one of the first Englishmen to recommend transporting canines to the new colonies. He advised in his 1584 Discourse on Western Planting that greyhounds would be needed in America to kill deer, bloodhounds to recover hurt game, and mastiffs "to kill heavie beastes of ravyne and for night watches." Martin Pring, as seen above, in 1603 became the first of his countrymen to witness the practical effects of the mastiffs upon the behavior of native Americans, who were soon to be considered the heaviest ravaging beasts to stalk the forest primeval. But Pring's experiences did not become widely known in Britain until Samuel Purchas published Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes in London in 1625.<sup>1</sup>

Spanish accounts of the canine conquistadors of New Spain, however, had been translated into English long before that. The Dominican friar, and later Bishop, Bartolome de Las Casas printed his Brevissima Relacion de la Destroccion de las

Indias in 1551. This famous account of Spanish atrocities in Mexico and Latin America sought to shock Spanish officialdom into radical corrective action. In 1583 an English version appeared in London under the title The Spanish Colonie, or Brief Chronicle of the Actes and Gestes of the Spaniards in the West Indies. Richard Hakluyt referred to the work in his Discourse Concerning Western Planting, and it was familiar to Walter Raleigh, Thomas Gage, Daniel Neal, and other pamphleteers of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century. Samuel Purchas condensed Las Casas's work and made it widely available in his popular Hakluytus Posthumus.... Other translations of Las Casas appeared in England during conflicts with Spain, and the work became the cornerstone of the Black Legend, the English propagandized view of Spanish colonization. John Phillips's definitive translation was published in 1656 during Cromwell's "Western Design," and was entitled Tears of the Indians.<sup>2</sup>

Accounts by other Spaniards of their New World experiences also found their way into the English language. Purchas condensed the works of Martyr, Gomara, and Zarate as well as that of Las Casas in his 1625 collection. Narratives by Lopez Vas and Father Jeronimo Benzos were also translated into English. These Spanish accounts did not balk at disclosing the unsavory aspects of the Spanish Conquest. They all discussed the prominent and inhumane role which mastiffs and other dogs played in subduing the native Americans. The

translator who printed A True Discourse of the Armie under the pseudonym of Daniel Archdeacon warned of the approaching Spanish Armada: "As the 'Spanish Nimrod' had hunted men with dogs in the Indies, so would he hunt Englishmen if given the opportunity." The man-eating dogs of the Spanish were recalled by English propagandists again and again to prove charges ranging from cowardice to barbarity.<sup>3</sup>

Christopher Columbus himself was the first European to discover how helpful the English Mastiff would prove in exploring and conquering the New World. He somehow acquired a pack of twenty purebred English Mastiffs and greyhounds for his second voyage to the West Indies in September 1493. Supposedly the dogs were to be used only as tasters to protect Columbus and his men from any poisonous foods in the strange new lands. But the animals were immediately used against the hostile natives. On May 5, 1494, his three Spanish ships landed on Jamaica to take on wood and water. The armed Indians on shore fled in terror after being fired upon with crossbows, and they were pursued by a great dog that tore into them and caused them much harm. This was the first recorded incident in which a dog served a military purpose in the New World.<sup>4</sup>

On Hispaniola the Indians hoped to deter the invaders by planting no more maize, and many of Columbus's men were consequently incapacitated by hunger. On March 27, 1495, the Spaniards could field only two hundred soldiers for the first



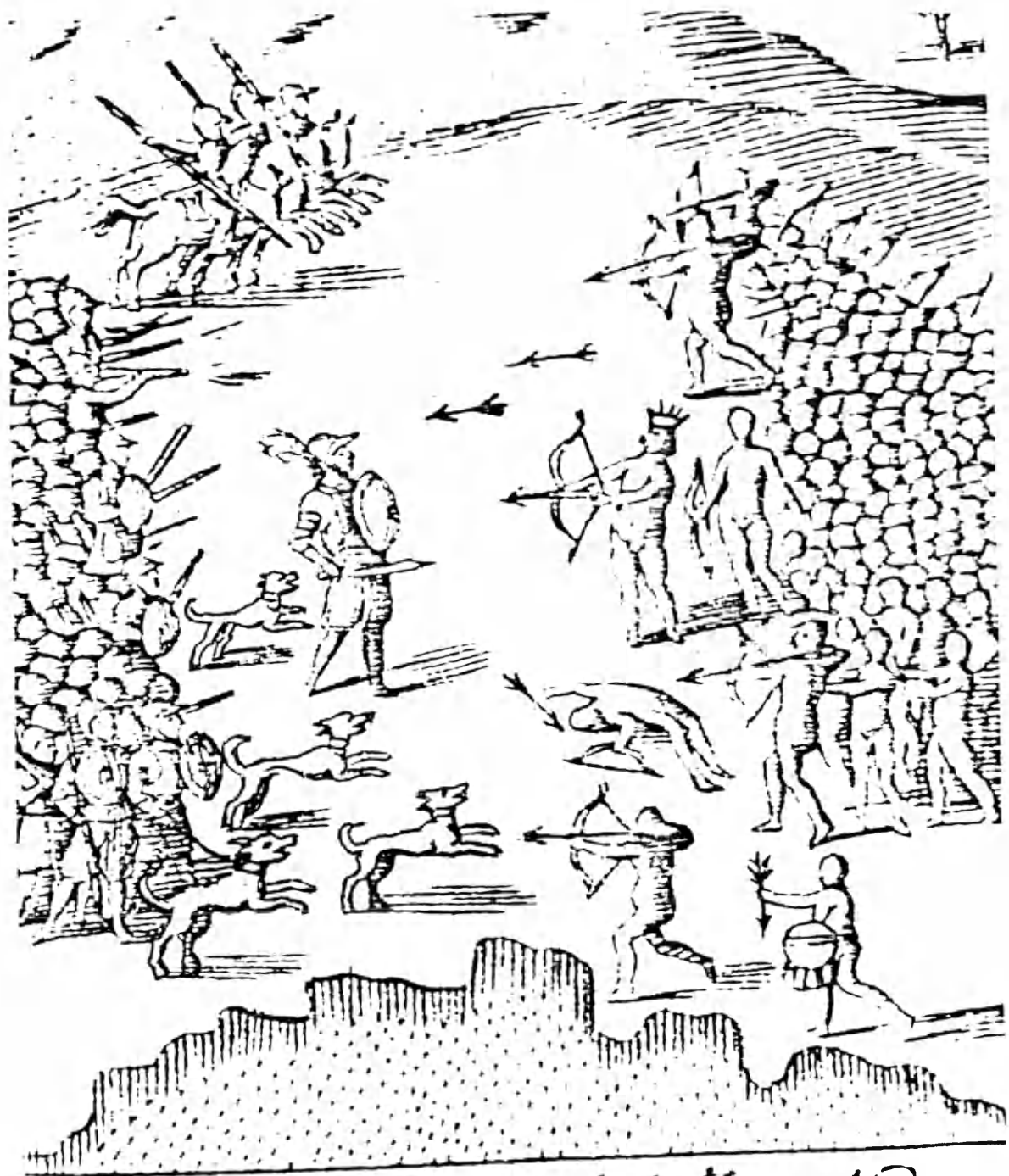


Figure 11. MASTIFFS PROVED TO BE HIGHLY EFFECTIVE WEAPONS AGAINST NATIVE AMERICAN TROOPS, as the Spaniards discovered in the late fifteenth century. This dogging, which took place in Puerto Rico, was printed in the Dutch translation of Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas, Historia general de los castellanos en las islas y tierra firme del Mar Oceano (Leyden, 1706). From John and Jeannette Varner, Dogs of the Conquest (Norman, Oklahoma, 1983).

pitched battle between Europeans and Indians. Twenty-five horses and twenty dogs, however, improved the odds in favor of the Spanish at the Battle of the Vega Real. On command, "the infuriated hounds hurled themselves at the Indians' naked bodies, grabbed them by their bellies and throats, threw them to the ground, disembowelled them, and ripped them to pieces." Las Casas probably exaggerated when he claimed that in one hour each dog tore to shreds one hundred Indians. But the Spaniards were shown how effectively the mastiffs could be employed in a formal battle against lightly-armed and unarmored troops.<sup>5</sup>

One Spanish captain praised his mastiff's battle prowess displayed in a 1539 encounter with the natives of Mexico. Francis de Ulloa and his men were besieged by superior forces. "We had no succour on any side; for Berecillo our Mastive-dogge which should have aided us was grievously wounded with three arrows. . . . In the first assault when the Indians came upon us . . . he behaved himselfe very well, & greatly aided us; for he set upon them, and put 8 or 10 of them out of array, & made them run away, leaving many arrows behind them." Berecillo apparently recovered from his wounds, for a year later de Ulloa reported that "our mastive dogge Berecillo overtooke one of them not farre from us . . . and pulled him downe, having bitten him cruelly . . . and held him till we had come."<sup>6</sup>

The natives soon realized that their traditional strategy



*La Gran batalla q̄ tubo el Alm<sup>te</sup> con el Rey  
Guarionex. y cien mil yndios en la Vega Real*

Figure 12. DOGS AT THE GREAT BATTLE BETWEEN THE ADMIRAL AND THE CACIQUE GUARIONEX ON THE VEGA REAL. From Herrera, Historia general (1726 edition), in Varner, Dogs of the Conquest.

of waging war, arrayed in battle order on open fields, was hopeless against the Spanish invaders with their horses, cannons, guns, and dogs. The surviving Indians then took to the woods, melting into the jungles of Central and South America. They could not elude the Spanish dogs, however, who had then been trained to hunt them down. Hounds, of course, had always been used extensively in the chase in Europe and in America to capture animals for food or sport. The actions of the conquistadors show that they merely considered the Indian as just another beast to be hunted with dogs. Francis de Ulloa described the effectiveness of the mastiffs chasing human prey: "We stayed untill noone betweene certaine secret wayes, and could never see or descrie any one Indian: wherefore wee returned to our ships, with two mastive-dogs which we caried with us to catch the Indians with more ease: and in our returne we found two Indians hidden in certaine thickets."<sup>7</sup>

Pedro Simon noted in 1544 that by then dogs had become the very nerve of the Spanish Conquest. Not only were mastiffs used to keep continual watch over Spanish settlements to prevent surprise night attacks, but they were employed against the Indians in battle and in the chase. The dogs also served to intimidate enslaved Indians and to hold them in thrall. On occasion, dogs were set upon natives to punish apostasy, homosexuality, and other "pagan" practices. And the Spaniards revived the barbaric Ancient Roman practice of



Figure 13. BALBOA DOGS A CHIEF AND HIS COURTIER  
ACCUSED OF PRACTICING SODOMY in a 1595 engraving  
by Theodore de Bry. From Charles L.G. Anderson,  
Life and Letters of Vasco Nunez de Balboa, in  
Varner, Dogs of the Conquest.



Figure 14. AN AZTEC SUBJECTED TO CANINE AND OTHER  
TORTURES to force him to reveal the location of his  
gold. From Las Casas, Narratio, in Varner, Dogs of  
the Conquest.

gladitorial combat between man and dog. Mastiffs and natives provided entertainment for the invaders by participating, the former eagerly and the latter not so eagerly, in manhunts. Spanish Indian-baiting in the New World demonstrates that the invaders were at least as bloodthirsty and barbaric as the indigenous tribes have traditionally been pictured.<sup>8</sup>

At the outset of the British experience in North America, Englishmen and their dogs did not treat the natives as abusively as did the Spanish, chiefly because they were in no position to do so. Both master and mastiff suffered much privation and many hardships in the early English exploration of Virginia. Two mastiffs escorted Ralph Lane's 1585-1586 expedition, only to become, when the company's provisions gave out, the main ingredient of a sassafras-seasoned pottage. On May 29, 1607, Christopher Newport's band was approached by hostiles who dared not to approach within musket-shot. The only English casualty was a dog which was perhaps too eager for a fight and which strayed too far from its masters. And during the "Starving Time" in Jamestown under the administration of Sir Thomas Smith, dog-pottage again became the soup-du-jour.<sup>9</sup>

The first English settlers in Virginia proved singularly unable to provide for themselves, and they soon discovered

that man could not live on dog alone. The Jamestown policy-makers attempted to carry on good relations with the natives who possessed surpluses of maize and other crops. Captain John Smith presented a white greyhound as a gift to Powhatan, which the chieftain "kindly accepted . . . with a publicke confirmation of a perpetuall league and friendship." The Indian was not aware of the significance of the greyhound as an English status symbol, but he treasured the noble beast for its own sake. The strong, sleek body of the pure white animal starkly contrasted the smaller, shaggy, piebald native canines. Powhatan treated the dog like a royal brother feeding it the same princely foods which he himself ate.<sup>10</sup>

As long as the Indians continued to share the fruits of their labors with the newcomers, Virginian officials did not wish to bite the hands that fed them and tried to appease the natives in most things. Many of George Thorpe's countrymen, however, felt that the Deputy to the College Lands had gone too far. When the Indians complained to him that the mastiffs terrified them, he had some of the dogs slain, to the great displeasure of their owners. And he would have gelded the remaining ones to have made them more gentle if he had had his way.<sup>11</sup>

The Indians desired to gain possession of European firearms in order to aid them in hunting and to force the English to treat them with more respect, and presumably they also coveted the powerful English dogs for the same reasons.

But Jamestown's leaders were not about to let their major instruments of deterrence fall into native hands. In August of 1619 the Virginia Assembly declared "That no man shall sell or give any of the greater hounds to the Indians, or any English dog of quality, as a mastiff, greyhound, bloodhound, land or water spaniel, or any other dog or bitch whatsoever, of the English race, upon pain of forfeiting 5 s sterling." But many of the dogs, natural rovers then as now, left the English settlements to range the woods, interbreeding with the native canines. They provided the natives with intimidating dogs of their own, thus limiting the initial English advantages in dogpower.<sup>12</sup>

Unlike the Spanish dogs in Latin America, the English Mastiff served basically in a defensive capacity in the Virginia colony, as a deterrence against Indian attack. Why did the Indian uprising of March 22, 1622 succeed despite the Virginian mastiffs? Pushed beyond the limits of endurance by English presumption and abuses, the natives, posing as friendly visitors, entered the Virginia settlements early in the morning and attacked the unsuspecting colonists. One of the first of the many English fatalities was George Thorpe. Perhaps the mastiffs, like their masters, had become accustomed to the presence of the Indians and no longer considered them as hostiles. Or maybe there were not enough dogs to effectively protect the settlers, the mastiff population not having yet recovered from Thorpe's purge.



Only after the uprising, and in response to it, did Virginians seriously undertake to increase the number of dogs in the colony. In 1624 George Wyatt advised his son, Governor Francis Wyatt, on strategy and policy and mentioned the importance of having mastiff watchdogs. "Each hows[e] . . . might have a good Mastive or Curst Cur (otherwise servisable) tied up in the Day and let l[o]ose in the Nights to be a good watch and guard to them, and more terror to this kind of Enimie, by their more fiersnes[s] against al[l] night evel." The dogs, however, also proved a liability to settlers facing chronic food shortages. William Rowlsley wrote home from James City to his brother on April 3, 1623, telling of the great loss of cattle, "for doggs have eaten in this winter more flesh than the men."<sup>13</sup>

The Virginians felt that the apparent treachery of the Indians justified any measures to eliminate the threat of another attack. John Smith believed that the "massacre" would benefit "the Plantation, because now we have just cause to destroy them [the Indians] by all meanes possible. . . . [N]ow we may have their owne plaine fields, . . . besides it is more easie to civilize them by conquest then faire meanes. . . . And you have twenty examples of the Spaniards how they got the West-Indies, . . . this will make us more circumspect, and be an example to posteritie." Edward Waterhouse claimed that the miscreants had forfeited all claims to humanity by clothing themselves in a mantle of

unnatural brutishness.<sup>14</sup>

Waterhouse and others cried bloody havoc and called for letting loose the dogs of war. The English mustered their canine corps with relish and advocated waging total war against the native Americans. "Victorie of them may bee gained many waies; by force, by surprize, by famine in burning their Corne . . . by assailing them in their huntings . . . by pursuing them with our horses and blood-Hounds to draw after them, and Mastives to teare them." In employing canine deterrents for the first time, the Jamestowners either conveniently forgot about previous English censures of earlier Spanish doggings, or they excused their actions by claiming that their enemy was far from helpless. The 1622 uprising demonstrated not only that, but also that the Indians had no desire to fight a "civilized" war. Thus, few Virginians felt constrained by moral obligations and supported many unchristian and inhumane practices.<sup>15</sup>

Like the Virginians, the Puritan settlers of the New England colonies also found themselves advocating brutal canine measures in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. But New England canines were not at first used against the natives. Dogs had accompanied the Pilgrims on the Mayflower and served them in Plymouth as pets and hunting companions.

Court records and other documents of the Massachusetts Bay settlements show that dogs were an inseparable part of early New England society. Mastiffs and other hunting dogs helped to eliminate the wolf menace in the northern colonies. Once Anglo-Indian relations began to deteriorate, however, the dogs became more valued for their defensive advantages. Finally, the New England settlers soon found themselves following Virginia's "example to posteritie," as events and conditions forced them too to let loose their dogs of war. They too justified their actions by claiming that the Indians struck first, and did so in a particularly "uncivilized" manner.

Two dogs, a mastiff and a spaniel, crossed the Atlantic with the Pilgrims on the Mayflower in 1620. These canine Separatists caused more trouble for their masters than they were worth. John Goodman and Peter Browne went for a walk with them in Plymouth after dinner one day. The dogs soon caught the scent of a deer and bounded off into the deep woods, Browne and Goodman at their heels. The little group soon became lost in the forest and spent a long and terrifying night in the frozen wilderness. On January 19, 1621, Goodman, recovering from frostbite, took a morning constitutional, accompanied by the spaniel, in order to exercise his aching legs. This time the dog met up with two wolves which began to chase him, and he "ran to him [Goodman] and betwixt his legs for succor. . . . [Goodman] had nothing with which to protect himself, but grabbed a stick and brandished it

valiantly, and they presently ran both away."<sup>16</sup>

Although spaniels were not very effective wolf-hunters, larger hounds such as mastiffs were, and were highly valued because of it. In 1637 John Sweete was presented to a Boston grand jury, fined five pounds and imprisoned "during the pleasure of the Courte . . . for shooting a wolfe dog of Colonell Endecots in Colonell Endecots owne yard." The Massachusetts Bay Colony passed a law in 1648 granting the selectmen of every town the power "to purchase or p[ro]cure of the townes stock so many hounds as they thinke meete, & to impose the keeping of them on such as they thinke fit[t]est, that so all meanes may be imp[ro]ved for the destruction of wolves."<sup>17</sup>

Once fighting erupted along the frontier, dogs become indispensable to the English, as to the Indian, as watchdogs and guard dogs. Fernando Gorges's Damariscove, a year-round fishing settlement in Maine, was palisaded and "armed with a cannon, some smaller pieces, and ten good dogs" as early as 1622. In the Connecticut settlements, dogs accompanied men whenever they left the protective walls of their garrisons in order to gather wood or harvest crops. The town of New Haven voted to purchase mastiffs from Stratford or Long Island in 1656. Local dogs were temporarily ordered on guard duty until the new recruits arrived. Mary Rowlandson reported that she had "six stout Dogs" defending her garrison in Lancaster, Massachusetts in February 1676, which were, "if any Indian had

come to the door, . . . ready to fly upon him and tear him down."<sup>18</sup>

The nature of the forest-fighting of the Pequot War in the mid-1630s and of King Philip's War in the 1670s necessitated new military techniques on the part of the New Englanders. Benjamin Church and others realized that traditional European methods of warfare would have to be abandoned in order to wage successful war against Indian guerillas. The settlers would have to answer the Indians' hit-and-run raids with sorties of their own, following native American raiders back to their wilderness bases of operation. Only then could they surprise the fleeing warriors, free captured English noncombatants, and disrupt future Indian attacks.<sup>19</sup>

William Hubbard voiced the fears of many a Massachusetts soldier when he wrote "It is ill fighting with a wild Beast in his own Den." During King Philip's War, Indian-shy Plymouth troops "were not willing to run into the Mire and Dirt after them [the Indians] in a dark Swamp, being taught by late Experience how dangerous it is to fight in such dismal Woods, when their Eyes were muffled with the Leaves, and their Arms pinioned with the thick Boughs of the Trees, as their Feet were continually shackled with the roots spreading every way in those boggy Woods." The Anglo-Americans desperately needed something to nullify the home-field advantage which the natives possessed in the New England wilderness. Mastiff

watchdogs and other hunting hounds were pressed into active service, patrolling the outskirts of settled areas and leading search and destroy missions into the sylvan no-man's-land.<sup>20</sup>

Dogs had been used by New Englanders before to hunt Indians, but never on a grand scale, never as a regular auxiliary to the militia, and never with the active support of provincial authorities. Town officers had earlier used dogs to track down Indian prisoners who had escaped from Massachusetts gaols. And the mastiffs which were recruited by New Haven to hunt wolves in 1656 were "of good use . . . in some other cases." Colonial officials in London, too far removed from the hair-raising realities of the New England frontier to feel the sense of desperation which effected the call for canine troopers, considered the matter in cold, practical terms: by the end of the seventeenth century, the natives of New England had also come into possession of European firearms. Thus, a minister scoffed to Lord Bellomont in 1700 that any dogs earmarked for use against the American Indians "must be dogs that bullets would not enter."<sup>21</sup>

The Reverend Solomon Stoddard, minister of Northampton, Massachusetts on the edge of English civilization in the Connecticut River Valley, suggested in a letter to Governor John Dudley dated 22 October 1703 that New England troops should follow the lead of the Virginians and use dogs against the natives. He felt compelled to justify the propriety of his proposal, and did so by stripping the enemy of his

humanity and consigning him to the animal kingdom. He saw the hostile natives as just another "hevie beaste of ravyne" to be exterminated. "If the Indians were as other people are, & did manage their warr fairly after the manner of other nations, it might be looked upon as inhumane to pursue them in such a manner. But they are to be looked upon as theives and murderers, they doe acts of hostility without proclaiming war. They don't appeare openly in the field to bid us battle, they use those cruelly who fall into their hands. They act like wolves & are to be dealt withal as wolves."<sup>22</sup>

Stoddard's arguments helped to convince the Massachusetts government to pursue actively an offensive canine strategy. In 1706 the legislature passed "An Act For the Raising And Increase of Dogs, for the Better Security of the Frontiers." Their action, no doubt, was partly inspired by the Deerfield Massacre of February 29, 1704, in which, out of 300 inhabitants, 50 were killed and 111 were taken prisoner to Canada by French soldiers and their Indian allies. The act, which awarded a frontiersman an annual subsidy of five shillings for every hound he raised, followed an apparently successful trial of Indian-hunting dogs which took place in August 1706. A company of fifty men with dogs had set out from Hartford and had then divided into smaller parties and ranged along each side of the Connecticut River, discovering and annoying the "skulking Indian enemy" who "greatly infested" Hampshire County.<sup>23</sup>

By the middle of the eighteenth century, dogs were found in every garrison and fort along the New England frontier, where they served as watchdogs and trackers. Captain Phineas Stevens, the commander of Fort Number Four above Northfield, Massachusetts, reported to Governor William Shirley on 7 April 1747 that their dogs were alone responsible for preventing a surprise attack by French and Indians from succeeding. "Our dogs being very much disturbed, which gave us reason to think the enemy were about, occasioned us not to open the gate at the usual time . . . but one of our men . . . ventured out . . . to set on the dogs, . . . firing his gun, and saying choboy to the dogs. Whereupon the enemy . . . immediately rose from behind a log and fired. . . . Being discovered, they . . . rose from all their ambushments and attacked us on all sides."<sup>24</sup>

The Pennsylvania frontier also suffered heavily from Indian depredations in the eighteenth century, and British regulars alone again proved singularly ineffective against the native American raiders. Benjamin Franklin himself thought that the colony could be saved from the Indian menace by employing canine auxiliaries. In a 2 November 1705 letter to James Read, he suggested that the army should adopt the "Spanish Method" and use dogs on leashes to hunt and harry the



enemy. "In Case of meeting a Party of the Enemy the Dogs are then turn'd loose and set on. They will be fresher and fiercer for having been previously confin'd, and will confound the Enemy a good deal, and be very serviceable." <sup>25</sup>

Letters between Pennsylvanian military administrators show that the Anglo-Americans continued to justify their use of dogs against the Indians by dehumanizing and denigrating native Americans. John Hughes advised Colonel Henry Bouquet, field commander of the Anglo-American forces, that "As the Enemy you are to encounter is a cruel Suptil, Ambushcading Enemy from whom no fair Engagement, nor Any Quarter can be expected if they get the Better by any Means," all methods tending toward their total defeat would be perfectly acceptable. Hughes suggested providing each infantryman with a dog on a three-foot leash, for then "No Indian . . . could well Conceal himself in a Swamp or thicket as a spy[.] Your Dogs will Discover him & may soon be learnt to Destroy him too." <sup>26</sup>

Bouquet, to whom Franklin had sent a copy of his letter to John Read, then wrote to his superior in New York, Sir Jeffery Amherst: "I Wish we would make use of the Spanish Method to hunt them [the Indians] with English Dogs, supported by Rangers and some Light Horse, who would I think effectually extirpate or remove that Vermin." Amherst's feelings corresponded with those of his subordinate. He replied, "You will Do well . . . to try every . . . Method, that can

serve to Extirpate this Execrable Race. I should be very glad your scheme for Hunting them down by Dogs could take Effect." Practical considerations prevented the immediate implementation of Bouquet's plans, however, as mastiffs and bloodhounds could not be had from England in time for the commencement of the new season of campaigning.<sup>27</sup>

Records show that Bouquet tried to convince John Penn and the humanitarian Provincial Council in Philadelphia of the merits of his proposed canine measures. He penned several lines to the governor on 4 June 1764: "I can not omit to Submit to your Consideration the use that might be made of Dogs against our Savage Enemies. Their audacious attempts in attacking our Troops and settlements may . . . be ascribed to the certainty of evading our Pursuit. . . . [A] few Instances of Indians seized and worried by Dogs, would . . . deter them more effectually from a War with us than all the Troops we could raise." The colonel recommended that since enough mastiffs and bloodhounds could not be recruited in Pennsylvania, the Council should "have Fifty Couples of proper Hounds imported from Great Britain with People who understand to train and manage them." Until these arrived, soldiers would be offered three shillings a month to procure their own strong dogs from the local settlements.<sup>28</sup>

Franklin wrote to Richard Jackson in England on 25 June 1764 that the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania had sent to Britain for one hundred bloodhounds to assist in hunting the

Indians. "If any Gentleman of your Acquaintance has such, I wish you would persuade them to spare 'em to us. Mr. Neate, a merchant of London, I think, is apply'd to, to collect them." The 2-4 April 1765 editions of the London Chronicle stated that 48 pair of bloodhounds had been sent to New York, "where the breed of these useful animals are to be kept up for the benefit of the province." Whether these dogs ever saw action on the New York or Pennsylvania frontiers has gone unrecorded.<sup>29</sup>

The Declaration of Independence and the American Revolution changed nothing on the Pennsylvanian frontier. The Indian troubles were merely swallowed up by the continental struggle. William McClay wrote to the Council from Sunbury, Pennsylvania on 27 April 1779 that "The whole Force of the Six Nations seems to be poured down upon Us." He proposed that an expedition of "a Single Troop of Light Horse, attended by Dogs" should set out immediately for the Indian country. "I have sustained some Ridicule for a Scheme which I have long recommended, . . . that of hunting the Scalping Parties of Indians with Horsemen & Dogs. The imminent Services which Dogs have rendered to our People in some late instances, seem to open People's Eyes to a Method of this kind." <sup>30</sup>

McClay concluded, "History informs us That it was in this Manner That the Indians were extirpated out of whole countrys in South America. It may be objected That we have not proper Dogs." The Pennsylvanian claimed he suffered only the ridicule

of his countrymen for the impracticality of his plan. He did not mention if he and Franklin and Bouquet had also suffered the moral outrage of the Quakers for the possible inhumanity of their canine measures. Englishmen had earlier condemned the atrocities which arose from the Spanish use of dogs in the sixteenth century. After a century and a half of struggling to conquer a land occupied by firmly entrenched natives, Anglo-Americans seemed to have held Spanish methods worthy of emulation. Did English civilization go to the dogs in North America in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries?

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> E.G.R. Taylor, ed., The Original Writings and Correspondence of the Two Richard Hakluyts, 2 vols. (London, 1935), 2:321-322. Hakluyt does not state if the commodities he enumerated are listed in order of their importance, but dogs follow brewers in his catalogue, and are not found under "Provisions Tending To Force," but under "Men and Things Incident and Tending to . . . The Encrease [and] Renewe[l] . . . of Victuall[s] at the Planting Places."

<sup>2</sup> William S. Maltby, The Black Legend In England: The Development of Anti-Spanish Sentiment, 1558-1660 (Durham, N.C., 1971), pp. 12-13, 15, 89.

<sup>3</sup> Maltby, The Black Legend, pp. 27-28, 59, 78.

<sup>4</sup> John Grier Varner And Jeannette Johnson Varner, Dogs of the Conquest (Norman, Oklahoma, 1983), pp. 4-5.

<sup>5</sup> Varner, Dogs of the Conquest, p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> Francis de Ulloa cited in Richard Hakluyt, The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation, 12 vols. (New York, 1965), 9:237-238; 9:260.

<sup>7</sup> Hakluyt, The Principal Navigations, 9:226.

<sup>8</sup> Varner, Dogs of the Conquest, p. 148; see also pp. 25, 41, 54, and 85.

<sup>9</sup> Ralph Lane in Hakluyt, The Principal Navigations, 9:340; Thomas Harriot also mentioned the eating of dogs by the English on 9:357; A Relatyon written by a gent. of ye Colony [Captain Gabriel Archer?] in Philip L. Barbour, ed., The Jamestown Voyages Under The First Charter, 1606-1609, 2 vols. (New York, 1969), 1:95-96; The Tragical Relation of the Virginia Assembly [1624] in Lyon G. Tyler, ed., Narratives of Early Virginia, 1600-1625 (New York, 1907), p. 423. The food problem was apparently so bad that Sir Thomas

Dale printed in the "Lawes divine, morall and martial" on June 22, 1611 that anyone convicted of killing or destroying a cow, horse, goat, pig, fowl, or dog, whether belonging to himself or to somebody else, without the governor's permission, would suffer the death penalty, and his accomplice would suffer branding and maiming; see David B. Quinn, ed., New American World: A Documentary History of North America to 1612, 5 vols. (New York, 1979), 5:225.

<sup>10</sup> John Smith, A True Relation... [1608] in Tyler, Virginia Narratives, p. 54 and John Smith, The General History in the same, p. 329.

<sup>11</sup> John Smith, Generall History, Book 4 in Tyler, Virginia Narratives, p. 359; Edward Waterhouse reported essentially the same event in "A Declaration of the State of the Colony. . . and A Relation of the Barbarous Massacre" [London, 1622], but, using hindsight, he attributed to the mastiffs the instinctive ability to sniff out treachery: "When these savages complained unto him of the fierceness of our Mastives, most implacable and terrible unto them, (knowing them by instinct it seemes, to be but treacherous and false-hearted friends to us, better than our selves) he to gratifie them in all things, for the winning of them by degrees, caused some of them to be killed in their presence, to the great displeasure of the owners, and would have had all the rest guelt (had he not been hindered) to make them the gentler and milder to them" (Susan Myra Kingsbury, ed., The Records of the Virginia Company of London, 4 vols. [Washington, D.C., 1906-1935], 3:552).

<sup>12</sup> See J. Frederick Fausz, "Fighting 'Fire' with Firearms: The Anglo-Powhatan Arms Race in Early Virginia," in American Indian Culture and Research Journal, 3 (1979):33-50; "Proceedings of the Virginia Assembly" in Tyler, Virginia Narratives, p. 270.

<sup>13</sup> Wyatt in the William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd series, 34 (1977):121; Rowlesley's letter in Kingsbury, Virginia Company Records, p. 235.

<sup>14</sup> Smith's Generall Historie, in Tyler, Virginia Narratives, pp. 364-365; Waterhouse in Kingsbury, Virginia Company Records, 3:557; see also Bernard W. Sheehan, Savagism and Civility: Indians and Englishmen in Colonial Virginia (New York, 1980), pp. 172-174.

<sup>15</sup> Waterhouse in Kingsbury, Virginia Company Records, 3:557.

<sup>16</sup> George Mourt, The Journal of the Pilgrims at Plymouth In New England, In 1620, ed. by George B. Cheever (New York, 1848), p. 129; see also Thomas Mount, Relation... [1622] cited in Howard M. Chapin, Dogs in Early New England (Providence, R.I., 1920), pp. 3-4.

<sup>17</sup> John Noble, ed., Records of the Court of Assistants of the Colony of the Massachusetts Bay, 3 vols. (Boston, 1901), 2:66; Nathaniel Shurtleff, ed., Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England, 5 vols. (Boston, 1853-1854), 2:252-3. Dogs figure in many other cases which appeared before Massachusetts's courts in the seventeenth century. For instance, see Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County, Massachusetts, 8 vols. (Salem, Mass., 1911-1921), 1:18, 59, 65, 118, 174; 2:6, 101, 236, 279, 309; 3:132, 396; 4:15; 6:97, 105, 128; 7: 424 and Chapin, New England Dogs, pp. 7-9; see also The Colonial Laws of Massachusetts, 1660-1672 (Boston, 1889), p. 191.

<sup>18</sup> "Letter from John Pory to the Governor of Virginia [Sir Francis Wyatt], Autumn, 1622" in Sidney V. James, Jr, ed. Three Visitors to Early Plymouth (Plymouth, Mass., 1963); on page 17 of Carl R. Griffin, III and Alaric Faulkner's Coming of Age on Damariscove Island, Maine (Old Town, Maine, 1981), Faith Harrington suggested that these dogs may have been English dog lock muskets; on 22 February 1637, Thomas Hulburt "went out [from Saybrook, Connecticut] with ten men and three dogs, half a mile from the house [fort] to burn the weeds, reeds and leaves upon the neck of land" in order to bring in twenty timber trees; from Captain Gardiner, Relation of the Pequot Wars, in the Massachusetts Historical Society Collections, 3rd series, III cited in Henry B. Stiles, The History of Ancient Wethersfield Connecticut, 2 vols. (New York, 1904), 2:137; Charles T. Hoadly, ed., Records of the Colony or Jurisdiction of New Haven (Hartford, 1858), p. 291 cited in Chapin, New England Dogs, p. 8; A Narrative of the Captivity of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson (Cambridge, Mass., 1682), in Charles H. Lincoln, ed., Narratives of the Indian Wars, 1675-1699 (New York, 1913), p. 119; in 1689 a barking dog prevented a surprise Indian attack against the Wentworth garrison from succeeding at Cocheco in New Hampshire: Wentworth genealogy, 1:97-98 cited in Chapin, New England Dogs, p. 5.

<sup>19</sup> Benjamin Church, Entertaining Passages Relating to Philip's War... (Boston, 1716), in Richard Slotkin and James K. Folsom, eds., So Dreadfull A Judgement: Puritan Responses to King Philip's War, 1676-1677 (Middletown, Conn., 1978), pp. 370-470.

<sup>20</sup> William Hubbard, The History of the Indian Wars in New England [1677], ed. by Samuel G. Drake (New York, 1865), p. 87.

<sup>21</sup> Mr. Hollihock of Springfield presented to the Commissioners of the United Colonies in 1656 the idea "that Mastiffe Doggs might bee of good use against the Indians incase of any disturbance from them," and the Commissioners "Reddily apprehending thought meet to comend the same to the severall generall Courts to take care and make provision thereof accordingly": Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, ed., Records of the Colony of New Plymouth in New England, 12 vols. (Boston, 1855-1861), 4:168; during King Philip's War in 1675, Captain Samuel Mosely and "about Ten or Twelve Privateers . . . carried with them several Dogs, that proved serviceable to them, in finding out the Enemy in their Swamps; one whereof, would for several Days together go out and bring to them six, eight or ten young Pigs of King Philip's Herds": The Present State of New-England With Respect to the Indian War [1675] in Charles H. Lincoln, ed., Narratives of the Indian Wars, 1675-1699 (New York, 1913), p. 28; several references to early New England Indian-hunting dogs can be found in the Massachusetts Archives, 67:218, 252 and 68:18, 25-26; Hoadly, New Haven Records, 29T; Cecil Headlam, ed., Calendar of State Papers: Colonial Series (London, 1910), 18:400-402.

<sup>22</sup> Stoddard wrote that the people of the frontier town of Deerfield "may be put into a way to Hunt the Indians with dogs. [O]ther methods that have been taken, are found by experience to be chargeable, hazardous & insufficient. But if dogs were trained up to hunt Indians as they doe Bears: we should quickly be sensible of a great advantage thereby. The dogs would be an extream terrour to the Indians: they are not much afraid of us, they know that they can take us & leave us. [I]f they can but get out of gun-shot they count themselves in no great danger how many soever pursue them. [T]hey are neither afraid of being discovered or pursued[.] But these dogs would be such a terrour to them, after a little experience, it would prevent their comming, & men would live more safely in their houses, & worke more safely in the feilds and woods[.] In Case the Indians should come near the Towne the dogs would readily take their track & lead us to them[.] Sometimes we see the track of one or two Indians but can't follow it. [T]he dogs would discover it & lead our men directly to their enemies: for the want of which help we many times take a great deal of pains to little purpose. Besides if we had dogs fitted for that purpose our men might follow Indians with more safety, there would be no hazzard of their being shot at out of the bushes, they would follow their dogs with an undaunted spirit, not fearing a surprisal[.] [A]nd



indeed the presence of the dogs would much facilitate their victory: the dogs would doe a great deal of execution upon the enemy, & catch many an Indian that would be too light of foot for us.

"If it should be thought by any that this way is unpracticable, & that the dogs will not learn to doe what we expect from them[,] these two things may satisfy them[:] one is that in a time of war with the Indians in Virginia, they did in this way prevaile over them, though all attempts, before they betooke themselves to this method proved in vain[;] the other is that our Hunters give an Account that the dogs that are used to hunt Bears mind no other track but the track of a Beare[.] [F]rom whence we may conclude, that if the dogs were used to pursue Indians they would mind nothing else.

"There must be some charge in prosecuting this designe, something must be expended for the purchasing sutable dogs & for their maintenance. [T]he men also who spend their time in this service, must be paid, but this will not rise in any proportion to the charge of maintaining a sutable number of Garrison souldiers.

"I have taken Advice with several of the principle persons amongst us, & they look upon this way as the most probable expedient in this case." New-England Historical and Genealogical Register, 24 (1870):269-270.

<sup>23</sup>The Acts and Resolves of the Province of the Massachusetts Bay, 21 vols. (Boston, 1869-1922), 1:598; The Boston News-Letter, 12-19 August 1706, cited in above, 8:670 and in Chapin, New England Dogs, p. 5; see also John Sheldon Radabaugh, "The Military System of Colonial Massachusetts 1690-1740," Ph.D. dissertation (University of Southern California, 1965), pp. 127-128.

<sup>24</sup>Cited in Caleb Stark, ed., Memoir and Official Correspondence of Gen. John Stark (Concord, N.H., 1860), p. 380.

<sup>25</sup>Leonard W. Labaree, ed., The Papers of Benjamin Franklin, 23 vols. (New Haven, 1960-1983), 6:235.

<sup>26</sup>Cited in James Axtell, "Through A Glass Darkly: Colonial Attitudes Toward the Native American," Essays From Sarah Lawrence Faculty (October 1973), p. 17.

<sup>27</sup>Labaree, Franklin Papers, 11:317; Bouquet's and Amherst's correspondence cited in Axtell, "Through A Glass," pp. 17-18.

<sup>28</sup>Labaree, Franklin Papers, 11:225-226.

<sup>29</sup>Cited in Labaree, Franklin Papers, n. 8, p. 240.

<sup>30</sup>McClay's letter in Pennsylvania Archives, 1st series, 12 vols. (Philadelphia, 1853), 7:357.

## CHAPTER IV

### GOING TO THE DOGS: THE ETHNOHISTORY OF A MORAL QUESTION?

What can be learned from the history of the English Mastiff in America? Dogging the Indians does not seem to have bothered colonial consciences as much as scalping and scalp bounties did. If modern Americans feel very little guilt for the English scalping strategy, should we really expect them to feel much moral discomfort in regard to the little-known Anglo-American canine policy? Few historians have attempted to prick the American conscience with reports of canine atrocities. John and Jeannette Varner have recently published a compilation of Spanish doggings in the New World, but the work is mostly narrative with very little analysis. More valuable is James Axtell's "Through A Glass Darkly: Colonial Attitudes Toward the Native American," in which the author briefly considers the moral implications of Anglo-American doggings and their relationship to other inhumanities practiced against the natives of colonial America. By considering the subject as a moral question, Dr. Axtell has succeeded in showing the impact, moral and otherwise, on colonial society of letting loose the dogs of war. My own

ethnohistorical investigation was enhanced by comparing the military use of dogs by the English in America to the use of dogs by the English at home and on their first Atlantic frontier in Ireland, and to the use of dogs by the French and Spanish on their North American frontiers.<sup>1</sup>

In seventeenth-century England, the mastiff was raised and trained primarily to serve as a watchdog or to fight in bloody bear-baitings and bull-baitings. The enjoyment of these diversions demonstrate that the sanguinary tastes of the English were at least as great as those of the North American natives who have been traditionally pictured as bloodthirsty savages. Some gentlemen, such as Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn, became disenchanted with the thrill of the bloody animal combats in the seventeenth century. But their feelings concerning the sports were exceptional. The English masses, of course, did not share their refined squeamishness.

This was an age when huge crowds flocked to the gibbet at Tyburn in London to watch criminals suffer cruel punishments or watched the insane at Bedlam for entertainment. If nobody felt uneasy about the mentally incompetent being mocked, or protested against convicts being hanged, drawn and quartered, disembowelled, beheaded, and burnt, why should we expect anyone to have raised a howl over dumb brutes being battled to the death? In fact, Englishmen were proud of their bear- and bull-baitings. They defended the torturing of bears, bulls, and dogs on the grounds that it was a manly and traditionally

English sport which accustomed a proud and tenacious people to bloodshed, and prepared them to face the enemies of the nation in battle. There existed the notion of a sort of sympathetic magic: the spectators at animal baitings would acquire the fortitude and obduracy of the British bulldogs. The English bear gardens were not closed by law until 1835, and in practice not until long after that.<sup>2</sup>

Of course, no protesting associations, such as the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (founded in London in 1824, the first such organization in the world) existed in the 1600s and 1700s. The movement for animal rights grew out of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment state of mind and the rise of evangelical religion. The changed social outlook at the close of the eighteenth century was a personal and emotional, rather than a philosophic and intellectualized, one. The animal kingdom benefitted, in a sort of trickle-down effect, from the reform in manners and the spreading doctrine of the rights of man and laws of nature.<sup>3</sup>

It would be anachronistic to find such pro-animal sentiments existing in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England and America. The only discomfort Puritan society felt about baiting bears and bulls was motivated not by the fact that it caused the participants pain, but because it provided the spectators with pleasure. Under the Commonwealth and the Protectorate, bear-baiting was outlawed occasionally, but it

was too much a part of English society to be discarded lightly. Dogfighting continued to enjoy an underground following in the rural areas of Great Britain well into the twentieth century, and had become a part of every culture which could trace its origins to the British hegemony of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Sadly enough, according to a recent television news report, animals are being dognapped today in Tidewater Virginia to be set upon one another in illegal bouts. Such circumstances make it folly to try to judge the canine antics of our English forefathers on our own "high" moral ground.

Mastiffs and other hounds came to America with their English masters as early as 1585. They were not brought chiefly for entertainment but for survival. Bear-baiting and bull-baiting were never as popular in America as they were at home in England. Such canine-consuming amusements were disapproved of on the frontier, where mastiffs were needed more to serve as deterrents to Indian attacks, and other dogs figured importantly as warning devices. By the time American towns and cities began to develop, other factors prevented the transplanting of London bear-gardens to American soil. In the seventeenth century, the Quaker leaders of Philadelphia and the Puritan leaders of Boston frowned upon such diversions for religious reasons. And in the eighteenth century, urbane gentlemen who espoused Enlightenment ideas protested against the inhumanity of such sports.<sup>4</sup>

Fighting in the English bear-gardens, however, prepared mastiffs for their New World roles as hell-hounds. There were no domesticated animals in native American societies to compare to the huge and ferocious mastiffs which accompanied Martin Pring and other Englishmen to Virginia and New England. Although native dogs served many different functions for the Indians, the canine never played an active part in Indian warfare. The military use of Indian dogs was limited to their employment as sentries to warn camps and villages of night attacks.

Although Anglo-American dogs had always been similarly important in a passive military role, from the very beginning of English exploration of North America, they were valued for more than just that. The experiences of Martin Pring at Plymouth in 1603 showed that Indians feared mastiffs so much that they dared not attack the European invaders in the presence of these animals. Naturally, the English were eager to prevent Indian attacks, and if keeping chained mastiffs around the settlements during the day and allowing them to roam the plantations at night forestalled any surprise assaults, then English settlers would put up with such inconveniences as dwindling supplies of fresh meat.

The mere presence of the mastiff in America also served as a constant and concrete reminder of the superiority of English culture, as native American dogs paled in comparison to this canine brute. The English dogs that ran off from the

settlements to become "White Indian" dogs in the wilderness never posed the same psychological threat to colonial society that their human equivalents did. The departures of the latter were often considered indictments of white society, but those of the former were seen to have resulted from simple animal lust.<sup>5</sup>

There was nothing really barbaric or immoral about the English canine deterrence policy except for the ever-present potential that the mastiffs might eventually be deployed as weapons against the natives. The Indians recognized such a possibility and negotiated with humanitarians such as George Thorpe in Virginia for the removal of the awe-inspiring animals, for they did not want to have to face the frightful dogs in English towns, in fields and forests, or in their own villages.

Once the Indians had been compelled to answer English wrongs with stealth and viciousness, the Anglo-Americans let loose their dogs of war from Virginia to Maine. At least, many voices cried for the unleashing of the canine weapons as a last ditch effort to counter the deadly effectiveness of native American guerilla tactics, and some of these cries have been preserved on paper. But why are there so few surviving eyewitness accounts of dogs actually being used against the Indians?

This may have been because men were uncomfortable with setting their dogs upon the natives and refused to record such



instances. Or perhaps dogs were never important offensive weapons for one reason or another. Religious and moral considerations may have prevented most Anglo-Americans from supporting such a policy, although the attitude of the Reverend Solomon Stoddard argues against this. Practical reasons, such as the fact that there were never many well-trained pure-bred mastiffs and bloodhounds in America, could also account for the discrepancy between the number of suggestions to use dogs and accounts of actual doggings. The ravages of time on historical materials is also a likely explanation.

The English did not feel extreme guilt for setting dogs upon the Indians. Although they had previously censured the Spaniards for their doggings of the natives of the New World, the English saw their own use of dogs in North America in a completely different light. They saw Spanish doggings as excessive, and rightly so. The natives of Mexico had accepted the harsh rule and Catholic religion of the conquistadors, and yet they still suffered at the hands of cruel masters and mastiffs. The Spanish set their dogs on the natives on the battlefield, in the jungles, and worst of all, in Indian villages and Spanish towns. Like Las Casas, some Spanish Americans were appalled by the atrocities which the grim soldiers perpetrated under the banners of Christ and Civilization, and spoke out. The English, too, realized that the inhumane use of dogs by the Spaniards, especially when the

mastiffs were set upon helpless natives merely to provide entertainment for and to satisfy the bloodlust of the conquistadors, was neither Christian nor civilized. They never condoned these more barbaric canine excesses of the Spanish Conquest.

The English, however, did understand, and later guiltlessly emulated, the use of dogs by the Spanish on the battlefields and in the jungles. In New England and Virginia such tactics had become, if not a strategic necessity in the seventeenth century, then at least a viable military option. The natives along the English colonial frontier were far from helpless. Nor were they Christian or civilized in the eyes of Anglo-Americans. Many colonists stressed these facts in justifying the more inhumane aspects of Anglo-Indian warfare. In claiming that scalplings and doggings were a response to Indian cruelties, settlers admitted that such actions were inhumane and reprehensible. But this was total war, in which the vanquished would lose all: their homes, their lives, their culture. Seeing it as a matter of survival, the English believed they had no choice but to use all means at their disposal to subdue the "savages" once and for all.<sup>6</sup>

Did Englishmen use dogs in other colonizing ventures in which they had to overcome stubborn native populations? The sixteenth- and seventeenth-century experience of the English in Ireland in many ways served as an apprenticeship to their colonization of the New World. Conditions in Ireland were

somewhat similar to those in New England and Virginia. Fierce, semi-nomadic native tribesmen did not take kindly to English attempts to plant settlements and to re-establish their hegemony in the Irish wilderness. The invaders found themselves forced to take such inhumane measures as lining the path to an English general's tent with the heads of the enemy. But no references to mastiffs appear in the accounts examined of the men who served on the Irish frontier.<sup>7</sup>

There are several possible explanations why this is so. The Irish terrain was so difficult that not even a mastiff could negotiate it successfully. At least one Englishman in Ireland saw "by manifold experience, what madness it is for a Deputy or General to lead royal forces against naked rogues in woods and bogs, whom hounds can scarce follow, and much less men." It is also possible that mastiffs were not used in Ireland because the natives possessed an intimidating canine weapon of their own: the Irish Wolfhound.<sup>8</sup>

When the English Mastiff and the Irish Wolfhound met in the London arenas in the seventeenth century, as they often did, it was invariably the latter which victoriously emerged as top dog. In a 29 October 1667 letter of Lord Conway to his brother Sir George Rawdon at Lisburn, one such combat is described: "Addy Loftus brought an Irish dog to fight with a mastiff before the king. The Irish dog had all the advantage imaginable, and dragged him five or six times about the ring, so that everybody gave the mastiff up for dead; all men were

concerned, as if it had been their General, and yet, at last, the Irish dog ran away." John Evelyn observed another such match in the London Bear Garden on 16 June 1670. "The Irish wolfe-dog exceeded, which was a tall greyhound, a stately creature indeede, who beate a cruell mastiff." Although it can be surmised that the English did not use dogs against the Celtic tribesmen because moral considerations prevented mastiffs from being set on nominal Christians, a more likely explanation is that their mastiffs, for once, just did not prove very effective.<sup>9</sup>

Did canine ineffectiveness also prevent the French from using dogs against North American natives? A brief examination of the history of England's chief North American rival does not turn up many Canadian canine conquerors. The French did bring dogs with them to Canada, but they apparently never deployed them as offensive weapons. Hounds, and presumably mastiffs, were important militarily only defensively. On more than one occasion in the 1630s and 1640s, French dogs prevented Indian surprise attacks and ambushes. "The great dogs" were often "let loose at night" to patrol the French settlements in order to give warning of the approach of intruders. One famous French military dog, Monsieur Niagara, regularly delivered messages through Iroquois country to Montreal in the late 1680s. But there is no evidence that the French ever used dogs to hunt Indians as did the English and Spanish.<sup>10</sup>

This study of the dog in early American society has necessarily considered the subject from a North American perspective. It has taken into account Spanish and French, as well as English, canines which found themselves in the New World as early as the fifteenth century. Information on native American dogs of the pre-contact period and on English dogs in the British Isles in the fifteenth through nineteenth centuries has also been brought to bear on the subject of the military use of dogs in colonial America. The Anglo-Americans can not be completely excused for their use of dogs against the Indians, but they do appear in a better light than the Spanish and English do, as far as abusing dogs and men is concerned. The French and the Indians, however, come off looking better.

Because this study considered only the military use of dogs on the American frontier, it may leave the reader with the false impression that early Americans valued their dogs only in the same way in which they valued their muskets and rifles. This is not true. But the story of the more peaceful pets of the older settled areas of colonial America has necessarily been neglected because of time and space constraints.

The story of the English Mastiff in America is not one with obviously white heroes and black villains. Because it considers the shady vales of different moral systems clashing along cultural frontiers, greys predominate. Greys, but not

necessarily greyhounds, whose princely presence in America had always been limited. The mastiff, the king of the English dogs, cannot in all fairness be considered a villain, for it was merely a tool, a weapon, in the hands of men. Nor are the Englishmen who employed them as offensive weapons clear-cut villains. Unlike the Spaniards, they attempted to limit the excessive cruelties which doggings involved by hesitating to deploy their mastiffs in the first place. Granted, any use of an animal such as the mastiff against a fellow human being can be considered cruel (but such considerations did not prevent Bull Connor from using dogs against the Birmingham civil rights protesters in the early 1960s). Once most provincials came to accept that the only good Indian was a dead Indian, however, the adoption of such inhumane measures was inevitable. The few quiet protests voiced by such men as the gentle George Thorpe were overwhelmed by the haunting, hideous howls of hounds in the wilderness.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>This chapter owes more than just its title to James Axtell's "Scalping: The Ethnohistory of A Moral Question" in The European and the Indian: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America (New York, 1981), pp. 207-241. John Grier and Jeannette Johnson Varner, Dogs of the Conquest (Norman, Oklahoma, 1983); James Axtell, "Through A Glass Darkly: Colonial Attitudes Toward the Native American," in Essays From Sarah Lawrence Faculty (October 1973).

<sup>2</sup>Gerald Carson, Men, Beast, and Gods: A History of Cruelty and Kindness to Animals (New York, 1972), pp. 46-47.

<sup>3</sup>Carson, Men, Beasts, and Gods, pp. 47-54.

<sup>4</sup>I have found reference to only one American bear-baiting, that in the Boston Gazette, 23-30 May 1726: "On Thursday next the 2d of June, at 3 o'clock P.M., in Staniford's Street, near the Bowling Green, will be Baited a Bear, by John Coleson; where all Gentlemen and others that would divert themselves may repair," cited in George Francis Dow, Every Day Life in the Massachusetts Bay Colony (Boston, 1935), p. 114; see Carl Bridenbaugh, Cities in the Wilderness: The First Century of Urban Life in America, 1625-1742 (New York, 1938), pp. 118, 278, 435, and 441; and his and Jessica Bridenbaugh's Rebels and Gentlemen: Philadelphia in the Age of Franklin (New York, 1942).

<sup>5</sup>See James Axtell, "The White Indians of Colonial America," in The European and the Indian, pp. 168-206.

<sup>6</sup>William S. Maltby claimed on page 17 of his The Black Legend in England: The Development of Anti-Spanish Sentiment, 1558-1660 (Durham, N.C., 1971) that Cortez and his colleagues, leading relatively few men, had to invade and conquer a huge and far-from-innocent empire. "His enterprise could be successful only if moral niceties were occasionally dispensed with-- a fact which even the English explorers came to appreciate in similar situations;" Benjamin Franklin wrote to Richard Jackson on 25 June 1764, "I am afraid our Indian War will become perpetual (as they begin to find they can, by Plunder, make a living of it) without we can effectually

Scourge them, and speedily," in Leonard W. Labaree, ed., The Papers of Benjamin Franklin, 23 vols. (New Haven, 1960-1983), 11:239-240.

<sup>7</sup> See Nicholas P. Canny, "The Ideology of English Colonization: From Ireland To America," in The William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd series, 30 (October 1973): 575-598.

<sup>8</sup> Minute of the most gross error, long since committed and still continued in the Wars of Ireland... [anon., 1599], cited in C.E. Maxwell, Irish History from Contemporary Sources, 1509-1610 (London, 1923), p. 220.

<sup>9</sup> Cited in Edmund Hogan, The Irish Wolfdog (Dublin, 1897), pp. 43-44. Evelyn in Edward C. Ash, Dogs: Their History and Development, 2 vols. (London, 1927), 2:503-504.

<sup>10</sup> See Dollier de Casson, A History of Montreal, 1640-1672, ed. and trans. by Ralph Flinley (New York, 1928), pp. 118-120, 171; Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents, 73 vols. (Cleveland, 1896-1901), 8:267, 32:27; Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, Historical Documents, 3rd series (Quebec, 1871), 3:62-63.



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