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# **‘This Poor People:’ Seventeenth-Century Massachusetts and the Poor**

**Charles R. Lee**

The relationship between seventeenth-century Massachusetts society and its poor was an aggregate of customary attitudes about poverty and fundamental social conditions. A new look at both the seventeenth-century system of public poor relief and correction—its cultural and intellectual underpinnings, and those who came in contact with this system, certain social characteristics of the poor—sheds light on at least part of this very complex relationship. In this context, one particular factor seems especially significant. Analysis of the poverty cases that came before Massachusetts town and colony officials between 1630 and 1719 indicates a clear connection between public responses to poverty and the factor of age. This association suggests a redefinition of poverty in early Massachusetts. This social connection also suggests certain hypotheses regarding change in early Massachusetts society.

Poverty is an economic, social, and cultural phenomenon.<sup>1</sup> In part because economic sufficiency was the rule, Puritan society seemed particularly preoccupied with the social and cultural manifestations of poverty. Poverty was associated with the absence of settled family and community relationships. And poverty meant the inability or failure to labor at a particular calling. These concerns also reflected practical matters. Public officials, faced with the task of providing for petitioners who required or for those who were likely to require sustenance, concerned themselves with the causes of indigency, its extent, and appropriate means of relief or correction. The economic definition of poverty was not as relevant to this society and this deliberative process as was the nature of dependency in wilderness society.

Until recently, historians writing about poverty in the seventeenth century have focused on the intellectual background and the public administration of the poor law, specifically the Elizabethan Poor Law of 1601. These studies traced the evolution of the worthy, impotent poor and the unworthy, able-bodied poor as legal concepts. This work also has underlined the importance given to local, public responsibility for relief.<sup>2</sup> Students of early America have followed the application of the 1601 Poor Law to the American scene. Most argue that the transmission of English precedent was simple and complete with only minor local variations.<sup>3</sup> Recently,

historians have focused on the social effects of the poor law and have begun to re-analyze the place of the poor in early American society. Eighteenth-century society has received the greatest attention because, most historians agree, socio-economic stratification and poverty first assumed significant scale in the late colonial period.<sup>4</sup> This recent literature has contributed breadth to a field long dominated by relatively narrow public policy or social-services related studies. But in many respects the poor and their place in the community remain shrouded in seventeenth-century rhetoric. Accordingly, reconsideration of some basic definitions seems in order.

The framework for this reconsideration of poverty and seventeenth-century Massachusetts society is the concept of Puritan community. The colonial notion of social welfare rested squarely upon this base. Nathaniel Ward, of Ipswich, writing to his fellow townsman John Winthrop, Jr., in 1635, outlined some elements he thought essential to properly organized communities. His thoughts represent an ideal which proved influential even after hope of realizing it waned. The letter was an attempt to convince Winthrop to return to Ipswich from his work for the proprietors of the infant Saybrook settlement. Ward wrote that their town seemed destined for both spiritual and material impoverishment. The community was teeming with "multitudes of idle and profane young men, servants and others." If not rectified by "due and tymely care," he told Winthrop, offenders would drag Ipswich down with them to a poor, mean existence. The Bay Colony experiment would be delivered "from the snare" of old England only to descend "to the pitt" in New England. One measure of "Gods presence and blessinge," he explained, was the relative size of "Satans kingdom."<sup>5</sup> The idle poor were Satan's minions. Ward's observations about the "idle and profane" foretold the future of towns bereft of adequate leadership. The caution also expressed Ward's concept of Puritan community.

The English migration to America had prompted many similar essays, giving identity to new settlements.<sup>6</sup> Ward's effort is noteworthy primarily because he suggested a concept of community derived from the Ipswich example. Two parts of this concept are relevant here. First, Ward's notion of community had social definition. A "homogeneous spirit and people" constituted the heart of Puritan community. Town, church, and economic sufficiency were to be built upon this exclusive ideal. There was no place for the "idle and profane" in this setting. His Ipswich experience also led Ward to delineate a special, ambiguous place in this society for the younger generation. Part of his concern focused specifically on servants: part was directed clearly at youth in general. The founders' sons and daughters were both the hope of the future and the bane of the present. Their apparent idleness and the community ideal as defined by Ward were not compatible. Second, Ward's concept included a dynamic element. His sense of change and his sense of community success or failure both rested upon the degree of homogeneity evident in Ipswich.

The exclusivity evident in Ward's social definition of community was also the central characteristic of the Bay Colony's public response to poverty. This response was based upon the distinction between the worthy and the unworthy poor. There were two necessary elements of this distinction. The first involved a social ethic and the second involved legal definitions of inhabitancy. Poor persons who were deemed worthy received public relief. Poor persons who were deemed unworthy received public punishment, "correction," or warning. The worthy poor were

those whose poverty was essentially fortuitous. Widows, orphans, the sick, and the aged all fit this category. The worthy poor all were legally recognized, settled members of the community. The unworthy poor had brought themselves low through idleness, intemperance, or capricious behavior. Itinerants were by definition unworthy. Causation and community membership were the essential differences between the two types of poverty. The condition of the worthy poor was providential in origin and familiar. The cause of unworthy poverty was personal, voluntary, and foreign.

This distinction is traceable at least to twelfth-century legal commentaries, and it was not the creation of Puritan society.<sup>7</sup> The distinction, however, was very important in Puritan society. Life in New England—throughout the “New World” for that matter—put a premium on able bodies. The real scarcity of labor, the Puritan emphasis on “calling,” and longstanding legal definition combined to make the unworthy poor especially odious, even criminal. As Edward Winslow, signer of the “Mayflower Compact” and future governor of Plymouth Colony, wrote, those with “a proud heart, a dainty tooth, a beggar’s purse, and an idle hand” were not welcome in New England.<sup>8</sup> Increase Mather’s *Wo To Drunkards* includes the interesting notion that the idleness and waste occasioned by too great fondness for strong drink was a form of “voluntary madness.”<sup>9</sup> The unworthy poor, who all shared the drunkard’s crimes, lived beyond the pale. Ward’s standard of homogeneity placed them outside the community. On the other hand, the worthy poor were poor despite having led what the Boston town meeting called “a peaceable and godly life.”<sup>10</sup> Michael Walzer’s notion that Puritanism was “in a sense the religion of the socially competent” is useful in this context. Full members of Puritan society were willing and able to be disciplined and introspective in their daily routines.<sup>11</sup> The worthy poor were, in this sense, social competents: community members. The Puritan sense of community helped define unworthiness and worthiness. And in a more direct, immediate manner, these definitions supported the legal relief and correction structure.

The distinction between worthy and unworthy poor has been the subject of close scrutiny and criticism.<sup>12</sup> The essence of this matter in Puritan rhetoric was a matter of character. The worthy poor were good people; the unworthy were bad. Without denying the role character played, statistical analysis of those who received relief or were corrected as idle poor between 1630 and 1719 suggests there was more to the distinction than rhetoric alone reveals. The factor of age was closely associated with the relief and correction system in seventeenth-century Massachusetts. Both statistical evaluation and analysis of the evolution of Massachusetts poor law are revealing in this respect.

The data for this study were drawn from the public records and histories of Massachusetts Bay and Plymouth colonies: the sources include the records of approximately twenty-five towns, five churches, court records from four Massachusetts counties, and the colony court records. The entire ninety year span of this study was surveyed, through obviously not all individual records covered the full period. The towns and counties surveyed were not confined to one geographical region of the Bay Colony, but includes all areas from Boston to Springfield, from Ipswich to Plymouth. The towns were not all of one type, but range from small, subsistence villages to the port city of Boston.<sup>13</sup> While recognizing that somewhat different perspectives are possible looking at specific locales, institutions, or time periods the focus here is on the general social experience.

The total number of individuals and families given relief or correction in the towns and courts surveyed was 2,089.<sup>14</sup> For this study families were counted the same as one individual since the records frequently failed to specify the number of family members, thus the number of cases does not equal the number of individuals. The records rarely specified the exact age of individuals or of family members but most entries included sufficient information to allow classification of the sample population according to household status. The data were amenable to seven household categories: single individuals (divided into "young adults" and "mature adults"), orphans, widows and widowers, married couples, one-parent families, and two-parent families. Household status is useful here as an indicator of age. Marriage and family do, to a point, indicate age in relative terms. When the records indentified a single individual and did not provide accompanying status indexes—age, references to a wife or family, or details about a trade or occupation—the assumption was made that this individual was unmarried, unattached, and relatively young.<sup>15</sup> In this manner, the data can be evaluated according to age.

This method of evaluation has certain advantages and disadvantages. The concept of household status is revealing in some respects, but not of basic social conditions. Categorization according to an age factor is more fundamental and also has the advantage of approximating seventeenth-century modes of thought and expression. As noted above however, the records do not allow easy categorization according to age. The assumption made regarding certain single individuals is open to some question. Careful, conservative reading of the records hopefully has kept errors to a minimum. And finally, young and old are relative concepts. Joseph Kett and James Henretta estimate that contemporaries included a wide range of ages, stretching from our modern notion of the adolescent years to the middle thirties, in their references to "youth."<sup>16</sup> The community-conferred concept of social maturity—which includes the factors of age, wealth, and status—often was not attained in early Massachusetts until a person reached forty years of age. Immaturity and "youth," in this respect, measure the same condition. So for the purposes of this study, "young adult" will refer to the young, immature individual and "mature adult" will refer to those cases involving older, mature persons and families.

The age factor does not appear to be significant when the sample population is analyzed without considering the worthy-unworthy distinction. Of the total sample, 50.5% were "mature adults" while 49.5% belong in the "young adult" categories. The difference is insignificant. But once the sample population is divided into worthy and unworthy groups the age factor becomes important.

Considering the worthy poor first, an age connection is evident both in gross figures and in decade by decade subtotals. The total number of worthy poor cases evaluated equals 960. The "mature adult" category accounts for 71.7%, or 688, of this total. The "young adult" category accounted for 28.3%, or 272 cases, of the total worthy sub-population. Approximately half of the "mature adults" receiving relief were identified as married couples, families, or widowers. The records gave the remaining "mature adults" other status indicators such as property or a trade. Of those who were considered worthy fitting the "young adult" category approximately two thirds of the total were identified as adolescents or younger. The remaining one third, approximately ninety cases, were assumed to have been young. In sum, by far the majority of those who received poor relief in seventeenth-century Massachusetts were older, mature persons. Furthermore, decade by decade sub-

totals indicate the number of "mature adults" receiving relief was slowly but steadily increasing. The number of unattached youth receiving relief slowly declined. The correlation between maturity and relief became closer between 1630 and 1719.

Age and unworthiness were also connected. With a total sample here of 1,129 cases, the "mature adult" category accounted for 32.4% of the unworthy poor. The "young adult" category accounted for the remaining 67.6%. The unworthy subpopulation includes those warned out of towns and those punished for prudential offenses by town or court officials. Warnings accounted for 807 of the cases, a sizeable majority, and "young adults" accounted for 76% of the warnings. Prudential offenders accounted for 322 cases. "Young adults" comprised 46% of these, with the category "mature adults" accounting for the balance. Prudential offenders thus contribute little or nothing to the imbalance evident in the warning out cases. Taken as a whole, over two thirds of the unworthy poor fit the "young adult" category.

Comparison of the worthy and unworthy poor, focusing on the age factor, adds a social component to the seventeenth-century concept of poverty. Definitions of poverty which on the surface appear to be based upon character traits triggered age-group related responses from the public welfare apparatus. The unworthy poor were mostly young, unattached individuals. The worthy poor were older, had families, or had lost families. They had some property or a trade, or community ties that indicated maturity, status, and worthiness. While age was only one part of a social matrix related to the worthy-unworthy distinction, social conditions in the Bay Colony accented the importance of the age factor. In this sense, Puritan society made the young unworthy and the old worthy.

In some ways Massachusetts poor law came to reflect this social process. The legal foundation of the Bay Colony's response to poverty was laid very early and then periodically elaborated. The colony and subsequent town charters all specified that public authorities were responsible for relieving the worthy poor. In 1636 colony magistrates wrote local responsibility into the law.<sup>17</sup> The language of the law emphasized that all towns were responsible for the "town's poor." Seventeenth-century towns never questioned his basic responsibility, although they looked to the county courts for assistance. Early relief law was age-specific only insofar as it consistently recognized orphans and the aged-infirm as the "town's poor." The preponderance of older, mature persons receiving relief in every decade after 1630 therefore seems attributable to society itself, not to legal design. Older persons tended to become dependent through no fault of their own more often than younger persons.

The first laws written regarding the unworthy poor also served as the foundation for other seventeenth century laws. These initial laws, local and colony, were all on the books by 1637. In their original form they were not age specific. Supplementary laws and administrative reforms did, however, give special attention to youth.

The practice of screening strangers for admission to and possible inhabitancy in the Bay Colony and its towns was the first line of defense against the unworthy poor.<sup>18</sup> The General Court wrote the first screening law in September of 1630, providing that all newcomers to the colony required magisterial permission to settle. By 1637, when the Court delegated the screening responsibility to local officials, all

existing towns had written screening into the local ordinance books.<sup>19</sup> For those “social incompetents” the screening laws missed, the General Court in 1633 ordered that idlers, “common coasters, unprofitable fowlers, and tobacco takers” would be punished by public measure. The towns followed suit with local proscriptions.<sup>20</sup>

By the middle of the seventeenth century Massachusetts officials had supplemented the original laws, giving special attention to young, single individuals in the administration of screening and prudential laws.<sup>21</sup> Dorchester selectmen kept a list of these individuals. Salem, Watertown, and Dedham surveyed families to discover those youth living without proper supervision. In a manner typical of how many of these surveys concluded, Watertown selectmen in 1656 called in Jonathan Phillips to answer charges of “loose living.” Phillips and three others, all young and single, were ordered to provide themselves with masters. Watertown and Dorchester soon appointed tythingmen to carry out these surveys on a regular basis.<sup>22</sup>

The General Court also refined colony prudential law in 1646 and again in 1676, specifying that town officials should inspect families for “idle persons . . . as well as other single persons, who are greatly, if not altogether, negligent in their particular callings.” Tythingmen were instructed to turn offenders over to the county courts so the magistrates could “settle” them. The Suffolk County Court “settled” these miscreants with fines, whippings, and servitude. One incorrigible youth was “disposed of by sale.”<sup>23</sup>

This effort mirrored social conditions. Throughout the seventeenth century, the population of the Bay colony was relatively young and highly mobile. The mid-century emphasis on screening and the prudential concerns accounts for these social realities. This is not to say that the magistrates intended these legal revisions to ensnare youth. Law and society perhaps produced this effect together, but legal design was not enough. As noted above, throughout the century prudential offenders were about evenly divided between the “young” and “mature” categories. There was some increase in the number of cases recorded in the two decades after 1660, but both “young adults” and “mature adults” increased in roughly equal proportions. Public officials concentrated their re-emphasis on prudential offenses, but the most dramatic change in the characteristics of the unworthy poor at mid-century is the rise in the proportion of “young adults” warned out of towns. Historical demographers have established that family, land, and community kept many Massachusetts youth from realizing full social maturity for a major portion of their lives.<sup>24</sup> Poor law and the public administration of this law may have contributed to this condition. The screening laws clearly did not circumscribe mobility, but they did prevent full access to established towns for those in search of opportunity. In short, poor law and society simply intersected at the age factor.<sup>25</sup>

The legal structure did not readily adapt to social change. Over time, it appears as though the age of those coming in contact with the system shifted somewhat in relative terms. Near the close of the seventeenth century a greater number of mature persons, those with families or tradesmen, were being considered unworthy of aid and admission to settled society. As Massachusetts towns became increasingly unable to provide room for each generation, the household status of transients shifted ever so slightly. The web of prudential and inhabitancy laws began catching different prey.<sup>26</sup> The “mature adult” proportion of those warned out of towns shows the most significant change. From roughly one-fifth of the total during the first decade of settlement, “mature adults” accounted for almost one-half the

warnings during the final decade of this study. The number of “young adult” cases also rose over the same period, but proportionally their significance was radically altered. As noted above, the proportion of “mature adults” counted as worthy poor also increased over time. Clearly, changes in the definitions of community and social maturity were taking place. The poor relief and correction system was touching an older population.<sup>27</sup>

This shift in patterns of dependency seems more significant than seventeenth century increases in poverty itself. This hypothesis, however, runs counter to contemporary opinion. From Ward to Mather, contemporary social commentary cited poverty as an increasingly significant aspect of colonial life.

Nathaniel Ward evaluated Ipswich society using a kind of deductive social analysis common during the seventeenth century. The poor, in this instance, were indexes of social health and well being. Puritan society did not court the notion that poverty could be eradicated, but the number of poor persons in any one community and the public response to them did have meaning. The polemicists Robert Cushman and John White, organizers and promoters of the Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay Colony settlements respectively, used the number of sturdy beggars roaming the English countryside as a measure of social decay and decline. Ward simply borrowed their technique. Examples could be multiplied. Michael Wigglesworth and Cotton Mather kept their own social ledgers. Wigglesworth's *Day of Doom* and Mather's *Diary* both include, in their own manner, censuses of poverty in Bay Colony society.<sup>28</sup>

The fact that Cotton Mather blamed the poor for ruining the “utopia” that New England had been should not necessarily suggest social decline, although this was a powerful contemporary image.<sup>29</sup> Something we might call the “concept of poverty” was a familiar part of seventeenth-century expression. Ward and Mather both employed the concept; it served their larger purposes. In a similar sense, the phrase “this poor people” was used frequently throughout the century for evocative and descriptive purposes.<sup>30</sup> Neither should Mather's charge necessarily suggest a society being overrun with poor persons. Analysis of the above data suggests the hypothesis that the population of the colony was increasing faster during the seventeenth century than were poverty cases. Relying solely upon percentage increase instead of absolute population figures, population increased from 1640 to 1715 by a factor of ten. During the same period, total poverty cases increased by a factor of three.<sup>31</sup> In relative terms, poverty may have been less a problem in 1715 than it had been in 1640.

This last discrepancy between rhetoric and reality suggests both continuity and change in the relationship between seventeenth-century Massachusetts society and its poor. Poverty was still a preoccupation of the Bay Colony. The concept of poverty and the definitions of the poor still helped define the “edges” of the seventeenth-century community. And these attitudes continued to cut far beyond economic distinctions and into social and cultural matter. The interaction of attitudes, law, and social conditions skewed the age distribution of the Bay Colony's poor, making the worthy poor overwhelmingly “mature” persons and the unworthy poor overwhelmingly “young” persons. Moreover, this same interaction tended to make both worthy and unworthy populations increasingly “mature” by the end of the century, indicating changed patterns of social maturity and dependency.



## NOTES

1. Landholding, poverty, and sufficiency are discussed in Richard P. Gildrie, *Salem, Massachusetts, 1626-1683; A Covenant Community* (Charlottesville, 1975) p. 72; and Christopher M. Jedrey, *The World of John Cleaveland: Family and Community in Eighteenth Century New England* (New York, 1979) p. 63.
2. Sir Frederick Morton Eden, *The State of the Poor* (London, 1797) 3 vols. Sydney and Beatrice Webb, *English Poor Law History. Part I: The Old Poor Law* vol. VII: *English Local Government*, reprint ed. (Hamden, Conn., 1963). A good modern work is Wilbur K. Jordan, *Philanthropy in England, 1480-1660* (New York, 1959).
3. Josiah Henry Benton, *Warning Out in New England* (Boston, 1911). Carl Bridenbaugh, *Cities in the Wilderness: The First Century of Urban Life in America, 1625-1742* (London, 1938); Marcus Wilson Jernegan, *Laboring and Dependent Classes in Colonial America, 1607-1783* (New York, 1931).
4. David S. Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic* (Boston, 1971). Stephen Foster, *Their Solitary Way: The Puritan Social Ethic in the First Century of Settlement in New England* (New Haven, 1971); Gary Nash, "Poverty and Poor Relief in Pre-Revolutionary Philadelphia," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser. XXXII, no. 1 (Jan., 1976); Douglas Lamar Jones, "The Strolling Poor: Transiency in Eighteenth Century Massachusetts," *The Journal of Social History*, (Spring, 1975); Christine Leigh Heyrman, "A Model of Christian Charity: The Rich and Poor in New England, 1630-1730" (unpubl. Ph.D. dissertation; Yale University, 1977).
5. "Nathaniel Ward to John Winthrop, Jr.," *Winthrop Papers*, 5 vols., ed. Massachusetts Historical Society (Boston, 1929- ), III: 216.
6. The two best examples are Robert Cushman, *Reasons and Considerations Touching the lawfulness of Removing out of England into the Parts of America*, in *Chronicles of the Pilgrim Fathers in the Colony of Plymouth, 1602-1625*, ed. Alexander Young (New York, 1971); and John White, *The Planters Plea, or the grounds of plantations examined and usual objections answered*, (London, 1630), reprinted in *Massachusetts Historical Society Proceedings*, LXIII (Oct. 1928-June 1929).
7. Brian Tierney, *Medieval Poor Law: A Sketch of Canonical Theory and Its Application in England* (Berkeley, 1959), pp. 11-12. Michael Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints: A Study in the Origins of Radical Politics* (New York, 1976), pp. 216-17.
8. Edward Winslow, *Good News From New England: or a true Relation of things very remarkable at the Plantation of Plimoth in New-England* (London, 1624), reprint in *Chronicles of the Pilgrim Fathers*, ed., Young, pp. 373-74.
9. Increase Mather, *Wo to Drunkards. Two Sermons Testifying against the Sin of Drunkenness: . . .* (Cambridge, 1673), pp. 2-29.
10. *Boston Records, Reports of the Record Commissioners of the City of Boston*, vols. II, VII, VIII, & X (Boston, 1881 & 1902), VIII: 61.
11. Walzer, 218.
12. Two lines of criticism dominate this discussion. For a summary of the first see John A. Garraty, *Unemployment in History: Economic Thought and Public Policy* (New York, 1978), pp. 1-70, passim; and Tierney, pp. 22-23. For the second see Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York, 1958); Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, 2 vols. (London, 1931), II: 607.; and Gabriel Kolko, "Max Weber on America: Theory and Practice," *History and Theory*, I (1961), pp. 243-60.

13. The type of town is significant, as public resources depend upon local conditions. For two attempts at typology, see Gildrie, introduction; and Robert Doherty, *Society and Power: Five New England Towns* (Amherst, 1977), passim.
14. This number represents the number of recorded entries and certainly not the number of poor persons or the number of poverty cases handled during this period. For an example of the latter, see Gildrie, pp. 155-56.
15. Jones, "The Strolling Poor . . ." uses the same type of household status analysis. The age assumption is supported in James A. Henretta, "Families and Farms: *Mentalité* in Pre-Industrial America," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., XXXV, no. 1 (January, 1978), 7-8.
16. The number of cases involving warning out gradually increased over the course of the century. Prudential cases tended to increase gradually until mid-century, thereafter declining precipitously.
17. The best recent review of poverty legislation is Rothman, Chapters I and II.
18. Benton, passim; Foster, passim.
19. *Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England*, 6 vols., ed., Nathaniel B. Shurtleff (Boston, 1853), I:76, 196. *The Records of the Town of Cambridge, 1603-1703* (Cambridge, Mass., 1901), 24. *Watertown Records Comprising the First and Second Books of Town Proceedings*, 2 vols., (Watertown, 1894), I:1-2. *Dorchester Town Records, 1632-1686, Reports of The Record Commissioners*, vol IV (Boston, 1896), 8. Boston Recs., II:10. *Early Records of the Town of Dedham, Massachusetts*, ed., Don G. Hill, 5 vols. (Dedham, 1892-99), III:20.
20. *Mass. Bay Recs.*, I:109.
21. The best presentation of these laws as they reflect concern for family order is Edmund S. Morgan, *The Puritan Family: Religion and Domestic Relations in Seventeenth-Century New England* (New York, 1944), pp. 65-87.
22. *The Colonial Laws of Massachusetts Reprinted from the Edition of 1660, with the Supplements to 1672, Containing also, The Body of Liberties of 1641*, ed., William H. Whitmore (Boston, 1889), pp. 26-27; *Mass. Bay Recs.*, II:150, 180. *Town Records of Salem, Massachusetts, 1630-1691*, 3 vols. (Salem, 1868-1934), II:145; *Dorchester Recs.*, IV:158-60, 239; *Watertown Recs.*, I:92-133, passim; II:172; *Dedham Recs.*, IV:103, V:53. Gildrie maintains that screening tests were essentially doctrinal; see Gildrie, pp. 4-5. David Flaherty notes the dominance of economic enquiry in inspection. He claims that financial probity was a town's greatest concern. David Flaherty, *Privacy in Colonial New England* (Charlottesville, 1967), pp. 172-73.
23. *Mass. Bay Recs.*, II:150, 180; V:373. *Colonial Laws*, pp. 5-6; *Records of the Suffolk County Court, 1671-1680* ed., Samuel E. Morison, *Colonial Society of Massachusetts Collections*, vols. XXIX-XXX (Boston, 1933), XXIX:83-89; XXX:596, and passim; *Middlesex County Court Records, 1649-1686*, transcr. David Pulsifer, 4 vols. (Court House, Cambridge, Mass.), III:5, 67, 88, 290.
24. Henretta, "*Mentalité*," pp. 7-8. also see Philip J. Greven, *Four Generations: Population, Land, and Family in Colonial Andover, Massachusetts* (Ithaca, 1970); and Kenneth A. Lockridge, *A New England Town: The First Hundred Years* (New York, 1970).
25. For an eighteenth century perspective on this matter see Rothman, pp. 50-52. Intergenerational conflict and imagery in the eighteenth century is discussed in Robert A. Gross, *The Minutemen and their World* (New York 1976) and Edwin G. Burrows and Michael

- Wallace, "The American Revolution: The Ideology and Psychology of National Liberation," *Perspectives in American History*, IV (1972), pp. 167-306.
26. Jones, "The Strolling Poor," p. 34; Henretta, "*Mentalité*," p. 8.
  27. There were, of course, wide variations decade by decade in the number of warning cases. During the first decade this study found 33 cases, 7 of which were "adult." The last decade total is 77, with 31 "adult" cases.
  28. Cushman, *Reasons and Considerations*, and White, *The Planters Plea*, both passim; *The Diary of Cotton Mather, 1681-1724*, ed., Worthington Chauncy Ford, 2 vols. (New York, 1911), passim. Michael Wigglesworth, *The Day of Doom: Or a Poetical Description of the Great and Last Judgement* (Boston, 1683).
  29. Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana; The Ecclesiastical History of New England*, 2 vols. (London, 1702), 1:97-103.
  30. Peter N. Carroll, *Puritanism and the Wilderness: The Intellectual Significance of the New England Frontier, 1629-1700* (New York, 1969), p. 83.
  31. The population matter has a long, complex literature. For the limited purposes of this study, I have used Harrington and Greene, adopted a very conservative factor of 10, and then considered solely proportional figures. This matter needs much more investigation than was possible here. Poverty cases totalled 211 during 1630-39 and approximately 500 to 600 during 1710-19. Evarts B. Greene and Virginia D. Harrington, *American Population Before the Federal Census of 1790* (New York, 1932).