Margaret Cary’s adult life, starting, with marriage and motherhood, as defined by 18th century cultural standards, ended in 1762. During the majority of these years, from 1741-1759, Margaret kept a sparse diary serving as a kind of family bible. This diary, although limited, offers a glimpse into the life of a woman who is often overlooked in histories of the period. Specifically, the details of Margaret’s life and family, her diary and other documents provide insight into the changing nature of family and gender roles in the 18th century merchant class of coastal New England. These changing realities of colonial seaports had a lasting impact on not just economic commerce, but also on religious, social, and cultural commerce. Margaret Cary’s life provides a case study of these changes and speaks to question of this project: the historical importance of Massachusetts’s women in the culturally transitional years between 1740 and 1760.
THE DIARY OF MARGARET GRAVES CARY:
FAMILY & GENDER IN THE MERCHANT CLASS OF 18th CENTURY CHARLESTOWN

A Thesis

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At long last – I thank Margaret Graves Cary and her family. Margaret’s sparse but wonderful words have made a lasting impact on my life as a scholar and student of history. I only hope that my words do her justice.

This project is dedicated to her.
Introduction: From Diary to Society

Every researcher should be so lucky as I was to stumble upon a source so neglected as the diary of Margaret Graves Cary. Margaret was an ordinary (albeit well-off) woman in a colonial seaport on the Massachusetts coast: Charlestown. She wasn’t a revolutionary or a feminist; she did much of what was expected of her by the period’s standards, and she happened to write a little bit of it down. After her death, the diary was at some point given to her middle son before being passed on down the Cary lines until in the late 19th century, when a distant relative decided to include a partial transcription among hundreds of pages of unrelated family letters.

I came across Margaret Cary’s diary during a search for women’s writing in early America and only dove in after I discovered that my first choice, Mehetabel Chandler Coit, was to be featured in a then-upcoming monograph. I returned to Margaret then out of need, not initially out of interest. The reality is, Mrs. Cary’s diary consists of only 26 entries, spanning the years 1741 to 1758, and even those precious few entries have even a paragraph to them. What was I to do with so little to work from?

I started to dig a hole to my metaphorical China, and here is some of the information I discovered: Margaret Cary was born in 1719, in Charlestown, Massachusetts, to Thomas and Sybill Graves. Thomas was a physician turned judge, and Sybill died of smallpox in 1721, along with Margaret’s infant sister, also Sybill (sometimes Sarah). Margaret worked with her father in his apothecary shop until she was of age and before marrying Captain Samuel Cary in late 1741. Captain Cary was from a line of merchants, most closely following in the footsteps of his own father, also Samuel. The elder Cary owned a ship called The Samuel and found himself attacked by pirates during his voyages mostly between London and Boston. The younger Captain Cary began his Atlantic trips in the mid 1730s, some to London, some to Cadiz, but many to the Caribbean. By the time of their marriage in 1741, the elder Cary had died, and the younger sailed almost exclusively to the Caribbean, specifically to St. Kitts.

Most of that information was found through early Boston newspapers, some family papers, and a whole lot of genealogical mapping. Margaret began her diary following her marriage to Samuel Cary in December 1741. It provided the starting point in my search for information from other sources to explicate and contextualize it. The gist of the diary entries is as follows: their first son Samuel was born in 1742, their second Thomas in 1745, and the final child, Jonathan, in 1748. With each birth, and with every other entry, Margaret prayed to God for guidance, strength,
and often forgiveness. Margaret experienced an earthquake, either a physical or metaphorical fire, several of young Samuel’s sicknesses, and perhaps several occasions for continuing her father’s medicinal practices.¹ In one instance specifically, she mentions taking a family under her care, although without saying in what way. One of the most important aspects of Margaret’s diary, corroborated by newspaper articles, was the continued absence of Captain Cary. During the 17-year span of Margaret’s diary, Captain Cary was home for perhaps three or four years years total.

Four years in seventeen? That seemed preposterous. I knew from Laurel Ulrich’s work about the concepts of Deputy Husbands and Good Wives, and about the various laws protecting women from deserter husbands. From this existing historiography, I knew that husbands were expected to be protectors, leaders, bread-winners, and disciplinarians. I understood that business, especially in merchant circles, would require months of sailing, but evidence suggests that at one point Samuel Cary was gone for almost six years. After further digging, I learned one more thing: this wasn’t uncommon among the group to which Margaret and the Cary family belonged.

That group was the merchant class of Charlestown, Massachusetts. According to archaeological and historical research, this class made up only about 10% of the seaport’s population.² Within this group, it wasn’t uncommon that men conducted business at a distance, often for lengthy periods of time, while women kept the house, made money, raised and educated the children, and spoke for their husbands in some legal and social matters.³ The point is, within her group, Margaret was not extraordinary. And that is what made her special.

We have the diary of Mehetbel Chandler Coit, native to Roxbury, Massachusetts, and later Connecticut, which supports much of what is already known about gender roles via scholars like Laurel Thatcher Ulrich and Ruth Bloch. Sarah Osborne, another colonial diarist, was a leader in the evangelical movement of the 18th century. Other women, like Martha Ballard or Elizabeth Drinker, can show us how women and families lived and changed in their respective contexts, both rural (Maine) and urban (Philadelphia). What Margaret provides for us is a look into the

¹ For the important religious ramifications of earthquakes on 18th century colonists not covered in this study, see: Erik R. Seeman, *Pious Persuasions: Laity and Clergy in Eighteenth-Century New England* (Baltimore, Md: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 147-180.


merchant world of colonial New England from the female perspective. As a member of a small but growing class of individuals, Margaret’s life and diary provides a lens through which to look at an incredibly important group of people that came to dominate the New England economy in the 18th century. Specifically for Margaret, this means showing us how women and families functioned within the merchant classes of seaport New England in the mid 18th century.

Given the materials available, I try here to make suggestions about life and how it functioned among merchant families during the period. Despite being so limited, Margaret’s diary and family history allow us to look at merchants and the merchant class, at women, sex, marriage, and pregnancy, and finally at families, childrearing, and the illnesses that were always rearing their ugly heads, smallpox especially. These topics and their relation to Margaret fill a void in a historiography that largely features studies of 17th century families but not so much 18th century. Instead, scholars of the mid-18th century focus more on consumerism, religion, and revolutionary fervor and seemingly choose to use 17th century families as placeholders for their 18th century counterparts. I want, to a degree, to complicate that.

Margaret Graves Cary lived an ordinary, if short, life relative to her class, time, and place. The lives of the Carys suggest a great deal about family in the mid-18th century: how it functioned, why it functioned, and how it changed. As the colonies, New England especially, moved to an Atlantic-facing economy, families also changed. These changes were especially evident among those most closely associated with the Atlantic, the merchant class. By exploring the life of Margaret Cary, perhaps something can be revealed about her family, and others like it.

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Early American scholarship over the last half-century suggests that the families like the Carys were embedded in a large personal and economic network of trade that likely had significant effects on how the members of the family lived and viewed themselves. A second set of scholarship, which examines gendered social practices and family life in New England during the colonial era, allows us to ask questions about not only women, but also men, and what roles each played specifically in sex, marriage, and household government. Beyond a simple exploration of Margaret Cary’s life, this study will endeavor both to locate the Cary family, and most especially Margaret, within the contexts other scholars have described, while at the same time exploring the ways in which a close study of the Carys can help us refine, qualify, and flesh out these models.
The most important early scholarly work about basic merchant economics in this region during this era was Bernard Bailyn’s *The New England Merchants in the Seventeenth Century* (1955). This vein of scholarship later came to include a history of the development of consumerism in New England in the 18th century, with the most influential of these studies being T.H. Breen’s “‘Baubles of Britain’: The Consumer Culture of Eighteenth Century American and the Coming Revolution” (1988), Bailyn and Breen’s arguments were revised by scholars like David Hancock, who argued for a more nuanced understanding of networks, especially in his *Oceans of Wine: Madeira and the Emergence of American Trade and Taste* (2009). Mark Valeri’s *Heavenly Merchandise: Rest of Title* (2010) then sought to show how such networks and consumerism had an impact on ideologies, specifically those of the religious of colonial New England. Finally, Elaine Crane and Ellen Hartigan-O’Connor in *Ebb Tide in New England: Women, Seaports, and Social Change, 1630-1800* (1998), and *The Ties That Buy: Women and Commerce in Revolutionary America* (2011) respectively, focused more on the social impact of merchant networks in relation to gender and showed more closely how Margaret and the Carys would have been specifically impacted by the economic and social changes embedded in the merchant world of seaport Massachusetts.4

Bailyn’s *The New England Merchants in the Seventeenth Century* was one of the first to discuss the origin and impetus for New England trade and merchant cultures in a dynamic way. In addressing the juxtaposition of 17th century Puritan ideals and merchant values, Bailyn surveyed the transition of New England from a religion-based colony reliant on fisheries and the fur trade to a far less Puritan region of seaports and Atlantic trade. This shift occurred largely within the second generation after settlement.5 Bailyn argued that just as the largely British-

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oriented merchant class caused cultural upheaval in seventeenth-century New England, those same merchant interests would eventually stabilize the region. Bailyn finished his argument with a lesson on Reformation English culture and the emergence of a class of gentlemen in New England who sought to reflect English culture on their side of the Atlantic. This cultural envy facilitated the development of an Atlantic perspective for many of the growing population, displacing the inward disposition of the Puritan faithful. As Bailyn wrote, “Trade, in making material and real the value of men’s labors in fields and on the sea, created dependencies and networks of relationships which, though long-lasting and important to the whole community, had no pre-ordained place in the Puritan scheme of things.” Bailyn’s descriptions of these dependencies and networks of relationships facilitated the initial trend among historians toward positioning these merchants in a transatlantic web, one in which Samuel Cary and Captain Cary would have undoubtedly participated.

Following Bailyn’s work, scholars largely neglected the topics of merchant cultures and Atlantic relations, probably due to an enormous academic shift to bottom-up social history, then intellectual and cultural histories. T.H Breen’s influential “‘Baubles of Britain’: The Consumer Culture of Eighteenth Century American and the Coming Revolution” (1988) was one of the first prominent works to signal a return to merchant history. Breen’s oft-cited argument details the cultural importance of the “language of consumerism,” a material-based common language among mid- to late-18th-century colonial Americans. Specifically, Breen wrote, “eighteenth century Americans communicated perceptions of status and politics to other people through items of everyday material culture.” He went on to focus on the meanings of things, “the semiotics of daily life,” that most scholars had taken for granted. Leaning on Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities*, Breen argued that 18th century colonists imagined a community within a context of British nationalism. Given what is known regarding the Carys’ probable inclusion in the merchant class of Massachusetts, Breen’s arguments regarding identity and community are apt in partially describing the culture in which the Carys, and most especially Margaret, lived.

7 T.H Breen, “‘Baubles of Britain’: The Consumer Culture of Eighteenth-Century America and the Coming Revolution,” 73-104.
Historians have since used Breen’s arguments and archaeological evidence to show that New Englanders, especially members of the merchant class like the Carys, were heavily involved in a system of class politics as projected through the consumption of goods – or as Breen wrote, “Advertisements, merchant displays, and news of other people’s acquisitions stoked consumer desire.” Breen argued that “this language of goods was shared by all who participated in the market” and that the shared commercial experiences of people with products and people with people were largely under-acknowledged by colonists. Specifically, Breen wrote, “Up until 1760, most Americans would not have been conscious of the profound impact of consumption upon their society…. Of course, the colonists were aware of the proliferation of choice, but for most of them acquisition of British imports was a private act.” Here too, Breen described a concept of consumption that may have been present in its earliest forms in Charlestown, and especially in Boston, during Margaret’s life.

David Hancock, writing not long after Breen published “Baubles,” first wrote his Citizens of the World: London Merchants and the Integration of the British Atlantic Community, 1735-1785 (1995) and argued that marginal merchants, even those on the periphery of the empire, influenced and were influenced by the economics of the metropole. Later, however, in his more celebrated Oceans of Wine: Madeira and the Emergence of American Trade and Taste (2009), Hancock argued that former images of merchant networks described as “wheel and spoke” were problematic. Rather, he contended, instead of a metropole-centric model, Early American and British networks worked more as a web: “Causality is reciprocal: individuals are embedded in a world and created by it; they also change the world by their actions and responses to their fellow members of the society and the nonhuman environment.” The reciprocal nature of Hancock’s proposed transatlantic world best illustrates the need to examine the experience of merchants on the ground level, as well as their everyday economies, in order to get a better sense of how these networks worked. “The creation of new ties,” Hancock argued, “was less an impersonal economic transaction than the actual coming together of men interested in similar types of enterprises. Innovations in New England commerce, therefore, depended to a large extent on the movements of men.”

Similar circumstances brought merchants and others together in a burgeoning system that adapted to the interests and movements of those participating. Such

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9 Ibid., 80, 85, 86.

10 Hancock, Oceans of Wine: Madeira and the Emergence of American Trade and Taste, xix, 144.
group organization implies a set of negotiations involved in maintaining membership in this transatlantic commercial merchant culture. While Hancock sometimes neglected the influence of women, it has been his work more than others that has allowed scholars to ask more questions about the importance of individual people such as Margaret, about local economies, and about micro-level cultural exchange and their impact on larger systems.\(^\text{11}\)

Beyond economic commerce, one such larger system is religious ideology, a particularly important factor in colonial New England. Mark Valeri’s *Heavenly Merchandise: How Religion Shaped Commerce in Puritan America* (2010) is a landmark work that shows how the religion of early New England reached accommodations with the market forces of merchant seaports. Specifically he wrote, “As Boston ministers conformed their teaching to the latest transatlantic intellectual fashions, they gave their merchant parishioners a language to bridge piety and commercial technique. From this perspective, it was the transformation of Puritanism, not Puritanism itself, that explains the congruence between religion and the market in early New England.”\(^\text{12}\) Put simply, ministers and intellectuals of the period (often the same) adapted their methods and religious rhetoric to better fit the time and thus allowed religious people (such as the Carys and Graves) to merge their moral and economic interests. Valeri is adamant and convincing that these early American Protestants did not inherently embody the free market capitalism that started to emerge in the 18\(^{\text{th}}\) century. Rather, that ideology emerged slowly as ministers and colonists adapted older models to the changing demands of a new economic and social order.

Elaine Crane and Ellen Hartigan-O’Connor each addressed women, gender, and the important roles each played in the success of consumer cultures in early America. Crane, in her *Ebb Tide in New England: Women, Seaports, and Social Change, 1630-1800* (1998), argues that the “feminization of New England sea ports was accompanied by and perhaps even responsible for other changes over time.”\(^\text{13}\) Crane’s use of “feminization” relates to enlarged roles for women in the urban spaces of New England seaports – mainly in the form of bookkeeping and shop keeping, but also in other areas typically dominated by men, such as legal matters. According to Crane, this feminization started during the 1740s and 1750s, coinciding exactly with the time


Margaret was writing her diary (1741-1759). Although, as argued by Bailyn, the emergence of a merchant class began in the 1670’s, a merchant culture on the New England coast wasn’t a reality until the mid-18th century. The consumer revolution in colonial American port cities, as described in Breen’s work, along with the neo-Calvinist realities evident in Valeri’s work, mirrored a gradual shift in economic and cultural ideals.

Congregationalist tradition dictated the nature of feminine piety, and many urban churches filled with the wives of largely absent merchants. As a result, the women, not men, of port cities came to define cultural commerce through conversation, social interaction, and local economics. The authority once held solely by men began to shift as consumer goods from England and other transatlantic cultures became commodities for those with household purchasing power: women. Situated amid this cultural transition was Margaret Cary. As a devout Calvinist but also as a citizen of a port city and the wife of a merchant, Margaret was perfectly positioned to experience the tensions of a religious but also increasingly commercial capitalist culture.

Ellen Hartigan-O’Connor’s more recent work, *The Ties That Buy: Women and Commerce in Revolutionary America* (2009), has focused more closely on women’s authority as derived from purchasing power in merchant cultures, as well as on the role of gender and diversity in the creation and perpetuation of transatlantic networks. Given Hartigan-O’Connor’s focus on gender, it is not surprising that she has argued, “Women were quintessential market participants in this context, with fluid occupational identities, a firm investment in cash and commercial goods for power and meaning and cross-class social and economic ties.” Her goal in her work has been to establish a place for women as historical actors in the expanding market of colonial North America – something largely neglected in scholarship predating that of Crane. Hartigan-O’Connor defines women as a key consumer demographic who attained power through shopping—that is, making commercial choices—and through conversational and social networks. Despite there being little evidence of Margaret shopping or making her own commercial choices,

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15 For an example of near-Boston communities that did not transition as suggested here (i.e. Essex and Marblehead), see Christine Leigh Heyrman, *Commerce and Culture: The Maritime Communities of Colonial Massachusetts, 1690-1750* (New York: W.W.Norton Company, 1986), 1-20.
her lack of husband suggests she did indeed maintain such agency, at least until Samuel was old enough to help.

Women, Hartigan-O’Connor continues, were central to the commercial connections that dominated urban economies such as Boston and Charlestown. As buyers in the market who were legally subordinate at home, women were very much intermediaries in colonial and even transatlantic economic spheres. Operating through networks (and thus a local ecology) of gossip, social information, and material knowledge, women bought and sometimes sold goods as a way to support and maintain value in a changing cultural and economic climate. As shown in Bailyn’s work, ideas of money, wealth, and the material shifted from the 17th into the 18th century, and Hartigan-O’Connor claims that women were at the forefront of such change. Breen’s influence is most evident when the author writes that “commerce created shared experiences and a mutually intelligible language that bridged geographical, racial, and social distance.” Her inclusion of race, however, and the obvious inclusion of gender allow Hartigan-O’Connor’s The Ties that Buy to expand on the work of its “Baubles” predecessor.

In terms of building and participating in the expanding merchant culture, women’s ties “formed an expanding web of Atlantic connections and attained a larger importance than was never visible in the terms of any single rental agreement or purchase of a pound of flour and yet underlay both.” This underlying web of connections, as evident in the work of her scholarly peers, breaks down into specific elements in terms of the lives of colonial women such as Margaret. Hartigan-O’Connor lists mutual dependence, intermediation, and informal exchange as the most important of women’s roles in economic exchange. The reciprocity evident in networks as well as the informality of those connections lent women the ability and power to serve as near-autonomous intermediaries in the realm of Atlantic commerce. Just as important, women’s role as workers, whether domestic or public, further “linked their local transactions to international transformations.”

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18 Ibid., 193.
19 Ibid.
20 Ibid., 8.
Histories of family and gender make up a second historiography that provides a vital context for understanding the links between women and family life in the home and the merchant class of New England seaports. More specifically, this study uses scholarship that addresses the nature of the private lives of Margaret and other women in the merchant class of 18th-century Massachusetts. Such topics as sex, marriage, pregnancy, childbirth, childrearing, and health all serve to show the realities of family life during this period. In the face of smallpox, a changing economic and social culture, and a life largely without the father of her children, what can Margaret’s life tell us about childbirth and motherhood among the merchant class in the mid-18th century seaport communities of New England?

First, we must understand how historians of gender such as Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, Ruth Bloch, Catherine Breckus, and others have created and then critiqued historical scholarship on gender, especially with regard to marriage and social roles. Ulrich’s *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650-1750* (1980) remains the go-to source on gender roles and social practice in the colonial period. Her later *A Midwife’s Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard Based on Her Diary 1785-1812* (1990) was a landmark book in gender history. It also, as a study relying on one woman’s diary as a major source, set the groundwork for many later projects including Breckus’ *Sarah Osborn’s World: The Rise of Evangelical Christianity in Early America* (2013), Michele Marchetti Coughlin’s *One Colonial Woman’s World: The Life and Writings of Mehetabel Chandler Coit* (2013), as well as this project on the life of Margaret Graves Cary. Ruth Bloch’s articles, most of which are collected in *Gender and Morality in Anglo-American Culture, 1650-1800* (2003), explore cultural and at times intellectual histories of gender in colonial America with a focus on notions of morality and virtue through the lens of courtship and other socially prescriptive roles. In contrast to the female-focused studies is Lisa Wilson’s *Ye Heart of Man: The Domestic Life of Men in Colonial New England* (2000), a gender history regarding men’s roles in what was primarily dictated in colonial America as a women’s sphere of work: the home. In the vein of Hartigan-O’Connor’s *The Ties that Buy is Lisa Norling’s Captain Ahab Had a Wife: New England Women & the Whalfishery, 1720-1870* (2000), a look at merchant class women primarily on Nantucket Island and their respective roles at home, albeit with absent men, during the whale fishing boom of primarily the 19th century. Finally, Rebecca Tannenbaum’s *The Healer’s Calling: Women and
Medicine in Early New England (2009) and Catherine Scholten’s Childbearing in American Society 1650-1850 (1985) are self-explanatory in their titles, as each remains the major source on their respective topics. They work well together to explore the roles of women in health, pregnancy, and childbirth, both in families and in communities.²¹

Ulrich’s Goodwives and her Midwife’s Tale, along with Breckus’s and Coughlin’s histories based largely on diaries, serve as the clearest models for (and clearest contrasts to) this analysis of Margaret Cary’s life. Published in 1980, Goodwives was one of the first prominent histories of colonial American gender following the rise of “women’s history.” Ulrich’s work on Northern New England women heavily influenced most subsequent works, with the exception of two Ruth Bloch articles published in 1978. Ulrich’s goal was “role definition,” but she also reveals a number of the neglected aspects of daily life in Northern (mostly rural) New England, such as the role of Deputy Husband. She argues that understanding gender and women in colonial America means that generalizations must be swept aside. In their place are considerations of what it meant to act as housewife, consort, mother, mistress, neighbor, Christian, heroine, and deputy husband. None of these roles or identities, Ulrich argues, existed in isolation. They must each be studied in conjunction with the others, as well as in their particular incarnations in different places and times. Like those women in Ulrich’s study, Margaret Cary’s experience arguably embodied a number of those identities. The influence of Good Wives on the historiography is easily seen as successive historians have used a combination of Ulrich’s identities to frame their own work.

It is also clear in Ulrich’s later A Midwife’s Tale, her portrait of Martha Ballard’s Maine, that her arguments are expressed through the tangible experiences of Ballard’s life. Ulrich sets out to explore Ballard’s life and women’s roles, as she shows how Martha Ballard was not, as had been historically assumed, precluded from participating in social roles outside of her home. As a healer and midwife, Ballard became important through her economic roles, her social roles, and

even her legal roles. Martha Ballard’s diary details the economic and social influence of other women during the period. Ulrich argues that Ballard’s diary does more than reveal the realities of an era. “By restoring the substructure of 18th century life,” she writes, “it transforms the nature of the evidence upon which much of the history of the period has been written.”

Historiographically, such a claim and purpose changed the course of women’s and gender history and set the stage for projects big and small, ranging from Brekus’s *Sarah Osborn’s World* and Coughlin’s *One Colonial Women’s World*, to this thesis and a proper examination of the life of Margaret Graves Cary.

Brekus’s *Sarah Osborn’s World* explores, as the title suggests, the rise of evangelical Protestantism through the writing of colonial Rhode Island resident Sarah Osborn. Brekus focuses on, through the life of Sarah Osborn, the revivalist era in North America in the years leading up to the American Revolution and argues for the importance of the laity, in particular non-elite white women, in the spread of evangelism in the 18th century. Brekus’s work expands the historical understanding of non-elite white women from one placing women primarily in the home and building a family, to one showing their impact on larger historical events. However, because Margaret Cary was a member of the elite merchant class, and because there is little evidence that Margaret shared her faith with other women, Brekus’s text serves as an implicit contrast to Margaret’s life.

Michelle Marchetti Coughlin’s text on Mehetabel Chandler Coit is more theme-focused than Brekus’s work and, like this project, attends more to the ordinariness of life as represented in the subject’s diary rather than to any extraordinary contribution. The first exploration of one of the oldest early American diaries still in existence, it is of interest for that reason. Coughlin’s work leads her in many directions, including discussions of business, family, social life, and even war. Coit’s life was long and extended far in to the frame of Margaret Cary’s but lived most of her life before Margaret did and with her husband in residence [She writes a diary that follows everyday life events, comings and goings, and recipes.] Mehetabel Coit’s life was also quite different from the quietly pious and loving but solitary Margaret Cary.

Ruth H. Bloch, in her “Changing Conceptions of Sexuality and Romance in Eighteenth-Century America,” among other works, surveys the transition from male-focused physical sexual experiences as a cultural ideal to more feminized and spiritualized models of physical experience.

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Showing the increased emphasis on the advantages of marital sex beyond just procreation, she argues that the meaning of sex changed just as religion and society did, with the rise of market economies and a diversification of faiths. Despite such a transition, however, Bloch also argues that sex continued to reflect the patriarchal social system on which communities still relied, something made explicit in Mather’s *Ornaments for the Daughters of Zion* (1692), where he claims that it is the woman’s role to sexually please her husband and through doing do, to please God. 23 Writing in 1978, Bloch intended to emphasize the importance of women as historical agents during the time, challenging male-centered views of women in histories of colonial America. Anecdotes of Captain Cary’s demeanor suggest that their sexual life still reflected a dominant patriarchy, just as Bloch suggested.

Lisa Heart explores the changing nature of that patriarchy at length in her *Ye Heart of Man: The Domestic Life of Men in Colonial New England* (2000). She argues that a recasting of historical ideas about patriarchy is needed, as past scholars have not yet understood the system from the personal and private recollections of the men involved. To do so, she looks more closely at the writings of men during both the 17th and 18th centuries. Some of those men frame their own patriarchy as “treasured or tacitly accepted” by women, but Heart writes that men saw being the head of household as a duty and obligation, not a power trip. She argues that colonial men sought to be useful, and, though women were certainly not understood as equal to men, men were by and large not autonomous in their relationship to women. 24 Using Ulrich’s *Good Wives* as a model, Heart means to show that the title “Good men” bore with it a “more complex base for self-definition” than did typical definitions of masculinity but also came with cultural and social expectations that sometimes unfairly dictated the lives of men. Tracing this version of patriarchy through business, courtship, marriage, and fatherhood, Heart succeeds in including men in the history of gender. Though her view of masculinity and patriarchy are at times difficult to apply to the Cary example given Captain Cary’s distance from home and the absence of evidence suggesting his perspectives, understanding Margaret and Samuel’s relationship as interdependent gives Margaret an agency that she and other women ultimately deserve.

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Lisa Norling’s *Captain Ahab Had A Wife: New England Women & the Whalefishery, 1720-1870* (2000) explores the development of female domesticity among the wives of whale fishers from New Bedford and Nantucket. Like Margaret, these were the wives of sea faring men gone for years at a time. Unlike Margaret, some of these women questioned the strength of their marriages in the face of loneliness and despair. Norling argues that at times, these women, nearly all of whom were Quaker, were called upon to be deputy husbands (as described by Ulrich). As in Margaret’s world, however, cultural, commercial, and economic shifts to an Atlantic world in the late 18th and early 19th centuries led to social, religious, and cultural change among these women which threatened to replace the cultural uniformity on which their gender roles had been based. This cosmopolitanism, in some ways similar to that of the mainland merchant class, led to expanded roles for women beyond the domestic lives for which they were raised. There are obvious similarities between the arguments in Norling’s work and this project; however, the life of Margaret Cary was different in three key ways. First, Margaret was likely Calvinist, with a radically different religious orientation than that of the Nantucket Quakers. Second, our understanding of Margaret’s relationship with Samuel was markedly different than many of those explored by the author, as Norling had access to two-way correspondence between spouses, whereas this study is restricted only to Margaret’s perspective. The distance between the Carys arguably made Margaret love her notoriously stern husband more, whereas some Quaker women became less dependent on and showed less affection for their absent husbands. Finally, Margaret’s (and the Carys’) story took place decades before those of Norling’s subjects. Nevertheless, Norling’s work is an important one for the historiography of gender in that it shows quite well the overlap between the domestic and the economic.

Catherine M. Scholten’s *Childbearing in American Society 1650-1850* (1987), and Rebecca J. Tannenbaum, *The Healer’s Calling: Women and Medicine in Early New England* (2009), each represents a sub-genre of gender history -- that is, more specific works exploring the various prescriptive roles of women and how women recast their own agency and made those roles their own. Each author gives extensive descriptions of the colonial birthing process and women’s health. These include the personnel involved in labor, the gendered social ceremony of birth, and the believed implications of sin on children and health. Tannenbaum’s key argument is that many processes surrounding colonial health, including healing or childbirth, were embedded in larger social networks facilitated by women. Scholten writes in much the same vein; however,
her work is specific to childrearing and the differences between the mother and father’s role in childhood. She writes of how, with the rise of women’s literacy in the mid 18th century, the father’s role in child-rearing diminished.25 These changes are especially evident in the Cary example, as, without Captain Cary present, Margaret would have relied on others for support. Scholten and Tannenbaum thus allow us to speculate on the likely nature of Margaret’s social circles of women and midwives, all of whom would have drawn upon personal, not academic, experience, to aid in Margaret’s pregnancies, births, and overall health. She was also left to care for her three sons with the help of these circles, along with just two slaves and possibly her brother-in-law Richard.26

Along with gender history, family history of the period also helps us to decipher the nature of Margaret Cary’s life from the scanty evidence her diary provides. Like Bailyn’s Merchants, John Demos’ Little Commonwealth (1970) is one of the oldest (but still important) works regarding colonial household government. Most if not all later scholarship owes much to Demos’ work and his arguments regarding the household as a reflection of political and religious hierarchies.27

Specifically, Demos argues that early colonial households upheld the patriarchy they saw in both religion and government. Just as the male image of God reigned over his people, a King or Governor did the same. From here, a husband and father followed suit as leader and ruler of his household. Demos, like later scholars, shows that the popular belief that Puritans were against sex was incorrect; rather, it was a crucial component of marriage and male power. He also argues that household patriarchy took shape via children’s education, specifically through catechization and apprenticeships. Finally he addresses, in the face of a widespread western acceptance of such male dominance, early beliefs held that certain human weakness was inherently feminine.

Though Demos’ arguments remain valid, later scholars would use his work as a basis on which to both build and detour from as those histories such as Martha Ballard’s and even Margaret Cary’s were revealed. In the case of Margaret specifically, it is clear from her diaries

and family correspondence that, despite his long absences, Captain Cary was seen as the dominant force in the household. However, it is during those absences that Demos’ arguments become frayed. Margaret Cary would have raised and educated her children, something increasingly common with rising of female literacy, largely without the help of Samuel. The Captain and Margaret were seemingly entrenched in the formal ideology of traditional gender roles while he was home. However, for far more than half of their marriage, he was not there.

Following Demos, colonial New England family histories took two distinct but not mutually exclusive paths: those focused on religion and those on community. The former is best represented by Richard Gildrie’s *The Profane, the Civil, and the Godly: The Reformation of Manners in Orthodox New England, 1679-1749* (2004), which argues that New England religious values were at once both strict and liberating. He writes that Puritan doctrine guided early colonists in many aspects of their daily lives, and that many of the people of these New England regions were not forced to follow such rigid beliefs, but wanted to do so freely.

Gildrie is clear in stating that the Puritan effort in both England and America was to inculcate self-control, orderliness, and piety in individual conduct. He argues that this view embodied a coherent social ethic stressing communal order. This emphasis became even more prevalent, Gildrie argues, in the late 17th century, when religious views combined with social reform created a sense of moral civility, i.e., when piety became connected with community participation. Gildrie writes that colonial leaders expected “responsible participation in civil life” and that such a life was couched in the language of virtue - then defined as “a willingness to promote the public welfare over private interest.”

When combined with the work of scholars who focus on family history -- particularly that of Gerald F. Moran and Maris Vinovskis, authors of *Religion, Family, and the Life Course: Explorations in the Social History of Early America* (1992) -- Gildrie’s arguments help suggest the nature of the moral influences in Margaret’s life. While Moran and Vinovskis’ work is wide-ranging, their arguments cover the moral upbringing of children and how, despite economic and social realities, children still experienced a form of childhood. This life stage took shape partly through required catechism and religious participation, and shows how the Cary children and their parents might have reconciled economic, social, and religious influences to shape a form of childhood. Specifically, though

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some young men were forced to “grow up” young through apprenticing or working in the home, child-centric religious practices like catechism lessons, in combination with other forms of daily education such as reading and writing, ensured that some version of childhood as a distinct life stage existed. Using these practices, education and catechism, parents like the Carys instilled foundational morality in their children despite a changing culture in increasingly diverse coastal cities.29

The religious and moral foundation of the Carys and other colonists worked in tandem with, and often heavily influenced, community practices. This can be seen in both Helena Wall’s *Fierce Communion: Family and Community in Early America* (1990), as well as Gloria Main’s *Peoples of a Spacious Land: Families and Cultures in Colonial New England* (2004). Wall argues that the lives of families and individuals in colonial American towns and cities were inescapably intertwined with their communities, and vice versa. In many instances, issues we might think of as private (e.g. courtship, divorce, and debt) were still very much public. Wall argues that public knowledge of one’s personal endeavors led to a form of community moral control. One such example includes a court’s use of second-hand community opinions as valid testimony about the health of a neighbor’s marriage. Though Wall amalgamates rural and urban families and thus has little focus on one or the other, her arguments are largely still apt. With regard to labor and childrearing especially, Wall argues that colonial families maintained a largely different concept of what “childhood” meant and that labor needs often deprived colonial children of having the childhood described by Moran and Vinovskis. [Both insights, however, are easily applicable to the Carys, with regard especially to Captain Cary and Margaret’s first-born, Samuel.] It may have been that Margaret’s need of help, given Captain Cary’s absence, may have led Samuel to have grown up, so to speak, before he otherwise would have.30

Like Wall, Gloria Main in her *Peoples of a Spacious Land: Families and Cultures in Colonial New England*, explores community influences on courtship, marriage, and childrearing in early New England. Main, however, more closely hearkens back to many of John Demos’ arguments regarding patriarchy in the household. Specifically, Main argues that in addition to basic public

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roles, childrearing, naming, and sexual politics perpetuated elements of the patriarchy so common in earlier periods. For example, Main emphasizes the colonial belief that women left without a sexual partner would fall into hysteria and that beliefs such as this one characterized a culture in which women were second to men.

Main, unlike other scholars of the New England family, compares the English to other peoples of the region, most notably Native Americans. By tracing similarities and differences among cultures since colonization, Main is heavy-handed in her suggestion that English common law and colonial cultures were sometimes similar to, or many times more restricting than, those “less-advanced” societies she mentions. Her arguments show how Margaret and Samuel may have maintained a marriage in an unequal culture, and starkly contrast with the work of those scholars who emphasize gendered social changes in seaport communities.

A final important piece of family history scholarship is Lawrence Stone’s influential *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800* (1965). Though nominally about England, Stone considers colonial America as part of England. Based largely in statistics and data, Stone focuses most on marriage trends, with key topics including marriage and remarriage rates in relation to lower mortality rates in the 18th century, as well as social changes like the advent of “affective individualism.”

Stone’s “Affective Individualism” refers to a family structure, emerging largely in the 18th century that saw more emphasis on personal autonomy and family ties based on mutual affection.31 This structure was, of course, in contrast to more authoritarian methods of parenting and control that by no means disappeared but gave way, to an extent, to partners who chose one another for affection rather than economic advantage; parents who cared about the educational, physical, and emotional, rather than just the spiritual upbringing, of their children; and communities less based on male-dominated power structures and more open to the female majority that made up most churches and social circles. Such arguments often coincide with Philip Greven’s landmark work *Four Generations: Population, Land, and Family in Colonial Andover, Massachusetts* (1970). Greven shows that early families were more nuclear and community based and that around 1720, shifts emerged that saw children becoming more independent and marrying younger, and families extending outward from their communities.

Greven’s focus is on genealogy and inheritance rather than affective family structures, and therefore Stone provides a stronger context for in this study.32

In terms of marriage, Stone shows the need for women to function as managers in many colonial families, especially those without daughters where a mother might otherwise delegate many of her roles to her daughter (the Carys were such a family). Such a need as having a household manager explains, beyond love, why Margaret and Captain Cary married and maintained that marriage despite his long-term absences: Samuel needed a trusted partner to manage his interests. Such a role not only involved raising children and keeping house but also managing money and documents, thus suggesting the basis for Crane’s and Hartigan-O’Connor’s works in which women used their roles to have economic influence. While not focusing on merchant communities, Stone suggests much of what is suggested here: that 18th century social change greatly affected the roles of women and men in the family structures of colonial America.

The transition to a more individualistic family structure peaked around 1750, correlating with both Crane and Hartigan-O’Connor’s ideas of more feminized seaport communities. Affective individualism took hold largely as a result of the cosmopolitanism of seaports forced changes in the nature of community influence. Interaction with larger networks of people, as facilitated by Atlantic-world mercantilism, allowed many colonists to see beyond the scope of local community-centric beliefs. As households became more independent of communal expectations, at least as compared with generations past, families were able to look inward to create family governments focused more on the personal well-being of family members. Changes associated with this new ideal extended to ideas of sex and sexuality, the roles of parents and children inside and outside the household, and the language with which each of these groups spoke of the other. Some of these structural shifts, especially changing affective ties and the idea of an augmented household government, are clearly represented in Margaret Cary’s diary.

Margaret’s diary is devotional in every sense of the term and as such, it is clear she attended church often. Boston and Charlestown church sermons of the period differ in a number of ways from their rural counterparts. Specifically, prescriptive language toward women trends more toward the proper care and love a mother should give to her children (i.e., affective ties) rather

than strictly scripture-based preaching’s on sexual mores and other elements found among the research of scholars like Ulrich and Greven.\textsuperscript{33}

To explore Margaret’s life in the context of the above historiographical themes, I have broken my study into two large chapters with appropriate sub-sections. Chapter one mostly explores the influence of Captain Samuel Cary, along with that of his father, also Samuel Cary, and the merchant tradition on Margaret. It also illustrates the influence and importance of her own father, Thomas Graves, a man from whom she learned something about medicine and healing. The chapter opens with a characterization of the Atlantic world, merchants’ place in that world, and the importance of cultural commerce within seaport communities. Part I of the chapter then situates Samuel and Margaret’s fathers in that world and explores the former’s profession as a merchant, the latter’s as a physician and judge, and the influences each had on the lives of their family. Part II then explores the text of Margaret’s diary as it relates to Samuel’s merchant endeavors and how she managed their family despite his long absences and sometimes near fatal experiences. Ultimately this chapter seeks to explore the life of Margaret as it connects with the men and merchants in her life. Only then does it attempt to suggest that, though the merchant class made up only a fraction of colonial seaport communities, this group played a primary role in the gendered social changes occurring during the mid-18\textsuperscript{th} century. Among this group, women played important and evolving roles.

Chapter two is Margaret-centric and largely discusses the feminization of communities and family governments. Part I details the realities of love, marriage, and sex in Margaret’s life and, through her, those of mid-century New England. Part II addresses pregnancy, birth, and the medical dangers of both. Part III is then dedicated to childrearing in the face of illness, with special emphasis on smallpox as it affected Margaret’s family and children. All of chapter two has at its foundation threads of spirituality and their connection to the physical and the rise of affective individualism, as well as ideas of gender roles and parenting in a society transitioning

from community and religious based value systems to one more centered on the market and the family. It is here I suggest that the cosmopolitan realities of 18\textsuperscript{th} century colonial seaports had a lasting impact on not just economics, but also on religious, social, and family values and vice versa.

Margaret Cary’s diary sheds light on that dynamic relationship and provides a brief glimpse into the life of a forgotten matriarch and her complex family.
Chapter I: A Networked Culture of Men & Women

In the first eleven years of Margaret Cary’s marriage, her husband, Captain Samuel Cary, was probably home for no more than 18 months combined. During this time, Margaret birthed and raised three boys, practiced medical arts of some kind, and navigated the ever-changing social and cultural landscape of 18th-century Charlestown, Massachusetts. What does this say about Margaret and similar white women of the merchant community in colonial seaports during the era? If Captain Cary’s long absences were typical of mid-1700’s merchants, Margaret Cary and the place of other women in the changing colonial cultures like hers requires closer examination.

In *Ebb Tide in New England: Women, Seaports, and Social Change, 1630-1800*, Elaine Craine argues that the “feminization of these New England sea ports was accompanied by and perhaps even responsible for other changes over time.”\(^1\) Craine emphasizes merchant culture and the financial influence of sea-based commerce on the lives of women in the Atlantic World, specifically in four New England towns. This feminization started around the 1740s and 1750s coinciding exactly with the writing of Margaret’s diary (1741-1759). Although Bernard Bailyn argues that a merchant class began to emerge in the 1670’s, by the mid-18th century a new merchant culture, with its own issues and concerns, was a solid presence.\(^2\) The establishment of a consumer revolution in colonial American port cities along with the advent of a more individualistic Calvinist ideology gave way to such a shift in economic and cultural ideals. As Congregationalist tradition dictated the nature of feminine piety and as churches filled with the wives of largely absent merchants, the female demographic of port cities came to define many of the ground level interchanges, which is to say cultural commerce.\(^3\) The economic authority once held largely by men began to shift, as Ellen Hartigan-O’Connor has argued, as consumer goods from England and other transatlantic cultures became commodities for those with household purchasing power: women. Situated amidst this cultural transition was Margaret Cary. As a devout Calvinist but also as a citizen of a port city and the wife of a merchant, Margaret Cary’s life may reveal some of the tensions of a religious but increasingly capitalist culture.

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Part I: The Patriarchs - Thomas Graves (1683-1747) & Samuel Cary (1682-1741)

Historian David Hancock argues for the importance of micro-level interactions as important influences on cultural commerce. “Causality is reciprocal,” he writes; “individuals are embedded in a world and created by it; they also change the world by their actions and responses to their fellow members of the society and the nonhuman environment.”

Localized, ground level participants such as the Carys played their own role in establishing the systemic elements of the increasingly interconnected Atlantic World through extending geographically their own social and market-oriented networks. Margaret and Samuel Cary, in particular, were both born into families with pre-existing commercial relationships, whether cultural or economic, and continued this connection through their marriage. Specifically, each of Margaret and Samuel’s respective fathers played integral roles in shaping the social and economic roles their children would play later in life. Thomas Graves’s and Samuel Cary’s individual experiences shaped not only their families, but also the communities around them.

Margaret’s father, Thomas, was born in 1683 and died at the age of 63 in 1747. His tombstone reads:

Here lyes intered the body of ye Hon'l Thomas GRAVES Esq., who departed this life in his sleep, 19 Jun 1747, ae 63. He was a beloved Physician, an upright Judge, & a wise & good man.  

Having been a physician and, as later correspondence attests, his own apothecary, Thomas Graves was important in colonial Charlestown. [He was also probably a judge, although available evidence does not allow us to reach this conclusion with absolute certainly.] Other evidence beyond newspapers and Thomas’s epitaph only write that he was a justice, with little additional specificity. Supposing that all announcements pertain to Thomas, his judicial appointments were as follows:

4 David Hancock, Oceans of Wine: Madeira and the Emergence of American Trade and Taste (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), xix.
7 Newspapers and other records at the time would often spell Thomas’s surname as “Greaves,” and there was another Thomas Greaves in Charlestown who, after his death in 1738, was described as Honorable, suggesting he too may have been a judge.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1731</td>
<td>Middlesex County Justice of the Peace (Greaves)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1733</td>
<td>Justice of the Inferior Court for Common Pleas for the County of Middlesex (Greaves/Graves)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1737</td>
<td>Justice of the Superior Court of Judicature (Greaves) (Resigned 1739)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1739</td>
<td>Commissioner to the General Assembly of Massachusetts (Graves)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1739</td>
<td>Middlesex representative to the General Court (Hon. Thomas Greaves)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Barring unpublished appointments prior to 1731, it seems as though Thomas Graves dedicated his later life to judiciary and legislative efforts, while his earlier years were more heavily dedicated to being a physician. If we can accept this timeline, it stands to note that there was at least some overlap. This might suggest that Thomas Graves was actually both physician and judge the entirety of his life. Proof of overlap stems from a 1733 newspaper announcement:

**Figure 1:** News piece announcing the medical accident of a pregnant woman. Upon delivering a dying child, Graves and Dr. Canedy saved the infant. See *The Boston Gazette*, Monday September 3, to Monday September 10, 1733; Issue: 714; Boston, Massachusetts: 3.

William Budington’s 1845 *History of the First Church, Charlestown, in nine lectures, with notes* noted that “Thomas Graves, graduated at Harvard College 1703, succeeded his father (Dr. Thomas Graves) in the practice of medicine in this town, and besides filling the offices his father sustained, became judge of the supreme court.”

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representative to the Massachusetts House of Representatives in 1739. The more important element of Budington’s history is his assertion that Graves succeeded his father after graduating from Harvard in 1703. This would mean that Graves worked as a physician to Charlestown for almost 30 years before his first documented judicial appointment.

How much influence did Thomas Graves’s practice have on his daughter Margaret? In her diary as an adult, she makes reference to taking at least one family under her care and mentions other times where she cares for her own ill children. Did Margaret learn, or even unofficially apprentice, with her father? Later family correspondence as collected in Caroline Curtis’s *The Cary Letters* noted she was “very intelligent and active and assisted her father frequently in his apothecary shop.” Chronologically, Curtis’ history (via letters written by Margaret’s granddaughter) lists Margaret’s time in her father’s shop as prior to her marriage to Samuel in 1741, thus suggesting that Margaret as a teen learned from her father. Margaret’s granddaughter continues, “My grandmother had great use for all her talents, particularly in time as she had three sons.” Such family history suggests that Margaret, like her father, had experience in and utilized basic medical training.

Samuel Cary was born to be a merchant and, like Margaret, gained the requisite skills from his own father. His father, also Samuel (1682-1741), had been a merchant his son’s entire life. In reading the shipping news sections of newspapers including the *New-England Weekly Journal*, and the *Boston News-Letter* (among others), one can easily track the voyages of both Samuel Carys to and from the ports of Boston. As evidenced by these announcements, the older Cary was probably a Boston-London merchant exclusively. Newspaper archives dating to 1714 show Cary leaving for London from Boston multiple times a year until the mid-1730s. His arrival and departure dates (as published) include but are not limited to, these:

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In August 1720, the Boston Gazette published a story regarding the older Captain Cary, his ship The Samuel, and pirates. The article read in part:

Samuel Cary Master of the Ship Samuel, Burden about Ninety Tons, Navigated with Ten Men, Six Guns mounted, Who manifested and declared, That on the 29th Day of May last past, he Sailed from London in the said Ship, bound for Boston in New-England, loaded with English Goods, Consisting of Bales, Trunks, and Boxes of Merchandize, about Forty Five Barrels of Powder, some Cask of Nails, Iron Ware, &c. That in the Prosecution of said Voyage, on the 13th day of July last past, in the Latitude of 43 degrees and 49m. about Forty Leagues East from the Banks of Newfoundland, he met with Two Sail, one a Ship of about Two Hundred & Twenty Tons, Twenty Six Guns mounted, the other a Sloop of about Eighty Tons, Ten Guns mounted, and according to the Appearants computation there was about One Hundred Men on Board both Vessels, the Ship was Commanded by one Roberts; That they both bore down upon him and Fired upon him, The Ship hoisted a Black Flagg at the Maine-Top-Mast-Head, with Deaths Head and a Cutlass in it, and the Sloop a Union Flagg, with Four Blazing Balls, the Ship ordered him immediately to hoist out his Boat and come on Board, which this Appearant did & upon going on Board found them to be Pirates.10

This excerpt shows that Cary, like his son after him, was the captain of his own ship. His cargo was eclectic but worth enough that the pirates led by the famed Bartholomew Roberts took 48 hours to sort through it and steal what was worth taking. A player on the Boston-London routes, Cary and his ship reveal some of the larger dangers of Atlantic World trade.

It was not until the younger Samuel Cary was 21 that he started to appear in Boston news. After having graduated from Harvard College just a year earlier, the younger Cary is listed as returning from Cadiz in early March 1735 after a two-month voyage. The report claims that Cary left London in late October and then spent two months in the Spanish city. Cadiz at this time

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10 The Boston Gazette, Monday August 15, to Monday August 22, 1720; Issue: 36, 3.
served as Spain’s most important port city in its Atlantic trade, specifically with the Americas. This trip shows that at an early age, Margaret’s future husband became a part of the ever-growing Atlantic merchant world.

Only a month later, both father and son appeared in the *New-England Weekly Journal* as having signed a large petition against the recognizance of bad bills of credit circulating in colonial economies from New Hampshire.\(^{11}\) It is important to note the use of “jun.” or junior following the younger Samuel Cary’s name. This suffix is used in shipping news for the following two years before ceasing around 1736/7. In this span of time the younger Cary came and went from Boston and London, apparently sharing in his father’s main commercial routes. In late 1736, however, shipping news shows the first of Cary’s lifetime of voyages to St. Kitt’s (often interchangeable with St. Christopher’s).\(^ {12}\) Right around this time, the news printers dropped the “jun.” from his name, implying retirement for the older Captain Cary. This timing coincides with the appearance of another newspaper article announcing the appointment of Samuel Cary as Justice of the Peace.\(^ {13}\) Given the sedentary nature of such a position, merchant trips were impossible. With four years left to live, however, the older Cary (according to an earlier news article and his later obituary) turned to basic merchandizing and the sale of goods rather than the shipment thereof.

The announcement of his death (1741) and the call of debts made reference to such sales.

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\(^{11}\) *New-England Weekly Journal*, April 7, 1735; Issue: CDXIX, 2.

\(^{12}\) *Boston Evening-Post*, October 4, 1736; Issue: 50; Boston, Massachusetts; pg. 2. *Boston Evening-Post*, November 22, 1736; Issue: 67; Boston, Massachusetts, 2.

\(^{13}\) *Boston Evening-Post*, June 28, 1736; Issue: 46; Boston, Massachusetts, 1.
The ownership of slaves was to be a continuous reality for further Cary and Graves generations. The above sale notice shows the elder Samuel Cary owned at least one slave and possibly more. A newspaper announcement published in 1739 showed Thomas Graves as interacting with the slave trade via assessment. Graves’s role was to determine the quality and price of new slaves, a fact which reveals yet another business venture but also suggests a certain moral standing regarding the practice of slavery. Margaret and Samuel are also known to have owned at least two slaves. Family correspondence recounts that at Thomas Graves’s funeral, Margaret’s son Samuel, being very small at the time, was “carried to the funeral in the arms of black Caesar, a house servant.”

The existence of slaves’ quarters on the Cary’s future (post-Margaret) Bellingham-Cary estate in the late 18th century, along with a mid-1760s tax record listing Richard Cary (Samuel’s brother) as owning two slaves, also suggest that the Cary family continued to hold slaves for quite some time. Two of those living at the Chelsea estate would eventually sail back to the Caribbean, while the third, a woman named Fanny Fairweather, became a beloved part of the later Cary family.

The Cary and Graves families would merge on December 24, 1741, with the marriage of Samuel and Margaret. By the time their intentions were made on December 10, Samuel was engrained in the Atlantic merchant world and Margaret undoubtedly so in the cultural community of Charlestown. Margaret’s first diary entry would follow some months later on May 15, 1742. It details Samuel’s safe arrival at St. Kitts just six months after their wedding. The Boston Evening Post shipping news of January 11 lists Samuel as “Outward Bound” to St. Kitts just two and a half weeks after their nuptials, thereby starting what would become a trend for their marriage: Samuel abroad, and Margaret alone.

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15 *Boston Post-Boy*, July 16, 1739; Issue: 248; Boston, Massachusetts, 4.
16 *Boston Evening-Post*, January 11, 1742; Issue: 336; Boston, Massachusetts, 2.
Part II: Samuel at Sea, Margaret at Home

So went the first year of Margaret and Samuel’s marriage, as detailed by her record of their correspondence:

Saturday, May 29, 1742

I received a letter from my dear consort, wherein he acquainted me with the wonderful goodness of God to him in raising him from sickness to health again. Lord, grant that our hearts may be sensibly taught by thy goodness and mercy to us.

June 14, 1742

This day I received a letter from my dear consort, with an account of his health, likewise many other valuable things. Lord, I would be humbly thankful to thee for thy goodness to me in continuing his health, and likewise treasuring our substance from the hands of our enemies.

July 18, 1742

This day I received the melancholy news of the loss that my dear consort met with.

Margaret’s use of the word “consort” is of note considering its common use during this period as a form of partnership. She uses it consistently instead of husband, especially noteworthy given the proclivity of her community to use “husband” and “wife”; newspapers, however, sometimes used consort as well, as is evident in Margaret’s later obituary. It is also worth noting that in this first year Margaret mentions Samuel’s health more than once. Though the British were famous for suffering from a variety of Caribbean-borne maladies, Cary having been in the Caribbean on and off for five years before this point suggests he would have adapted. His health, then, is just as ambiguous as other things about his life.

What “other valuable things” Samuel may have relayed to Margaret is hard to determine; however, news from abroad and his successes at business are easily assumed. Margaret’s June 14 use of the word “enemies” is abstract, but in future entries she makes explicit the enemies of Captain Cary, specifically his French captors. Once again, with regard to Samuel’s “loss,” historians might only speculate. Basing that speculation on Margaret’s overall language use, this “loss” was probably of a material kind as opposed to personal. In her later entries Margaret is verbose, for her, in the language used to talk about death or illness. Here, however, with no prayer and only “melancholy” as a descriptor, we might rather expect the loss of ship, goods, or monies.
On December 24, 1744, Margaret wrote of death within the Cary household. With no names mentioned, this death is the second Margaret recounted in her diary following the first and equally ambiguous mention of death in June 1744. Following her statement of death, she spends just under 30 words praying to God to guide her in her distress while her second paragraph is twice as long by contrast and entreats God to forgive her for loving Samuel too much. Such difference surely shows Margaret’s focus on Samuel. It is this entry that most clearly introduces the affective language that sets Margaret apart from her contemporary diary writers. She writes:

**December 24, 1744**

Lord, thou hast this day brought death into the house again. Oh, grant me grace to examine myself and see wherefore the Lord is contending with me; and, O Lord, be pleased to sanctify all thy dealings toward me.

Lord, thou hast visited me with the rod of affliction, not only in sending death into the family, but in the long absence of my dearest friend. Lord, I know I have sinned in setting my heart too much upon him; in loving the creature I have forgot my Creator. But, O Lord, thou knowest how to forgive the frailty of our nature. O Lord, be pleased to return him yet again, and grant that my eyes may see him then will I praise thy great name for all thy goodness to me and mine.

Just two weeks later, on January 7, 1745, *The Boston Evening Post* published a story with the header “Extract of a Letter from St. Kitts, November 18th, 1744” (Figure 4). This letter raises questions about Captain Cary’s travels back home to his family.

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**Figure 4:** “Extract of a Letter from St. Kitts, November 18, 1744. Unclear delineation of when letter ends leads to ambiguity as to when Captain Cary actually arrived. “Last night” might refer to November 17th, or January 6th. See: *Boston Evening Post*, January 7, 1745; Issue: 491; Boston, Massachusetts, 2.
Margaret’s January 7, 1745, entry expresses her happiness with the arrival home of Samuel. This date matches perfectly with the January 7th Boston Evening Post story, which has Cary arriving “Last Night.” A second article published on January 10 refers to Cary arriving “last Monday;” after seven weeks from London (as mentioned in the first article), further establishing the date of Cary’s return. Finally, Margaret and Samuel’s second son, Thomas, was born October 7, 1745, suggesting an early January conception. This crosscheck is necessary to clarify the first article’s ambiguities. Its lack of delineation between the St. Kitts letter excerpt and further journalistic commentary can lead to questions about whether Cary arrived in January, or sometime closer to the authorship of the letter. Such ambiguities become more prominent in later years.

On May 27, 1745, Margaret wrote of Samuel leaving again, probably for St. Kitts. The following three and a half years would prove her most tumultuous to date. Just over a year later, Margaret wrote:

**September 19, 1746**

This day I heard of the wonderful deliverance my dear consort met with from the hands of his enemies, and that he was in the greatest danger. O Lord, be pleased to grant our souls may be sensibly taught with thy goodness to us; that all thy mercy may lead us to repentance’ and, O Lord, be pleased to take him under thy Divine protection in all times to come, and return him in safety.

Just five months later, she wrote again:

**February 12, 1747**

This day I heard the melancholy news that my dear consort was taken. Lord, be pleased to sanctify all thy dealings towards us, and enable us to behave aright under all thy dealings; and, O Lord, be pleased to redeem him from the hands of his enemies, and return him in safety.

And finally, later in 1747:

**July 15, 1747**

This day I heard the joyful news that my dear consort was returned from the hands of his enemies; and now, O Lord, would I bless thy great name for all thy mercy vouchsafed to us.

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17 *Boston News- Letter*, January 10, 1745; Issue: 2127; Boston, Massachusetts, 1.
Be pleased to be with him, and keep him from all evil, and return him again in safety; and grant that my eyes may see him, and that we may bless thy name together.

Natalie Zacek, in her *Settler Society in the English Leeward Islands, 1670-1776*, remarks that during the early to mid 18th century, “Anglo-French combat was not confined to the lands and seas of Europe; it flared up thousands of miles away in the West Indies, where the two nations’ colonies engaged in hostilities as their metropoles’ proxies.” The French were the “enemies” that Margaret refers to a number of times. Zacek’s analysis also suggests why Captain Cary was at danger for capture or conflict: “St. Kitts was particularly vulnerable during these outbreaks of warfare: not only did it occupy the awkward position of joint settlement” [the French and English shared portions of St. Kitts’ land before and after the Treaty of Utrecht], “but its location to the leeward of Martinique, the locus of French power in the Caribbean, placed it directly in the pathway of French incursions.”

This constant threat from the French created animosity among British subjects left wondering when the Crown might intervene against their French neighbors.

*The Boston News Letter* twice published accounts of Captain Cary being taken by the French. The first instance (Figure 5) saw Captain Cary and other members of “the fleet” being taken by French privateers near Antigua, then the British island closest to British Montserrat and French Guadeloupe. The second (Figure 6) makes no reference to the location of Cary’s recapture. In describing the state of Caribbean merchant politics in this period, Zacek writes, “The French had recently raided Nevis and St. Kitts and threatened to attack again, and privateers [like those who took Cary] lurked in the waters around the islands and rendered shipping hazardous.” She continues, “Many islanders were convinced that England was doing far too little to assist its colonies in the course of a war that had resulted from European politics rather than local inclinations.”

Margaret’s diary entries regarding Samuel’s experiences align with the publication dates of newspaper articles suggesting that she was not personally told of her “consort’s” fate, but rather found out second- or even third-hand. There is no later published mention of Cary returning from the French a second time: thus, this final news must have been through personal correspondence.

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19 Ibid, 223.
Figure 5: Account of French Privateer sloop engaging Captain Samuel Cary off of Antigua. Captain Cary is then taken shortly, as told by Margaret, before being released. See Boston News Letter (The Boston Weekly), September 25, 1746 Issue: 2319; Boston, 2.

Figure 6: A second report (February 1747) just five months after the first encounter with the French sees Captain Cary being taken. According to Margaret’s diary, the French in the West Indies would hold him for approximately five months. Reference of Captain Cary’s involvement in the “West India Fleet” is of note. See Boston News-Letter, February 12, 1747; Issue: 2339; Boston, Massachusetts, 3.
Though explicitly referenced neither by news reports nor by Margaret, Captain Cary must have been vigilant for a second “enemy,” as defined by the 18th century Caribbean-oriented British: St. Kitts slaves. Zacek determines that around mid-century, the percentage of blacks in the Leeward Island population ranged in the upper 80s, with Nevis the lowest with 86.1 percent. St. Kitts in particular executed 38 slaves between 1740 and 1746 for felonies, illustrating high tensions between cultures and races. Zacek, judging from the sugar-oriented compensation offered to the former owners of the executed, argues that these slaves were also young and strong, suggesting they may have been runaways. Given Samuel’s earlier experiences with slavery, Captain Cary likely owned or managed slaves on any land he may have owned and was familiar with the racial tensions across the island.

Despite being captured twice by the French, the second time for some interval of months, Captain Cary returned home, according to Margaret, on November 19, 1748. She wrote:

**November 19, 1748**

This day God was pleased to return my dear consort after an absence of almost four years. Lord, grant that I may be thankful for this thy great mercy to me, and that we may both bless and praise thy name together.

It was on this date that Captain Cary met his son Samuel, by then six years old, for the second time. He would have met his second son, Thomas, three years old, for the first time. Their third and final child, Jonathan, was born October 21, 1749, suggesting another early January conception. Margaret is clear that she had not seen Captain Cary for almost four years, dating to May 27, 1745; however, two articles from separate newspapers tell a different story. On October 12, 1747, the *Boston-Evening Post* lists simply “Cary” as outward bound to Jamaica. On November 5, the *Boston Weekly News-Letter* lists “Cary” as cleared out for the West Indies. The absence of “Samuel” or “Capt./Captain” is not unusual but does allow that another Cary may have left port. Further research shows that a number of seemingly unrelated (or at least distantly related) Cary men lived in the surrounding area or surrounding colonies at the time and could plausibly, however improbably, be the one who is mentioned. Jonathan Cary was a constable, James Cary was a captain in the militia, and Nathaniel Cary was a leader in the church and made

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21 Ibid., 31.
22 *Boston Evening-Post*, October 12, 1747; Issue: 635; Boston, Massachusetts, 2.
23 *Boston News-Letter*, November 5, 1747; Issue: 2377; Boston, Massachusetts, 2.
his money through the selling of, not shipping of, a spectrum of goods. Samuel’s brother Richard made his own fortune while staying on land, and the other merchant Carys primarily left port from New York, Philadelphia, or the Chesapeake region. Though the evidence is not conclusive, Margaret’s husband Samuel was the primary “Cary” leaving port from Boston in the 1740s. Is it fairer to ask whether Cary was on the mainland a year before finally returning home to his family, or whether Margaret finally failed to write of a time he came home? If the latter, what other events might have Margaret neglected to record?

Either way, Samuel’s almost four-year absence was the second of considerable length during the six years the Carys had been married up to that point. Those large pockets of time required Margaret to utilize the social and cultural commercial ties that connected her to the community, the church, and the growing consumer market as a wife, to be sure, but also as a representative of the Cary family, with her own agency and authority to choose.

Charlestown and other New England seaport cultures saw a rapid increase in consumerism in the middle of the 18th century. T.H Breen’s seminal Marketplace of the Revolution and related articles place this change in the 1740s, precisely when Margaret and Samuel married. Given this material-oriented social system, Margaret and other women’s place in the seaport culture and economy would have been directly related to their material wealth and their authority (as the main buyers of goods) of choice. Arguing precisely that, Ellen Hartigan-O’Connor in her The Ties That Buy: Women and Commerce in Revolutionary America writes, “Women were quintessential market participants in this context, with fluid occupational identities, a firm investment in cash and commercial goods for power and meaning and cross-class social and economic ties.” The force of these arguments that women were gaining in social and economic power during this era is only magnified by Margaret’s status as a wife with a long distant husband.

Margaret, as a well-off woman, would have owned a spectrum of goods distinguishing her from others during a time in Charlestown of considerable wealth differential. Steven

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24 Boston Weekly Post-Boy, March 16, 1747; Issue 643: Boston Massachusetts, 2; Boston Evening-Post, March 7, 1743; Issue 396: Boston Massachusetts, 4;
25 Virginia Gazette, September 8, 1738; Issue 110, Williamsburg Virginia, 4; Boston Evening-Post, March 12, 1750; Issue 761; Boston Massachusetts, 3; Marsha L. Hamilton, Social and Economic Networks in Early Massachusetts: Atlantic Connections (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009), 100-124.
Pendery’s “Consumer Behavior in Colonial Charlestown” uses both probate records and archaeological evidence to analyze the wealth differential in the seaport as well as make inferences about material wealth and status. Pendery’s data shows that in 1750, 66% of middle class households and 100% of upper middle class households owned tables and chairs, and that 65% of both classes owned bed stands and feather beds. These statistics are juxtaposed against only 1 of 3 citizens in the lowest class owning the same goods. His study also argues that 2 in 3 of upper middle class citizens owned silver spoons, and 1 in 3 owned coffee or tea wares. Finally, Pendery notes that 1 in 3 of the highest class owned porcelain wares. These goods in particular, Pendery argues, were restricted almost exclusively to Charlestown merchants in the 18th century. This group made up only 10% of the city’s population. 27 Given the Cary merchant tradition, in combination with the wealth associated with Thomas Graves’s professions, these statistics suggest that Margaret may have lived as a citizen in the highest economic class and thus was a part of the merchant-oriented feminization that defined parts of coastal Massachusetts. 28

In her *Ebb Tide in New England*, Elaine Craine discusses these economic structures of New England and argues that they reflected the needs and opportunities of the time and place. Specifically, labor shortages in early America created a space for women like Margaret to play an integral role in the economy, especially those of seaports. Craine further argues that social and economic roles were not stagnant; they changed as the economy did. While Hartigan-O’Connor’s arguments illustrate the commercial and material authority with which women were enabled, Craine focuses on production. She writes, “Not only were women an essential part of a system that required an elaborate and intricate exchange of goods and services, but…female productive input was considered crucial to the success of the experiment.” 29 Craine claims that women have often been overlooked in colonial economic histories focusing on the accumulation of wealth (material and liquid capital) rather than on the whole economic enterprise, which includes household economics. Work, Craine writes, is a (if not the) crucial part of any economy, and the author elaborates on the nearly infinite number of jobs that women performed for income, some of which included the medicinal occupations with which Margaret may have been involved.

Entries in her diary, including her mention of “taking a family under my care,” suggest that Margaret continued in her father’s stead as an apothecary, or at minimum as a healer of some sort. In delineating the nature of women’s work in colonial New England, the Craine brings attention to gendered wage inequality and provides scenarios of men and women competing for the same wages in the same jobs. “It is of some importance,” Craine writes, “that a man and a woman were both involved in [this] occupation, since it hints that a division of labor based on sex was, perhaps, in a transitional phase.”30 This transition of labor roles and gendered space contributed to the larger transformation of seaports in the middle of the 18th century. As an apothecary in Charlestown, Margaret may have been in the center of this feminization and one of many women who functioned in an informal economy.

Craine argues that even when such women’s husbands were home, wives and women maintained authority and importance and shared a relationship of greater mutuality with their counterparts than past historians have claimed. This would have become a reality for the Carys between 1748 and 1750. Having returned to Charlestown in November 1748, the next evidence of Samuel’s departure is Margaret’s entry on March 6, 1750, more than a year later. If this span is accurate, it marks the longest period of time Samuel stayed in Charlestown since their marriage. He would, as always, leave again for more than three years. In the fall of 1752, Margaret writes of his not coming home (as apparently expected). This expectation is an implicit allusion to correspondence between the couple, none of which survives. Margaret’s entry in December of that year is of note as she wrote:

**December 24, 1752**

I have just heard of the safe arrival of my dear consort at London, and the many dangers and difficulties he has undergone, and that he had liked to have foundered at sea. O Lord, I would bless and praise thy name that thou wast pleased to appear for him in the time of his distress.

It is surprising that no account of this harrowing story made its way into Boston newspapers, and after spending almost eight months in London either docked or shipping to and from, Cary finally returned to Boston, without acknowledgment in Margaret’s diary, in October, 1753.31 In fact, Margaret did not write a single entry after December 1752 and before October 1759.

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30 Ibid., 108.
31 *Boston Evening-Post*, October 22, 1753; Issue: 947; Boston, Massachusetts, 2.
unusual for a wife and mother who had previously documented her children’s sicknesses and her husband’s comings and goings. Following Samuel’s arrival but preceding his impending departure on November 10, 1753, Samuel can be found in the archives twice. First, in a *Boston Evening-Post* article published a week after his arrival, the author claims that a counterfeiter had been arrested after having traveled to Boston on Captain Cary’s ship. Second is Samuel’s appearance in Thomas Hancock’s receipt book on November 6, 1753 (Figure 7).

This short receipt notation tells us three things. First, it shows how much in currency and goods Captain Cary exchanged in single transactions (this one converts to almost $3,000 at 2013 rates). Second, a historian of trade might be able to use the balance, date, Hancock’s history, and other variables to determine what kind of goods Cary generally handled/shipped. Finally, Cary’s interaction with such a prominent merchant house owner as Boston’s Thomas Hancock further establishes Cary’s role in the mid-18th century merchant world.

The last entry of Margaret’s short life was written three years before her death. This entry, of course, was with regard to Samuel:

**October 17, 1759**

This day it pleased God to return my dear consort, after a very long absence. Lord, I would bless and praise thy great and glorious name for all thy mercies, and especially for this.

After Samuel Cary left Charlestown in November 1753, there are no shipping news entries regarding his return. Several newspaper stories in early 1759 make reference to Cary once again being a part of a fleet of ships in the Caribbean battling the French at Martinique. It is following

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32 *Boston Post-Boy*, November 12, 1753; Issue: 984; Boston, Massachusetts, 2.
this trip that Captain Cary gave 1,000 pounds from Margaret’s estate to his then 18-year-old son, Samuel, to go to St. Kitts. His oldest son would eventually work at the Simon Plantation before moving to Grenada in 1772.

Focusing on Margaret and similar women as primary actors in merchant and social histories allows historians a more dynamic view of the female presence in the all-important household economy as well as in the larger cultures at the local, regional, and trans-oceanic level. In 18th century coastal Massachusetts in particular, women in the merchant class juggled just as many, if not more, roles than men. This was especially so in the merchant culture where husbands, like Samuel, were often not home. Women like Margaret influenced consumerism, material culture, trade, and labor structures.

Margaret Cary was also a devout Christian woman in a time of religious and capitalist tension occurring in Boston, Charlestown, and surrounding port cities. These religious ties were largely more local than women’s wider economic relations. For Margaret in particular, as a woman in a Calvinist culture, a mother, and as a wife without her husband for wide stretches of time, God was her guide, followed closely by the church and the community of Charlestown, Massachusetts.
Chapter 2: Small Family, Big World

Introduction

December 24, 1744

Lord, thou hast visited me with the rod of affliction, not only in sending death into the family, but in the long absence of my dearest friend. Lord, I know I have sinned in setting my heart too much upon him; in loving the creature I have forgot my Creator. But, O Lord, thou knowest how to forgive the frailty of our nature. O Lord, be pleased to return him yet again, and grant that my eyes may see him then will I praise thy great name for all thy goodness to me and mine. ¹

Family and God were the two most important elements of Margaret’s adult life. That period, from roughly 1740 until her death in 1762, was during a time of great change in terms of the traditional community social expectations concerning men, women, and especially family. Some historians argue that family is the social institution most resistant to change. However, though John Demos’s idea of the “little commonwealth” defined generations of New England families as the family unit reflected the larger political and patriarchal culture, as that commonwealth changed, so too did those families.²

Life in Charlestown, Massachusetts, was no different. Specifically, some women in urban areas such as Charlestown had more power in the community or economy, generally due the absence of a husband at sea. Within the family too, an early-to-mid-century rise in women’s literacy led to an increased feminization of childrearing and education as women became able to teach writing, reading, and catechism to their children. Piecing together Margaret’s life and the lives of her immediate family may help us better understand the nature of changing ideas of marriage, love, and parenting.

Mid-18th-century Calvinists often fall victim to popular preconceived notions about their predecessors, the Puritans. Works of fiction by authors such as Nathaniel Hawthorne and Arthur Miller have mythologized early New Englanders to a point where they are amalgamated into one Puritan soup, devoid of racial, religious, cultural, or economic difference. Scholars seeking to demythologize these same notions, especially Margo Todd in her Christian Humanism and the

Social Order, have agreed that “historians of puritan ideas, even to the present day, have been like intellectual historians and literary scholars of an earlier generation: they have clung tenaciously to a ‘great tradition,’ seeking to establish a single and direct channel of influence on puritan thought.” It is clear just from the example of Margaret and her family that actual influences ranged from economic to familial to communal, and that any family characteristics that the Carys embodied were not determined by any single event or cause.

Examination of Margaret’s diary and life also requires acknowledging and heeding Helena Wall’s warning that just as New England authorities would have had colonists conform to particular norms of behavior, it is important that historians not force historical actors to conform to preconceptions about their behavior. Put more plainly, we should be cautious in forcing colonists such as Margaret into preconceived roles.

While families of the period were influenced by an increasingly transoceanic economy, an urban community structure increasingly ceding power to the individual, and a diversifying religious culture, Margaret’s life was also defined by her managing a household and family largely alone. That is not to say that Margaret was any less influenced by the Charlestown community, her devout faith, or the growing market in which she and Samuel both played a part. As part of one family within the ten percent of Charlestown attached to a merchant culture, Margaret is unique enough to warrant analysis but still representative of growing cultural trends among women living without husbands in a period often described as patriarchal. Indeed, as Demos’s idea of the little commonwealth extended into the families of not only the 17th but also the 18th century, Margaret’s life can serve as an example of the impact of social changes of the mid-eighteenth century on well-off, urban, merchant families. If the merchant class and its participants illustrate the workings of an Atlantic trade-based economy and culture, the women those men left behind illustrate the switch to a more feminized culture at home.

I. Romantic Love: Marriage, Courtship, & the Community

Early colonists believed that marriage was less about romantic love between partners as it was an expected religious (and economic) partnership. The unmarried in a community were often ostracized and the ages at first, and often only, marriage were in the low twenties. These cultural expectations carried over into the following century; however, 18th-century New Englanders began to value romantic love as an important aspect of the marriage bond. Though spiritual unity and equality of station remained common prerequisites in new marriages, affection entered the picture for many mid-18th century couples, Margaret and Samuel included.

Of Margaret’s twenty-six diary entries, fourteen begin with Captain Cary, most of which are similar to this one:

June 14, 1742

This day I received a letter from my dear consort, with an account of his health, likewise many other valuable things. Lord, I would be humbly thankful to thee for thy goodness to me in continuing his health, and likewise treasuring our substance from the hands of our enemies.

The audience for Margaret is always God. Her entries about Captain Cary are almost always an update about his whereabouts, whether coming to or leaving Massachusetts, or arriving in St. Kitts. She then often follows with a statement regarding his general health and ends with a prayer to God to watch over Captain Cary and to protect and bless them both.

These entries, ten of which follow the above model, span the first eighteen years of Margaret and Samuel’s marriage. Three regarding Samuel are those briefly alluding to his imprisonment and subsequent release by his the French. Two entries in particular suggest the kind of affective love that Lawrence Stone and others such as Sylvia Frey argue began appearing more commonly in the 18th century.5 The December 24th entry found at the beginning of this chapter is especially interesting given Margaret’s admission that she has come to love Samuel more than she has her

God. While such an affective relationship would have certainly been deemed sinful in decades past (as is evident by Margaret’s apology), a married couple’s romantic bond as equal to their respective relationships with God became more common in the mid to late 18th century.

New England communities traditionally prized stability and harmony, and they sought to achieve it in part through the regulation of individual, neighborhood, and family behavior, most easily through the expectations of marriage and courtship. Courtship, as shown by scholar Ruth Bloch, only began after each party (but mostly the woman) received parental permission. As a general rule, however, parents of New England couples did not typically “arrange” matches, but rather negotiated with their counterparts after a couple had agreed between themselves—a development associated with the acceptance of romantic love. Parental consent was not mandatory if both bride and groom were free and of legal age (as was the case for Margaret and Samuel), understood as eighteen for a woman and twenty-one for a man.

Margaret Graves married Captain Samuel Cary when they were 22 years old and 28 years old respectively. Samuel was just older than the male average of 25/26 and Margaret was of average age. Their intentions were made on December 10, 1741, and they married on December 24. Given their status as full adults, their courtship would have been relatively uneventful and probably unimpeded by their parents, not least of all because Samuel’s father had just died. The community pressure for approval likely still existed with regard to economic status, leaving little doubt that the Graves and Cary families expected both Margaret and Samuel to find spouses who reflected each family’s wealth. Thomas Graves, probably living comfortably as a physician, lost his wife in 1721 to smallpox and remarried the widow Ann Watts in 1728. Watts, who had no children of her own, owned through her deceased sister what was once Massachusetts’s Governor Richard Bellingham’s estate. Both the Chelsea mansion and the Charlestown estate fell to Thomas upon Ann’s death. Having no brothers, Margaret inherited the former when her father passed away in 1748, with the latter willed to her older sister Kathryn. This land, in conjunction

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with the namesake connection to one of Charlestown’s founding families, made Margaret Graves an exceedingly advantageous bride for Captain Samuel Cary.

Samuel Cary was in his own right a suitable groom for Margaret. At 28, Samuel was already a merchant, a status which in itself required some amount of capital and credit. Also, while his exact wealth is difficult to determine, his place as plaintiff in a December 1740 common pleas suit suggests some degree of it. The case, *Samuel Cary v. Samuel Tuttle*, reads that sometime in 1739, Samuel Tuttle became indebted to Captain Cary for just over forty pounds. This amount of money in 1739 was significant and suggests that Captain Cary at the very least traded in goods of some worth. (See Figure 8)

Given Samuel’s long absences (three years, three and a half years, three and a half years, and six years), it would have fallen to Margaret to manage the family’s money. Social custom required Margaret to become what Laurel Thatcher Ulrich defined as “a deputy husband” in Samuel’s stead. A deputy husband was expected to act in her husband’s interests during his absences. Examples might include tending a shop, signing contracts, or bookkeeping for a business. While it is unclear if Margaret participated in any directly market-oriented activities, she certainly facilitated both his and her own roles in the upkeep of the family and household.

In other such arrangements, a merchant husband’s kin group might provide support to the wife though, as Peter Hall writes, kin groups had not yet formed in the mid 18th century to the point where they had the size and influence that was theirs by the late 18th. Still, kin connection often dominated political and economic spheres of colonial America on small scales before later becoming larger networks. Margaret and Samuel’s line of Carys, however, are seldom mentioned in community records or other correspondence, including those of Samuel’s siblings, and thus provide no evidence that such a supportive kin group developed. With no evidence of much connection to her surviving sister Kathryn, who lived in Chelsea, Margaret probably was largely alone with only the help of two slaves, and after some time, her growing children.

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8 “40 pounds in 1739 had the same buying power as 7024.21 current dollars.” http://futureboy.us/fsp/dollar.fsp?quantity=40&currency=pounds&fromYear=1739
Figure 8: Narrative record of Samuel Cary v. Samuel Tuttle, December 9th, 1740. This case, taking place a full year before Samuel's marriage to Margaret, saw Cary suing Tuttle for a debt of 40 pounds. See: Samuel Cary, Samuel Cary papers, 1766-1870; bulk: 1766-1812Miscellaneous Bound 1734-1740, Massachusetts Historical Society, (Boston, MA)
Despite the distance between her and Samuel, Margaret Cary probably still lived under the expectations of patriarchy that required her to be submissive to Samuel. Margaret’s love for Samuel is certainly explicit in her largely affective entries; however, no letters from Samuel survive to confirm the mutuality of that love. It might be that Margaret observed the hierarchy of the patriarchal order by relying on a trusted male figure such as Samuel’s brother Richard or someone else to take responsibility for traditionally male cultural functions within the family. Such a system would have been set up to ensure Margaret continued to serve as an economic trustee for the Cary family and to raise the children in a moral, pious, and disciplined household as Samuel might if he were present. Without sources to support either possibility, it is impossible to know how Margaret and her family handled this situation. Whatever the case, it is likely that – whether she wished to be or not – she became more independent than was typical of a non-merchant wife. Clearly Margaret was cognizant of her role as wife and mother despite the distance between her and Samuel. However, Margaret Graves Cary began to exemplify a new fluidity of roles for women in the changing seaport communities of the New England colonies.

The following excerpt is important, first, because Margaret asks for forgiveness for not filling her role of wife as well as she feels is necessary, and second, because she again shows her affection for her husband in remarking to God on their eleven year anniversary.

**December 24, 1752**

This evening I have been reflecting upon this day eleven years, when the providence of God brought us into this dear relation of husband and wife. Great cause I have to lament that I have no better filled up my place with useful service. I would take shame and lie low, and I beg pardon for my dear Redeemer’s sake.

Despite community and familial influences on the earthly practice of marriage, Margaret’s opinion remains fixed that the “providence of God” is above all else the reason behind her and Samuel’s union. The second half of the excerpt is important in showing her mindset with regard to marriage roles. It is interesting that she takes on the blame for not filling those eleven years with more useful service despite Samuel only having been home no more than a year total over those years. Given the social expectations of marriage, “useful service” may have meant helping Samuel in his work, or even in the providing of more children given that she was only 29 after the birth of her last child, Jonathan. Most interesting is what “great cause” Margaret claims to have to lament. This and Margaret’s asking God for forgiveness and a “pardon” speak to her
belief that marriage roles are part of a divinely determined structure and that she has apparently not done as well as hoped. These roles of marriage were certainly not restricted only to the time each spouse was alive, as widows and widowers followed other legal and social expectations.

Margaret died in 1762 at the age of 43, leaving three sons and her widower husband Samuel. Widowers of the period were even more likely to marry again than widows, regardless of age. Widowers had far more to gain from remarriage in that they became the managers of their new wife’s property and servants. The new marriage also provided a sexual partner, a household manager, and someone to raise any adolescent children. The term “manager” is key because under English common law (which influenced many New England laws), freehold land brought into marriage by a woman came under the “management,” not the ownership, of the new spouse. In 1762, Samuel was 20, Thomas 17, and Jonathan just 13; thus Samuel not only became manager of the estate, but also of the children, family, and household affairs beyond those attended to by any slave or servant, who in turn needed managing. Widowers would sometimes legally bestow parts of their estates on their new bride or any sons or daughters to protect those family members in the event of the man’s death. One example was Margaret’s father, Thomas. Upon Sybil Cary’s death in 1721, Thomas would have gained complete ownership of any property she brought to the marriage, but then would have shared part in his later marriages, first to Ann Watts in 1728, and then to Phebe Vassel in 1738. Remarriages including children from earlier marriages often complicated things, especially in property management. Had Ann Watts any biological children of her own, Kathryn and Margaret would not have inherited their respective estates. If Samuel had remarried, probable stepsons from new marriage might have detracted from the inheritances (mostly silver) of Samuel and Margaret’s three sons, not out of law but of social obligation.11

In many examples of colonial families, sons could not prosper without land or money, and fathers often held onto this wealth to maintain authority over their children. Most scholarship studying colonial inheritance, including Phillip Greven’s *Four Generations*, shows that a majority as high as 70 percent of sons in the mid-18th century only inherited land upon their

father’s death. This pattern held in the case of the Carys, whose Chelsea estate was passed to the sons only upon Captain Samuel Cary’s death in 1769. Up until that point, the elder Cary (56) had lived at the estate for four years with lingering health issues. Following Margaret’s death in 1762, Samuel cannot be found in local shipping news, suggesting that he retired from the merchant world upon taking over Margaret’s role as manager of the property and family. After his death, Samuel Jr. eventually bought out his brothers Jonathan and Thomas and became the sole owner.

II. From Sexual Temptation to Parenthood

A number of Protestant denominations, Calvinists especially, believed in a link between the physical and the spiritual. This link is most apparent in the descriptions of conversion experiences in colonial New England. A prominent example is Sarah Prentice, wife to Solomon Prentice, an influential minister in southeastern Massachusetts. Upon her conversion, Sarah was said to be catatonic, not to have moved for several minutes before reviving and praising God. Such physical experience is emblematic of the Calvinist belief in a physical accompaniment to spirituality. This link was not limited to conversion, however. God’s presence was believed to hold sway in all of Calvinist physical life (and death) including marital sex, pregnancy, and childbirth.

Men of 17th century colonial New England often believed that women more readily fell victim to their passions and temptations, were less rational, and were subject to hysteria when they went without sex. Such beliefs were an extension of early modern Protestant belief that the devil’s sole purpose was to persuade individual Christians to act on temptation, sexual temptation included.

A second belief, contradictory to the first, held that Satan only targeted the pious and those not

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13 John Demos, “Old Age in New England,” in *Turning Points: Historical and Sociological Essays on the Family*, John Demos and Sarane Spence Boocock, eds. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979). Demos cites Cotton Mather’s “The Old Man’s Honour” in determining 60 as the chronological definition of the “border” age between adulthood and old age. He shows that 54.9% of 17th-century Middlesex County 20–year-olds lived until the age of sixty. That number would have risen into the 18th century as overall mortality fell.
tempted were not good Christians. The latter belief raises questions about the vilification of women with regard to sexual desire. Though much of these beliefs waned as the 18th century wore on, some communities maintained certain sexual biases toward women. Nonetheless, women’s “weaknesses” and supposed lack of reason were nearly always attributed with reference to Eve and the expulsion of humankind from Eden. Margaret, however, may not have shared such sexual preconceptions, as urban areas such as Charlestown and Boston transitioned mid-century to more closely balanced ideas of sexual temptation and away from gendered views vilifying women.16 Beyond bearing three children, Samuel’s absences limited her and Margaret’s other sexual interactions. That Margaret was never deemed “hysterical” despite years long periods of abstinence further suggests that beliefs about female sexuality were changing.

Social conventions in early New England, albeit more often in rural communities, were especially male-oriented, since most value systems sprang from religious doctrine and churches led by men. Despite this public power structure, the pleasure of women during sex was believed to be a requisite for conception. Such a belief suggested that any man who could not pleasure his wife could not become a father. Even with these values, masculinity was still linked to household government and, as such, children were necessary for the projection of “manhood.”17 Thomas Foster shows in his “Deficient Husbands” that this connection between the body and manliness closely paralleled the spiritual link with the body, as this masculinity was representative of the paternal order of religion. Early New Englanders also believed that the female womb must be kept in use to be healthy and required regular orgasms and pregnancies.

Margaret makes no reference to her sexual feelings (unsurprising given the tone and genre of her diary). Given these social ideas regarding sex, female pleasure, and their connection to reproductive health, one might surmise that the Carys engaged in intercourse as often as possible during the short spans of Samuel being home.18

16 Richard Godbeer, Sexual Revolution in Early America (Gender Relations in the American Experience) (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 227-263.
Table 3 shows birth and probable conception dates for the Cary children along with the availability of Samuel Cary as determined by newspaper shipping dates. Such a chart suggests the frequency of their sexual relationship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Samuel Available</th>
<th>Birth of a Child</th>
<th>Conception Date</th>
<th>Samuel Leaves</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married December 24th, 1741</td>
<td>September 20th, 1742</td>
<td>Approximately December 20th, 1741</td>
<td>January 11th, 1742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrived January 7th, 1745</td>
<td>October 7th, 1745</td>
<td>Approximately January 7th, 1745</td>
<td>May 27th, 1745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrived November 19th, 1748</td>
<td>October 21, 1749</td>
<td>Approximately January 21, 1749</td>
<td>March 6th, 1750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrived October, 1753</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>November 10th, 1753</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrived 1759</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Margaret dies, 1762</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Samuel Cary was home only five times when married to Margaret. The short spans of time at home combined with the unlikelihood of conception occurring with the first sexual interaction may reveal the Cary’s sexual relationship. Interaction during the fifth span is unknown.

The regional population in colonial New England famously doubled almost every twenty years, exemplifying the common nature of pregnancies (much more common than those in the Cary family). This population increase was primarily due to the combination of near universal marriage, biennial babies, and low mortality. Massachusetts’s family size in the 18th century varied from 6 to 8 people per unit and rarely dipped below that range.\(^{19}\) One study puts the Massachusetts average at 7 people in 1764, two years after Margaret’s death.\(^{20}\) The Cary family, at five total members, contributed less than an average number of offspring to the regional population, a fact perhaps determined by Samuel’s merchant life. A lower family number was not, however, incredibly uncommon among women and families similar geographically and economically (i.e., the urban merchant class) to Margaret and Samuel. In the later 18th century, middle-class American women in long-settled urban seaport cities had fewer children than their own mothers or grandmothers; Margaret fit this trend.\(^{21}\) The reason was two-fold: first, because an urban family had less need for children than their rural counterparts, and second, because


\(^{21}\) Ibid, 29.
there was less land to support a multitude of children in a merchant culture. Though only 10% of Charlestown’s population at mid-century owed their income to merchant commerce, these merchant families, like the Carys, were those who began to have fewer children.

Family size then, in conjunction with sexual norms and resultant pregnancies were inevitably linked to community economic and cultural expectations. Pregnancy and childbirth were further complicated in colonial New England by the near absence of prenatal care. Moreover, a lack of modern anesthetics, coagulants, and medical instruments made labor a dangerous enterprise. Midwives were the primary caretakers of a woman during childbirth; non-medical men and children had little place in the process. Margaret’s female companions would have lent their moral and emotional support to the proceedings. Religious leaders would sometimes, but not often, come in support of a birthing, and medically trained doctors had no place until around 1750. Even then these doctors, usually young wealthy white men having studied in Europe, met resistance from tradition.22

Margaret was twenty-three years old when she first became a mother. Though Margaret makes no reference during any of her pregnancies to the maladies that often accompany pregnancy, doctors and midwives of the time defined pregnancy in terms of Humorism. Medical practitioners of the period attributed morning sickness and other illness or pain to a precarious imbalance between states of the Hippocratic humors, i.e. blood, phlegm, black bile, and yellow bile. In addition to misconceptions of pregnancy-related sickness, massive ignorance existed regarding menstrual cycles and how pregnancy presented itself. A state of “obstructed menses” called for medication, oftentimes just herbs, that led to sickness or sometimes, albeit not often, to abortion. Many historians suggest that women at the time, especially midwives, were more aware of these abortive effects than they let on – and would sometimes use certain medicines deliberately. Only after obstructed menses were ruled out was pregnancy suspected, but it could only be confirmed by fetal movement or quickening, usually evidenced about the fourth month. Given the emphasis on both reproductive and marital sex in colonial communities, many couples, the Carys included, continued having sex long after conception.23 For Samuel and Margaret

specifically, intercourse occurred for probably 3 weeks, 4 months, and 6 weeks following each respective (approximate) conception date. The first conception date, sometime very close to their wedding day, would result in the birth of Samuel Cary on September 20, 1742.

**September 20, 1742**

This day God was pleased to appear for me in a wonderful manner, in a time of great difficulty and distress, and made me the living mother of a living and perfect child.

Lord, what shall I render to thee for all thy goodness and mercy vouchsafed unto me?

Two elements of Margaret’s post are of note. First, her emphasis on being a “living mother” of a “living child” is reflective of historical concern about maternal and infant fatality at birth. The work of Nancy Schrom Dye, in conjunction with Judith Leavitt in her *Brought to Bed*, argue that the few existing statistics show that maternal death fell off drastically from England to New England during the 17th and 18th centuries and that most societal fear was borne of ministers preaching the dangers of childbirth or a consensus fear among communities.24 Despite only 1 in 200 women dying at childbirth in the mid 18th century, the period’s literature was largely an attempt to maintain piety among expectant mothers or would-be pregnant women in colonial New England.25 The religious character of these pamphlets is most evident in those of the most prominent religious and intellectual figure of the time, the Reverend Cotton Mather.

On just the third page, Mather in his *Elizabeth in her Holy Retirement: An Essay to Prepare a Pious Woman for her Lying in. or Maxim and Methods of Piety, to Direct and Support an Handmaid of the Lord who Expects a Time of Travail* (1710), writes to an intended female audience, “This, if any, is the Time, wherein the Methods and motions of Divine Grace, will find her;
And if ever you will *hear the Voice of God* at all, *To Day you will hear His Voice.*” Margaret’s declaration that God appeared in a “wonderful manner, in a time of great difficulty and distress” mirrors Mather’s description. The minister writes for pages maintaining that conception, pregnancy, and childbirth are a woman’s God-given purpose and that to be impatient, discontented, or dissatisfied with the pregnancy condemned her to a “very blameable Indecency and Indiscretion” in the eyes of God. In relation to a woman’s mortality, Mather writes, “For you ought to know, your *Death* has entred into you and you may have conceived That which determines but about Nine Months more at the most, for you to *Live in the World.*”

While maternal death at childbirth was around just half of one percent, infant death was more common. Approximately one English child in six did not survive his or her first year, and only slightly fewer, proportionately, died in infancy in New England. Though maternal and infant death weren’t as high as some such as Cotton Mather might have warned, the social fear, in combination with the exhaustive process that childbirth was, created justifiable anxiety among mothers, families, and midwives regarding late stage pregnancy and childbirth. It is this fear that is seen in the diary entry when Margaret writes of her “great difficulty and distress.”

Margaret and Samuel’s second child and son, Thomas Cary, was born on October 7, 1745. Margaret’s entry detailing the birth is very similar to the first. Her distress and calling out to God illustrate the continual link between the physical and spiritual in Calvinist thought.

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27 Gloria Main, *Peoples of a Spacious Land*, 111.
28 Scholten, Leavitt, Tannenbaum, and Dye all speak to the levels of discomfort, malady, and physical harm possible during childbirth. Broken pelvises and ruptured vaginal walls might occur, the former often leading to (sometimes fatal) infection. Blood loss was a large concern during the birth of particular large children, which made for tearing. Without coagulants or painkillers, mothers were given herbs/alcohol for these physical setbacks but otherwise felt everything.
29 A later example of such distress may have occurred in early 1751. Some 19th century secondary texts refer to a fourth Cary child named Abigail Coit. There is no evidence either way to truly suggest a fourth child, but also only partial evidence to deny a fourth child in the line. Although there are no birth, death, or baptismal records of an Abigail Coit born to Margaret and Samuel – as well as no family recollection of a daughter – more than one source mentions her in what may have been a case of still birth or infant death. (Not surprising given the lessening but still high rates of infant mortality – many of which were never recorded). More likely, however, are 19th century historians mistaking the birth of an Abigail Cary to Samuel and Mary Cary in 1735 (possibly Captain Cary’s infant sister) for a daughter of Margaret’s.
30 Rose Lockwood, “Birth, Illness and Death in 18th-Century New England” *Journal of Social History*, 12, 1 (Autumn, 1978), 111-128. Lockwood’s essay compliments Scholten, *et al* in its exploration of Ebenezer Parkman, she of Lockwood’s 19th century case study, part of which details the number of sicknesses common in the 19th century and birth complications, e.g., a prolapsed uterus.
October 7, 1745

This day I was safely delivered of a son. God was pleased to appear for me in a wonderful manner in my distress. I called upon him, and he heard and answered me in a way of mercy. Lord, grant that a sense of thy goodness may always abide upon me.

Though many defined the birthing process as an occasion mainly for women, men were sometimes present. If the mother became greatly distressed, a church minister might be invited to pray with the mother and remind her of her duty to God. The husband too might be asked to pray with or comfort the mother. Generally, the husband or older male child’s role was to travel the neighborhood and gather friends of the mother and the midwife or physician. When delivery approached, however, most men would exit the room and stay with any children or friends who could not endure the process to come. It is here that Margaret probably became most distressed, and here that Cotton Mather’s writings connecting faith and pain largely rang true. Reaching out and speaking to God became a major goal, as is evidenced in her diary.31

Though labor was its own enterprise, the point of delivery then became most exhausting, while post-delivery became its own very important stage in the process. The social custom of lying-in protected a mother from her usual responsibilities while she recovered. Her husband was often a key contributor to her health and comfort at this time, an obligation Samuel would not have been able to fulfill. A slew of other visitors customarily congratulated, assisted, prayed with, or simply comforted the mother/parents/family. For Margaret it was perhaps these people, in addition to her slaves, who guided her lying-in process. The first step in another important process was making sure the newborn was not deformed or “affected” by its parents’, but mostly its mother’s, sin. The vices and passions of a mother were believed to result in malady or deformation in the newborn, and so these fears were used as a warning to deter expectant mothers from indulgence and what the community and church defined as sin.32 Though the intense pains of childbirth were also often linked to sin, surviving mothers found resolve in knowing scripture. A popular sentiment of the period was founded in I Timothy 2:15, which reads, “Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.” Such biblical sentiment gave families the confidence that they were

in God’s grace. Once a child and mother were deemed “normal,” naming and baptism were the standard next steps.

The Carys’ first child was named after Samuel and his father. Their second was named after Margaret’s father, Thomas. The third son, Jonathan, was named after his great-grandfather, Deacon Jonathan Cary (1647-1738), and one of his uncles, also Jonathan Cary, who died young. Unsurprisingly, Samuel, Thomas, and Jonathan were by 1771 the second, fifth, and sixth most common names in New England. Some scholars argue that name continuity stressed the generational continuity of the family, specifically the paternal side, rather than the individuality of the child.³³ They also point to family-oriented naming as a power construct upholding the authority of parents in the household. Others, however, believe that there is little meaning in Massachusetts naming patterns (if there are patterns at all). Daniel Scott Smith shows that the pool of names across the region did not waver and showed no real signs of meaning beyond biblical roots.³⁴

Margaret is sparse in detail following the birth of each son. Beyond the individual entries marking the appearance of each child, Margaret gives no insight regarding churching, baptism, or infant care. Her lack of writing may be due to Margaret’s entries being less day-to-day and more scattered as in a family bible, or there might not have been much time to spare, or both. There existed a shared anxiety within communities about obtaining baptism for children as soon as possible, as is illustrated by the generally short lapse of time between birth and baptism at church, usually on the Sunday following birth.³⁵ This anxiety was linked more to concern for the soul of the child (1 in 6 infants died in their first year) than to the perceived necessity for the mother to resume other social responsibilities. However, the latter was also important. While baptism was not delayed among the religious, the lying-in period prior to returning to general duties was longer among the wealthy. Churching, that is, the part social, part religious celebration of a newborn and the health of its mother, was another common custom taking place after a child was born. Though churching was more commonly linked, even in Early America, to

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³⁴ Daniel Scott Smith, “Continuity and Discontinuity in Puritan Naming: Massachusetts, 1771,” The William and Mary Quarterly, Third Series, 51, 1 (Jan., 1994): 67-91. He points out that Middlesex County (Charlestown was included at this time) held prevalence for Jacob and other Tribe of Israel rooted names (85).
Anglicanism, churching was a Christian endeavor. One argument regarding churching was that it was a male-driven practice emphasizing women’s helping to purify their peers post-birth. Like labor, delivery, and most of the lying-in period, however, churching was in practice a female event that saw mothers supporting each other and celebrating the good health and piety of each new mother. We do not know whether Margaret participated in such ceremony; however, given her religious dedication, the baptism of her children must have been of primary importance.36

Records show that Samuel was baptized on September 26, 1742, six days after his birth and Thomas was baptized on October 13, 1745 also six days after his birth.37

Jonathan, the Cary’s final child, was born on October 21, 1749 and baptized just one day later. Margaret wrote much of the same in her diary, thus suggesting that Jonathan’s time in gestation as well as his birth were not unique.

**October 21, 1749**

This day I was safely delivered of another son. God was pleased to appear for me. In my distress, I called upon him, and he heard me, although I am so unworthy of any mercy; therefore will I call upon him so long as I live. Lord, grant that I may live more to thy glory than I have yet done.

The complexity of colonial pregnancy and childbirth often involved considerations far more extensive than just biological and familial influences. Land availability, labor, and material wealth, but also social and religious elements played large roles in the process. The latter two are most visible in the continual links between the public community and the private but also between the body and the spirit. Each of these elements, in combination with a family’s private belief system, influenced the having and raising of children. This factor ultimately limited the Cary family size. Though the tone changed, women like Margaret were told time and again, from literature like Mather’s to sermons from their ministers (at this time, Margaret’s was Thomas Prentice), that procreation was women’s main purpose and God’s will. Margaret and others like her were told that women were to eat a plain diet, to rest, and to pray often to ensure the health of a newborn, which in turn ensured the health of the church, the community, and society.

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36 David Cressy, “Purification, Thanksgiving and the Churching of Women in Post-Reformation England” *Past & Present*, No. 141 (Nov., 1993), 106-146. Though focusing on England in an earlier period, Cressy remains the go-to scholar on churching for many Early American historians due to the ceremony’s tradition and largely unchanging status in the church.

Despite the strong place religion held in Margaret’s life, having children was also necessary economically for most colonial families, as they constituted free labor. In a merchant family, having sons was important for the continuity of a ship, a business, or a business connections. As seen in the Cary line, the role of merchant would be passed on to Samuel and Jonathan as their father grew older. The sons’ roles in the family, however, were only possible when Samuel, Thomas, and Jonathan did not succumb to the 16% chance of infant mortality, and then only after Margaret raised them in a family largely devoid of the patriarch whom most felt should run a household government.

III. Childrearing in the Face of Sickness

Sybil Graves, Margaret’s mother, died on November 1, 1721, of smallpox. Margaret’s infant sister, also Sybil but sometimes noted as Sarah, died four days later on November 5, of the same infectious disease. Margaret was little more than two years old. These and other experiences deeply influenced the way Margaret raised her children. They were what would also lead Margaret to inoculate her three children thirty years later in the face of another outbreak. The smallpox epidemic of 1721 was both a tragedy and a controversy, as officials both political and religious, along with their followers, feuded over inoculation and its place in society. Such a contentious debate undoubtedly influenced Margaret and her contemporaries, not only with regard to how they dealt with such sickness, but also how they raised children in a still heavily religious but also newly cosmopolitan society.

Though there exists in Margaret’s diary no mention of her or anyone else raising her three children, Margaret was probably the primary caretaker of Samuel, Thomas, and Jonathan. With Samuel largely absent, she likely had only her servant Caesar and his wife for help with the children, though there remains the possibility of employed help or a put-out teenaged girl from another family. During this period, older children would customarily help with the younger, so as Samuel aged, he probably assisted with Thomas and especially Jonathan, who was six years his junior. Despite their somewhat unusual family structure, Samuel relayed positive stories of his mother to his own children. In her correspondence, Margaret’s granddaughter and Samuel’s daughter Margaret wrote of her father’s memories.
January 23, 1843

She [Margaret] was always represented as a woman of a very resolute spirit, as well as of great prudence, for which she had need with her sons. My father [Samuel] had great filial reverence for her memory. He often spoke of her piety, fortitude, and activity of both mind and body.

This memory contains elements that can alert historians to several aspects of Margaret’s character and child-rearing strategies. Specifically, the daily task of managing her home with only two servants and no husband would have left Margaret little time for worrying about her children’s psychological development, and, as Helena Wall writes, “Both economic necessity and religious doctrine encouraged children to grow up quickly.” As discussed earlier however, other scholars such as Moran and Vinovskis argue that while childhood featured many facets that adult life did – because of catechism and specifically child-oriented educational practices, children did experience a childhood. Samuel’s memory shows that Margaret was probably an active mother who invested a lot of time in the care and moral education of her children.

Given the community and social roles and expectations with regard to marriage and family, childrearing in colonial New England reveals more clearly than any other the communal context of family life. However, by the mid-to-late eighteenth century, the community began to play a more limited role than it had previously in family life and in the ties between parents and children. These affective ties are most evident in Margaret’s entries regarding Samuel’s sickness, namely when she’s worried about “my Sammy.” Historians of early American diarists note that authors of early New England diaries and memoirs ruthlessly censored personal expression of emotion, except for those ritually prescribed sentiments on occasions such as the illness (as shown with Margaret and Samuel) and the death of one’s parents and children. It can be inferred then, that Margaret’s heart (and affection) showed more here than perhaps she intended.

The mid-eighteenth century saw a new conception of parental responsibility centered on the care and proper nurture of children; however, traditional ideas of discipline required a parent such as Margaret to start the regulation of the will of the child immediately upon birth. The first

measure of control for an infant came by way of feeding. Most children were weaned directly from the breast to spoon food such as corn mush made with milk at 8 to 10 months.\textsuperscript{41} Before weaning, however, feeding would sometimes exhaust the milk of a mother. Some sources claim that breast milk was the most frequently advertised commodity in early American newspapers. (However, breast milk was sometimes used medicinally to treat adults as well.)\textsuperscript{42} Some believed that an infant nursing at a breast other than its mother’s was disgraceful in the eyes of God, perhaps less a core belief of Calvinism and more a social precedent aimed at strengthening the bond between mother and child. After 1750, physicians endeavored to persuade women that the only healthy thing for an infant was its mother’s breast, perhaps largely as a response to changing family customs that saw a strengthening of bonds between parents and children, especially in urban areas such as Charlestown. Also after 1750, advice literature such as the \textit{Compleat Housewife}, which provided advice to increasingly literate mothers (usually of higher classes), advised demonstrating concern for children by careful feeding.\textsuperscript{43} Ultimately, courtesy suckling among community mothers was part of the mutual aid they were expected to give each other; however, putting out babies to hired wet nurses was not common among the colonists.

Beyond discipline and nurture, the health and lives of infants was a priority. The death of Margaret’s mother and young sister are representative of the realities of early life in 18\textsuperscript{th} century Massachusetts where, as shown above, 1 in 6 infants died in their first year. We do not know whether mother and child developed smallpox independently of one another or if one gave it to the other. What is known is that Margaret had some level of the disease as she is described in letters as having been “small in person, plain, pitted with the smallpox.”\textsuperscript{44} Ambiguity remains regarding whether or not Margaret had smallpox, or was just inoculated since the practice involved infecting the patient.

Famously described by Dr. Zabdiel Boylston and by both Cotton and Increase Mather, descriptions and accounts of smallpox and successful inoculation were circulated en masse around the Boston area in 1721. Increase Mather specifically recounted the story of a Dr. Harris

\begin{footnotes}
\item [42] Ibid, 252.
\item [43] Elize Smith, \textit{The Compleat Housewife Or Accomplish’d Gentlewoman’s Companion}, (London, England, 1727). Smith’s cookbook was first printed in Virginia but reprinted in New York, Philadelphia, and Boston in the 1740s.
\end{footnotes}
and his time in France curing children of smallpox. The process, as related by Mather and Boylston, involved making two incisions, “as far away from the heart and brain as possible,” on the body of the patient. The physician would then apply a small amount of pus from a diseased person’s active smallpox pustule to infect the patient, but only enough to induce immunity. Mather continued to recount how the children who underwent this process were not bedridden and only fell victim to a dozen or fewer pustules on her face and even fewer on her body.

Mather and Dr. Harris recommended “that the Diet of the Patients be thin, and moderate, forbearing flesh, and Wine, and Spirituous Liquors; and all hot Medicines, and Cordials.”45 Such a diet, in addition to prayer and a physician “providing against the dangers of the Pestilence,” would keep a patient healthy.46 It is likely that Margaret survived inoculation while her mother and infant sister were probably too weak to be inoculated, thus succumbing to smallpox.

Figures 10 & 11: Increase Mather’s account (left) and Dr. Boylston’s more medical account (right). Each was in response to the April, 1721 outbreak of smallpox in Boston and surrounding areas. See Increase Mather, Some further accounts from London of the Smallpox inoculated” (Boston, 1721); Zabdiel Boylston, Some account of what is said of inoculating or transplanting the smallpox. By the learned Dr. Emanuel Timonius, and Jacobus Pylarinus. With some remarks thereon. To which are added, a few queries in answer to the scruples of many about the lawfulness of this method” (Boston, 1721).
Though Boston fell to eight outbreaks of smallpox in the 17th century, citizens believed the 1721 outbreak had come from Barbados.

In April 1721, many people left Boston. For those who stayed, inoculation was an option because of doctors like Boylston. Controversy, however, sprang not from the particulars of the process, but from the process itself. Cotton Mather summed it up in his *An Account of the Method and Success of Inoculating the Smallpox in Boston, New England* (1722), one of many essays in a mainly print, but also verbal and often legal, battle over the religious permissibility of inoculation. Mather wrote that his opponents believed “that God has decreed when, and how we shall dye, and for us to pretend a Remedy that won’t fail to Save our Lives, and secure us from *Death* by the Small Pox, is to take the *Work of God* out of his Hands.”

Put plainly, opponents of inoculation (most notably William Douglas, a Boston doctor, and James Franklin, the editor of the *New England Courant* and Benjamin Franklin’s brother) believed that to use man-made inoculations was fit only for “heathens.” They believed God-fearing people should not do God’s work to save others, using medicine in lieu of prayer. In a culture where ailment was translated as God’s punishment for sin (further connecting the physical and spiritual), inoculation was a “machination of man,” not to be trusted, due to its perceived root in folk medicine.

As a physician, Boylston often countered such claims with the statistical numbers of lives saved through his practices. The Mathers, however, used their reputations as well-known ministers and social influencers, as well as broadly construed statistics, to show that God sanctioned the wisdom of inoculation. It is this element of the controversy (her personal experience notwithstanding) that would have spoken most strongly to Margaret’s religious sensibilities. Each Mather published several essays on the topic, with Cotton (above) speaking

47 Cotton Mather, *An Account of the Method and Success of Inoculating the Smallpox in Boston, New England* (Boston, 1722), 2.

more to the science as Boylston did. But in one pamphlet in particular, Increase Mather specifically discussed the religious implications. He minces no words in “proving” that inoculation is both lawful and a method provided by God for the safety of his children. Specifically, “GOD has graciously owned the Practice of Inoculation, among us in Boston, where some Scores, yea above an hundred have been Inoculated, & not one miscarried; by they Bless GOD, for His discovering this Experiment to them.”

Despite the controversy during the 1721 smallpox outbreak, inoculation largely won out, and, in conjunction with other public health strategies, made smallpox epidemics less lethal in colonial New England. Following a string of outbreaks in the 17th century, Boston officials began to learn of the disease’s contagiousness, leading them to adopt the practices of counting the sick, placing flags or guards outside their houses and insisting on involuntary quarantine within one’s home. Elizabeth Drinker, a famed Philadelphia diarist of the mid- and late 18th century, wrote about the disease in 1759. Though three hundred miles southwest of Boston, Drinker regarded the occurrence of smallpox as commonplace, suggesting the disease had become far less fear-inducing than it had been a few decades prior. This relative indifference may have been born of a spreading knowledge about smallpox and the now more widely spread option of inoculation. The latter is implicit in her use of “naturally” juxtaposed against the unnatural occurrence of smallpox through inoculation. As she wrote on October 24,

Went this morning to Thos Say's, whose Daughter Becky lays ill in ye Small Pox, which she has taken in the natural way; and to most that take it naturally, (at this time), it proves mortal.

Margaret’s decision to inoculate her own children perhaps best illustrates her independence and shows the fluidity of her and other women’s circumstances. Given her personal experience, it makes sense that Margaret had her own children inoculated. Still surprising, however, is that Margaret made such a decision with Samuel having been gone for two years at the point of her diary entry. In the face of another outbreak of smallpox in 1752, Margaret wrote:

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49 Increase Mather, Several Reasons Proving that Inoculating or Transplanting the Small Pox is a Lawful Practice and that it is Blessed by God for the Saving of many a life (Boston, 1721), 1.
June 1, 1752

This day my dear children were inoculated. O Lord, be pleased to grant a blessing on the means used, and appear for them now in the time of their distress. Lord, I beg, for Christ’s sake, thou wouldst not punish me for my sins by taking these dear children from me.

It is safe to assume that Margaret was happy to have her children inoculated in the face of an outbreak that claimed the lives of 539 of the 5,545 Boston-area residents, while only 30 of 2,124 inoculated died. Despite Boylston’s earlier descriptions and the low statistic of mortality, lingering social concern over inoculation closely paralleled the fear of maternal death at childbirth. Margaret, it seems, whether because of her personal experience or because of her belief in the power of medicine (due to her physician father), was a supporter of inoculation.

Once children aged (survived) into adolescence, their livelihoods, health, and education were generally in the hands of multiple individuals. Traditionally, childrearing was in the hands of mothers like Margaret until the age of six or seven for males, often longer for female children. As childrearing became more specialized and sentimentalized in the mid-to-late 18th and early 19th centuries, it also became a more clearly feminine task. A mother began her child’s moral education by giving catechism or introductory lessons in scripture and by teaching the child how to pray. Later, fathers often conducted daily prayers and Bible readings. These domestic spiritual exercises reinforced the moral authority of the father. Most mothers shared the Christian duty to teach children religious principles, as well as the legal obligation to govern and nurture them, but very little advice was addressed to women in the literature on family life beyond healing and nursing. It is evident from what is known of Margaret that much of her children’s spiritual and moral education came from her rather than their being a shared responsibility between parents.

Another Margaret story in Cary family correspondence, as related by Samuel reads:

There was a garden at the back of the house, and one day some foolish boys were ridiculing my father [Samuel] for being under the control of a woman [Margaret], and taunted him by saying that he dared not break off the branch of a fruit tree that grew in it. He got a hatchet, cut down the tree itself, and brought it round in front of the house crying out, “Sam Cary has cut down his mother’s pear tree!” His mother [Margaret] took no notice of it at the time, but when they were alone together, she represented to him the folly and weakness of his conduct, so that he deeply lamented it; and whenever he mentioned it, it was always in praise of her conduct and acknowledgment of her good management.\footnote{Caroline Gardner Curtis, \textit{The Cary Letters}, 22. Emphasis my own.}

It is in this memory that Margaret’s fortitude (as in the first memory) and great prudence comes through, as her son, age unknown, chopped down the pear tree. This incident too might reveal Margaret’s affections for her children, or at least for Samuel. Samuel’s reverence for Margaret shows that despite her increased responsibilities in the face of her husband’s absence, she was able to manage raising and educating her children. Their health, however, Samuel’s especially, continued to be a concern.

In the Cary family, it is evident that Samuel was gravely ill at least twice. Margaret’s relevant entries include the following:

\textbf{January 2, 1743}

This day I was in great danger of being consumed by fire, but the Lord was pleased to appear for me, and wonderfully to put a stop to it. Lord, grant me grace to be humbly thankful to thee for thy mercies.

My child has had a long illness which has brought him very low, but the Lord has been pleased to rebuke it. O Lord, be pleased to perfect his health, and grant me grace to see the rod and who has appointed it, and be so wise as to make a right improvement of it.

\textbf{July 15, 1747}

…My dear Sammy is dangerously sick of a fever, but, O Lord, thou canst help and heal him. Whither else should we go but unto the Lord? Be pleased to bless the means used with him, and grant me grace to behave aright under this affliction, to see the rod and fall down and worship thee.

These are Margaret’s only references to Samuel’s illnesses, and she made none regarding Thomas or Jonathan. Correspondence between Samuel’s future children briefly revealed, with no additional detail, that he was a sickly child. Historically, there were several illnesses besides smallpox that were widespread at the time, including measles, diphtheria, influenza, pleurisy,
whooping cough, and several types of fever including typhoid, yellow, and scarlet, largely reduced in description to simply “fever.” At the beginning of the 18th century there was a particularly virulent strain of influenza that wreaked havoc on the Boston population. Without more than what Margaret wrote, we can only speculate.

Samuel was most likely sick with influenza, diphtheria, scarlet fever, or whooping cough, though measles is possible, as an outbreak had occurred just 30 years prior. Whooping cough is unlikely to have caused Samuel’s second sickness, since fever is not typically a symptom of the disease. All of these maladies, however, were common in children at the time, diphtheria especially. The illness ripped through New England starting in 1735 and ravaged many smaller communities. Kingston, New Hampshire, was especially devastated, losing 210 people to diphtheria, 200 of them children. Many parents mistook diphtheria and scarlet fever for other illnesses up until 1735, when several articles, essays, and pamphlets were published warning of the signs and causes of diphtheria and other “distempers.” Dr. William Douglas’s essay The Practical History of A New Epidemical Eruptive Milary Fever with an Angina Ulcuscolosa... refers directly to a town suffering with what has since been determined as diphtheria.

Figures 13 (Left): Dickinson’s 1740 pamphlet regarding diphtheria and treatment. Dickinson, J., Observations on that terrible disease vulgarly called the throat distemper. With advices as to the Method of Cure. In a Letter to a Friend (Boston, 1740).

Figure 14 (Right): Douglas’s earlier (1735) work reducing diphtheria (but maybe scarlet fever) to its symptoms for lack of name. William Douglass, The practical history of a new epidemical eruptive military fever, with an angina ulcuscolosa which prevailed in Boston, New England in the Years 1735 and 1736. (Boston, 1736)

125 Ibid.
In 1740, *Observations on that terrible Disease Vulgarly called the Throat-Distemper with Advices as to the Method of Cure*, was circulated throughout Boston and its surrounding areas as advice and warnings to families and physicians. These authors (trusted physicians), however, were sometimes flawed in their own descriptions, and their work therefore led to the misnaming of illnesses among lay people.\(^{58}\)

Margaret, like most women of the period, would have turned first to her own experience as an aid to her father, but also to her recipe books. Though in the 17\(^{th}\) and early 18\(^{th}\) centuries most advice pamphlets were directed toward men, the mid 18\(^{th}\) century rise in female literacy and a further feminization of childcare led to more pamphlets for women.\(^{59}\) The texts for men often featured a mix of advice on curing illness and advice on husbandry and farm work. One such title was *The Husband’s Guide in Four Parts* (1712), published in New York. Its longer title promises, “Part second, choice physical receipts for divers dangerous distempers in men, women, and children.”\(^{60}\)

With Samuel away, Margaret would have consulted something akin to (and probably more local than) Eliza Smith’s *The Compleat Housewife: or, Accomplish’d gentlewoman’s companion*. This text, published in Williamsburg in 1727, was a collection of several hundred “of the most approved receipts in cookery,” as well as “a collection of near two hundred family receipts of medicines.”\(^{61}\) This genre of pamphlet was popular among women like Margaret, town physicians and apothecaries like Thomas Graves, and among midwives, who would mix the written advice with their own experiential knowledge to serve the community.

Although midwives remained the dominant participants in childbearing practices in the mid-18\(^{th}\) century, physicians assisted with general illness, even before the 18\(^{th}\) century. Trained doctors and midwives were not the only option, however. Ministers were looked to as healers who doubled as a leader in prayer.\(^{62}\) This position was of the utmost importance especially to


\(^{60}\) The Husband’s Guide in Four Parts (New York, 1712).


It is not a coincidence that of Margaret’s twenty-six diary entries, only three entries mention her “seeing the rod (of affliction).” Two of those regard Samuel’s sickness while the third accompanies an ambiguous death in the household. She then asked for forgiveness from God and made gestures toward improvement. If Margaret saw sickness as a test, it makes sense that she offered herself up for the punishment of sin. With Samuel gone, she was the lone parent and as a mother in general, and would have been socially expected to look out for her children’s wellbeing. Margaret’s written connection between maladies and her own faith provides yet another example of the link between the physical and spiritual, a testament to changing ideas of individualized religious experience. Such a trend of connecting the tangible and physical representation of her piety through her, Samuel’s, and the children’s, general wellbeing made it important that a minister attend the sickbed of an ailing loved one. Such a presence allowed Margaret further connection to her own faith and brought her a sense of being closer to God.

Sickness evaded, Margaret’s life, as is evident by her diary, prominently included the upbringing of her three sons. Her membership within the church, however, ensured she was not completely alone. In the mid- to late-18th century, Protestant ministers and educators began to characterize education differently than they had to that point. While maintaining that obedience to divine and parental authority was the primary lesson that a child should learn, they described religious education as one of instilling values and encouraging a child’s instincts to do good, rather than a process of beating deviltry out of it.63 Samuel, Thomas, and Jonathan would thus have learned values and morals from Margaret and from Samuel (when home), and as members of the church because of baptism, from the community and ministers within the church.64

Other venues for the education of a child, notably later in adolescence and into the teenage years, were the processes of putting/hiring out and apprenticeship. Some colonists looked negatively upon putting out, that is, the hiring out of a minor to a wealthier family for the moral education of the child and the labor needs of the host family. Colonists created criteria for putting out based on education and manners. For example, if a child was particularly uneducated due to class or circumstance, or if a child was simply unruly, that minor would be hired out to a

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wealthier family in need of cheap labor.\textsuperscript{65} It is clear that the Cary children did not meet these criteria for putting out, as Margaret undoubtedly would have noted such an event. Given their apparent wealth, however, it would not be implausible that others’ children might serve in the Cary household or perhaps aboard a Cary vessel, though no evidence of this practice with respect to the Cary family exists. The improbability is compounded by the general expectation for a put-out child to stay in the household until the age of adulthood -- 21 for boys, and 18 or marriage for girls. If another child were to be taken into the Cary household in any kind of work agreement, be it apprenticeship or having been put out, Margaret would likely have mentioned such an event in her diary. A male apprenticeship is also unlikely given Samuel’s frequent absences (unless, of course, he took a young sailor/merchant upon his ship – something for which we have no evidence either way), and female apprenticeships were much more rare. An anomaly to consider, however, is again the sometimes listing of Abigail Coit as a fourth Cary child whereas only three are listed in town records.\textsuperscript{66} Though no Cary child was “put-out,” it is known that the younger Samuel was apprenticed to a Boston merchant, Mr. Deblois.\textsuperscript{67}

Mr. Deblois was probably Gilbert Deblois of Boston, a successful importer of hardware and mostly foreign goods.\textsuperscript{68} A family story relates how Samuel would go on runs for Mr. Deblois to gather payment across nearby colonies (in one instance, specifically to Middletown, Connecticut).\textsuperscript{69} Samuel’s trips for Deblois went well, and Samuel could find no fault in Samuel’s business prowess. However, the son was known as a womanizer, and, in fear that he might make “an imprudent connection,” Samuel was compelled to send Samuel to St. Kitts in 1760 where he served under the advisement of a family friend and banker, Mr. Manning of Manning and Anderton, a prosperous merchant house first in Bristol and then St. Kitts.\textsuperscript{70} His brothers, though, were strikingly different. Jonathan was known as the quiet brother who also took up the merchant life, mostly traveling between London and the Caribbean. His career developed, of

\textsuperscript{66} Though infant mortality is the likely culprit (see fn 29 of Ch. 2), the mention of Abigail might have been a mistaken reference to a put-out child. Given Samuel’s distance, a put out female child to help Margaret in the household is unlikely but possible.
\textsuperscript{69} Caroline Gardner Curtis, \textit{The Cary Letters}, 25.
\textsuperscript{70} Edmund Sheridan Purcell, \textit{Manning as an Anglican} (Macmillan, 1895), 6.
course, after Margaret’s death, when Jonathan was only 13. Jonathan died young, being lost at sea aboard his own ship around 1775. Thomas was studious and would go on to have his own ministry in the northern coastal town of Newburyport, Massachusetts, an obvious result of Margaret’s religious influence. Despite all three being below the traditional age of adulthood for males (21) when Margaret died, family letters claim that each son’s respective personalities had developed as a direct result of her parenting. Samuel specifically told his own children “that whatever prosperity happened to him through life was for her sake and in answer to her prayers.”

Some historians may argue that Margaret’s affections and efforts to make a happy home were part of the mid-to-late eighteenth century trend of reconfiguring family life and the creation of small, emotionally intense units familiar to more modern families. Others, however, argue that by the late eighteenth century, a loosening of familial economic relationships had taken place and resulted in an increasing indulgence shown toward children partly as a by-product of New England’s prospering economy. These new economic ties facilitated change that saw children less dependent upon their parents for traditional social discipline and more on education and affection. We cannot make a claim either way regarding the Cary sons’ economic independence from Margaret and Samuel. Samuel’s initial successes in St Kitts were supported by a one thousand pound inheritance, Jonathan’s post-Margaret life is undocumented, and Thomas chose a life associated with financial modesty. It is worth noting, however, that although English and early American custom often defined adulthood by the ability to make and keep contracts (usually 21 for males), in practice, marriage defined male adulthood. The earliest Cary to marry was Samuel in 1770, at the age of 28.

Community and religion defined Margaret’s adult life. According to those norms, Margaret was to be a mother and a wife, and should have done both of those things as morally and piously as possible. As is evident from Margaret’s own diary and her eldest son’s anecdotes, her family may well have depended upon her for almost everything, and her own well-being was directly linked to the welfare of her husband and young children. Though the size, composition, and even

71 Ibid., 22.
72 Helena Wall, Fierce Communion: Family and Community in Early America, 50-51.
social structure of families of the period were often defined by the religious-based social values projected onto them, the Carys were part of the small percentage of families that didn’t quite fit such a mold. As their history shows, urban dwelling and especially merchant-oriented families had a host of other considerations, particularly male familial roles (or lack thereof), that affected their financial, social, and familial lives.
Conclusion: The Legacy of Margaret Graves & the Cary Family

Boston, October 14, 1762

On Friday last died at Charlestown, after a short Confinement, aged 43. Mrs. Margaret Cary, the amiable Consort of Samuel Cary, Esq; and youngest Daughter of the Hon. Thomas Graves, Esq; - Her Life was adorned with a bright Assemblage of Christian Graces and Virtues; and at the close of it, her Expectation of a blessed Immortality was fix’d on such an unfailing Foundation, as made the Prospect of Eternity appear happy and desireable to her.¹

Boston, December 11, 1769

The same Morning died at his seat in Chelsea, after a few Days illness, Samuel Cary, Esq. in the 58th year of his Age. – A Gentleman of Superior Abilities, and polite accomplishments. His remains were recently interred at Charlestown on Thursday last.²

Margaret Graves Cary died of unknown causes on October 8, 1762, almost three years after her final diary entry. At the time of her death she was mother to three sons: Samuel, Thomas, and Jonathan. Her husband, Captain Samuel Cary, had not been in the newspaper or shipping news within that same span of time, and Margaret never wrote of him leaving again, a fact which suggests that he retired in late 1759 and spent the next three years by Margaret’s side. This retirement coincided with his giving his son, Samuel, money to travel to St. Kitts, and his return from the war in which he was wounded. It was upon Margaret’s death that Captain Cary was bequeathed the Bellingham estate in which he lived until his own death in 1769.

Samuel Cary (1742-1812)

By all accounts, their son Samuel was successful during his time in St. Kitts. He was first sent by his father to work under the supervision of a family friend, William Manning. Samuel used his father’s 1,000 pounds to open a store on the island and added space that he rented out. This foray into business led to Samuel becoming a manager of the Simon Plantation on St. Kitts sometime before 1765: Samuel’s ledger still survives, and a number of the entries are dated that year. It is unknown whether Samuel ever returned to Charlestown before his mother’s death or to Chelsea before his father’s. What is known is that when Captain Cary died in 1769 of

¹ The Boston News-Letter, October 14, 1762, Boston, Massachusetts, 3.
² The Boston Evening-Post, December 11, 1769, Boston, Massachusetts, 3.
complications from his war wounds, Samuel bought out the inheritances of Jonathan and Thomas and further consolidated the Bellingham-Cary estate in Chelsea, Massachusetts before leaving once again for the Caribbean in the early 1770s.

In 1843, Samuel’s daughter, Margaret Graves Cary, wrote a letter to her nephew George about her father, Samuel, and his exploits in St. Kitts and his early years in Grenada leading up to his marriage to Sarah (sometimes referenced as Sally) Gray. There is some discrepancy between her letter and the surviving Simon Plantation letter book kept by Samuel Cary. The ledger makes note on most pages of having been written on St. Christopher (later St. Kitts): however, Margaret Graves claims that the Simon Plantation was actually in Grenada; a curious discrepancy regarding islands some 360 miles apart. She writes that one of Samuel’s close friends, a Mr. Bourryan, owned a plantation on Grenada (supposedly Simon), near Grenville, and hired Samuel to manage the estate. She writes that Samuel, as manager, supervised two white men and almost 300 slaves on the island and was also entreated to buy, with Bourryan’s investment, a second smaller plantation (Mt. Pleasant) also on the island, which led to debt for Samuel and Sarah Cary.

Samuel married Sarah Gray on November 5th, 1772 in Chelsea, Massachusetts. According to later recollections of their daughter Margaret, they spent a great deal of those first months of marriage in Boston associating in the social scene with other young couples. It was soon after Samuel sailed back to Grenada and, following the birth of their son Samuel in October 1773, his wife Sarah joined him while leaving newborn Samuel with her mother Sarah. They spent most of their years managing their estates in Grenada, Samuel as the plantation master and Sarah as the household mistress.³ Family letters illustrate Sarah’s training of house servants and Samuel’s ascent in the social circles of planters and managers there. Around the time of General Edward Mathew becoming Governor of Grenada, Samuel was appointed to the General Assembly of Grenada.⁴ Despite sending their two eldest children, namely Margaret (2nd oldest), to school in London – letters strongly suggest that Samuel was for the American cause in the American

⁴ Caroline Gardner Curtis, *The Cary Letters*, 37
Revolution and was once threatened by Governor Mathew for accommodating American ship captains in his home.  

Overall success on Grenada allowed the Carys to stay on the island for almost nineteen years. The year 1785 saw Samuel almost die of fever. By 1787, Grenada population stood at 996 whites, 1125 free people of color, and 25,962 slaves, however, theirs and other plantations and sugar crop were decimated by a hurricane – further plunging the Carys into debt. In 1792 the Carys returned to Chelsea with seven children and three slaves. Two of those slaves returned to Grenada due to homesickness, and the third was Fanny Fairweather. Sarah Cary adopted Fairweather off the streets of St. Kitts when she was only 7 years old. She would become a beloved member of the family. Departing from the islands, the Carys left their eldest, Samuel, to manage the properties before slave insurrection forced him to abandon the estates in 1796.

“The Retreat” became the name for the Chelsea estate, a 365-acre farm which Sarah and Samuel set out to renew through planting and landscaping upgrades. Family diaries claim that Samuel Cary spent 12,000 dollars in 1791 renovating the property. The insurrection in 1795 destroyed any semblance of Cary wealth, and Samuel would live the remainder of his life as a poor man. Some of the children were pulled from school to save money, and letters and diaries make note of Samuel’s restraint in spending, despite the fact that he had once been a man of wealth. One of their children was Thomas Graves Cary, whose future daughter Elizabeth would become Elizabeth Cabot Agassiz, the co-founder and first president of Radcliffe College.

A single unifying theme in these family histories is the love which Samuel and Sarah shared. Their grandson George notes that Sarah lived for her husband and that his tempers and anger were always dissipated by the influence of his wife. Samuel died in 1812 at the age of 70, and it is said that Sarah’s remaining 12 years of life were lived for her children because the death of Samuel had robbed her of any remaining happiness in her own life. It is clearest in their relationship and the endearing memories of their children that the affective individualism so evident in mid-century Charlestown and New England had influenced the life of Margaret’s son.

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6 Frederic William Naylor Bayley, *Four Year’s Residence in the West Indies: During the Years 1826,7,8, and 9* (William Kidd: Oxford University, 1833), 645.
Thomas Cary (1745-1808)

If Margaret’s affection and love for her children were evident in the life of Samuel, her piety and relationship with God greatly influenced her second son, Thomas.

There is little proof that Samuel continued in the religious life Margaret had bestowed upon the children. At one point in Grenada, Sarah even gave catechism lessons using an Episcopal bible. Thomas on the other hand, wasted no time in living a pious life no doubt influenced by the faith of his mother, Margaret. After graduating from Harvard, Thomas was ordained in 1768.

Thomas took up pastor duties at the First Parish/Church in Newburyport, Massachusetts, on May 11, 1768, when he was only 22 years old, replacing the late Reverend John Lowell. Thomas kept a daily diary from 1762 until his death in 1808, and through this diary, historians might know Thomas Cary as a man of simple tastes, dedicated to his church and to his family, and to his farm. It was in 1775, the same year as his youngest brother’s untimely death, that Thomas married Esther Carter. Historian Marsha Rising, analyzing Thomas’s diary, notes that both Thomas and Esther were strong patriots with respect to the American Revolution, and that their wedding was deliberately simple so as to not detract from the social issues at hand the same year.

7 Caroline Gardner Curtis, The Cary Letters, 37
8 Ibid, vii
9 Ibid, ix.
Esther died in 1779, and Thomas remarried Deborah Prince in 1783. Between both wives, Thomas was the father of eleven children, only two of whom grew to be adults. One of these children, Samuel Cary, became a colleague to James Freeman of Boston’s King’s Chapel. This was important given that Samuel’s work with Freeman marks the second time that a family member chose to abandon Calvinism post-Margaret (the first being Sarah Cary’s use of an Episcopal bible). Rising notes an overwhelming lack of emotion in Thomas’s diary, probably by design. These emotionless accounts of death greatly contrast with the diary entries of his late mother. One excerpt, written upon the death of Thomas’s son Jonathan, reads, “My son Jon’a died at one clock in the morning. 6 months, 26 days.”

Apparently a trend throughout, the affective language and emotive appeals of Margaret’s writing did not carry over into her son’s text. Surprisingly, given Thomas’s vocation, not even Margaret’s religious rhetoric was represented in Thomas’s diary. That said, his place in Newburyport suggests that he was more religiously liberal than his mother. In 1788, Thomas suffered a neurological setback that greatly affected his health for the rest of his life. Though he would go back to preaching thereafter, Thomas was not entirely the same following his brief mental incapacitation.

During Thomas’s ordination, Thomas Prentice wrote that he and others trusted in Thomas’s heart, and they hoped that he trusted in them. It is clear from Rising’s short study and through family recollection that Thomas was always a patient and thoughtful man, as he was described by many as the quiet and studious brother. It is because of Thomas that many of the older Cary genealogies survive. Family letters say that he kept genealogies in his own family bible and that he was in possession of his mother Margaret’s diary until his death in 1808.

Thomas died on November 24, 1808, when he was 63 years old. He had lived a quiet life at Charlestown, Chelsea, and then Newburyport. His niece and Samuel’s daughter, Margaret, writes that Thomas was always the favorite of his otherwise abrasive father. Captain Cary especially liked that Thomas had settled early in life when he moved to Newburyport and set up with Dr.

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10 It is worth noting that Margaret’s father, the Honorable Thomas Graves, was never a member of the First Congregational Church of Charlestown (like Margaret and Samuel) but rather was Anglican. Such a distinction raises questions about Margaret’s decision to gain full communion to the church on May 30th, 1742. See William Ives Budington, The history of the First church, Charlestown, in nine lectures, with notes, 254.


Enoch Sawyer as he began his career as a pastor there. While Captain Cary saw Samuel as irresponsible and perhaps as a womanizer, and Jonathan as immature, he was pleased at the end of his life knowing that Thomas had grown up to his standards. One might wonder if his good opinion of the son had anything to do with Thomas’s spiritual similarities to Margaret.

Jonathan Cary (1748-1775)

Margaret and Samuel’s youngest son, Jonathan, was, like his older brother, father, and grandfather, an Atlantic merchant. His trade took him between London and the West Indies, but more so the former. He had little to do with his brother’s business in the Caribbean. Jonathan also shared one of life’s more tragic elements with his mother, Margaret, that of early death.

Little is known of Jonathan beyond his merchant career and early death. There are no surviving shipping records of Jonathan leaving or entering Boston as his father and grandfather had. There is a single instance in an October 1772 issue of the Boston Post-Boy that mentions a Jonathan Cary as being passenger aboard the ship of a Captain Higginson. In other issues it showed that Higginson commonly sailed to London, supporting family claims of Jonathan’s tie to England. The only surviving notes on Jonathan are two short anecdotes related in Margaret Graves Cary’s further letters to her nephew (and Jonathan’s great nephew), George.

The first is a memory of Samuel relating how Jonathan had once done something to upset their father, Captain Cary. Upon being called for, Jonathan instead sat down by the front door of the house. When Captain Cary came to look for his youngest son, Jonathan ran off. This story was told less to illustrate Jonathan’s demeanor than the fear with which the brothers regarded

their father. A second story is even shorter and speaks of Samuel surprising Jonathan along with Samuel’s fiancé, Sarah Gray, in 1772. Samuel had been in the Caribbean and had declined a number of requests to come home but eventually he felt compelled to visit his love, Sarah, who was apparently friends with Jonathan. The way in which the story was related suggests that, despite being a merchant of some kind, Jonathan was at home far more than his father had been in Jonathan’s youth and far more than his brother Samuel was at that time.

Little more is known about Jonathan than that he died at sea sometime between 1773-75.

A Shift to Revolution

Despite the feminization of seaports in mid-18th century New England, the 1760s and 70s saw a return to gendered roles more typical of the early 18th and 17th centuries. Most notably, a “return to homespun” ideology became prevalent as anti-British ideals became more commonplace, especially in Boston and its neighboring communities. The “return to homespun” was spurred by commercial tensions between the colonies and Britain and found many colonists making their own goods as opposed to buying them from abroad. Since the rise of the Atlantic world networks in merchant-based communities was a large factor in the expansion of women’s roles in seaports, an interruption of that economic system hampered that expansion. Though T.H. Breen and especially Ellen Hartigan-O’Connor show that materialist commercialism still boomed throughout the period, there still pervaded a sense that women should temper their consumerism and be more inclined exclusively toward the education and upbringing of their children.

By Margaret’s death and especially by the time of American Revolution, female literacy in the New England colonies was at an all time high (50-60% in some cases), further facilitating the shift to considering a child’s education and upbringing a woman’s job.\textsuperscript{13} Over time historians would come to call this trend “Republican Motherhood.”\textsuperscript{14} That is, future American men were to be taught the ideals of American patriotism and liberty via their mothers, and this role elevated the importance of women’s roles in the household. This belief is reflected in the letters of Margaret and Captain Cary’s grandchildren (Margaret, especially), who more than once note the


patriotism of their mother and father (Samuel and Sarah). Just as Margaret impressed religion and affection onto her children, future generations of women impressed “American” ideals.

The rise of new attitudes about gender in the 19th century saw women further removed from the parts of society in which they once played a role. Elizabeth Murray’s business connections, Martha Ballard’s medicinal networks, and even Margaret Cary’s independence, were subverted by new ideas of democracy and masculinity that emerged in the early to mid 19th century. It is in this era that Elizabeth Cary (Margaret’s great-granddaughter and future Elizabeth Cabot Agassiz) was raised and lived, and was what may have influenced her foundation of the all-women’s Radcliffe College (once the Harvard Annex) in an attempt to promote co-education and the advancement of women in academics.

Affective individualism was more resilient in the post-Revolutionary era, especially as mothers increasingly were told to educate and stay with their children. A second Great Awakening in the early parts of the 19th century would seem to ensure, for however similar or dissimilar, that Margaret’s religious ideals continued long after her death. However, given Sarah and Samuel Cary’s apparent adoption of Anglican values and other descendants’ association with Unitarian churches in Boston, it appears that Margaret’s Calvinist beliefs extended only to her son Thomas. Even then, as a preacher until his death in 1808, Thomas Cary probably supported the more liberal faction of Congregationalism and was a part of the First Church of Newburyport, known for later splitting along liberal and conservative lines of faith.

Though Margaret is barely known to historical record, and though her family largely lost touch with the realities of her life, she remains an important example of life in Charlestown, Massachusetts, and of coastal, urban New England as a whole in the mid-18th century. The existence of her diary makes her one of the most intriguing Early American historical actors to never be fully explored. As a religious, white woman in the mid-18th century, Margaret and others were expected to be, and are often stereotypically positioned as, mothers and wives dominated by the patriarchy of their close-knit religious communities. In reality, many women like Margaret played roles beyond those that would have been expected of them in more traditional, rural cultures. However, these women were living what to them was an everyday,

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15 Thomas’s son, Samuel Cary, worked with James Freeman in Boston, one of the first prominent Unitarian ministers in America.
ordinary life, unburdened with the thinking that their lives were particularly noteworthy. It’s only in retrospect with close analysis of sparse record that we can begin to see how central the experiences of women like Margaret’s were to a major shift in gender roles from wife and mother to, at the very least, economically and culturally crucial household manager. Specifically, the patterns of marriage, lower fertility, romantic relationships, affective nurturing, and increased authority of women over households presaged the major trends of 19th century America. What became true for Margaret in the shifting 18th century rapidly became something like the norm for native-born Protestant families not in newly settled areas during the 19th century. It is only after reading between the lines of her diary that we can understand that the ordinary life of Margaret Graves Cary, and likely the lives of other women in the merchant class of 18th century Massachusetts, was really quite extraordinary.
Appendix: **The Diary of Margaret Graves Cary**


**May 15, 1742.**

This day I receive the agreeable news of the safe arrival of my dear consort in St. Kitts.  
Lord, be pleased to grant that we may make a right improvement of so great a mercy.  
Lord, what shall we render unto thee for all these mercies we receive from thee?  
Lord, be pleased to grant that we may always have a grateful sense of thy goodness to us in thy regard.

**May 24, 1742**

This day I am taking the care of a family upon me. Lord, grant that I may not be so taken up with the world as to neglect my great concern; and grant, O Lord, that I may behave myself wisely and prudently in every state in which it shall please God to call me.

**Saturday, May 29, 1942**

I received a letter from my dear consort, wherein he acquainted me with the wonderful goodness of God to him in raising him from sickness to health again. Lord, grant that our hearts may be sensibly taught by thy goodness and mercy to us.  
Lord, as thou art daily showering down of thy favors upon us, so grant that we may be lifting up our hearts to thee.

**June 14, 1742**

This day I received a letter from my dear consort, with an account of his health, likewise many other valuable things. Lord, I would be humbly thankful to thee for thy goodness to me in continuing his health, and likewise treasuring our substance from the hands of our enemies.

**June 21, 1742**

This day I gave myself up unto the Lord in an everlasting covenant never to be forgotten. Lord, give me grace to live up to the profession that I have now made.

**July 18, 1742**

This day I received the melancholy news of the loss that my dear consort met with.  
Lord, grant that all the dispensations of thy Divine Providence may work for our everlasting good.
September 20, 1742

This day God was pleased to appear for me in a wonderful manner, in a time of great difficulty and distress, and made me the living mother of a living and perfect child.

    Lord, what shall I render to thee for all thy goodness and mercy vouchsafed unto me?

January 2, 1743

This day I was in great danger of being consumed by fire, but the Lord was pleased to appear for me, and wonderfully to put a stop to it. Lord, grant me grace to be humbly thankful to thee for thy mercies.

    My child has had a long illness which has brought him very low, but the Lord has been pleased to rebuke it. O Lord, be pleased to perfect his health, and grant me grace to see the rod and who has appointed it, and be so wise as to make a right improvement of it.

June 3, 1744

This day we had a dreadful shock of an earthquake. Lord, grant that the surprise I was in may make me careful to prepare to meet my judge.

June 4, 1744

Lord, thou hast this day brought death into the house. Oh, grant that we may be all quickened hereby to prepare for our dissolution.

December 24, 1744

Lord, thou hast this day brought death into the house again. Oh, grant me grace to examine myself and see wherefore the Lord is contending with me; and, O Lord, be pleased to sanctify all thy dealings toward me.

    Lord, thou hast visited me with the rod of affliction, not only in sending death into the family, but in the long absence of my dearest friend. Lord, I know I have sinned in setting my heart too much upon him; in loving the creature I have forgot my Creator. But, O Lord, thou knowest how to forgive the frailty of our nature. O Lord, be pleased to return him yet again, and grant that my eyes may see him then will I praise thy great name for all thy goodness to me and mine.

January 7, 1745

This day God was pleased to return my dearest friend after a long and tedious absence. Lord, grant that I may now perform the vows and promises I made in the day of my distress, and live more to thy glory than ever I have done, and be pleased to sanctify the losses and disappointments we have met with.
May 27, 1745

This day I lost the company of my dearest friend. Lord, be pleased to take him under thy Divine protection, and keep him from all evil and return him in safety.

October 7, 1745

This day I was safely delivered of a son. God was pleased to appear for me in a wonderful manner in my distress. I called upon him, and he heard and answered me in a way of mercy. Lord, grant that a sense of thy goodness may always abide upon me.

September 19, 1746

This day I heard of the wonderful deliverance my dear consort met with from the hands of his enemies, and that we was in the greatest danger. O Lord, be pleased to grant our souls may be sensibly taught with thy goodness to us; that all thy mercy may lead us to repentance’ and, O Lord, be pleased to take him under thy Divine protection in all times to come, and return him in safety.

February 10, 1747

This day the Lord was pleased to appear for me and spare my life when in great danger. Lord, grant me grace to spend my spared life to thy glory.

February 12, 1747

This day I heard the melancholy news that my dear consort was taken. Lord, be pleased to sanctify all thy dealings towards us, and enable us to behave aright under all thy dealings; and, O Lord, be pleased to redeem him from the hands of his enemies, and return him in safety.

June 19, 1747

This day it pleased God to take away my honored father in a very sudden and awful manner. Lord, be pleased to sanctify this affliction to me and all concerned. O Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me; fathers of the flesh pity their distressed children when they complain to them, and wilt not thou, O Lord, whose compassion so far exceeds creatures’ compassions as the sea exceeds a drop? O my Father, pit me, support me, deliver me; and now father and mother have forsaken us, will the Lord be pleased to take us up, and be our God and Father unto death?

July 15, 1747

This day I heard the joyful news that my dear consort was returned from the hands of his enemies; and now, O Lord, would I bless thy great name for all thy mercy vouchsafed to us. Be pleased to be with him, and keep him from all evil, and return him again in safety; and grant that my eyes may see him, and that we may bless thy name together.
My dear Sammy is dangerously sick of a fever, but, O Lord, thou canst help and heal him. Whither else should we go but unto the Lord? Be pleased to bless the means used with him, and grant me grace to behave aright under this affliction, to see the rod and fall down and worship thee.

November 19, 1748

This day God was pleased to return my dear consort after an absence of almost four years. Lord, grant that I may be thankful for this thy great mercy to me, and that we may both bless and praise thy name together.

It has pleased God to hear my prayers, and raise my dear son to health again. Lord, grant that he may live to thy glory, and that I may praise thy name for all thy goodness and mercy, and trust in thee in all times to come.

October 21, 1749

This say I was safely delivered of another son. God was pleased to appear for me. In my distress, I called upon him, and he heard me, although I am so unworthy of any mercy; therefore will I call upon him so long as I live. Lord, grant that I may live more to thy glory than I have yet done.

March 6, 1750

This day I lost the company of my dearest friend. Lord, be pleased to take him under thy Divine protection, and return him in safety, and grant that we may meet again in this world, and that we may meet and praise thy holy name forever in the world to come. It has pleased God to visit my poor baby with long weakness, but he has now appeared for him and begun to raise him up.

June 1, 1752

This day my dear children were inoculated. O Lord, be pleased to grant a blessing on the means used, and appear for them now in the time of their distress. Lord, I beg, for Christ’s sake, thou wouldst not punish me for my sins by taking these dear children from me.

November 14, 1752

This day I meet with a great disappointment in my dearest friend’s not coming home. Lord, sanctify this disappointment and all others I meet with.

December 24, 1752

This evening I have been reflecting upon this day eleven years, when the providence of God brought us into this dear relation of husband and wife. Great cause I have to lament that I have no better filled up my place with useful service. I would take shame and lie low, and I beg pardon for my dear Redeemer’s sake. I would also call to mind some of very many mercies I have enjoyed. How many evils hath the Lord kept me from, which have overtaken others! We have had our difficulties, but God hath graciously supported us. Sometimes losses have been our
exercise, but God hath graciously been with us in six troubles, and in seven he hath not withdrawn his arm. We have wanted no good thing; nothing o much as thankful hearts and improving spirits, and what a shame is it that we have been wanting!

We have several children, and their lives have been continued to us, blessed be our gracious God! O that our children may live in thy sight! Hast thou not said, I will be the God of thy seed also? Blessed be God, we are yet a family not broken up by death, nor any other distressing providence, as is the case of so many at this day. I know not what another year may be to us; it may be the parting year.

I have just heard of the safe arrival of my dear consort at London, and the many dangers and difficulties he has undergone, and that he had liked to have foundered at sea. O Lord, I would bless and praise thy name that thou wast pleased to appear for him in the time of his distress.

October 17, 1759

This day it pleased God to return my dear consort, after a very long absence. Lord, I would bless and praise thy great and glorious name for all thy mercies, and especially for this.
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