TREASON

The Violation of Trust

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The cover:
Burn and Lay Waste from a painting by Nelson Surette, (1920-2004)
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The Nova Scotia artist illustrates the English genocidal expulsion of the Acadians from Nova Scotia in 1755. Surette, Canada's historian-in-art, created a lasting monument to the historical events surrounding this atrocity in a series of six paintings.
Burn and Lay Waste is in the Clare Municipal Building in Nova Scotia.

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for Meg

PART ONE

Overview

William Palmer is a 17th Century Kentish man living a bit more comfortably than most because he has had some elementary education. But, his young wife dies in childbirth and he begins to think of leaving England with thousands of others who are escaping the religious persecution of King and church. He makes the journey, helps to colonize New England and will cut a new home out of the wilderness four times before he dies. But, the Puritans have brought much of the religion they split from with them and they add more rigid rules in the creed causing upheaval among parishioners. The indispensable Natives, without whom many settlers would not have survived, are subjected to wars with the English and European disease eliminating whole tribes and subduing thousands more. The climate is severe along the Atlantic coast but nature provides both sustenance and shelter for Will when he marries and raises his family on his farms in Connecticut and New York. Will Palmer acquires land, that which he could never have done in England. It is obligatory for him, for security and place in society.

William Palmer and his family lived in these six settlements.

Part One

Not to know what happened before we were born is to remain perpetually a child. For what is the worth of a human life unless it is woven into the life of our ancestors by the records of history?

Marcus Tullius Cicero, 106-43 B.C.

1

Late in 1634, in the town of Maidstone, Kent, thirty-eight miles southeast of London, William Palmer was at a turning point. Less than a year ago, Sarah Heath, his wife of two years, died in childbirth along with the child, a girl, and he hadn't cared much about anything since. He carried on with his job at the sessional courts where he was the clerk, sometimes police court magistrate, reader and writer for those who were arraigned and their families. But it was as an after hours farm hand for his father, John, that Will kept balance in the family. His education and position in the courts elevated him several notches above his father who reckoned that working in the fields and mucking out the stables was good for Will. "Moind yer plaice," he'd say.

John Palmer, a tenant farmer west of the Medway River on the other side of Rocky Hill, never forgave himself for allowing his son to go to school, learning to read and write when he couldn't himself. It was Martha, his wife, who negotiated with the priors to enroll her son at Corpus Christi, vegetables from her kitchen garden and damson plums making the bargain. The boy walked alone to his morning classes at the corner of Fairmeadow and Earl Street on the Medway but he was expected to be at home in the afternoon to work on the farm. Despite his

father's admonition against education, that he had better learn to sweat, Will had contributed as much as John to the farm and the household. But John had lost his son's respect years ago when Will realized that his mother had the brains and his father made all the noise and took all the credit.

Will had grown into a fine specimen once out of his teen years when it seemed he would never fill out. Although it would never be discussed, he knew his father thought him rather wet. He was fair and had the Palmers' high cheekbones. He wore his softly curled hair tied at the nape of his neck and his blue eyes were direct and clear below a high forehead. He gave an impression of reserved composure and people took to him to be a man who could be trusted.

But within him was a great discomfort with the life he was destined for, a life like his father's. He despaired of ever having any degree of self-determination over his future, and of ever owning anything more than a few personal belongings. But most significantly, he wanted to rid himself of the authority of the Church of England that he had grown up under, and he wanted to start again.

Events between Charles I and parliament were leading the country into utter chaos. Religious dogma had swung like a pendulum for centuries and by 1635, twenty years into the Thirty Years' War, Catholics and Protestants were still fighting for dominion over European souls. Charles demanded allegiance and developed imaginative punishment for citizens who presumed to make a decision of their own.

Understandably, confusion reigned among the lower classes who seldom got wind of what politicians and the aristocracy were planning until they were in the thick of it, but at the courts in Maidstone, conjecture was a daily diversion. Sometimes there was a kernel of truth in what Will's colleagues mused about and from which he was able to draw his own conclusions. He knew he had to leave Kent.

People were finding a way to get out of England, to escape the religious and political persecution. The Puritans had broken away from the Church of England and managed to get a charter for a company in central North America on the east coast. Not as difficult as it seemed since the King exiled them. They were persecuted as a threat to the authority of the crown: imprisoned, hanged, and forced out of the country. Some had escaped to Holland where they were allowed to practice their faith freely. They first turned down an offer to go to America with a Dutch-sponsored expedition preferring to make the trip with their own countrymen. Besides, to the Dutch the expedition was purely for capital gain, to the Puritans it was freedom.

Then, Will's cousin, Joseph, told him about the vast expanse of land available for the taking in the New World. Joseph said, "I've decided to go, Cousin. You should give this some thought, too, and I will provide you with any intelligence I receive."

Will did give long and careful thought to leaving his family and the familiarity of the culture inside the old city of Maidstone and taking a risky, six-week voyage with exposure to pirates and dreadful sickness on high seas.

By the first of the year he had made up his mind to go, and it created quite a stir. No one expected he'd ever leave Maidstone, he'd become such a mainstay, so the court was having difficulty replacing him, and the young ladies-in-waiting who expected to walk out with him after Sarah died knew they would not be called on now.

But, leaving his mother would be more difficult than anything else. He had always been there for Martha, helping to make her life easier, and he knew it could only get harder as she got older.

"I know about the 'ardships in the Colonies," he told her. "I'm a sight better off there than 'ere taking into account the wars we bin fighting and more's to come. In the New World I can own my own plot, and with land of my own I can at least be sure of an 'ome and enough food. And there'll be other Palmers there, Maum, cousins and elbow relaitions." His displeasure with the church was carefully skirted.

Martha nodded in agreement and kept her emotions to herself; she would never hinder him from going to the colonies on her account.

"I've known for some time that you would have to go. Perhaps, before you knew yourself, Son."

They were both suffering the pain of what they knew would be a permanent separation wrenching apart years of symphonic closeness and leaving a black void deep inside their respective guts. At times it would seem to Martha more than she could bear.

Will had things to take care of before he left. Before breakfast he brought his mother's cow in from the common for her to milk, then fed the pig and chickens. He left for work earlier than usual, just after the sun rose above Rocky Hill and cast a pink radiance across the white clouds in the northern sky. Usually he didn't leave until after his father left and the sun was well up. For twenty-two years John had worked at the smith's a mile or so along the old Roman road. But he was puttering this morning, having his first real sense that his son was actually leaving in two days and he would likely never see him again.

Martha had been weaving ells of fabric for the clothes Will would

take with him, and this morning he wore the linen frockcoat she had just finished sewing with her tiny stitches, a needle-full at a time. The dye hadn't taken well because there had been a communal vat on the day she did it and hers was the last to go in. They used goldenrod and Martha expected the coat to be about the shade of mustard, and when it dried it was darker. But it improved after she set the dye in the alum wash. She was quite pleased.

Will went out to town to work for the last time Saturday morning, the fourth of July 1635. According to the dewed cobwebs on the grass and the locusts' robust song thrilling across the fields, it was going to be a hot day. What with a waistcoat, a stock and small clothes—shirt, breeches and stockings and identical boots, neither for the left foot nor the right—Will would be glad of the linen. His other frockcoat was wool, and his waistcoat, leather.

This morning he would walk across the Medway on the Great Bridge to the High Street, then turn north and up Week Street. It was the long way to court, a route he rarely took but he wanted to have time alone, to look out over the old stone bridge, and north to where the fresh, soft morning breeze wafted the willows' skirts out from the bank to kiss the glistening black water, slowly and softly rustling as if dressed for the evening in peau de soie. Teasing the water, the tiny, frosty-green leaves drifted out to the middle of the river, then back to the bank, out again, back again. He wondered if this erotica-of-the-willows went on every morning at this time, and how he could have missed it all these years.

Will forced his mind out of its reverie and thought about the last twenty-five convicts he had processed yesterday that were marched out of the courthouse, their chained manacles jangling along Week Street to St. Faith's. Some were outright crooks, others just trying to survive taking a bit of food for themselves or their families. Honesty was a luxury the average pauper could not afford. Sometimes prostitutes were included in the mix and meant to be segregated.

They boarded a barge and sailed down the Medway and under the bridge where he was standing, bound for Chatham, half way to London. Waiting there was the dark hold of a once-proud sea-going vessel that would take them to Virginia. Some would make it, the very hardy, about fifty per cent. The rest would die horribly of internal excruciation, the bloody flux, scurvy, mouth-rot, brought on by poor food and drink and hygiene, or the lack of it, the stench in the hold unbearable, and the consequences of fighting, a regular occurrence in the confinement of the holds. No one would step in; culling was natural and necessary. The bodies would be disposed of over the side, without ceremony. Dispatches

in the early part of the voyage guaranteed a good deal more comfort in the balance of the trip for the remaining fifty per cent, with more food and beer, and twice as much space, which was, even then, barely elbow room.

Then, too, there were the smugglers whom Will regularly recorded going through the exercise of a trial as part of the system that kept the contraband flowing to and from France and served many of Kent's gentry who lived very well on both sides of a very flexible court system.

And there was a man convicted of stealing a horse and its brass from a manor in Aylesford. He was working for the squire there, and was seen leading the handsome eighteen-hand shire away. He protested that he was taking the horse to the watering trough about two hundred yards ahead of him, but the owner would have none of it.

They had all been brought from prison last week to wait in the sweltering top floor of the courthouse for the circuit judge and the quarterly sessions. Some were resigned to their fate, and some meticulously carved messages for posterity in the wooden walls of the miserable holding cells: "John Davis. 3 times here to please his wife;" "Happy the man who in silk or in leather purse retains one splendid shilling."

In the annals of Will Palmer's working world lay the underside of humanity for which Maidstone was as well equipped as any English town for meting out prescribed punishment. Conveniently located in the square was the pillory for passers-by to offer righteous remonstrations: the ducking stool favoured for women, the whipping post where the accused was tied by the wrists to a post, his or her back stripped and lashed with a leather thong as directed by the court. The gallows at Penenden Heath was rarely used but when circuit judges decreed there was hell to pay and handed down the ultimate sentence, it was cause for great excitement. Will's work included the paperwork for such things and he, too, was expected to be there.

There would be a turnout of hundreds for a hanging. It would be delayed through a weekend to examine the gallows for surety, to clear arena space to accommodate the crowd, to allow the church to advise its flock on Sunday and suggest rather strongly that they be there so as to see for themselves—men, women and children—the upshot of sin. Many would come from miles around to see the spectacle. The lower classes would make the trip on Monday in a dray pulled at a walking pace by the quietest of workhorses. The women and children would stay overnight with relatives and friends, the men in any of several taverns, an inconvenience they would relish as they could freely imbibe, stretch

stories and finally collapse. They would all sleep on the floor in a circle around the central post, feet inward although they might have chosen the odour of unwashed feet over foul breath. Early the next morning without ablutions but with a hearty breakfast, they would gather with the townsfolk, dignitaries, priests and all, and wait in the town square for the procession to begin. In a pint-sized hay wagon on two wooden wheels were wardens and fettered prisoners now utterly filthy, their clothes in shreds. Since the day they were condemned in court there was no need for decent food and clothing and theirs had been taken away and given to relatives of the guards.

Will would stand away with the important looking officials while the crowd kept pace up Well Road to Peel Street and on to the Heath, harassing the prisoners all the way. The process would take most of the day. The trip from the prison would last nearly two hours, then each of the felons was given his last rites by the Archbishop's top-of-the-line, I-told-you-so priest, and if the hangman didn't always accomplish the deed in a professional, one-off manner he was properly castigated by the crowd. Then the great unwashed amused themselves by pelting the dangling bodies with derision and rotten fruit so as to make their politics understood among neighbours and especially the clergy. The bodies were left there for days, sometimes weeks if deemed necessary, for the sake of setting a good and proper example. In that case, the remains were propped and fastened in a steel frame to shield it from abusers, although crows and other scavengers were quite welcome. And while the body rotted and shamed the family, children were threatened with the sight as a bogeyman, terrifying them when they misbehaved.

While Will made none of these decisions he watched and wondered at the severity of the punishment and the need for such a spectacle but kept his thoughts to himself. The group he was obliged to be with: colleagues, barristers, priests, and town officials commented on the drama.

"Came off well."

"Agreeable day for it."

"The population took careful notice, don't you agree?"

Will reluctantly turned and walked across the bridge to the east side, the stones satin-smooth from two hundred years of West Maidstone farmers trekking to town by horse and wagon. He looked to the Archbishop's grand palace just before the bend in the river, and All Saint's Church. He would be there twice for tomorrow's services; indeed, he would be severely punished and likely fined if he didn't turn up. There would be a special twenty-minute fire-and-brimstone sermon for his benefit,

preventive maintenance lest the power of the church slip his mind while on the high seas.

A lark called from her nest in a gnarled old hickory on the east bank. In a shallow pool just below the bridge, a trout lazed in the water, its translucent red, blue and yellow spots visible one minute, gone the next. Now and then the fish would slowly move its tail, open its gills, drowsily open and close its mouth. The river, the hickory and the church were all there long before Will was born, and would be still, long after he died.

He'd been here thousands of times but had never seen the profundity; there had never been a need, it would always be there the next day, the next time he chose to stop and look. Today, every item he saw, the minutiae and the arresting, concentrated his mind, for it would be for the last time.

As Will walked off the bridge, he looked north to the ancient Fraternity Hall where he had gone to grammar school. He remembered the rich furnishings and the cold atmosphere, the drill of learning to read, the punishment when he couldn't remember the Latin roots for the English verbs, reading the lessons from the Bible, and the still discernible memory of the knots in his stomach every morning during the long walk to the monastery. But he daren't mention it, his mother so wanting him to be literate on one hand, his father's suspicion of book learning on the other and his concern of Will reaching beyond his class; what would people say? "Moind yer plaice, son."

Will walked past a pile of stacked ragstone, and into the market in the broad High Street, the few hawkers there this morning barking out their wares:

"Strawb'ries and craime, new bu'er from yeste'dees churnin'."

"Fresh 'ake and mussels, get 'em 'ere."

"'ops from the valley, the foinest this year," which Martha would buy to make the customary drink.

Hops for making beer were a major crop in Kent. The ubiquitous rural conical oast houses processed the hand picked hops for home made brews in Maidstone, then boiled in the process, beer was much more potable than most of the available water.

Will circumnavigated the foul smelling street as much as possible and still he stepped in sewage and rotting vegetation. He nodded to the fishmonger and smiled at the butcher. Everyone knew he was leaving and they watched soberly until he was out of sight. A little ragamuffin darted out from behind a horse-cart and nearly knocked him over as the wife of the butcher came from behind him, chasing the child away from her fresh

flat bread cooling on a ledge on her cart.

"Ahhh, yer poor ma'am, Will. Where'll she be without ya?"

"Yes, maum."

Her husband, a thumping great lump of a man in a blood-smeared jerkin and apron, walked toward them.

"Ach, leave 'im alone, woman."

He turned back to Will. "I hear there'll be a dozen or so maids on the voyage. Like ta keep yer mind from wandrin', I warrant ya."

"Tsk!"

Will passed the common where the market horses were grazing and once away from the caterwauling he walked deliberately toward the courthouse looking to each side of the narrow street at what he would not see again. He nodded to everyone he saw, and felt them looking after him with wonderment or curiosity or envy. He had a cold feeling of not having taken the time to know all these people well enough or intimately enough, and now it was too late.

He was expected to turn up at the dance tonight at the top of the Market. There would be questions that he couldn't answer himself about where he was going when he got there, what the voyage would be like, did he know anyone there, would he ever come back? One or two of the more inquisitive men would ask the questions while the rest stood by eagerly listening to the answers, each recipient having their way with it in the next round of telling. It would include pirates, incredible storms at sea, and a little potential scandal in case they'd heard any of this before. And this would lead to at least one dance with a young woman the reporter would not otherwise have had.

As Will approached the stilted courthouse he noticed someone quickly dart into the staff entrance where the clerks worked and where he worked, too. He rounded the building and walked up the wooden ladder-steps and as he went through the door there was a great huzzah as several young men gave him a farewell cheer. He suddenly felt doubt about going and had to muster some fibre before speaking. And he felt a twinge of guilt as it was taking a long time to find a replacement for him, the others doing the extra work in the meantime.

All day Will's colleagues teased and cajoled.

"You'll find yersel' sleepin' in the wood in America, no bed to lay yer hed upon, no roads to walk upon, ner no mother to make yer viands."

"Ye'll be back on the first vessel sailin' east, I assure ya."

"And yer hands, what'll ye do with hands like a maid's, trees to fell and turn into wood for burnin', earth to dig and turn over?"

Will smiled self-consciously, then scolded, "Away with all of you. I've work to do."

He finished the court transcripts and some letters he had been working on. Now, he gathered up his personal belongings from the trestle where he stood to work: three quills his mother received from the neighbours who kept geese, a lidded pot with the ink she made from walnut shells, a few books he kept for legal reference, and the small knife he carried in a sheath on his belt for trimming the quills. The county supplied ink of a lesser quality made from fruit juices and rag-paper for which ragmen patrolled the streets calling, "Ragman, Ragman. Bring out ye rags."

The others pressed him to finish his work: "Hurry on man, we've an abundance of drinkin' to do this day."

Late in the afternoon they linked arms with Will in the middle and led him to The White Horse, the main grogshop in Maidstone, where they toasted his voyage and where they would keep him until the dance began early in the evening. They had a meal of flat bread and hard cheese, boiled beef, beer and ale—a quantity of ale. They talked about their years together in the sessions courts, the extraordinary cases they had witnessed, and laughed at their own capers and transgressions until their sides ached.

Then they strode down Pudding Lane, laughing and singing *Jones' Ale, A Light Heart's a Jewell, Little Barley-Corne*:

Thus the Barly-Corne hath power
Even for to change our nature,
And make a shrew, within an houre,
Prove a kindhearted creature:
And therefore here, I say againe,
Let no man tak't in scorn
That I the vertues doe proclaime
Of the little Barly-Corne.

It was a beautiful summer evening, less sultry now with a cool breeze from the river. They could hear the lutes and see the torches and by the time they got to the market they were in fine fettle, ready for an evening of celebration. Everyone in Maidstone danced, and everyone would be out tonight to bid Will farewell. He saw his parents and other members of his family standing quietly in the distance. His face flushed; it brought him close to tears.

But he knew who he was, he knew this was final, that he would likely not return and he'd never ask for help. He felt like he was on the edge of a precipice, his emotions swinging between fear and excitement. He was leaving the only home he knew, going to an unknown land, an unknown future. Would he make it across the Atlantic, would he find fellow countrymen or Natives and what would they do to him if he did, and how

much sinew did he have in him to cope with all the unknowns?

He danced and danced with nearly every young lady, every woman there and his mother a few times. She was a fine dancer, had taught Will when he was a child and they danced well together. He danced without stopping until his legs felt as if they might dissolve under him. But he had laughed, and talked, and listened, and loved and touched more in these few hours than ever at any one time in his life.

At the end of that night, Will watched the townsfolk and his colleagues as they disbursed to their respective part of the town, and then, with his parents, walked back across the Great Bridge from whence they came.

The next morning, feeling raw and gritty from the night before, Will gathered himself up for a full day at All Saints Church.

> *Now, the Lord shall be pleased to hear us, and bring us peace in the place we desire, but if we shall seek great things for ourselves and our posterity, the Lord will surely break out in wrath against us. Now, the only way to avoid this shipwreck is to do justly, walk humbly with our God. . . .*

Late in the day while everyone was still in church, Will walked along Maidstone's old streets for a last time. He went north on Mill Street then east along Palace Avenue to Gabriel's Hill, south to Church and Wyatt Streets, the High Street, Bank Street, then back to Mill Street and he took account of everything from the lazy clouds to the smoke stacks to the gardens and stored them away for the future. By then, the congregation had been released to the church grounds where he met his cousins, aunts and uncles, and people he'd known all his life for a final few minutes each. Early the next morning he would leave in a coach for the half-day journey to Gravesend where he would embark on the *Paule of London* for the New World.

He woke before daylight to the knowledge that this was the day, the day he had to say good-bye, the day he had been both dreading and anticipating. He mustered himself. His father was the easier, a handshake and good wishes were all that were necessary. But his mother was another matter. He took Martha in his arms and felt the stifled, vibrating sobs, both knowing they would not do this again but each resolved to Will's decision to go. He held back his own tears as much as he could and held on to his mother as long as he should. He daren't look back for fear of losing his determination.

2

And pierce the drought of March to the root
Then people long to go on pilgrimages
And palmers long to seek the stranger strands
Of far-off saints

Chaucer
from *Canterbury Tales*

The journey to the coast was a milestone in Will's life, sometimes on sunken, Roman roads as old as the hills, at other times the high road to London. They met other coaches and horsemen and people on foot: a fair, barefoot girl leading a cow to a common; a uniformed officer on a fine stallion who took exception to the plain coach and its passengers on the road and in his way. And there was always a scurry of animals and children as they came into towns for passengers to board and disembark, take on mail and cargo, and to water or change the horses. They passed through miles of quiet countryside where animals grazed peacefully inside ancient hedgerows, past open brooks and rivers of fresh, cold, clear water flowing over the same beds now as they had when Roman soldiers marched through here fifteen hundred years ago. In America, Will thought, a few roads will have been cut through the trees, but barely, and they will be level with the earth so that one can see the horizon.

When they passed the castle at Rochester, raw, new soldiers were being drilled on the green outside the moat by young military reissuing the cruelty they had endured when they were mustered into the King's

army by artful replenishers sent out into the countryside to bring in new recruits for a price. As if in complete ignorance of the soldiers, several elegant and coifed ladies of the court walked and rode sidesaddle while taking their daily airing on the opposite green, but neither side of the green was unaware of the other.

There would be no castles in the New World.[1]

Will carried some cash in a leather purse on his belt and Martha had sewn more into the linings of his frockcoat and jerkin. Piracy and friendly looting were a matter-of-fact when traveling anywhere, but particularly on board ship. He had arranged for a letter of credit from the town council that would hold the bulk of his funds, and invested the requisite fifty pounds in shares by the Massachusetts Bay Company, the enterprise allowed the Puritans by Charles.

Will had received a letter from Cousin Joseph, now in New England, with instructions:

> *. . . bring a good store of clothes and bedding, a musket or fowling piece and your shot most for big fowl, lemon or its juice, butter or sallet oil, paper and linseed oil for windows, and cotton yarn for lamps, a good bread-room for your biscuits, let your cask for beer and water be iron-bound for the first tire if not more, let not your meat be dry salted nor your biscuit so hard that you need an adz to work it out with. And, make your will. Hoping to see you by the next return, commending you to the Lord for safe conduct. Your loving cousin, Joseph.*

He would also need a few tools: an axe head, a froe and a buck saw each without handles which he could whittle himself. In a sealed chest was his clothing, nearly all made by his mother: tow shirts, breeches, a pair of overalls, stockings, stocks, handkerchiefs, nightshirts, shoes, boots, soap, rough blankets and rough clothing as the ship's ropes and planks were pitched. In a box he had as many of his books as he was allowed to take. In his carpet bag he had dried food, herbs and chalk for sea-sickness, yarrow for wounds, writing material and precious seeds: peas, beans, squash and wheat.

After an ale and dinner in a tavern near the docks, Will walked to the foul smelling pier amid seamen and hawkers, strumpets and waifs and filed onto the ship forward. He could see his belongings being carried up the aft gangplank by landsmen, sinewy and darkened by grime and the

elements. Other ships waited their turn at anchor for the *Paule* to fill her hold.

The *Paule* was an average-size barque for its day, square rigged, two masts, fore and aft rigged on aftermasts, about two hundred tons, one hundred and ten feet long, twenty-five feet wide. It looked relatively well maintained, tar-black, the wood seemed preserved and some of the canvas was new. It was the only vessel of its size tied up, its huge masts, probably hewn in the New World, towered above everything visible, and the size of its hawsers wrapped around the groaning bollards were awe inspiring. Three other vessels would sail about the same time as the *Paule*. The convoy would try to stay within sight and available for mutual support all during the journey.

Boarding involved little more than Will having his name checked off a list and producing the carefully written receipt he had been given when he paid for the trip in Maidstone.

"I have the honour to bid you good dai, Sir," said the purser.

"And, I, you," responded Will.

Will found his quarters and dropped his bedroll and carpetbag out of sight behind the tarp. Then he went off on a tour of the ship to get an idea of what this test of endurance was going to be like and encountered others settling in, some arguing for space, others standing back and whispering for want of confidence to get space.

"You see, Joseph," said a woman quietly to her husband, "they're taiking all the best plots on the ship."

Individuals took care of their own bedroll, stashed it and cleared away belongings to make room to stand or sit on the planks below decks. There were a few hammocks next to the port holes that were the choice places to sleep, and the topmost in the hierarchy that formed almost instantly on boarding took them.

The women and children shared a space enclosed by a tarp, and Will shared another enclosed space with five men, two of whom he thought to be trustworthy.

The vessel offered little space for privacy, and the latrine, a chair-frame securely anchored to the outside edge of a lower deck and downwind at the head, the convenient ocean spray washing both chair and occupant. Sailors had their own facility carefully spaced some distance away and the captain, his, in the poop. Infrequent bathing was with recycled fresh water after many others. And although there was a drape to cover one's nudity in all cases, men walking by peered in on other men and teased as a matter of course. Women were given protective watch by other women.

For those in the depths of the hold, mostly yeomen, the voyage was miserable. The vessel leaked, water seeping in between the joints in the planks, and there was little, if any, air or light.

The *Paule* was captained by Leonard Betts and carried a crew of about fifteen hardened sailors and a few powder monkeys—bought from the London workhouses or picked up on the street—who learned the ropes in short order. The passenger list included sixty-four men, two children, and seventeen women.

After waiting for two days for the right winds and tides to weigh anchor, they made for the Straight of Dover, the English Channel, then west into the Atlantic. It was long and slow, a few miles a day, eight miles an hour at best, but averaging three or four. Square-riggers could be three sheets to the wind and making headway one minute, and suddenly sailing backward the next if the wind filled on the wrong side of the sheets. Or, ominously fearful to crew and passengers alike, moving not one way or the other on the unfathomable waters.

The vessel carried spices, yard goods and mail, or what would remain of it after it was freely searched by anyone whom it pleased to do so as a spare-time indulgence. As well, it brought cones of sugar and chocolate from the Caribbean and South America. Because the English would not allow any vessel other than their own to enter a port in the colonies, the goods had to be delivered to England first, then doubled back to America.

The Paule also carried goods and foodstuffs still necessary for the nascent settlers:

> 80 hogsheads of mault, 300 barrels of beefe, 40 tonne of wyne, 200 gallons of oyle, 3 tonns of strong water, 2 tonnes of vinegar, 15 hogsheads of oatmeale, 10 hogsheads of pease, 20,000 of nayles, 20 musketts, 500 weight of small shott, 4 barrells of powder, 250 weight of pewter, 500 weight of sope, 150 suits of clothes, 300 dozen of stockings, 300 dozen of drauers, 400 ells of cloth to make shirts, 10 dozen of hatts, 20 dozin of Monmouth Capps, 200 suits of doublet and hose made up of leather, lined with oiled skin leather and fastened with hooks and eyes, scotch ticking and the wool to put therein, blankets of Welsh cotton, mats to lye vnder 50 bedds aboard shippe, 500 quire of foolscap paper.

And some stock: cattle, goats, sheep, hogs and chickens made the journey, which, coupled with the even less appealing human stench,

didn't lend anything to the oppressive confinement of the ship. Four oxen were on the *Paule*. The heavy, neutered cattle were better able to endure the journey and work the land than horses.

Three days out and the atmosphere on board was filled with concern with both the risks at sea and prospects in Massachusetts. It would be at least the middle of August when they arrived, which meant Will would have six weeks at best to find land, clear it and erect a simple shelter. And perhaps it would have to wait until spring; the contingency plan. He had been referred to a few established families with whom he might live in the meantime.

But, he was concerned more than anything with the hard winters he'd heard about, and how the settlers endured. Many had not survived the cold and disease, and although he thought of himself as quite robust, he was not accustomed to months of freezing days and nights, bitter winds and new snow piled on huge drifts of old snow.

For the time being, however, he, William Palmer, was one of the colonists, and the endeavour was going to take all his resources. He would make the first adjustment to the daily routine at sea.

He would make the food he'd brought last the whole journey, and supplement the ship's sparse provisions that were not particularly savoury. So he rationed himself accordingly: six weeks with a few days for the unforeseen, about forty-five days. If that seemed unlikely, he would have to tighten his ration, and probably lose some weight. It was just the first week and things were going as expected, so he dipped into his resources of dried beef, hardtack and a lemon to guard against scurvy. The ship provided beer and water, mainly rainwater. The *Paule* also provided cured beef, pork and fish, biscuit, cheese, butter, pottage and oatmeal. Not very appealing but he was looking forward to better fare in the colonies.

A policy evolved as England began to spread its tentacles out over the planet to become an island-empire: to export its expendable overpopulated, underemployed, and very poor underclass. Will wondered who of these were on the *Paule of London*, who might be indentured, bonded for service for seven years to unknown personalities, those already in the colonies who sent for servants and paid for the cheapest passage available in much worse crossings than this one.

Plantation owners were beginning to sail their own vessels, stripped of everything but the timber that held them together, back and forth across the Atlantic to import servants, many of them Irish. The servants were herded into the hold with little to eat or drink and barely

enough clothing to keep them warm. Many would never see the New World, and perhaps be grateful for it. But, it was the only hope they had to escape from the hardship and suppression in Great Britain. They had the mettle to leave, and those who made it across the Atlantic would be the genesis of colonization in the New World.

Will wondered too if there were any felons among the passengers. Criminals were escaping to the colonies but so, too, was the British government in its wisdom deporting them, to rid the country of them and the burden of their keep. The virgin wilderness in the New World was to be populated with the most vulnerable in the company of the most predatory.

Life for the passengers on the *Paule* was governed and controlled not by the captain or the elements, but by the preacher. Sermons were twice a day, prayers at noon. All were required to attend and Will was always there although he had never officially joined the group.

Everyone gathered in the hold of the ship before the appointed hour to save the late penalty duly recorded by an elder and the minister arrived when the spirit moved him. He wore the Puritan habit of black with white falling bands, ruff and a tall, conical hat. He walked into the parting crowd to face them on the crate that elevated him a head above everyone else. He first closed his eyes as if in private prayer for as long as twenty minutes challenging the parishioners to do the same. When finally he was ready to deliver his dissertation he spoke very softly looking out and up appealing for mercy for his flock but as he went on there was a crescendo in his voice and fire in his eyes, so much so that some women trembled with fear.

> *Your wickedness makes you as it were heavy as lead, and to tend downward with great weight and pressure toward hell; and if God should let you, would immediately sink, and swiftly descend and plunge you into the bottomless gulf; and your healthy constitution, and your own care and prudence, and all your righteousness, would have no more influence to uphold you and keep you out of hell, than a spider's web would have to stop a falling rock. Were it not that so is the sovereign pleasure of God, the earth would not bear you one moment; for you are a burden to it; the creation groans with you; the creation is made subject to the bondage of your corruption, not willingly; the sun does not willingly shine upon you, to give you light to serve sin and Satan; the earth does not willingly yield her increase to satisfy your lusts, not*

is it willingly a stage for your wickedness to be acted upon; the air does not willingly serve you for breath to maintain the flame of life in your vitals, while you spend your life in the service of God's enemies.

The idle time was trying, too many people in too little space brought out the worst side of some people, and to add insult to injury the frequent squalls and high winds kept the passengers confined to their cabin or in the hold below much of the time. Will was finding his sea legs and his stomach was holding up fairly well, but there were times when even the herbs and chalk weren't much help. Still, he was better off than many who found the trip beyond the pale and complained bitterly; they were ill prepared for the hinterland in the New World.

He was sitting on a hatch considering his fate when a corpulent, middle-aged man squeezed himself in beside him. Will moved to the edge until he was half off and half on.

"Good day to you, Sir. I am Elija Buttolph from East London."

"And I am William Palmer from Kent."

The firm roundness of Buttolph's torso balanced on legs that hadn't gained weight or strength in concert with his body presented as a huge pear on breeched slats.

"A fair day for sailin' now but the sea can change its attitude in the blink of an eye," said Buttolph.

"More's the importance of enjoying the day as it is," said Will.

"Hmph. I find the crossing somewhat less comfortable than I expected for what *I* paid."

"I don't think anyone is very comfortable on this journey."

"Well, I mean to set things right with the Captain," said Buttolph. "He doesn't know who he's dealing with here."

Will rose from his precarious seat, smiled and said, "I'm sure you will apprise him of that, Sir."

It was one of the rare days when it was safe to be on deck, and the two children on board, four and three-year-old boys, were having a wonderful time. The oldest, dressed in miniature adult clothing since he was traveling abroad, would be expected to take the great leap into manhood next year, a year earlier than was customary. Will joined Bob Taylor, one of the men who shared his quarters, and stood amidships watching the youngsters laughing and giggling. They slipped and fell just in front of the men. Will stooped to help them up and said in a low voice, "If you're not careful, the captain will send you below."

"Aye, Sur," said the four-year-old, laughing himself into

hiccups. The little one, while infectiously giggling and intermittently squealing, lost control of his chubby legs and fell to the deck on his padded bottom.

"Aye," said Bob, "and you're not loikely to see the loight 'o dai until this journey ends. He's a mean 'un, this capt'n."

A young woman approached the boys. In the confinement of the ship they were clearly wearing her out with their constant energy. She seemed rather plain from a distance, her poke bonnet closed around her face like a Dutch nun, a few red curls falling out from under the hat at her nape, and around her face. She was being blown around on the deck when the wind came up, her cape pulling and pushing her like sails. As she came closer, her features became clearer; she was attractive. Her complexion was quite beautiful, high colour from the wind, and such green eyes that didn't seem possible.

Will watched the boys chasing each other around the coiled hawsers and wondered if he could teach them their letters and numbers during the trip. He had some books from his own days at the grammar school in Maidstone, a slate, and some writing paper. They just needed a quiet spot for an hour or two a day, perhaps easier said than done. He turned to tell Bob what he was thinking, but Bob was clearly absorbed in the young woman, and his intentions were manifest in an outrageous leer. Will was not so much surprised as alerted now to what this trip might be like and quickly scanned the deck to see if there was any more of this going on. There were men talking to men and women to women on the main areas of the deck, and in less conspicuous spots there were a few men talking to women. In these close quarters everyone would eventually come into contact anyway, but it seemed hardly possible for any kind of intimacy. He had been transfixed in his thoughts when the boys' near-hysterical laughter brought him back to the present. "Leave her alone, Bob. She's got enough to cope with."

"Aye, and she needs the help of a man, don't she?"

Martha was looking forward and didn't see Will. As he approached she turned; he bowed from his waist and introduced himself. "I'm William Palmer. I come from Maidstone, Madam. I've been watching your boys and have laughed nearly as hard as they have."

She blushed appropriately and said, "Yes. They find occasion to laugh all day, Sir."

"We are going to be confined for some time with little room for them to discover themselves. I have a suggestion."

Will looked at her expectantly while she looked at him quizzically.

"If it please you, Ma'am, I wonder if you would consider

allowing me to teach your sons during the voyage. It would give us both something to do."

He could hear Bob behind him muttering, "Cahn't trust a man who jumps the queue."

Will could see her face change, her forehead move upward slightly, her eyes brighten, and slowly a slight smile come over her face inside the bonnet. Not too much, not enough to be too encouraging, but enough that Will knew the idea appealed to her.

"That's kind of you, Sir. Please let me dwell on it."

Will removed his hat, bowed and moved back. "Whenever you're ready, ma'am."

He turned to go back to the place where he had been standing with Bob, but Bob wasn't there, so Will took a book out of his pocket and sat on a battened hatchway to read. He ordered his books from London, and among the last ones he'd received was Sir Thomas Wyatt the Elder's poems. *Farewell, Love* and *My Lute, Awake* were among Will's favourites. He also had Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, and some of William Shakespeare's sonnets. And his Bible. One had to have a Bible—it was deemed essential, as vital as food and water—and King James I's recently approved version, translated to English from the Hebrew and Greek, allowed everyone, not just the clergy, to read it and draw their own conclusions. It was a step toward emancipation for the masses that not everyone in the church hierarchy supported.

But, Bob Taylor had a penchant for diversion and gambling was one of them. With other men he played Put and Slam, old sharpers' games. They were careful to keep their little cabal out of sight and sound, betting being frowned on by the minister and women who would make a full report. Will played cards but Noddy or Cribbage were more his speed, and as he played for two pence a game or nothing at all there was always someone ready to play with him. Jos Bishopp brought some welcome music with his lute and more so when he was joined by a fiddler. A few gentlemen invited a few ladies to dance on the deck when it was steady enough. Of course, there were not enough ladies to go around, but neither was there adequate space among the endless rigging for more couples; passengers had to confine themselves to a portion of the aft deck and keep out of the way of the crew.

The wind was steady and they were making some headway. Will was looking out to sea with his collar up against the bone-chilling cold and a wind that sucked his breath from him. He could just see the outline of a barque on the eastern horizon, likely bound for London. As they neared it he could see another, smaller vessel beside it, clearly a prize taken

somewhere at sea and being taken home as booty, an unwritten but an implicitly accepted source of income.

Each vessel acknowledged the other with a flag and a single shot but they were too far apart to come alongside and socialize, much to everyone's disappointment. There were porpoises and whales and bonitos following and gamboling near the ship as if to make its acquaintance. A swordfish took umbrage with this monster in his space and tried to pierce the ship. Will watched them all until the wind sent him back to his quarters.

A few days later the young mother was back on deck with another woman about the same age, and the two boys. Their squealing laughter made some people smile helplessly, while others were irked at such a lack of discipline: children were to be seen and not heard, and confined so as not to be a nuisance.

Captain Betts came toward them wearing a frown. "I warn ye but once: ye'll go below until ye leave this ship." He glowered at their mother and the children immediately stopped running and backed away from the captain and toward their mother. They leaned against her and held onto her legs.

"I beg your forgiveness, Sir."

With her companion, Martha walked toward Will, the boys clinging to her and looking back at the captain shaking his finger. "Good day to you, Sir. I am Martha Bourne and may I present Sybill Courtney."

Will bowed; Martha and Sybill curtsied. Will nodded to each woman. "Madam." "Madam."

"And these are my sons, William and Henry."

"'Tis an honour to meet you."

The boys bowed as far as their little bodies allowed.

"My husband, Mr. James Bourne, went to America on the *Fortune*'*s* spring sailin'. We travel separately against the uncertainty and risk of leaving the children without parents in the event of a disaster at sea."

"Very wise, indeed, Ma'am."

"As you observed, the boys have pent up energy and no leave to spend it. Hence, I wish to accept your proposal, Sir, whenever you wish to commence."

The boys looked at Martha, then at Will. He asked them to sit beside him on the hatchway, then bowed to the women as they moved away leaving William and Henry to Will's care. He had his King James Bible in his pocket, and with a boy on each side he began to teach.

The two women looked over their shoulders as they walked behind some rigging not far away. Martha said to Sybill, "My husband is

often not a gentleman when he is alone with me and I have done this without his knowledge. I will pay the consequences, but he will not be able to take whatever they glean away from the children."

"What will he do, Martha?"

"It will depend on his state of mind and the quantity of ale he has taken."

The days passed with Will teaching the boys as some adults looked on hoping to learn a little from the periphery and the proud mother watching from a distance. Will was never aware of her great worry and went on with his charge as if all was well.

They made their way across the Atlantic encountering alternately violent winds and doldrums. One of the gales split the foresail and forced them to take in or lower all but the mainsail. Yet, a pretty gale was welcome to move the ship closer to its destination even if a new foresail had to be hoisted. Though it was summer, the cold followed them across the sea and Will was glad of his woolen overcoat.

He was just coming up from below when a fight broke out on deck between landsmen. At first he thought it was a huge brawl and looked around for the boys. He soon saw them some distance away clearly enjoying the spectacle one laughing the other grinning coyly with his hand over his mouth. The fight turned out to be two adversaries calling each other by memorable names, "The son and heir of a mongrel bitch." The rest were onlookers egging them on with one or two trying to talk some sense into the men. The first mate, however, took the matter in hand; there would be no rowdies on his watch. The offenders walked the deck for prescribed hours with their hands bound behind them.

Discipline was almost a daily event that Will saw himself or heard about. A young man who used impious language was laid in bolts until he repented. The stripling servant of one of the passengers was stripped, laid against a capstan and whipped for taking a lemon from his owner. A man was ducked at the main yards' arm for stealing his master's strong waters and becoming obnoxiously drunk.

Everyone, including Will, was watchful of disease. When a servant fell ill with smallpox she was isolated to keep it from spreading but she died a few days later and they all knew there would be more. Her hands and feet were bound, her body was wrapped in a sheet, grapeshot tied to either end then pushed out into the ocean through a porthole.

Suddenly, one afternoon when Will was on deck, people began rushing about in the stern.

"Midwoife, get the midwoife."

Women gathered huddled down on the deck and men knew they

were to stay away. They gathered some distance from the scene so as not to hear the cries and discussed other things so as not to seem aware. Some paced with their hands behind their backs, and heads lowered, cringing with each cry. Not even the ship's doctor, a young man with a brief apprenticeship with a dentist in London, would be tolerated until after the delivery.

The captain raised his ancient in the poop, lowered his topsails and shot off a piece. The *Paule* would stand away before the wind while a skiff was heaved out and lowered, the oarsmen rowing to one of the other ships in the convoy to borrow their midwife. It took three hours to make the return trip.

A woman in the Puritan habit and carrying a satchel climbed up the rope ladder with the crewmen when they returned and walked purposefully toward the rear of the deck where several women were gathered and looking down. One looked up and walked toward the midwife shaking her head, "No."

"It's too laite, Goodwoife. The choild come too soon and did not breathe. And we'll need to help the mother considerable if she's to live."

Several people carried the woman toward the main hatch and disappeared below.

That evening, the captain ordered the sails lowered. Four men brought a pole frame up from below with a wrapped body strapped to the frame, the cannon balls clearly defined at the feet. A small bundle lay beside it. They lowered the frame to the top of a trunk while the captain draped a British flag over it. The passengers and crew stood with their hands folded, praying individually, some women crying softly. The preacher read from the Bible and the deceased's family carried the bodies to the gunnels. They tipped the top end of the frame up, the bodies slid off the stretcher with a rush and after a pause softly splashed into the sea below.

The sails were hoisted and the *Paule* moved on into the night.

The watches faithfully called the hour, and the helmsman kept the vessel on an even keel; they were making the entire journey from England to the New World by celestial navigation, cross-staff, and experience.

The next day, thirty-five days out, they sighted northern Newfoundland and mountain-high icebergs offshore. Everyone crowded to the starboard of the *Paule* to see the awesome blue-white spectacles while the pilot gave them a wide berth, even those that seemed harmlessly small.

They were across the Atlantic and Will felt a sense of relief although he was aware of the potential danger still ahead. That night

another man sickened and died, this time of phthisis: tuberculosis of the lungs. It seemed as if a moment of hope was only to be written off by another of grief.

Now the atmosphere of the last month began to change from the confident ship in dangerous depths to a measured dance between passengers and the ocean. Sailors and servants put out lines and caught flounder, mackerel, cod and netted floating, sleeping turtles. But there were those aboard of a holy bent who ordered those fish caught on Sunday returned to the sea—although they were long since dead—and then properly admonished the servants although they were employed in the service of others.

Pods of fin whales began to turn up and accompany the vessel like an entourage of recorders on this journey with humans, and the humans recorded back. They ran to the ports and the rails when the leviathans arrived and could soon identify individuals. Will's young charges were among the enthusiasts; he was as eager as they were to abandon the academy to see the great mammals at least half the length of the *Paule*. Will lifted the boys up to give them a clear view and they would squeal with delight when the pods emerged to send up huge fountains of water from their blowholes, leap into the air, mightily slap the water with their tails, and submerge. Along with most of the passengers, they had never seen anything living of such size and were both awestruck and thrilled that the creatures had come along for the ride. Clearly the Goliaths of the deep could easily travel at twice the speed of the *Paule* but dallied to look back at the inanimate monster with its cargo of ants.

Will was in the mess, sitting down for his turn at the table framed for a square meal and contemplating another tin plate of dried beef and porridge, when the lookout in the crow's nest called "Land Ho." The pilot had already felt the change in wind and temperature and smelled the fresh air. A provident herring gull put down on the bowsprit to announce dry land approaching.

Every passenger hung on every word and every breath of wind in their apprehension about this place where they would begin again.

The end of the journey was in sight for Will Palmer. His emotions—part apprehension, part thrill—were piqued now. He watched intently for land to appear on the horizon and, at the same time, the crew making preparation as they became busy and alert to orders and change.

3

13th August 1635

It had been a full six weeks since Will boarded the *Paule* at Gravesend. The crew sounded now every watch, then every half watch until sand adhered to the wax at eighty fathoms, and soon they saw land a league or so to the west with perhaps twenty-five sail anchored offshore. As they came closer to the coast other vessels were careful to give way to the *Paule* as the vessel of burden and the pilot gradually close hauled to slow his pace giving himself adequate time to work out his landing. As in most ports on the northeastern coast of America he would not risk it in the unpredictable weather, but drop anchor some distance out and disembark by schooner-rigged launch. He bellowed his orders to the first mate who relayed them to the crew while Captain Betts stood majestically alone on the foredeck with his arms folded behind his back and his feet planted well apart.

The long, uncomfortable journey had given Will sea-legs that would be some time adjusting to land and his whole body would need daily exercise to recover his muscle strength and pliancy. But he could look forward to an abundance of good, varied food this time of year, and he hoped, a properly strapped framed bed to sleep in his first night ashore.

He had a few belongings to get together, his books and bedroll, that he wanted to have ready so he could spend most of his time watching and waiting. The boys were too excited to have lessons, and the minister added more prayers to cover possible dangers between here and land. Then, to their great frustration, all passengers were sent below until the vessel dropped anchor.

When the passengers emerged to see the place where they had been brought, their first sight was a vista of green trees, a huge, undisturbed landscape. Will could do nothing but stand and gaze across Massachusetts Bay in wonder at the expanse of virgin forest. Most of Europe and particularly England was bereft of trees so Will had never seen anything like this. At the same time, land had been cleared in pockets around the shore for the three roads leading to the docks, for fish processing and ship building. And he could see several houses in the distance.

There were so many people on the slip to meet the boat that Will thought the whole town must be there, some hoping for mail from relatives or filled orders from London. Others were merchants picking up their goods for sale. Whatever the reason, they were all excitedly waiting to meet the passengers.

Having doubts about the good intentions of both the crew and the dockworkers, Will waited to go ashore on the same launch with his baggage and by that time most of the passengers had been ferried to the dock. From the *Paule* it looked like a large party, everyone adrenalized to a pitch and hardly able to contain themselves. Sailors and servants were working their hardest both on the vessel and on shore and their hardest was not enough for masters who were demanding faster, more careful handling and less complaining. Landing baggage, foodstuffs and stock was difficult enough but the day was hot and humid and stinging, blood-sucking insects were particularly attracted to sweat adding insult to injury for everyone.

Finally, Will's turn came to go ashore and set foot in Massachusetts. Very unsteady on his feet, he had a persistent sensation of motion, but he was intact, and despite his cool exterior, just as excited as everyone else.

He stepped off the boat and a crew-member handed him his carpet bag saying "A good sailin', I'd say, Sur." The minister said, "The Lord granted these miserable sinners safe passage despite their transgressions." And the sinners, properly humbled, stopped congratulating each other.

On the slip the others were reacquainting themselves and Will started toward the front and he could see an older man talking rather seriously to Martha Bourne. She was back-to and he could see her shoulders drop and pull the boys' hands in to her abdomen. The man left and Martha looked back and out to sea as if bewildered. She didn't seem to know what to do next. Will was just about to go to her when people started to crowd around.

Women bustled up to each passenger with outstretched arms and

hugs, elated to see someone from home. They would stand back and examine the captured newcomer and say, "You're a Collins, I can see your mother's eyes. D'ya see that 'arry?" And, if they were off the mark, they'd start again, still sure they must be in the right family. "Who's yer father," "Ach, I knew 'm well," "'Ow's yer maum?" "'Ow was the crossin'?" and "Do you know if the *Increase* has set sail?"

Will chose a matronly looking lady. "Madam. Can you tell me the name of this place?"

"Why, Boston, lad. Bless ye. Ye've landed in Boston, Massachusetts. The Lord brought ye 'ere to us and we are well plaised."

"Yes. We are fortunate, Madam. Is there an inn or a tavern hereabouts?"

"Aye. The Unicorn about a hundred yards thence." And then, looking at him coyly and grinning from ear to ear, "We've been expectin' ye, lad."

Will looked for Martha and the boys but they were nowhere in sight.

He walked to the tavern with the others where there was a veritable feast on the groaning board: game, seafood, fresh vegetables, fruit, ale, rum, and sweets. The townsfolk had prepared for the new people before they arrived and dropped what they were doing to come to meet the *Paule* when it dropped anchor. There were Natives among them who fished for eels especially for the occasion, walking them out of the water and taking as many as they could carry. They were fat and sweet. And shellfish: clams, and quahogs, periwinkle, lobster, crab and shrimp; wild fowl: partridge and woodcock; and venison. Luscious fruit picked fresh from young orchards: plums and pears, apples and cherries. Cakes and puddings made with expensive cane sugar, molasses and honey. There was fresh spring water, untainted beer, and strong water, home made rum.

They talked long into the night about everyone at home in England, the politics, the church, and all the news.

"I heard on the crossin' that the King is puttin' his ship tax on more counties and not just those on the coast."

"I have intelligence that the Scots are refusin' to use the King's Church Service Book."

"They say the King will raise an army against the Gaels until they obey his order."

They danced and laughed, making stories to remember with nostalgia for the rest of their lives, warping and weaving them to astound children and grandchildren and anyone else who would listen. "You should've seen one of them sailors chasin' a powder monkey across the

deck. The little urchin had caught the sailor's fingers in a hawser . . ."

"By mistake, mind."

"But the boy was faster and the sailor slipped and lost his footin'."

"We were entertained by it all at the expense of the poor sailor's fingers. He suffered severe pain and nobody to pity him."

Finally, in the wee hours, Will excused himself, collapsed onto a cot from sheer exhaustion and slept fitfully in the motionless bed until late morning when it began all over again. The women had gone home to sleep for a few hours and returned with more labouriously and lovingly created food. Refreshed, bathed and with a change of clothes, everyone gathered again with new energy and élan.

Men sat at the table talking about land while women bustled about serving food. Will was told that he must be married to qualify for a land grant. He knew that. He intended to buy a plot of land for a house and apply for a grant later. What he didn't quite know yet was where.

He had survived the journey, and for the immediate future, he would concentrate on finding the community where he felt he could put down roots, the most likely place from which to begin his life again. And he was anxious to walk the shore, the town and talk to everyone he saw.

There was a great deal of activity all along the coast, people who were shipbuilding, fishing and processing fish at the water's edge. The harbour was full of sail. Other vessels with new settlers were arriving regularly, and two of the convoy that left Gravesend with the *Paule* had safely completed the journey and were standing offshore anxiously awaiting sight of the third. Fish in its abundance was being caught, gutted and salted as fast as women's hands could fly, mainly for export. "Hard work?" inquired Will. "Aye. Back breaken', Sur." They were not salting or preserving anything for themselves as one could pluck fresh fruits at will from the sea or from the orchard. Shipbuilding had developed beyond shallops to schooners. Six husky young men were winching and stepping the main spar and Will watched while the butt disappeared below and voices from somewhere in the bowels of the vessel called, "Wait." "Hold 'er." "Ease a little to starboard." And then, "She's in." All seven men on the top grinned their satisfaction to each other. "Do they usually slip into place like that?" "God's teeth, no, Sur," said one, laughing. "We were here two days steppin' the foremast."

They all laughed at the relief that comes with success narrowly eked out of heroic struggle and Will took his leave, "Godspeed, lads." He walked up the short road from the shore to the brow of the hill and across the common on his way to the high road. He stopped amid the grazing

cows and sheep to look at a house across the way where hens scratched and children played in the front yard. A hound stopped running with the children to sniff the air and bark at the stranger. Will walked toward the house, waved and one adventurous little girl curtsied and stepped forward. "Good day, Sur."

"Good day child," said Will bowing to meet her stature. "Is your father here?"

"Yes, Sur," she said, "This way."

Will followed the child to the back of the house where a man was chopping down a tree in the clearing. The child ran up to him and said, "Father, this gentleman asks to see you."

The man stopped chopping, leaned on his ax handle and bowed.

"Good say, Sur," said the man. "I'm just clearin' the trees that fell in the storm last week."

"Good day to you," said Will bowing slightly. "How providential that we escaped the great winds here."

"You are indeed fortunate. We've heard that others farther up the coast did not fare so well. But you must be newly arrived on the *Paule*?"

"I am, Sir. William Palmer from Maidstone. Safely made port Monday last with all aboard save three, four if you include a newborn."

"Yours was exceedingly well managed as compared to most. Many have been lost during the voyage, and some after they arrived. It's a hard journey and bless us all for having the courage for it." He said, "I'm John Williams, and this is my daughter, Patience. I'm the agent for the court when it comes to Boston."

Will smiled. "I have some experience in the sessional courts of Kent."

"Aye. So you are the passenger they told me about. Can we have a meetin' to talk about this?"

"Yes, of course. Whenever you wish."

Will had to know about the house and plot and asked one question after the other. "Your plantation seems well established. How long have you been here? When did you build the house?"

"We came ten years ago with the first settlement that brought into being the Massachusetts Bay Company with Governor Winthrop and we called Boston 'The City On a Hill.' I built the house with the help of several others and we have been living in it for eight of those years. My wife and I came over together from London and our three children were born here. The Lord has been kind and we are well pleased," said John smiling at Will. "Come inside."

Patience padded along behind the men eager to see for herself

her parents' hospitality and the stranger's reaction. The other children came running to view the exhibition. But soon they were all sent back to their respective chores, out of sight and sound.

The two men cleaned their boots on the jack embedded in a step and went into the woodhouse off the kitchen. John said, "We sometimes use this for a healing room for the stock," and led Will on into the kitchen where a woman was stirring something in an iron pot over the fire in the massive hearth. "My wife, Esther. Mr. William Palmer from Maidstone, Esther."

"Pleased to have you to our home, Mr. Palmer. Show him the house, John, and I'll make tea."

Housing construction was advancing beyond the great hall to second stories, even some partitioned separations and ells added to the back or side: the salt box, and that's what the Williams house was with the woodhouse in the ell. The kitchen was just half the main floor. There was a heavy wooden table with benches on either side, herbs and new candles hung from their wicks from a beam in the corner. Iron and wooden cooking utensils hung above the hearth and candlesticks with partly burned tallow were lined up on the windowsill ready for evening. They went into the sparsely furnished sitting room where there were three wooden chairs, a wooden bench and a small, treasured chiffonier. "My wife insisted on bringing it," offered John sotto voce. Rolled up and pushed against the wall were small mattresses stuffed with straw for guests who came and stayed, sometimes for months.

Will marveled at the partition between the two rooms. "This is new to me and it seems very satisfactory."

"Many people are building this way now. We are progressing beyond the Old Country."

Back in the kitchen John led Will into the corner behind the hearth where the herbs hung and where the stairs to the second storey was hidden. The wide-open space with soft pine floors laid over the joists contained three small pallets on one side and a roped frame bed on the other. Clothes and bedding were neatly folded on a small table against the outside wall. The stone chimney on the side with the bed was giving a great deal of extra heat to the upper storey on this hot day.

"I like your design, Mr. Williams."

"So, you are going to stay with us?" asked John.

"Oh, yes. I have no intention of going back but I have yet to decide where I'll settle."

"Well, Godspeed to you, Sir."

They went down to the kitchen and sat on the benches at the table facing each other. Esther poured tea in just two of her best pewter beakers. "This is very kind of you. I understand it is difficult to get tea here, and I

surmise, expensive."

John smiled his acceptance of Will's appreciation. "The population is now near seven thousand and more coming. The courts are busy and there may be a need for someone of your talent. If it is agreeable to you, I will inquire."

"If I can ask your indulgence John, please wait until I decide where I want to settle."

"Forgive my presumption, Sir. I thought you might decide to stay here if you were employed here."

"I've only just arrived and have much to think about. Be assured, I will take it into consideration."

They bid each other good day and Will walked back to the road and north toward the centre of commerce.

All the houses along the way were set back a hundred feet and more from the road, an announcement that there was more than enough land for every family. In some cases the green space collected debris and Will thought the English system with the debris collected behind the house might have been more appealing; building the house to the edge of the street helped to keep up appearances.

He met a man on the way who was eager to do business. They looked at a house similar the John Williams' house. "How would you appraise this property?" said Will.

"I reckon six hundred pound would take care of everything considering you'd be starting from scratch and considering you'd have a patent to put your house on. If not, that's another story."

They walked toward the town nodding to people they met. It wasn't The Mews in London, but very pleasant. In the town there were merchants and smiths, and some plantations in their very beginnings. "Are you going to be needin' a bed, mister?" Only the wealthy were able to bring their furnishings across the Atlantic and there were few of those because most of the émigrés were of the lower classes; they had everything to gain, the wealthy had everything to lose. Will thought it over and decided he would at least need a couple of beds, a groaning board and benches. "But, hold on," he said. "We're getting ahead of ourselves. I've a lot to do before I get to that state."

Now and then they saw flowers, gardens of flowers: white Bear's Breeches, violets, blue Fennel Flower, yellow Hearts Ease, golden Marygolde, rust red Wallflower, yellow lupine. Will hadn't personally known anyone who had the time, could otherwise afford to grow flowers, or do anything else just for the pleasure. He felt he'd made the right decision, to be one of thousands to colonize the New World.

4

Will was still staying at the Inn along with other single men with whom he shared the dormitory on the second floor. He ate his meals there and was daily refilling his breeches with the weight he'd lost during the crossing. The woman who ran the Unicorn was rather maternal and loved to see her food enjoyed. Her husband, however, was less domestic, more a man of business, and anxious that his guests find other accommodation as there would be others as soon as the next vessel arrived. Fortunately, Will had invitations to stay with settlers and was just thinking about which he would prefer.

In the meantime, he ventured out each day to see Boston's enterprise and talk to its entrepreneurs and settlers, getting as much of the flavour of culture that had developed as he could decipher. Although there was still a strong loyalty to England there was also a definite drive for independence, and like teenagers getting away from home for the first time, there was a sense of sheer joy in their freedom. Of course, there were difficulties: pioneering had its own hardships, the wars with some Natives loomed daily, and the cruel climate, disease and childbirth took loved ones and neighbours unjustly.

He talked to a merchant. "Mr. Palmer, you will find us very agreeable as long as you do your share in the community. Of course, there will be things you will have to work out for yourself such as the mind of the minister, the workings of the church and the government. As an educated man you will find it all less puzzling than most. Just ask me, ask anyone, if you seek intelligence. And come to prayer meeting tonight and meet the people of Boston."

Will bathed, shaved and dressed in his linen frockcoat and set out to go to the Meeting House, a square, clapboard building with a pitched roof on

the edge of the town square about two hundred yards from the Inn. He fell in with the stream of townspeople on their way to the same meeting and introduced himself. It seemed as if his reputation had gone before him. "Ah, yes. You're the man from Kent. Come and see us, Sir, anytime. We are just over the way. See, there?"

"Have you taken up residence, Sir? Any of us would be glad to have you. You've only to ask."

They filed in and the first person to step in front of Will said, "Welcome and may I know your name?" John Greene, whom Will had met during his walks around the town, stepped forward and took the introductions in hand. "Captain Wilson, may I present Mr. Palmer of Kent recently arrived on the *Paule*." Wilson sniffed, bowed half-heartedly in response to Will, and walked away without saying anything. "They're not all like this," said Greene and took Will around the Meeting House and introduced him to all the men and sometimes their wives. Some were businessmen, some farmers and fishermen, many doubled their vocations. But they were not all of the same tenet. There were Separatists, Puritans, Adventurers or the generic Strangers.

Greene, a lay preacher, took charge of the meeting and others took turns: a coachman, a button-maker, a clerk, a seller of stockings, a fisherman, a tanner; all were lay preachers. It began with a short prayer, followed by a discussion about shepherding on the common, the purchase of a bell for the Meeting House and maintenance of roads. Although men were appointed and paid to keep the streets clean, accumulated horse manure was creating a problem for women on foot. A much longer prayer closed the meeting but Wilson called for people to stay to voice their objection to lay preachers whom he viewed as religious radicals from the lower classes.

He made his opinion plain.

"It is not the custom of any well settled church in Europe to ordain such as you, I mean hatmakers, cobblers, tailors, horsekeepers, upon one and the same day to be plank and the pulpit, in the forenoon making a hat, or rubbing a horse, in the afternoon preaching a sermon. God doth furnish our church plentifully with learned men, and does not need such as you to preach the Gospel."

People shied away gradually working their way toward the door and on their way home.

The August heat was oppressive when Will went out the next day. People had discouraged him from going to the east side and he was curious so he decided to walk east near the docks. The streets were a cacophony of hawkers.

"Two a groat, and four for sixpence, mak're1."

"Maike room for m'lord, 'ere."

Carriage hacks abused the street mongers and the street mongers abused back.

"Pai 'tenshun, dog. You'll find yesel' in the guttah."

"Moind 'ow you go, gov'nuh. There mai not be quite 'nough room for yore kind 'ere."

Chamber pots were indiscriminately emptied from windows above the street, and horse traffic left copious quantities of dung behind, making it impossible to walk without gathering the muck on shoes, and layered, long skirts. He walked for hours in the heat and stench until he was exhausted with apprehension and disappointment. He went back to John Greene's shop and told him what he'd seen. "I thought we'd left it behind, the sorry side of the city. But here it is again just as it was in Maidstone and London and I don't want to live here, Mr. Greene."

"It's our shame that we foolishly keep hidden. You would have found us out in due course. I hoped you would stay and help those of us who want to change the east side."

"I want to start fresh in a new settlement. Some men at the Unicorn were talking about Watertown. What do you know about it?"

"It's a new settlement up the river where I know you would be welcome. The town is making it known that they need freemen, people of quality, and declared there will be no pauper." John turned to the front of the shop, raised his index finger, went to the window and came back with a sheet of paper. "They've published some of their covenant," he said and handed the paper to Will. It said:

> *Covenant of Watertown, 30 July 1630*
> *We who∫e Names are hereto sub∫cribed, having through God's Mercy escaped out of Pollutions of the World, and been taken into the Societe of his People with all Thankfulness do hereby both with Heart and Hand acknowledge.*

"It may be closer to your preference, Mr. Palmer. It would be wise to journey to Watertown. It's only about a day from here on the Charles River."

"I will," said Will, "as soon as possible. I've met the demands set out by the Bay Company and I'm entitled to two hundred acres of land. I want to get some idea just how difficult the Puritans are to live with. I have not come with a congregation, after all, and although I appreciate law and order, I'm not sure how much I can appreciate theocracy."

He started toward the door, then turned back to John and said,

"Bye the bye, a young woman and her two sons made the crossing on the *Paule* but I haven't seen her since we arrived."

"Ahhh," said John with an impish smile. "So there is a fair young maid."

Will dropped his head and returned the smile. "No, John. I taught her boys while we sailed and I assume she is safely with their father. Her name is Bourne, Martha Bourne."

"I know of a James Bourne. Nasty fellow. He was kicked in the head by a horse. And we all said hurrah for the horse. But, I don't know anything of Martha."

Will raised his eyebrows. "Thank you John. That's very interesting."

When Will went back to the Unicorn some of the men were talking about taking an investigative trip in a local shallop around the shore line in Boston Bay and invited Will to join them. He jumped at the chance. They left the next morning. Fishing shanties dotted the coastline and skiffs were rowed out to wait for their prey a little north and removed from the thirty-five or so sail in the Bay. The extraordinary bounty of fish in the ocean was phenomenal. Will watched the fishermen just a few hundred yards off shore fill their boats to the gunnels in less than an hour. And the clouds of passenger pigeons literally darkened the sky and broke stout branches from trees with their collective weight. They put in at a port along the way where there were small shipyards and the beginnings of a shipbuilding industry.

"I am astonished at the volume of life in the wild," said Will.

"And unsullied by human hands," said someone in the back of the boat.

When they arrived back in Boston Harbour, Will went to the Inn, sat down at the quiet end of the groaning board and wrote to his parents.

Boston, Massachusetts
Friday, 4th September 1635

Dearest Mother and Father: I pray this finds you well and of good temper. We arrd safely on the 13th last and I suffered the journey very well. There were many afflicted poor souls but all but four who crossed are here in the New World. They died a terrible Misery and the Relatives of some cried in such despair when the wasted Bodies were cast into the sea. I will take up temporary Residence in Watertown of this province, and by spring I hope to have settled in a more agreeable

Town of more tolerable laws and controls. There is talk of Reverend John Eliot preparing to make a new colony on the Great River settled last year by John Oldham. Eliot is bound on converting the Indians and the fierce Pequots are first on his plan. I am considering going with him. This Town has imported Neat, Swine, Fowl, Goats and they grow great heights of corn given by the Savages. I will write often and keep you apprized of my movements. I pray you convey my Good Health and love to all my Friends and Kindred. Y^{r} Loving son, William Palmer

He went back to the harbour looking for the next ship sailing back to England and found a man he'd met at the Meeting House. He asked if he would be a willing courier and it was all settled. Will gave him his folded, sealed letter and watched it disappear inside the leather jerkin, safe and sound. Even so, there was no guarantee his mother would get the letter, he would only know when he received a reply which would be months from now. He knew she would be very concerned and so relieved to know he was all right, anxious to hear of his plans.

Then he went shopping for transportation to Watertown and found that a shallop was leaving on Monday. He paid for the trip then walked to John Greene's shop. "I'm going to have a look at Watertown next week," he told John.

"I'm sure you'll find it more tolerable than here. And, of course, you can always come back. We'd welcome you."

"You've been very kind to me, a stranger, since I came. I shall let you know my situation and look in on you whenever I come back. Please let me know your state of affairs when you have time and I would look forward to hearing from you."

"I will, indeed, Will. And if you come to Boston, please stay here with me."

"That would be very agreeable for me, John. Thank you for your generosity. Now I must arrange to have my trunk sent on when I'm settled. It will be good to have my belongings and fresh garments. Godspeed, John."

They embraced and Will went back to the docks and where his trunk was being held and told the clerk of his plans. The clerk in turn was eager to make the news known so passed it on to colleagues and strangers alike who speculated as to why so many newcomers rejected their town.

"It's Captain Wilson, you know. He drives everyone out."

"No. I think it's the minister's wife. She's a cold fish."

"They say he didn't like the east side," offered the clerk.

5

On Monday Will sailed with several others, mainly men on the same mission as Will, with some precious chairs and a bed frame, and a few hens and cattle on the Charles River to Watertown. They went to a private home where the owners took in as many potential settlers as they could find floor space for until they were invited to stay with a family. Will was given such an invitation the next day and took his carpetbag to a modest home on Water Street where he was welcomed like an old friend.

He settled in, sent for his belongings, attended events in the common house, went to church as expected twice on Sunday and prayer meetings twice a week.

The common house was unchurched for court, socials and balls or dances, and there were a few tentative soirees in private homes. So it was that Will was invited to an evening of music and conversation in elegant company. He felt this was the time to indulge in some finer clothes than he had arrived with and bought a new broadcloth frockcoat. Ready-to-wear clothes were now shipped from England on every vessel that came into port in New England but, by the time they arrived, at twice the price they were in Kent. Will sorely wished he had had more forethought about this before leaving home, the difference between five and ten pounds being considerable now.

He was delayed and arrived a bit later than requested so that nearly everyone was there. The host was a freeman and a merchant who had been in Watertown about three years. In that time he had acquired enough land for a small plantation of stock, corn and wheat and was trying his first venture in tobacco. His house, and his pride, was of the

English overhanging second story design, the hearth in the centre of the house, and the mark of wealth and acquisition: casement windows with diamond shaped, leaded frames that swung out.

It was filled with chatter and laughter when Will arrived. Cheerfully welcomed by the lady of the house dressed in her best silk from England, she navigated him around the rooms, introduced him, overplayed his unattached status somewhat, he thought, then left him with a merchant who asked questions about his trip, and news from home. He was kept there until a servant offered him sweetmeats and a drink from a tray. My, he thought, how he'd come up in the world; his father would have a thing or two to say about this.

Left on his own to scout the room, he saw America's first middle class self-consciously testing its breeding. Everyone was dressed in their finest, women in quite remarkable gowns for the time and place, a few men took a stance in the third enclosed ballet position, and new acquaintances nodded their heads politely in agreement and properly shook them at shocking news. Three young ladies were introduced to Will as he stood there, they giggled self-consciously, and it made him feel very awkward, this metamorphosis in such a short time, and merely by virtue of a voyage across the ocean.

When Will changed his focus from the mass to the minutiae the first person he saw was Martha Bourne, and then she saw him. They walked toward each other, she curtsied, he bowed, and everyone else gawked. They worked their way toward the couple in a circle and watched their conversation like a tennis match. Men teetered back on their heels while ogling, women tilted their heads to one side then the other and smiled sweetly. Secrecy was not the standard, anything not visible was subject to suspicion.

With everyone listening and watching it was difficult to have a conversation, but Will was able to find out where Martha was staying. She also told him that she was seriously considering going back to England where at least she had some family of her own. "My husband, James Bourne, was killed by a horse while I was on my way to America." "Ahh," breathed the audience. Before they separated, she agreed to walk out with Will the next day. Having stopped all conversation in the room they were relieved when the recital began.

When Will had had enough of the music and the grandiloquence, he paid his respects to the host and slipped out. Meeting Martha again was a pleasant surprise and he was looking forward to seeing her the next day.

When he went out the next morning there were people gathered in small groups looking distressed, talking anxiously to each other and he

soon found out why. The keeper at the dock was more than willing to tell him that the Puritans were taxing everyone regardless of sect, to support the church. “We left England for religious and political freedom, and we have neither one,” said the clerk. “And I’ve heard that there will be no new grants after this year.”

“Perhaps my stay here will be brief,” said Will.

“No one would fault you, Sur.”

“My trunk is in Boston and I will send a message to the clerk there to send it by the next shallop,” said Will. “Please let me know when it arrives.”

“Yes, Sur, I will.”

That afternoon he called on Martha who was staying with a settler who had seen her plight at the docks when she was told her husband was dead.

She had also discovered that there was no home for she and the boys, that her husband had only acquired debts in the time he’d been here, and what little he had, went to pay them off. She had two choices: go home to her grandfather or stay in New England and work as a servant. Neither was anything to look forward to and she was feeling very depressed.

“We are of a kind, Madam, my wife’s gone these past two years. Barely eighteen when she had a quiet birth and it so consumed her, no vestige remained to save herself. It persuaded me to consider the journey to America and I am convinced that it was an excessively favourable decision.”

Will told her about his life in Maidstone and his plans. “I’m going up the Great River to Pyquaug to observe and inquire,” he told her. He decided to leave that with her until he saw her again and then he would ask her to stay a few weeks longer.

They walked out again after church on Sunday. Of course, the whole congregation was buzzing with gossip, conjecture and their considered opinion of the compatibility and suitability of the couple. Breeding, background, class and the organic inspection of the townspeople were the prime factors for deliberation. The opinion of the subjects was not part of the equation.

But, the couple were in their own world. They discussed the welfare of the boys, Will’s plans to build a house when he settled, and his firm conviction that all children should be educated.

Martha agreed to stay in Watertown and wait for Will’s return when they would talk again.

The universe was evolving as it should.

6

14th September 1635

Will met the next morning with a group who were planning to move to Pyquaug in the spring, and were making a scouting trip there the following week, a perfect opportunity for Will to look the place over. He met with a Pyquaug selectman who was in Watertown to discuss the availability of land and to recruit new settlers.

"It's necessary to make this trip before winter sets in," said a man from the group. "I have intelligence that just last year a party of settlers barely survived when their boat was caught in ice."

Will's party would leave the following week, the third week of September. 'We expect the return trip to take a fortnight or more," offered the selectman.

The group accepted Will as a member of the party when they were told he worked in the courts in Maidstone. This was his stay: his education. His mother's wisdom and foresight would look after him for the rest of his life.

The group left in a shallop early Monday morning and sailed back down Massachusetts Bay, walked across Barnstable to Buzzards Bay, sailed through Aquidneck Sound and Lange Eylandt Sound to the mouth of the Great River.

In the shallows there was cordgrasses, saltgrass, American holly, and in the marshes wild celery, coontail, common waterweed, and eelgrass. Insects in the wetlands found the newcomers to their taste. Thousands of migratory waterfowl: ducks and geese, sandpiper and tern, and young shellfish, shared the tidewaters. Diamondback terrapin, salamander, frogs,

toads, copperheads had enjoyed privacy and freedom, until now. They were considered unworthy of a safe haven and beaten back along with the clouds of pigeons. Christianity decreed nature to be in the service of man.

The leaves were turning and Will saw a spectacle of colour, something he'd never seen before: brilliant red sugar maples and tamaracks, delicate yellow birch, and waxy ochre oaks. The abundance, the endless landscape of trees, the phenomenon, amazed the settlers.

The sail up the River from Saybrook at the mouth of the River to Pyquaug, about forty miles inland, took a week and the last few miles through the oxbow in the river were particularly difficult. The wind dropped and the sails hung limp until four sturdy crewmen were dispatched to "walk" the shallop up the river. They took two anchors attached to hawsers up the river in a small boat and dropped them when the hawsers grew taut. On deck a team of hardy men regimentally lined up in the prow and pulled on the anchored ropes until they reached the stern, and the whole process was repeated until the walkers became exhausted or a fair wind came up.

Eventually they rounded the top of Pyquaug and a cove came into view, a calm new half-moon of beachfront surrounded by trees of every variety.

Several people were waiting at the dock and they helped the passengers disembark. Animated and exuberant they offered each other salutations, "Welcome, Sur," "Good Day, Ma'am," and a good long look to determine the wherefrom of the nose, eyes and forehead, then the torso and stance as they might judge farm stock. They talked about relatives to ascertain mutual kinfolk, and decide if there was anyone close enough on whom they had sanction to pass judgment.

They were quietly pleased to see that Will was a strapping young man in his prime. If he chose to stay here, he would be having something to say about his own life and about the welfare of his town in sharp contrast to his English experience; he could shed his old mask and find out just who William Palmer was. And he needed to know that in order to determine his place in the social order.

The Old World class system was reshuffled like a deck of cards. Without doubt, there were still classes: owning land put men in the upper layers, servants and derelicts at the bottom. As they arrived, indentured servants and slaves and Natives slipped in under all classes to become the bottom layer. Town officials, tutors, merchants and professionals naturally rose to the top as cream separates from milk, without plan or discussion.

The ancient system was also governed by how people behaved

fiscally, socially, spiritually, the church holding all the trump cards, with *what-people-think* riding shotgun it maintained official/unofficial law and order. Few would have the temerity to step out of line while in a public place; what they did behind closed doors, in their homes, was another matter.

Will walked with the townsfolk and the other passengers up a hillock from the cove in the late afternoon, hot and humid in the clearings but quiet and cool in the wooded glens along the way. Flashes on trees indicated the presence of Natives here long ago, and the main trail was, in fact, theirs. Will often had a sense they were nearby, perhaps watching. He also knew there had been and would continue to be, confrontations. It was the one thing he knew he was not cut out for.

They walked south along the rutted path past the commons, the site set aside for the meetinghouse, and the few farms dotted along the way. A handful of healthy looking cattle grazed in each of the open commons. Hens, pigs and goats were in farmyards and sometimes crossing the path with the town shepherd close behind.

As it was some distance inland, Pyquaug was not so likely to be threatened by an offensive from the sea, and the Wongunks had already welcomed the settlers although the land was not yet paid for. The indigenous Pequods and other tribes had had very different encounters with adverse Englishmen but the Wongunks were trading furs, and the leaders in Pyquaug decided early on to make every effort to ally themselves with whatever Natives turned up, mainly for their expertise in wood lore and survival.

Nevertheless, Will was told he would be required to train monthly as part of the pro tem militia and to take his share of guard duty. Each plantation now was required to maintain a stock of two pounds of powder and twenty lead bullets and prepared to display it to a constable on demand. Some of this came about because a settler had fired a musket at night when he heard movement and it brought out a firing squad that killed one person and injured others. The offending noise came from a pig that was munching in a vegetable garden. Now, no one was allowed to fire a weapon at night. But mainly these security measures were as protection from the rightful owners of the land: the Pequods, who had always been there, and latterly, the Dutch who had been in the Connecticut Valley first and so felt their claim had priority.

Quite naturally, the Natives felt their ownership was universal having lived wherever they wished, unobstructed, for thousands of years. So that, although they sold a parcel of land, that is, they exchanged goods and signed a contract, the tribes that frequented and perhaps fought with each other on a parcel of land, felt it was still theirs, and had no sense of

ownership by the colonists or anyone else; it belonged to everyone. On the other hand, the colonists accepted, probably out of ignorance, the king's declaration of ownership by virtue of discovery, and such rights as to grant land to whomever he pleased, unobstructed.

The main part of the village was on about ten square acres of land running north to south along the rutted road, The High Street between the cove and The Great Plain, several acres reserved for the meetinghouse and the burying ground about in the middle, farms on either end. Cleared in recent months, the ringed stumps of severed trees still bleeding glistened in the sun. The thick forest of rich, mixed hardwood: red maple, silver birch, oak, poplar, hackmatack and hickory would gradually be tailored into buildings. A copse of white birch, its silky bark peeling and curled to expose its rust-red underside, was new to Will. Stands of pine had been saved to break the wind from the east and they soughed softly in the engagement. White cedar, bald cypress and juniper filled his senses.

In the wood, tail-proud red squirrels reproached the intruders, a summer-brown snowshoe rabbit hopped off into the undergrowth, a whitetail doe raised her flag and fled into the safe cover of the forest. From a deciduous grove on the edge of the forest robins sang their cherry-tree call: cheer-up, cheer-up, cheerily, cheerily. Closer to the river's edge barn swallows fed on the wing. Little rusty-bellied aerial acrobats, they executed barrel rolls, swooped, banked, dove and climbed full throttle. There were buttercups and Queen Ann's lace in a clearing in the distance, wild daisies and thorny roses, lupines along the bank, yellow and blue flags in the backwaters. Other than the wood-smoke from the few houses, the air was clear and smelled of pine pitch and wild flowers. Will had been aware of this phenomenon since he arrived in America. Maidstone had become badly polluted from so many chimneys and industries such as the tanneries and the breweries.

The rich alluvial soil at this deep bend in the river would provide marsh hay in the low meadows on the east side for grazing cattle where the new settlement would develop, and nourish crops in the broad terraces on a rise above the river.

Will sensed that he would probably settle in Pyquaug before leaving Watertown, and everything he'd seen and heard since had only served as grout for the chinks. He and the group met with the council, talked about plans for the town, changing the name to Wethersfield, the availability of land, the soil and game. The first settlers had managed to bring some stock up the river, but with difficulty. Several pigs and cows were lost the first winter and they warned Will's group to bring animals in the spring when

there was ample grazing. If they endured the trip, by boat or overland, in the ensuing months until winter, the animals would adjust to the climate.

He had a lot to think about now. There was the heady notion of being a founder of a new town in a new country, now so far from civilization. He kept a tight grip on the prospectus so as not to fall into a sense of being lost in the wilderness.

He made plans in his head. He would write to the council in Maidstone for a draft on his funds to purchase land and build a house. His would be among the first houses built in Wethersfield, and, he expected to have one of the first families: his children would be born, christened, and learn to read and write here. He would send them away for further education if necessary, and it probably would be since, Will believed, they would have to find someone, a teacher, a tutor, to teach the rudiments to all the children in the town. It was the main thing he had in common with the Puritans: education for the children.

Will talked with the selectmen about the choice of sites for his grant, his house, the construction, the cost. And furniture: benches and tables, cupboards and a bedstead.

He was given the grand tour of twelve houses and many more outbuildings on the High Street and Broad Street. There were advancements in the buildings: nearly all were post and beam construction, some floors were laid with split logs, some packed earth, and the hearths were built of stone on the only inside wall. Will thought that many were starting with better housing than they had ever experienced in their lives, and on their own land. As there was no common house yet meetings and sermons were in private homes. Temporary shelters: pit houses, sod houses and tent pits were also fashioned, then left for newcomers as needed.

Will attended sermons on Sunday, was carefully examined by the preacher and the congregation to determine his qualifications for acceptance by the new citizens of Wethersfield. The strikes against him were given first consideration in the tradition of all small towns, and by the time those were laid out, considering his good points might very well have been a waste of time. Everyone knew by Sunday that Will was unmarried, and had he not been young, that certainly would have qualified as a veto. He had not come here with a congregation either, which was contrary to some and a good thing to others. That meant he was not as dogmatically bound on church reform as the Puritans were. On the other hand, it meant there was no one to vouch for him, to tell about his life in Kent, whether he was of good character.

The townspeople asked questions about his intentions.

"Do ye have a woman, Sir?"

And they would discern for themselves his qualities, and pass judgment after church. They were all quite agreeable, smiling and welcoming and warm, the men bowing, the women with their hands folded across their abdomens and stepping back for the right perspective for inspection. No one said anything about this, but Will was well aware of what was happening in this little clearing in the hinterland.

He and Andrew Ward, his host, had long talks about their respective visions and aspirations. Andrew was one of three men appointed by the Massachusetts general court to govern Wethersfield for a year and he was thinking of proposing Will as the recorder for the local court in Hartford. All hearings were now in Boston, but the cluster of small towns on the Great River: Hartford, Windsor and Pyquaud, viewed themselves as separate and established their own court.

Will confided to Andrew that he was interested in starting a school. Andrew grinned.

He said he wasn't sure that farmers would support a school in spite of a directive from the Bay Company to do just that. And before building a meeting house, if necessary.

"There's precious little spare time for a settler's children to go to school. And who will pay for this grand scheme? Some might concede that their sons need to know their numbers to manage the farm, but girls are a different matter; they have no need for education, their place is in the kitchen and the birthing room."

Andrew wouldn't hinder Will from trying, but he sure would like to be there when he made his proposal to the community. What Andrew didn't know was that Will was planning on a heretofore unheard of meeting with both men and women in attendance, where he could get at least some votes in favour of a school, or a teacher while a school was being built. Women were, after all, the unacknowledged guardians of civilization, the family, and the church. But, the men who called town meetings were not apt to ask the opinion of a woman.

Will left for Watertown on Tuesday saying to Andrew that he would send a message when he'd made a final decision.

He sailed back the way he had come and in Boston looked for someone sailing to Gravesend or London to take a letter to his mother. From there, it would be taken to Maidstone by coach. He arrived in Boston in time to hear of a vessel sailing the next morning for Gravesend and the purser suggested a likely passenger to deliver his letter.

He found a place to write in the Inn amidst the noise and rabble of settlers coming and going.

Boston, Massachusetts
7th October 1635

Dearest Mother and Father: I pray this finds you well and of good spirits. I intend to settle on the Great River called by its Indian name Pyquaug and will be called Wethersfield. The soil is rich and strangely watered, many pooles of fresh water everywhere, and the river runs down to the ocean for our trade. The climate is less fair as in England, severe cold in winter and dank and hot now. An insect, called by the naytives a mosquito, is very bothersome. But the aire is cleere and most agreeable. There are disputes between some of the settlers and the Bay Company and with all inhabitants and the Indians. I will not affright you with the distempers but to be assured I am unharmed. I write this day to the council for a draft on my funds, the purpose to buy land and builde a dwelling. I enclose it with this letter and entrust it to you to deliver, Mother. I will write with regularity, and apprise you of my progresse. I pray you convey my good health and love to friends and kindred. Yr Loving son, William Palmer

He signed it carefully in his best and most recognizable script as reassurance to his parents that it was indeed their son who had penned this letter.

Then he wrote to the Maidstone council requesting, "One Hundred Pound Sterling as order for payment to Wm Palmer, against my funds in your care," to be sent by the next most convenient passage. He folded it inside the letter to his parents and carefully sealed it with hot wax.

The purser sent a runner, a young boy, to look for the recommended passenger. The child was barefoot, his clothes were dirty and tattered, but his earnings were necessary so he was not in school and probably would never read or write. He found his quarry and when the two men met they discovered they had mutual friends in England to serve as absentee references, and the arrangement was made. Will paid the boy in sterling and he was so surprised he just looked at Will, speechless. It was manna to him, as he usually received the local currency: peltry or wampum.[2] "Away with you, lad."

Will went on to Watertown and talked to several townspeople there, some he had met in the meeting before he went to Wethersfield. They agreed to gather the next evening to provide guidelines to keep him out of difficulty with the Massachusetts Bay Company and the Natives and as many others

as possible. There had been settlers who had realized the wrath of the Puritan establishment in Boston and Will needed to be apprised of the risks.

An English council had been appointed that in turn appointed a board from the settlers while maintaining control in England. A councilor advised Will.

"As a freeman and a shareholder you can settle wherever you wish within these colonies that James I granted the Company: a tract of land one hundred miles square from the sea inland between latitudes 40th and 48tho N. But, you cannot resettle elsewhere without the permission of the church and government."

The council would set that process in motion.

Will left the meeting with two things on his mind. What did Martha think about him and would she stay? And he wondered if he could possibly get a house up and the roof on before winter. The risk was in the unknown: how soon would winter set in in Wethersfield with the first freeze when it would not be possible to ship goods down the coast and up the river from Boston.

Things were moving quickly and Will's priorities were falling into place. He clinically pondered the business of marriage. It filled immediate needs: Will needed a wife, Martha needed a husband. They got on well together, but they hadn't lived together. They would be taking a chance, but so did everyone. Some people were more fortunate than others and Will considered himself to be one of the former.

Marriage was of some considerable gravity to thoughtful couples, to take note of their station, taste and interests, attitude and aspirations, for if they were unequally matched the union would surely be "fraught with miseries untold and unknown to all but such as may be so unfortunate," one father wrote to his daughter guiding her down the road to matrimony and to deter her from marrying for the wrong reasons.

> *To confer the largest amount of happiness that married state is susceptible of, the husband ought, in intellect, to be equal to the wife. He ought to possess the same tastes, moral, social and literary. He should be industrious, enterprising, and energetic—attentive to the wants and ready to mitigate, as far as possible, the afflictions of female life. He should be kind, condescending—affectionate and obliging. But, in justice, I ought to add these qualities are just as essential in the wife to produce matrimonial happiness as in the husband, I need scarcely say that the reverse of the qualities I have named will be cause of unhappiness more or less in proportion to the degree in which any or all may exist, and ought, therefore, to be avoided in the selection of either a wife*

or a husband.

I wish thee to apply the foregoing rules not only to [your intended] but to thyself and then decide, and dispassionately, not under the wild influence of frensied love. This passion with its blinding excitement, soon passes away, and then too many see their error when too late to retract. But the obligations of matrimony are only extinguished with life; therefore the immense importance of deciding these with one who can the most equally fulfill or return them. If, after thus considering the matter in all its important relations, it seems better to yield to present impulses, why I will yield (must I say) reluctant consent. Not reluctant from any want of respect for [your intended] but because I fear that your tastes and peculiar characteristics may prove so different from each other that your anticipated happiness many not be realized.

But I must bring this letter to a close, as my paper is exhausted, by subscribing myself thy
affectionate father
WHance

He called on Martha Bourne. He would see how she felt about staying in America, and of course, how she felt about him. They were calling each other by their Christian names now, but only in private. In public, they adhered to the rules and Martha called Will, Mr. Palmer, he addressed her as Mrs. Bourne.

"Martha, you have the same name as my maum and it couldn't be more welcome. I have missed her with the longing of a child."

"Then I am pleased to carry the name."

"Have you considered staying in America? Do you like the country well enough to bide here or do you grieve for home?"

"I like it well enough, Sir, but I'll need to make a life for myself and the boys, not as it is now, living with a family out of their kindness."

"Would you reflect on settling in the colonies and making a life with me? I intend to go to Wethersfield with the next group of settlers and forge my own farm on my own land with a few livestock."

Martha said she had given it some considerable thought, had even talked it over with the boys, and she would be very satisfied to marry Will. They discussed the pitfalls of such an event given the social construct in Watertown and decided to do it as soon as it could be arranged. Will's interpretation of James Bourne was that Martha and the children had been afraid of him and he wanted to give them some relief from anxiety and

confidence that he would take care of them and give them a stable home.[3]

It was the second week of October and the nights were already chilly. It seemed clear that it would be folly to try to accomplish any construction this fall, but all manner of preparation could be done. The intendeds found temporary accommodation, and between now and spring they would apply for a grant and settle on a design for the house. Will would take some work with the council and the church and teach the boys. He wrote to his parents and Martha's grandfather right away.

They were married by a magistrate. She was just twenty and he, thirty. As it was the second marriage for both and as they were without their respective families, a private ceremony was the suitable choice with Martha's little boys, William and Henry, in their first suits standing beside the couple. Keeping arrangements private was not easy in Watertown, but the newlyweds succeeded until after they were married and in their first home together. When the family Martha was staying with revealed to a neighbour that Will had called for she and the children the previous afternoon and had not brought them back, they came to the logical conclusion; they were already married and it was too late to haze them. They would have a social in the meetinghouse on Saturday.

Will thought himself so fortunate. He had made the great leap from one world to another across a vast divide of ocean and culture, survived a journey that few had before him, and was brought together by two oblivious striplings and an abused horse. In the space of a few short months his entire life had rotated with the compass to poles away from his beginnings where he had little hope for the future, to a future full of hope.

For the rest of the day they busied themselves unpacking their belongings and settling in. The boys were rambunctious and impatient for meals so Martha sent them to play outside until she called them for supper. The house was sparsely furnished by the owner with a long oak table in the kitchen, benches along the walls, a huge iron kettle on the andiron in the kitchen hearth, a few utensils, a bedstead, feather mattress and pallets for the boys. Martha brought her few prized possessions from England: bed clothes, a pair of pewter mugs, a few trinkets and some silk. But, they were no longer hers. In fact, she had only had possession of them from the time James died and the moment she married Will. Her husband owned everything she brought to the marriage.

When it became late in the afternoon of their first day together, Martha called the boys in for supper, a regular feast of fruit, fresh vegetables, stewed beef and flat bread served on wooden trenchers with wooden spoons. They stood behind their place at the bench as Will blessed the

meal, and then the boys plunged in. Food in the New World was an exciting experience for them, the variety, the freshness of the fruit and vegetables, molasses. sugar cones and spices from the Caribbean.

Will offered another prayer after supper, read to the boys and when they fell to drowsiness, their parents carried them to their pallets. Then William kissed his new wife and carried her to bed. To his private relief, he hadn't forgotten anything, and after an appropriate interval for the overture, they found they were in tune with each other.

For the rest of the fall and into the winter their lives would be easier than either had ever experienced. They were well aware that when this long honeymoon was over there would be many years of hard work and they meant to enjoy every minute of the hiatus.

Martha gradually became more confident and less shy and that winter they rarely missed a social event, invited guests to tea and were guests in return. Martha made her English recipes: Apple Muse, A Potage of Roysons, Cake Bread. They sampled new fare from the fields and meadows: wild pears and apples, groundnuts, squash and pumpkin during the late summer and fall, and wild rice. They were fascinated to watch the Natives paddle right up to the aquatic plants at the exact moment when the long grains released and they would shake them from their stalks straight into the canoes. It was the only way to harvest it, the plant refused to be cultivated and released its ripe kernels straight into the water when the stalks shattered.

Will tried writing on birch bark as the Natives did and found it quite serviceable once he learned how to keep his quill from going through the delicate layers and blotting his ink.

Before freeze-up, they went down to Boston in a shallop and the children saw all the sail in the harbour and the new immigrants on the docks looking wide-eyed just as they had themselves mere months ago. Martha ordered fabric and thread from shops that, open to the street in warm weather, were just closing their shutters for the winter. And they went to see John Greene. Will wanted to introduce his family to the man who had been so solicitous to him. John greeted Will with open arms, bowed graciously to Martha and talked briefly to the boys. And they accepted his invitation for tea and cheese just has Will had done before. They were now old friends.

"Please come and see us John, and stay as long as you wish."

Will made financial arrangements, looked over building supplies and decided what he would have sent to Wethersfield for their house in the spring. Boston streets were already noisy, muddy and well strewn with horse manure. The town council always needed to find ways to keep the

streets open and clean in the winter to accommodate commerce.

Hurricanes came up the coast destroying everything in their path in the fall, and winter was particularly severe that year. It was the first such experience for the Palmers, the huge drifts of snow and the numbing cold. There were days at a time when they were snowed in, unable to get past the few feet Will cleared out to the edge of the road. Keeping warm inside was another challenge as the raging winds blew through every pinhole in the bare, planked walls. And the hearth fire wasn't much help when the winds blew down the flue and sometimes even blew the fire out.

Then, the gales of March howled, April rains washed the earth clean and Will and Martha prepared for their first child, the great life and death gamble. Very high odds of complications, and of not making it at all were one in eight. The odds against the child were one in ten before the age of five.

Martha knew she would suffer great pain in labour and accepted it as punishment for Eve's sins, for the very act of sexual intercourse. And please restrain from crying out so as not to annoy the people who generously came to help, half a dozen neighbours and an invaluable midwife.

She would be cognizant of age-old notions: one must take care to not "look upon a horrible spectre" else the child would be disfigured, and to avoid looking at the moon lest the child be a lunatic.

In normal circumstances, at least one mother would attend the birth, Will's or Martha's, and a few aunts. But there was no immediate family here, they were on their own and were grateful for those women who would step in to help. They had nearly all been through this themselves and felt a particular empathy for Martha's isolation from anyone close to her, including her husband, who was an alien in this domain exclusive to women.

There was newness in everything here, nothing of experience to fall back on, nothing old and tried, and the risk was increased in this, the most personal of circumstances. Some women were abused or abandoned if they did not successfully produce a child but Martha's old fears were slowly dissipating and she gradually felt quite fortunate in Will as he showed no signs of instability. She kept the whole subject to herself as if exposing it might invite the awful spectre in and there would be nothing she could do about it.

7

At the first sign of spring break-up Will went to Boston to supervise the shipment of the material he'd ordered, then took the first vessel sailing to Westchester himself. He took the plans he had drawn up with Martha during the winter, and his carpetbag. He expected to stay in one of the lean-tos that others had used and left intact. It didn't matter. His own house on his own land would be worth whatever it took. And it would take a little more sinew than he had now. He hadn't worked physically for some time and his hands and muscles would give him considerable pain for a few weeks. But he could see the house and Martha in it in his mind's eye and it gave him a profound sense of belonging and home.

Come live with me and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove
That valleys, groves, hills, and fields,
Woods, or steepy mountain yields.

Christopher Marlowe (1599)
The Passionate Shepherd to His Love[4]

Will sailed up the Great River with his nails, glass and iron findings shipped from England for the hearth. Though it was early spring and not yet summer-warm, the greening had begun, the earth and wildlife exuded hormones and pregnant warmth. The very air was corporeal and one could hardly contain oneself, such was the sensation of bursting new life in the pristine river valley.

Wethersfield was in its infancy, and there was still much to do to give it an atmosphere of Merry Old England, although there was much of

it, the underworld, the poverty and filth, that the New World could do very well without. The firm hand of the Puritan canon might just prevent some of that from happening.[5] Unfortunately, it also prevented music and dancing, one of Will's delights.

The main thing that Will missed was the local grog shop where he and other men went every day to quaff, commiserate and regale each other with their feats and political gossip, where one could show utter disdain about something he knew absolutely nothing about. In the less pedantic atmosphere of a coffee house there might be less rhetoric and more laughter and music. Private clubs with a newspaper nailed to a cane for patrons to read at their leisure were hardly imaginable here in a clearing in the wilderness. The sense of having a place at the White Horse in Maidstone and meeting friends had been a significant part of each working day. He hoped an experienced brew master would find his way to Wethersfield and not too far in the future.

Then too, it was difficult to communicate or send valuables and parcels as the licensed porters who stood on every corner in Maidstone and London were so far only in Boston. When Will wanted to send a message to Martha he had to send it with a shallop captain and trust that it would get there. Or make the journey himself. The boys were now capable of reading which eliminated the need for a third party interpreter. Nevertheless, Will went back to Watertown as often as he could to do things for Martha that she couldn't do herself, and to teach the boys. In due course Martha would have at least one servant, but for now, she was on her own while Will was in Wethersfield. He wished he could take them there if only for a few days, but it wasn't practical.

It would take all summer to get the house comfortable enough to live in. And he intended to have it roof-tight by the end of September which would give them a couple of months before the baby arrived. So much yet to evolve, so much still to be revealed.

Trees had already been marked and felled, stripped and milled in the sawpit by the settlers that came last year. Now seasoned, the lumber was ready for newcomers such as Will who would repeat the exercise with his own trees. Everyone marked and set aside the tallest and straightest of their hardwoods for the insatiable demand by king and country for masts for the growing naval force, and emigration to America.

8

Spring 1636

Will was ready to start building in Wethersfield. He cleared an acre of land for their home on Broad Street in The Great Plain, seven lots south of The Plain Lane, the east side facing the pine tree windbreak. The common for grazing his cattle was just a few hundred yards north. And there was another pasture on the east meadow high on a rise above the Connecticut River, a majestic spot for blasé cows to look down over the river and valley. They could see for miles from there, the lush fields, dense forests and the extravagant sunsets.

John Clark lived on the first lot north of Will's, then Gershorn Buckeley, and Robert Rose. There was a rumour that Mr. Buttolph would arrive soon to live on Rose Lane. Will gave the location a lot of thought because it was in a vulnerable spot until others built south of him, but he reasoned that as all the men in the community were trained militia, there was little to worry about.

The design was to be the townhouse Will had admired in Kent: the first story recessed under the second, like an inverted tiered cake, with bow windows in the upper level and casement windows with leaded glass on the main floor. The overhanging second story would be framed and slatted, and to ease the snow down, the steeply pitched roof would have overlapping shingles. He would shutter all the windows against the winter wind, put an inner skin of timber on all the inside walls and rough-hewn planks on the floors. The kitchen hearth would be dead-centre to radiate heat up- and downstairs in the winter. But in the summer all the windows could be thrown open for the clean, fresh breeze to waft through the

house, east to west, south to north. There was plenty of frontage for the children to play, chickens to scratch in the yard and goats to graze.

Clearing the property was hard labour. First the lot for the house and barn, then the granted acres had to be cleared before they could be tilled for crops. The borrowed ox team pulled stumps by the roots and Will burned them along with brush, he filled the stone boat countless times to be dumped and carefully fitted in a solid wall along the eastern perimeter of the fields. Even with all able-bodied men helping when they could, it took most of the first year to bring the property to a working farm.

The house went up with considerable help from those who had finished building their own. But the design was modified with reality: the second story went straight up and the building was turned around on the lot. The front door now faced south to allow for an addition on the east side, an ell for a summer kitchen with a nursery for stock underneath. Keeping some stock was necessary so a barn was built and the reconfiguration made space for a covered walk from the summer kitchen. The barn was parallel to the house providing additional shelter and creating a courtyard in the middle. Martha would also keep hens and perhaps a few quail for an oversupply of eggs which, in keeping with tradition, she could sell, keep the yield and it would be hers, the only source of funds or barter she would have.

The work was hard on Will's hands and muscles, and the heat, black flies and mosquitoes were sometimes unbearable. He was sunburned over and over so that he couldn't sleep, sheets of skin peeled off his back. But he had no doubt that it was all worth it.

9

Mid-September, 1636

Will loaded his family and possessions on a hired shallop and sailed down the Charles River from Watertown and stopped in Boston to purchase food and material and to see John Greene once again who greeted them with open arms. “I am put at ease to see you’ve all survived and thrived.”

“Thank you, John,” said Will. “We are indeed thriving and looking forward to settling into our new house in Wethersfield.”

“And you must come and stay with us as soon as possible,” said Martha.

They had some beer, cheese and bread with John and went on to the dock to supervise their belongings being transferred to the vessel that would take them to Wethersfield. It went south along the New England coast which Martha and the boys had not yet seen, up the Great River and disembarked at the landing at Wethersfield Cove ten days later. John Clark, several other men, some children and their dogs were there to meet them with a team of oxen and a cart. They transferred their possessions and then walked up to the knoll beside the team, the children lagging behind, laughing and talking like old friends. They walked down the rutted, dusty, main road to their new house on Broad Street to find the kitchen filled with nearly everyone in the community. They’d brought so much food the bench was laden. Someone fiddled and they stole a little space to sing and dance. It was such a brilliant night the boys talked about it for weeks.

Time was not of the essence here where values were being

tested. The Palmers could begin their new life in earnest with a sense of permanence with whatever each of them did as part of the construction of their own history, tangible and personal.

Thirty-three other families settled in Wethersfield that year and together with Oldham's group, there were now forty-four colonists in the little clearing on the River.

Each day save the Sabbath was filled with hard physical labour for everyone: men, women and children. Many families sent their children out to work in other homes and to apprentice with enterprises, and once out from under the Puritan thumb, they sometimes had a brief spell of delirium and acted like children. But, they were soon disabused of any notion of childhood. Will's children stayed at home where they worked on the farm as they were all boys, and where Will carried on teaching them.

Now well advanced in her confinement, Martha maintained the Palmer household: food, clothing, health care and community intercourse for all the family. Food preparation meant slaughtering, curing, culling, picking, milking, planting, growing and reaping to the table and all the preparation in between. It began before daybreak and ended well into the evening. Martha was grateful for hired help, and sometimes that could be additional work if training was necessary or the help was not particularly industrious.

Everyone was up by dawn. Work began as soon it was light. A huge backlog had been rolled into the back of the hearth the night before but if it burned out Martha would have to re-fire it with the tinder box and charred linen.

Her next chore was to empty the chamber pots in the outhouse behind the barn, and push the ticks and beds against the walls for the day. Her ticks were filled with goose down, wool and spruce needles.

For breakfast she made a porridge or gruel of pease or corn-meal and meat with household bread, a hearty, twenty-three ounce, unleavened loaf. Dinner, the main meal of the day, was at eleven in the morning, and supper at five in the afternoon.

By the time the boys and Will had finished breakfast and gone out to care for the stock, Martha had started making food for the rest of the day: boiled pudding of Indian meal, turnips and squash from her kitchen garden, and venison or wild fowl bought from the truck-master or killed by Will with his musket, which was not very accurate. Martha butchered and carefully saved all fats for candles and soap that she made in the spring and fall. She hung cotton wicks over a rod, repeatedly dipped them in the melted tallow until they were of adequate girth. And

she made soap of wood ash and fat in a leach tub that was kept outside.

The skins of the slaughtered animals, especially calves, were tanned and put aside for the peripatetic cobbler's annual work-and-stay visit and the finest linen for the tailoress in those years when she could be budgeted.

On fish days, Martha prepared freshwater eel, trout, or whatever the Natives or the boys brought from the abundance in the river. She might have a bake-pot stewing in a corner of the hearth and covered with hot coals, or fowl on a spit that the boys or a servant would turn. There had been a baker in Watertown but here she kneaded and baked the heavy loaves of bread in the oven cavern snugged in on one side of the hearth. Beer was served with every meal and Martha always had a brew on.

She never knew when someone or a whole family might come to stay a few days or a few weeks, and always had something set aside for the occasion: a hung fowl, fruit, sweets. She kept extra ticks for travelers to bunk in with the family.

Then there was cleaning, carding, spinning, dying, weaving from flax and wool which she often did in warm weather so she could wash the yard goods and spread them out to dry on the grass. She knit the stockings, sewed and mended all the clothes for the family except perhaps Sunday best, and these were time consuming chores best left for intervals when neighbours came to call or at the end of the day.

It was a while before they had a well, and the river was a long haul from the house. Even so, they were unaccustomed to such plentiful and pristine water. With the neighbours, Will and the boys first carried water from the river to the common, to the barn to water the stock, then to the house for Martha to use for cooking and drinking and a few times a year, for washing and bathing. Everyone was careful to save and reuse water where possible.

The boys drove the cattle to graze in the common and came back to do their other chores: cleaning out the stable, feeding the pigs, chickens and goats, running errands for their parents. On days when the ox team was available, Will cleared more land, and he set out young fruit trees grown from seed in the village: apple, plum, pear. And he cut his winter's hay with a scythe, felled trees for the insatiable hearth, coopered his barrels with split saplings, mended tools and harness, and perhaps stopped to discuss the state of affairs with neighbours as they passed by.

And then there were the meetings. An edict read:

> *It is ordered that the drum shall be beate for the towne meetings and whosoever shall not come within halfe an houre after the beate of the drum shall pay 6 pence and for totall absence 2s or if any man shall goe away before the meeting be done 1 shilling.*

Will attended whenever called.

For the most part, the family was in bed soon after dark. But, during the winter when days were short, the patriarch gathered his family around the kitchen hearth and one of the boys read, usually from the Bible, while Martha knit stockings and other small clothes.

Her labour began prematurely and went on for three days and nights. Will was concerned. Women kept coming and going from the birthing room, closing the door behind them, completely ignoring him and indicating their annoyance should he clumsily get in their way. He could feel their accusing eyes behind him when he wandered out of the house, walked to the edge of the garden and talked to the boys who had been taken to a neighbour until it was over. He kept moving, couldn't concentrate and later realized that the whole scene had happened before when Sarah and the baby both died.

His name was Joseph. He was a little small but determined. "He will make his mark in the New World," said his father.

Martha had lost considerable blood and it was some weeks before she was able to do much more than nurse Joseph and take care of her own healing against the dreaded infection.

By then, winter had set in with a vengeance. The first snow came in the form of a blizzard and left four-foot drifts. The High Street and Broad Street, wheel ruts in a field in summer, presented as soft dimples in the chaste blue-white dunes.

The boys excitedly bundled up in rough wool cloaks and hide boots, and went out where Will was waiting for them to help with shoveling and farm chores. Their hands and feet soon pained with cold yet they tumbled each other in the snow while Martha watched from the window laughing to Will and shaking her head.

Some of the Wongunks had been very charitable to the intruders and went out of their way to share seed and planting advice. Now, they showed them how to insulate their houses with packed snow over cedar boughs against the bottom frame at the footings, and to caulk with hemp and oakum. And they helped the village build sleds, what the Dutch called sleighs, of straight-grain, green birch. They planed the slats into smooth runners and framed them in a bender hung from the rafters over the smithy's fire. Once cured, they lashed them together to conform to the width for the lanes and the team.

As a communal winter vehicle, sleds eased the workload of hauling out timber, wheat to the mill, fuel to the greedy woodbox. And, Sunday morning, Will and his neighbours mounted a box on the lashed bridge and loaded women and small children aboard. The Palmer boys

rode the back of the runners, Will stood to rein the team from the front. Listeners half a mile away would smile at the chatter and laughter, brass and harness bells pealing across the blazing white vista. Everyone was expected to help restrain the sleigh when the traces slackened on slopes and hills.

But the situation with the Natives had been brewing south of Wethersfield for some time and Will was enlisted.

If you prick us, do we not bleed?
If you tickle us, do we not laugh?
If you poison us, do we not die?
And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?

William Shakespeare
The Merchant of Venice (16th C)

10

1637
The Pequot War

The Pequots, the Native tribe in the Quinnehtukqut Valley had had just about enough of the colonists. Smallpox had taken almost half the tribe, the settlers and their stock raided cornfields, and they took more and more of the land. So they attacked settlers in a field near Wethersfield, killed seven men, a woman and a child, and took two girls to avenge land taken from a sachem. And then they murdered John Oldham.

Massachusetts Bay called for revenge and dispatched John Endicott with ninety men to Block Island where they killed fourteen Natives and burned their village and crops. Then he sailed to Saybrook and brought the Connecticut villages into the battle. Will was obliged to serve in the campaign, but he was not in the front lines. He was a scout and in charge of clearing roads under Captain John Underhill, although, of necessity, the militia was usually scattered through the woods.

One John Tilley sailed through the inspection post on the Connecticut River and as soon as he put ashore he was ambushed. The Pequots cut off his hands, then his feet, flayed his skin and put hot coals between his skin and flesh, and made hatbands of his fingers and toes. He lived and died for three days.

The Natives never had a chance. The Pequot village near New Haven was destroyed, its leader and over five hundred Indians killed, and the captives sold as slaves. Except for a few hiding within other tribes, it was the end of the Pequot tribe.

11

1639-1649

The Palmer family grew with another son, Benjamin, born in 1642, and Wethersfield was also growing and developing. Will was an agent for the town when new laws were being passed in Boston, planner and draftsman when the infrastructure was designed, and as a freeman, he was an obligatory officer of the church. But, they were still without a meetinghouse which left a substantial void for a place for Sunday services, meetings, social events and the village bell, an expensive import.

The bell was used for announcing births, deaths, weddings, tragedies, funerals, sermons and the approximate time. One could tell just about where the parson was in the village when the bell announced a death. He would be called to the home of the deceased and would offer prayers and condolences before calling in at the bell-ringer's, then on to the gravedigger.

Will headed a committee to promote, fund and acquire both a meetinghouse and a bell.

The clergy, needed for baptisms, visitations on the sick, to keep abreast of court proceedings, the hours-long prayers twice on Sunday and advice on all manner of things, was the most important—perhaps the only—institution in the community and it became top heavy with a few too many ministers in Wethersfield.

Dissension developed between them as territory became an issue, and among settlers who were in a quandary as to which one to call

on; damned if they did and desperate if they didn't. One minister took the matter in hand and decided to take his adherents to resettle elsewhere.

The court of New Haven decreed that:

> *We find . . . that many of those who put up their names for removal, were not induced thereunto by any dislike or engagement they have in the present [religious] quarrels, but for want of lotts and other considerations.*

Will had not been among the Ten Adventurers, Wethersfield's first settlers in 1634, so he had not been given prime land. Still, he was part of the community now and there was the matter of building a meetinghouse. But then there was the question of his choice of minister who happened to be the one moving on.

Some people, and Martha, speculated as to why anyone would put themselves through the ordeal of establishing a second frontier. But it was decided that one side of the faction led by one of the ministers, William Swaine, should settle in Totoket, "the Land of the Tidal River," about thirty miles due south of Wethersfield on Long Island Sound, and two other ministers led groups to Milford and Stamford. When all was said and done, only three of the original settlers remained in Wethersfield. Will and two other men were the first to go with Swaine. Leaving Martha and the four boys behind, he cleared land and put up another house before selling the one on Broad Street in Wethersfield and taking his family south.

The Dutch were in Totoket, had cleared some land and established a trading post. And the Matabesecks, a small Native tribe, had a fortified village at Indian Neck. It was a small tribe because a colonial detachment had nearly exterminated them during the Pequot slaughter.

Will had passed through Totoket during that war, and he knew it had been granted to Samuel Eaton in 1640. But, Eaton went to England to bring out settlers, and never returned. In March, 1644, the General Court of New Haven Colony ordered ". . . they to whom the affayers of the towne is entruſted shall diſpoſe of Totoket according as in their wiſdom they see cauſe."

The way was cleared for a new grant which was given to Will's group, "they repaying the chardge, which is betwixt 12 & 13£," and in June they left Wethersfield with part of their stock by the River to Long Island Sound, then west to Totoket and the new frontier.

Will was the chief agent for the town and for that he was granted more land. Each settler was granted three acres to build on, and the

meadow was apportioned in the first part: ". . . shall be divided in four parts and then divided by lott . . . all the meadow that lyeth on the right hand side [west] of the town that is earliest settled." The second part: "to be bounded and prized by Ro[b]. Rosse, W^{m}. Palmer, Sarjent Swaine and Thomas Blackley, with all convenient speede and then the lott to be cast."

Distribution was a little vague, but it soon developed that here, too, the upper class would receive the largest and choice lots.

The rest of the men arrived and they quickly put up small, rudimentary buildings around a clearing in which they set up the smith's forge. They all had experience now, built houses one after the other then moved their respective families and remaining stock to the new settlement. Again, they dismissed the Native Totoket and renamed it Branford.

The house on Broad Street was sold to John Root but Will could not sell most of his land as families were migrating and there was little call for property. Martha and the boys arrived in Branford late in September with the other women and children. Will, with the older boys, moved cattle and some belongings: benches, the dismantled board, bed frames, ticks, kitchenware, utensils and tools, in shallops. Martha took the younger boys and the last two hens, a cock and two piglets in Native-made cages along with most of their personal belongings.

For the first week they settled in, then had a communal social to mark the occasion. There was little time to spare for merry-making with a whole new village to establish and winter at hand. As well, Martha was pregnant which seemed to be her fate when Will decided to break camp. Benjamin, now two and Joseph, four, were a handful. Henry and William were given nursery responsibility between farm duties.

The strong Puritan influence from Massachusetts was a bit removed here and the priority on education for the children that was cardinal to its doctrine, was sacrificed. So, there was no school and would not be for some time. Will was educator and disciplinarian to his children.

They were still reading from the Bible and writing, now Will started the older boys reading from the classics and ciphering, and since they were émigrés to the new world, he was looking for maps and charts to teach them something of geography so they would always be cognizant of where they were and from whence they had come.

In the next year or so, thirty-seven other families arrived and soon there was a mill and a baker, cobbler, harness-maker, merchants, and a town assembly, such that the town was nearly self-sufficient.

The affairs of the town were processed sometimes with aplomb,

sometimes, not. Will sat on the council. Although the monarch was anathema to the Puritan philosophy, they named the path along the northern perimeter King's Highway. The two roads called Town Street and Pig Lane crossed in the middle of the village just above the dogleg in the Connecticut River that flowed into Long Island Sound creating a haven, ideal for shipyards and the fishing industry but not necessarily safe from invaders.

In light of the Pequot War and Branford's proximity to the Sound and the open sea, it was decided to fortify in earnest. John Plum kept the records.

> *On 16 of the 9 mo. 1646, the town ordered . . . a fence be made from the sea beginning neere the neck wher Tho. Mulliner sometymes dwelt to run abought five miles to the sea neare a plaine where The Indians now dwell.*

In addition to the fence, they built a wall around the village, the only one in New England. It was twelve feet high, the meetinghouse inside the southeast corner, and then they reinstated armed guard duty from Wethersfield.

Will voted in favour of the wall but not the fence. "Gentlemen, it is a waste of time. An invader could easily penetrate and in no time." His opponents argued that, "the fence would at least slow the advance allowing our defense more time." Will lost and the fence went up.

The population grew, demands grew accordingly, and Will barely had time to manage his farm. With the help of the children he would often just get the chores done before he had to change and go to a council meeting or to court where he clerked, recorded trials, elucidated to defendants and respondents alike, and read sentences in the sessional courts.

The inevitable miscreants made their way into Branford and the council installed the customary English tools of punishment: stocks, a pillory, a whipping post on the green at Whipping Post Hill, a dunking stool for women, and a court house equipped with a gaol under its chambers.

Both the pillory and the stocks were meant to cause excessive pain to the accused either standing or sitting with his head bent forward and locked in a hole, hands and feet bound in the wooden apertures while townspeople were free to pelt him with whatever was handy. Thinking themselves somewhat above and beyond the English retribution system, council deemed other instruments of torture: the rack, thumbscrew, and the wheel, barbaric. This time, Will agreed. But, the ultimate punishment

of hanging was not so exempt.

They built a gibbet on Gallow's Hill, a simple gantry of uprights and a cross beam from which the rope or a chain, hung. The condemned was taken to it on a cart, the noose fastened around his neck, and the horse and cart were led away. The victim dropped but not far enough or hard enough to break his neck and strangulation was cruelly slow. If it seemed overlong to the hangman he jumped on the shoulders or swung from the legs then left it to sway reeking in the creaking irons for weeks and months as admonition to potential miscreants and a caution to children.

Civil and minor criminal law was kept in Branford and circuit judges from the magistrate's court made the rounds to hear more serious criminal cases. The Puritan government in Boston, which was also the court, established that ". . . the word of God shall be the onely rule to be attended into in ordering the affayers of government . . . ."

The local court, the church, also dispensed justice: a ten-o'clock curfew, fines for defective fences and stray cattle, decreed road building and maintenance standards, those crimes that broke the Ten Commandments: manners and morals (the details carefully omitted from the records), drinking and smoking habits, dress, the Sabbath and heretical utterances. Punishment was set out in Plea VI for "minced oaths:" *Be not deceived, God is not mocked* and blasphemy earned a woman excommunication when she was heard to say to a man, "I swear by God I will put the pitchfork into your bowels." She was not welcomed back to the fold until she confessed and repented.

Will smiled as he read the order to Martha.

12

The news of the state of affairs in the Old Country came by strangers and journals and was giving everyone concern, Will in particular, as Maidstone was too often in the middle of it.[6]

As empires extant, Spain and Portugal, lost their dominions, King Charles made plans to slip into the void by transforming his tiny island into a global empire often crushing other countries with unprovoked aggression to do it, the same strategy that found its way to America to crush the Natives.

In the meantime, while Charles, the Catholic, was making arbitrary decisions about the clergy, monopolies, and taxes, especially taxes to finance his wars, Cromwell, the Puritan, got himself elected to parliament. He first tried to reason with the King to step back and allow parliament to do its job that was primarily to restore the economy. Prices fell in the textile industry in Kent, and the depression spread to agriculture and the rest of the economy. Charles took common land from the peasants and gave it to his cronies. His Cavaliers drove the stock off leaving farmers with no grassland and since they had no other source of pasture, they were forced to slaughter their cattle. And the chasm between rich and poor spread further and further.

They needed bread and they came to Westminster to petition: " . . . the best attended by gentlemen of quality of any petition that hath been yet delivered," wrote Nehemiah Wallington. They came by the thousand from Buckinghamshire, Essex, Hertfordshire and Kent.

> *These Kentish men I did see myself come up Fish Street Hill, many hundred of them, on horseback, with their*

> *protestations sticking in their hats and girdles; they came in order, three in a rank, first the knights, and gentlemen, then about twenty ministers, the other horse and footmen. . . .*

The King found himself opposite Cromwell's army on the battlefields of Edgehill; it was the beginning of a long and bloody series of civil wars between King and country.

In 1644, the New Model Army was the latest thing in armies and its reputation was second to none. Sir Thomas Fairfax first commanded it, he took it into Maidstone and Will feared for his parents. But the Army was needed in the larger sphere of parliament-versus-the-King, and it soon became Cromwell's.

No conventional pick-up army, this, but at once the epitome of military chauvinism and parliamentary bureaucracy. It boasted a record clean of rape and pillaging, drinking and gambling, and was renowned for its strict discipline and meritorious promotion. It drew its complement from across the nation rather than locally, and was grandly acclaimed as:

> *composed of persons superior in station and education to the multitude. These persons, sober, moral, diligent, and accustomed to reflect, had been induced to take up arms, not by the pressure of want, not by love of novelty and license, not by the arts of the recruiting officer, but by religious and political zeal.*

It was reported that the Army moved to victory with the precision of machines; from the time it was founded until it disbanded it never encountered an enemy that could withstand its onset. It never failed to conquer, never failed to destroy.

Churches and clergy were fair game to Cromwell's streamlined Puritanism, as he believed that individuals should communicate directly with God, not through a richly frocked priest. And when word reached All Saints in Maidstone that the New Model Army was destroying the trappings of the clergy, a pall of fear fell over the priory.

But, the King's most formidable opposition was the city of London's great unwashed. They came out in numbers, even women and children and servants and marched through the city beating drums and carrying banners to enlist others. Organized in relays, whole trades came from neighbourhoods:

> *. . . tailors carrying 46 colours, and seconded with 8,000 lusty men; watermen, amounting to 7,000 tuggers, carrying 37*

colours; 5,000 shoemakers carrying 23 colours; 1,000 oyster-wives; 3,000 white shirts.

There were feltmakers and cappers, cordwainers and a whole company of gentlemen vintners and their wives and servants. They built timber and earth forts, armed them with cannon and surrounded them with trenches and stakes.

The people hid their provisions, the smiths hid themselves so the King's army had had little food for two days when they met parliament at Edgehill in 1642. On the other hand, they readily provided for Cromwell's men.

At Edgehill Cromwell's Roundheads were resplendent in uniforms of blue and gold, steel helmets and bucket-top boots to mid-thigh, the Parliamentary orange sash, white lace falling bands and gauntlets. The Cavaliers wore the first English redcoats, uniforms of velvet and lace, shining armour, and carried colossal identifying banners. Bishops and priests conferred their blessings on the cause and everyone prayed.

On the battlefield, rolling drums and the jangle of equipage anticipated the marching army. They close-ranked behind the cavalry and volleyed round shot through the King's Cavaliers, then the foot attacked from both flanks. Thousands of musketeers gave fire on command then disappeared behind thick, black smoke. When it had barely cleared, they reversed their muskets and, with the pikemen, charged forward for the final thrust.

Both sides enlisted about fourteen thousand men, three thousand lay dead between the lines. The Royalists were roundly defeated and never conceded. But some of the rank and file threw down their royal red girdles and crossed the fields.

Charles was incarcerated on the Isle of Wight and Parliament put him on trial for treason. He acquiesced to an elected parliament and offered Cromwell forty thousand pounds for his life. But, it was too late. It was the end of the monarchy for a while, and for Charles ad infinitum. In 1649 he was tried and convicted of treason, taken to Whitehall and beheaded.

The mayor of Maidstone, Andrew Broughton, read the royal sentence:

Whereas Charles Stuart, King of England, is and standeth convicted, attained and condemned of High Treason and other high crimes; and sentence upon Saturday last was pronounced against him by this court, to be put to death by the severing of

his head from his body; of which sentence execution yet remaineth to be done: These are therefore to will and require you to see the said Sentence executed, in the open street before Whitehall, upon the morrow, being the thirtieth day of this instant month of January between the hours of ten in the morning and five in the afternoon, with full effect. And for so doing, this shall be your warrant.
Given under our hands and seals, John Bradshaw, Thomas Grey, Lord Groby, Oliver Cromwell.

Power has a tendency to expose true character. Cromwell, the Puritan, was now lord protector of England and among his first autocratic acts was to squash the Levellers and suppress the royalists of Maidstone. Mayor Broughton disappeared.

Will was very anxious about his parents. By now the city was deathly sick with the plague, and tainted, and would remain so until Charles II came to the throne in 1660, when the burghermasters finally relented to a new king and a fresh sheet.

As for the Kentish Palmers, their claim to fame now was in a distant cousin, Barbara Palmer, mistress of Charles when he returned from France.

Will wrote several times through it all but with no reply he was frantic to hear of his parents' well being. He wrote to John Greene in Boston to inquire of new arrivals from Kent and finally, months after the King was beheaded a message came from someone who knew of the senior Palmers, that they were safe but had aged considerably, that Martha's health especially had deteriorated and she sorely missed her son.

Will was torn. He didn't sleep or eat and his family and friends were very concerned. Then a man arrived from Gravesend and the council called everyone to hear him speak. He said it was dangerous in England now and he was very grateful to have gotten out. He advised not to write letters that might endanger loved ones.

Three months later a message came that first Martha and then John Palmer had died within three weeks of each other. Will felt the loss as if he had been there when it happened. Martha comforted him and the children rallied around to hear about the grandparents they had never known. He told them about his mother whom he had loved so much and how they had danced together. And about the Old Country, the antiquated tools on the subsistence tenant farm west of the Medway, and his education at Corpus Christi. It was a world away from the comforts of Branford, Connecticut.

13

The Palmers kept the Sabbath. No work and no obvious enjoyment like tick-tacking, ball or bowls, no playing at nine-pins, nor cruising in boats or wagons or carriages, and no innkeeper had leave to serve wines or spirits before, during or after the divine service.

There had been the New Year and May Day celebrations in the colonies from the outset, but lately ministers decreed that "debauchery usurped the place of innocent enjoyment," and festivities were gradually being curtailed. Funerals were still cause for revelry, though. When one of the selectmen died during the Palmer's first year in Branford, the funeral procession announced to the town very recent devotion and wealth. It had not been a happy home, but friends were given gloves of silk, and fine linen scarves draped from one shoulder to the opposite underarm. The deceased's servants followed the bier each with a white handkerchief pinned on the left arm just above the elbow. And the wake was a display of excessive bounty on the board, whole pipes of Madeira and several hogsheads of beer.

On this occasion the authorities stepped in to stop the aggrieved from eating and drinking the widow out of house and home. As the day wore on into the night and inebriation beset certain of those present, they fired volleys over the grave, sometimes causing serious injury to the unaware, both man and beast.

As time passed, a certain degree of comfort developed and the Palmers rose in class a notch or two to that which "kept its own cows and drove its own wagons." Ladies came to tea arriving about three in the afternoon, going away at six. Martha served a lump of sugar cut from the cone laid

beside each cup, the better for one to nibble and sip tea through with comportment becoming the occasion. Young ladies sat demurely knitting or embroidering samplers, speaking when spoken to, carefully choosing unassuming responses befitting their station, "Yes, ma'am." "Thank you, ma'am." When men were present, they moved away from the women as if men's judgment was perhaps not for women's ears or over their heads; women graciously, or gratefully according to the company, accepted the discrimination. "Let us retire to the parlour, ladies," Martha would say.

Five new Palmers were born in Branford: Samuel, Obadiah, Thomas, Martha, and finally Philip. Eight boys now, including Martha's, and the little girl adored by everyone, even her brothers. As the family grew, so grew the house to a very respectable stone and wood frame dwelling in the style that Will first wanted to build in Wethersfield. And this house had leaded casement windows, two hearths, one extravagantly on an outside wall, and a root cellar under the ell.

In Holland, depression had enveloped the country until in 1644 the tulip bulb crash reduced the population to such destitution that they devoured the very seed of their fortune; the law of supply and demand had overcome itself. And, it had a direct effect on New Amsterdam, the main source of trade in the colonies.

Gradually it began to affect Will's estate. His crops and stock were losing value and then, in the wisdom of business for all time, he diversified; he invested in a shipping venture.

Thomas Marshfield from Windsor, just a few miles north of Hartford, was a partner with Henry Wolcott and Samuel Wakeman when they chartered a vessel, the *Charles*, out of Bristol for New England and borrowed a total of two hundred and thirty pounds to finance the voyage from Nathaniel Patten, a passenger to whom they sold first class passage. Will Palmer also loaned a sum to Thomas Marshfield.

The *Charles* was overbooked and under supplied and Patten didn't get first-class passage.

The vessel had a rather more shabby history than Patten had been led to believe. It had been granted letters of marque and fitted out to capture French and Spanish merchantmen. It sailed the trade triangle from Bristol to New England, Newfoundland, and Malaga, Spain and had brought home many a prize including a Spanish warship of 30 guns. The crew, an obstreperous bunch, once disrupted Hugh Peter when he was preaching in Pascataquack. They hooted and howled and heckled until the preaching ceased.

Patten launched a suit against the charterers with Boston's only lawyer as soon as he arrived there and revealed that he had advanced an

additional hundred and sixty-two pounds to Marshfield.

Will registered an action in the Hartford Particular Court, but it was just a formality, he would never recover his investment. Wolcott was the survivor, Wakeman was killed by Spaniards in the Bahamas. Wolcott seized Marshfield's estate who then disappeared leaving his family destitute.

There had been a minor shipbuilding industry in New England when a ship's carpenter came from England soon after the Pilgrims arrived, but he fell ill after building two shallops and died. Then in 1629, six shipwrights were brought out by the Bay Company along with substantial ship's stores. They managed to build a few shallops and schooners, small fishing boats and one ocean-going vessel of thirty tons, *The Blessing of the Bay*, a ship built of fine locust it sailed east and west to trade mainly with New Amsterdam. And the first meetinghouse in Virginia was built by a shipwright, the roof an inverted ship's keel.

But all that happened in Massachusetts and Virginia. A shipbuilding industry was just as feasible in Connecticut and Will was encouraged by the principals in New Haven to invest in the venture. "Ye'll be well rewarded, Mr. Palmer."

New Haven had struck a vein of bad luck and was desperate to find a way to thwart it and recover its fortunes. They ordered a ship of a hundred and fifty tons from Rhode Island. The new ocean-going vessel would by-pass the Massachusetts Bay Company, the middleman, and sail directly to England. They christened it *Fellowship* and it set sail for Liverpool.

The venture represented most of the resources of the settlement and a good many other individuals beside Will.

For a year and a half there was no sign of the *Fellowship* on either side of the Atlantic until one day, out of the mists of a thundershower, an apparition appeared in the New Haven inlet. As it came closer, the gathering crowd was overcome with emotion when they recognized the vessel and some of their friends on deck. Then, suddenly in the eerie calm, the masts snapped like toothpicks, the passengers fell into the sea and the *Fellowship* keeled over and sank. The town knew now what had become of the craft. And Will knew what had become of his investment.[7]

Will and Martha stayed in Branford until early 1657 when they moved back to Wethersfield. He was now fifty-two and she just ten years younger. There was yet another rift between minister and congregation: those who barred non-church members from voting and those who

decreed that any man "of good character, orderly walk and with an estate of thirty pounds," could vote, and those who thought all men had the right to vote. There were also a few women who dared think out loud that they, too, should have the vote. Will was of the opinion that all men should vote; he wasn't so generous about women.

In Wethersfield, a meetinghouse had, at last, been completed, an austere wood-frame, square building, with a steeply pitched roof and a finial to deflect lightning at its peak. A total of eight casement windows allowed enough light by day and a candle corona hanging from a rafter along with candles in brackets on the walls and table tapers provided the artificial light at night. But candles and tapers were dear; short of an emergency, they held their meetings in daylight. There were wooden benches, a board for the communion table, a desk for the minister and another elevated board for the deacons.

Then they built a schoolhouse and hired a schoolmaster and this was a final deciding factor for the Palmers.

Will couldn't find a house on Broad Street where they had lived before, but he did find one for sale on High Street about half way between the Middle Road to the Great Meadow and the South Road. It had belonged to Edward Sherman but he left Wethersfield with his brother John. John Sherman was yet another minister that had run afoul of the congregation and the court. It seemed to be a chronic disease with the colonists and their preachers, and Wethersfield was gaining a reputation for ministers as either a weighty challenge or a place to altogether avoid.

But, this time, the Palmers were neither pioneers nor part of a religions rift. They didn't have to build again, they had the ample acreage that Will was unable to sell ten years earlier to farm, they knew some members of the community, and this time, Martha was not pregnant.

Their new home was well placed: the Town House was just a few farms south, the meetinghouse and Burying Ground next after Hungry Hill, and the school, the Hugh Welles School, was about half a mile away on the other side of Rose Lane and perhaps two hundred yards south of the Green. Even the palisade was nearby.

There was something else. Young William, Martha's William, now in his mid-twenties, seemed to be failing and was unable to work as he always had. He was reduced to shepherding for the town, and even that left him exhausted.

The common, the Great Meadow where William might work, abutted their house and ran all the way to the river. Now there was a ferry across the Connecticut at the foot of South Road. Henry Smith poled, or pulleyed, his boat against the current to his landing on the other side. In

the spring he took cows over for summer grazing and in the fall he took them back. And the town built the palisade, a small fort, just south of the pond at Middle Road; military drill was still in force.

Young William took on light work, keeping the meetinghouse and ringing the bell. But, by the next year, in November 1658, he succumbed to consumption. It was hard on Martha and Henry, and the younger children missed him too, he had been their big brother and, in the last two years, their teacher, as much as he could when he was resting at home.

Will administered his estate of one hundred and eight pounds, three shillings and sixpence.

By 1666, Will felt the need to move again; it happened once a decade. He felt the breath of the very tyranny that had forced him out of England as so many religious sects were being oppressed: Quakers, Anabaptists, and Antinominians, the Puritans decreeing that theirs was the only religion people were free to practice. And he was also suffering from what he considered to be economic hardship as he'd never really recovered his losses. At the same time, he remembered his beginnings in America when he didn't own a patch of land. But, when Joseph, now twenty-six and married, moved to Westchester County, New York, and was expecting his first child, Will decided it was time to lessen his work load. He would sell his farm in Wethersfield and buy a smaller one in Westchester, the first English settlement west of Connecticut and founded only about ten years earlier.

He was now sixty-one, and seemed well, but Martha was quite worn out, gradually becoming dependent on her children. Benjamin moved back to Branford and married there. But the other six children were still at home: Samuel, Obadiah and Thomas were all teenagers and the two youngsters, Martha and Philip, were only ten and eleven. They all moved to Mamaroneck with their parents. Will bought a few acres for a small farm in Westchester, an existing house and lot, and promptly registered the cattle that he transported the whole distance by boat.

14

Suddenly, in April 1670, Will died. The boys and Martha were astonished because there had been nothing in Will's life to prepare them for his death. He was sitting in his Morris chair smoking his pipe just as he always did after supper while Martha cleared away the evening meal. Samuel made his habitual call and sat down in a chair opposite Will saying something about the weather and the spring planting when Will grimaced, coughed and struggled for breath. And it was over. Just like that.

It took a long time for them all to come to terms with it until Joseph took the matter in hand and oversaw the details.

Petition for Letters of Administration on Estate of William Palmer in L.I. p. 106 of Wills, N.Y. Co.

To ye Hon. Governor Lovelace, Governor of all his R.H. as ye Duke of York's Territories in America, Greeting:

The humble petition of ye honorable humble petitioners request is that whereas it hath pleased ye Lord to take away our father lately out of this life and that with a sudden blow of death without sickness that we could any ways conceive only a distemper he hath had on him many years which we could not conceive mortal and dying suddenly left no will only verbally which was expressed to none but we his children that were by long before his death and heard him say he having but little estate in this life his whole desire was not knowing how it

might please ye Lord in his goodness and mercy to deal with him said that what he left behind him should fully and freely be left to his wives will and disposing for her maintenance in respect she was stricken in years and far unfit for labour, Your honorable humble petitioners desire is that your Honor will be pleased to grant such favor for us that our mother ye widdow being so left may find so without any further charge in respect ye Estate is but small and she incapable of paying charge that may arise and ye Honorable Petitioners shall ever pray.

Westchester *April 26 1670*

Joseph Palmer
Sam[l] Palmer
Obadiah Palmer
Thomas Palmer
Adm'con granted and issued out according to request.

Martha M. Palmer
X

An Inventory of ye Estate of William Palmer
Late of Westchester, deceased (vizt).

20 acres of Upland
16 Acres of Meadow
1 Home Lott – 2 acres & 1/2
1 Yoke of Oxen
2 Cowes, 1-2 years old bull & 1 calf that sucks
1 Mare & 1-2 year old colt
2 sowes and 14 Shotes

We whose names are hereunder written do to ye best of our understanding judge them at 8ts. The bedding and what belong to it we do judge may be worth 10ts. Of linen that belongs to ye house 6ts, his wearing clothes 6ts, Pewter & brass & other small matters 10ts.

Consider Wood
Francis Peats

June 2, 1670

Martha had little will or strength left to go on once Will was gone and she fell into a lingering malaise. The following winter she, too, died and Samuel took charge of the household as he had when his father died. He saw to it that the younger children were educated, and as Will would have it, they should all own considerable property, his crusade for land passed on to his children as an inherent requisite.

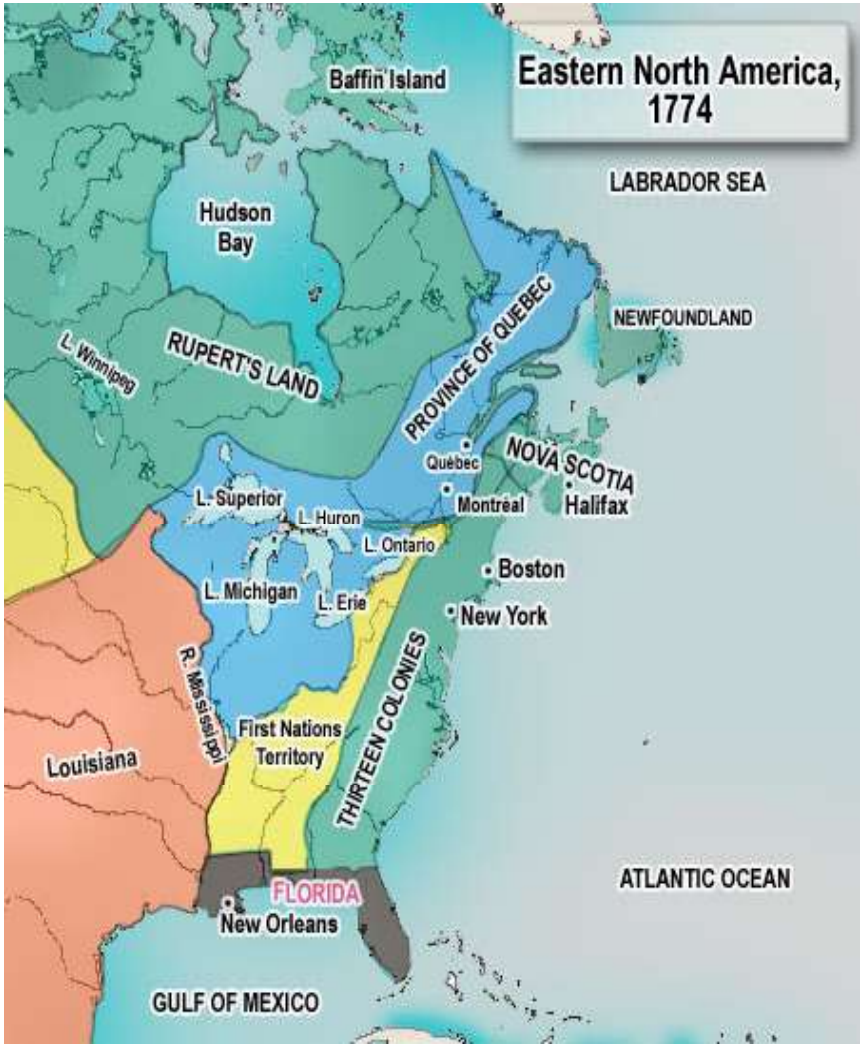
Once again, the Palmers had escaped religious intolerance. Now, they gradually swung their divine bearing to the left and the Society of Friends. The Dutch in New York were as tolerant as they had been a generation earlier with the Puritans in Holland. In fact, they called Westchester *Vredeland* or *Land of Peace*. Five years after Will died, Samuel married Mary Drake, also imported from Connecticut. They named their first child William and registered him in the Flushing Friends Records.

Janet Hudgins

PART TWO

Overview

For nearly one hundred and fifty years the Palmers have lived in peace in Westchester County, NY as founders, farmers and professionals. Taking care to heed the counsel of William Palmer, they acquire more and more land until they own hundreds of acres of farmland, the square mile of Larchmont and City Island. Isolated wars are taking place, Natives and the French are both forced off their land which the Empire seizes along with all its resources. But peace comes to an end for everyone when England increasingly taxes the colonists to finance its endless wars; there is a rebellion. The "art of war," taught by the English to such as George Washington and all but three of his officers, manifests itself when they put their training to work against the masters in the American Revolution. But, the Palmers are Loyalists and their fate is sealed when the English General Burgoyne lays down his sword.



Eastern North America 1774
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Part Two

1

Spring 1774
Somers, NY

A century after Will Palmer died, Lewis Palmer was the patriarch. He was not particularly handsome at first sight, but became so as the dimension of his character developed, when he was preoccupied and not conscious of scrutiny. He was quite noble in his serenity, in his depth, and he seemed completely whole in himself. He was clean-shaven other than the nearly white moustache he kept trimmed above his upper lip. It seemed natural as if it might have been there always and was as definitive as any of his features. Now in his fifty-sixth year, his thick, fine chestnut hair was graying at the temples where it kinked. Sarah, Rachel's maid, kept it trimmed and queued. His skin was fair, his eyes soft blue, his face was not so full, but fell slightly under his cheekbones and his jaw line was clearly defined. His forehead was creased where he had all his life pushed it upward to assess the fields with the sun in his eyes, and his skin below his hat-line was somewhat ruddier than that above. He was solid, for he regularly rode out and supervised the work on his farms in East Chester, and took charge of the place in Somers. The boys as they grew worked with him when home from school, and now each had his own farm,

Edmund within a half-hour's ride of his parents.

Lewis and his older sons employed slaves and indentured servants. The huge crops were planted, cultivated and reaped with oxen, horses, by hand, by trusted farm supervisors and hired hands while Lewis might be on another farm in East Chester or Somers, some thirty miles apart. Had he been practicing the Quaker faith of his ancestors, he would not have had the luxury of free labour. In fact, most of the other churches made noises in opposition to slavery, but not especially the Church of England.

He was a circumspect man and he and his eldest son, Edmund, often talked into the evening in his study. He would go over the family history as if he'd never done such a thing before telling his son how Will's sons were consequential in the development of Westchester County almost from the time they moved there.

"Joseph, Will's first born and your great-great-grand uncle, signed as magistrate in August, 1673 for Westchester, the shire town of the county about twelve miles from New York City, to bring it and Eastchester under one court of law after the English seized New Amsterdam from the Dutch in 1674. And he was one of the fifteen grand jurors in Westchester. Samuel, the third son, was not quite twenty when he moved to Westchester and began to take various offices, constable and overseer the first. Then, he was elected surveyor, commissioner and assessor, and he was a trustee and executor of several estates. In the third generation after Will, my father, John, went to England to read law and became a driving force in the development of law in colonial America. He was a founder of part of Westchester County, a justice of the peace, and his signature was on documents of significance in New York throughout his life."[8]

Lewis was quiet for a few minutes, his eyes transfixed on the trees outside a window. "Father died too young. He was only about forty-nine, you know. Too young." He blinked, raised his eyebrows, sighed and resettled himself in his chair.

"But, back in Samuel's day, Caleb Heathcote, an English baronet, came to Westchester and replaced the officials with 'gentlemen,' he said, and taxed farmers fifty pounds a year. So, in 1696 Samuel and Mary and their six sons, made a choice just as Will and Martha had several times before them. They pulled up stakes and moved, to Mamaroneck.[9] Each of the freeholders in the town owned a few acres with mutual access to pasture land, wood lots, fields and the commons. They quietly managed their own affairs with little interference from the English or the Dutch. What with the long history of conflict on both sides of the Atlantic, this was an achievement of note. Most of the Palmers were, after all, Quakers, and they might have thought this would go on forever."

Edmund said, “Hard to imagine how they kept out of the empire’s wars all those years. How did they do it, Father?”

“They weren’t entirely kept out; they were very much involved but indirectly. When Church of England men volunteered to fight for the King, they scorned the Palmers as Quakers and persecuted them as either slackers or unpatriotic,” replied Lewis. “Some were tortured and jailed, others were forced to fight either here against the French or the Natives, or in Europe, and some of those died rather than fight. Ironically, the English preoccupation with things military, the stuff of empire, led to pinning stripes on those in the colonies patronized as ‘officials.’ So, the first entry in Mamaroneck’s book of records reads, ‘2d April, 1697, Lieutenant Samuel Palmer, Supervisor.’ His son, William, was elected first constable and clerk—all of Samuel’s sons were able to read and write *ad lib*—then in 1702, he was chosen to lay out highways. And the next year the province built the Boston Post Road, from New York to Connecticut on the old Sacerah Path.”

Lewis leaned forward and put his elbows on his knees.

He said, “Sam traveled the Post Road to Mamaroneck Harbour to take care of government business, to take care of his own business at the town dock, the Underhill Budd storehouse, the mill on the Mamaroneck River and the blacksmith.[10] He had one of the two carriages in the township, but it would have been more prudent to make the trip by water.”

“They all had plenty of land, every one of them,” said Edmund.

“That’s right,” said Lewis. “William’s progeny carried his banner with absolute resolution. He said, ‘without land, one is impoverished.’ You know, Samuel first bought Munro’s Neck, the square-mile town of Larchmont—three hundred and twenty acres below the Post Road and two hundred and sixty acres above—from the Native Indian sachem Ann Hook in 1700 and raised his family there. His house was set back from the Post Road and to one side of two enormous elms. He built like his father with heavy beams, planks and stone.[11] And then he bought Great Neck on Long Island for some of his descendents. His sons, Obadiah, Nehemiah and Sylvanus, my grandfather, went to Mamaroneck and accordingly accumulated more land for their respective families.”

Lewis laughed. “Obadiah and Polycarpus Nelson were elected to erect a pound and to call men to work on it and if they refused or didn’t come they were to pay ‘half a piece of eight a day.’ Any loose animals were subject to capture and slaughter.

“And Samuel bought City Island where all Palmers had a right. We used to picnic and swim there. Your mother took all of you there several times when you were small.” Edmund smiled. “You remember, son, when we went there in the summer of ’55? You were about six or

seven then. You children played on the beach and swam in the Sound until you were exhausted with laughter."

"I do remember, Father. But, I had no idea we owned it. That would explain why there was barely anyone else there but ourselves and our cousins."

"Samuel's grandson, Benjamin of Throggs Neck, fell heir to City Island, and began to develop it as a port city. In 1761, he formed a syndicate to capitalize on the Long Island Sound trade. He established ferries to the mainland and laid out streets on the Island, and when the toll at King's Bridge seemed unreasonable, he built a free bridge across the Spuyten Duyvil Creek."

Edmund asked, "When did you start buying land, Father."

"I started buying land before your mother and I were married, you know, first in East Chester where we raised all you children. Then in 1761, I bought more land in Westchester and a year later in Cortlandt Manor where I plan to live for the rest of my life. I've kept the other farms for you boys. Cortlandt is a huge parcel of above eighty-seven thousand acres across the full breadth of Westchester County. You could be a leaseholder or an owner of manor property, but either way, the Lord of the Manor, the Cortlandts, are responsible to provide a grist mill, blacksmith, carpenters, wheelwrights, millers, boat builders, a doctor and a teacher, all very necessary if you are settling the vast expanse with 'men of quality.'"

Lewis laughed. "Did you know we were men of quality, Son?

"We moved north to Somers, to seven hundred acres in Cortlandt, 'Farm Number Seven.' Your mother come from Philipse Manor which stretched from Dobb's Ferry, about twenty-four miles up the Hudson and north and east to the Croton River, over ninety thousand acres. Philipseburg had two hundred and seventy tenant farmers each working about two hundred acres. The Cortlandts and Philipses are about the wealthiest of the remaining Dutch families left in New York."

Lewis leaned back in his chair, the one that came from his father when he died, and looked into the distance.

"In my father's time, the middle of the 18th century, there were major changes. The Georgian calendar was finally adopted by Whitehall. Europe had been using it for much of the last century but the House of Tudor consistently refused to accept it and it took time to evolve in Westchester as well. The change eliminated the need for showing two dates on all documents, omitted ten days in September and altered the New Year to the 1st of January from the 25th of March.

"The Witchcraft Act ended the hunts and trials in 1736, although suspicion was still there. John Wesley brought his strict Methodism across the Atlantic and rode horseback to preach to everyone including the poor

and afforded free seats in his church in New York, whereas the custom of other churches was to charge rent or sell pews. Benjamin Franklin invented the lightning conductor, and eyeglasses with side arms, or temples, were invented by Edward Scarlet."

He lowered his head and sighed. "The English practice of forcing people out of their own country as they had William Palmer, was rising again with considerably more violence, this time, in the Highlands of Scotland. They called this the Highland Clearances as if the hills and glens were removed of Native Scots with their blessing, as the clan system and a thousand years of culture was destroyed by the Hanoverian, George II, in 1746. Having won a grim battle over the once-victorious Prince Charles, the triumphant Duke of Cumberland began the 'pacification' of the Highlands. He murdered any remaining clansman in the field, and buried the wounded alive in huge pits, and for this he was given a flower in his name: 'Sweet William' to the English, 'Stinking Willy' to the Scots. From then on the pattern of harassment and persecution followed 'for the good of all.' Leaseholders of the lairds, sometimes a clan chief but more often an English peer, drove men, women and children off the land, their homes and all possessions burned behind them. Highland dress, music, language, religion were all forbidden, and resistors were subject to everything from beatings to death. 'The only good Highlander is a dead Highlander,' they said. Without identity, land or leadership, missionaries moved in to 'improve' the flock with a better religion and to report any suspected disloyalty to the English government. And then, the English moved sheep onto the land the Highlanders had been forced out of. It was the same pattern that found its way across the Atlantic to the North American Native Indians. 'The only good Indian is a dead Indian.' We might have experienced harmony with the Indians if it hadn't been for this."

"I don't think you can talk about the Clearances unless you talk about the slave trade," said Edmund.

"Yes. You're right. We would not have been able to manage the farms without our servants. Indeed, I would never have considered buying all the land I have. I could not have hired the help I needed to plant and harvest."

"There will be a day when you won't be able to do that, father. Slaves will be outlawed. I've even heard talk of it in the tavern lately."

"Oh, I don't think that will happen, Son. Not in my lifetime. Think of all the others here. They couldn't work their farms alone either. No. I don't think so."

2

1774

Lewis stopped at the mill in Somers on his way to the Eastchester farm and found a few men talking. The rebel movement was heating up and most people had identified their personal allies and these people knew which side Lewis was on. He reluctantly sat down on a barrel head offered him and James Osbourne from Crompond did the talking.

"Well before your ancestors came here, Lewis, the English were intent on driving both the French and Native Indians off the face of the earth. Are you aware of what was happening not far away from here?"

Lewis said rather stiffly, "I think I do."

"I'm going to tell you," said James. "The Acadians were the first European settlers in Canada and were there long before the English settled in New England. They came down the St. Lawrence River and to Terres de l'Accadie in 1604. And they got on well with the Mi'kmaq who taught them how to survive through the bitter winter blizzards and the spring floods. They were good farmers, too. They were all across Eastern Canada and the Ohio Valley and Pennsylvania where they built Fort Duquesne—twelve-foot walls, eight cannon each—at the mouth of the Ohio River. George Washington . . . ."

"He was trained by the English, remember," said Lewis.

"Yes, I remember. He was in the English military and sent to warn the French to leave."

"And the French sent Washington packing."

Osbourne nodded to the miller and said, "When was that, John?"

"About twenty years ago, I'd say."

Lewis said, "The English built cities and towns and . . . ."

"The French built cities and towns and schools and the English destroyed them," said Osbourne. "You know that the Lieutenant Governor colluded with others to get rid of the Acadians and replace them with English immigrants."

Lewis was clearly not enjoying the lecture.

"The governor sent soldiers to Acadian farms in the middle of the night to seize their arms and he jailed objectors. Then he ordered Acadian men into Fort Cumberland in the Bay of Fundy and once in, they were locked in. Messages were sent to their families to report to the fort or the men would 'suffer.' Anyone trying to escape was killed. Quickly, before news traveled to the Annapolis Valley, they repeated the process at the church in Grand Pré. Once inside, the doors were locked and they were delivered the 'royal decree' declaring them non-citizens, their land was confiscated and their possessions destroyed, cattle and crops forfeited to the King. It was the same sordid method of dispossession that had been exploited in Africa by Europeans: con, capture and confiscate. Having looted everything in sight, the soldiers burned homes, barns, even animals within, and crops. 'Scorched earth' they called it, and that was the *modus operandi*. There was nothing to go back to even if they could escape. It was a model keenly observed by terrorists ever after."

"I think the French did their share of terrorizing," said Lewis. Again he was ignored.

"There had been about eighteen thousand Acadians in Nova Scotia when they began their campaign but only seven thousand remained, the others having left before this expulsion and in this, the first dispersal, two thousand prisoners were taken to stripped cargo ships at gunpoint and seven hundred homes, barns, mills were ransacked and burned. From then on, the English terrorized all the Acadians they could find, tore children from their mothers, wives from husbands, hatcheted and burned everything in their path reducing generations of toil to rubble. They were packed into the vessels to the point of suffocation, sent to various parts of America where, in most ports, they were refused entry, and set adrift.

"Then, in 1759, a thirty-two-year-old man from just south of Maidstone, Kent, arrived in Nova Scotia. James Wolfe stopped in Acadia on his way to Québec and his final confrontation. But, first he took Fort Louisbourg. He drove the French out, and the governor, Charles Lawrence, demanded the French take an oath of allegiance to the King, or leave. He called it the 'final resolution.' They pulled families apart, and if they resisted, locked them up. Hundreds were sent to England where they spent years in concentration camps, and some were sent back to France where they were aliens after eight generations in Acadia. The more

fortunate found their way here, to Louisiana, where they could at least make a living and keep their families together. About ten thousand Acadians were forced out, and probably a third died en route in the unendurable prison vessels where the dreaded smallpox and typhoid were generated."

James looked at Lewis and spoke in earnest.

"Mr. Palmer, the English were not noble in battle; neither were they gracious victors. They never faced their victims nor made any attempt to remedy the hideous torment they forced on them, and despite many attempts to persuade the crown and parliament, they have never taken responsibility for their crimes."

Lewis was quiet and thoughtful for a few minutes. "Thank you, gentlemen. I am enlightened of your passion for the rebels but I am not persuaded. Good morning."

He arrived in Eastchester just north of the Palmer Road and was talking to his manager, Thomas, who had been with him for years. They discussed the crops and the general welfare of the property and everyone on it and when Thomas was satisfied everything important had been looked after he carefully broached the subject of the troubles in Boston. "Mr. Palmer, the peoples there are fighting with the English. I hear it every day now, about the taxes they don't want to pay and the insulting redcoats. I'm concerned, Mr. Palmer, that it will come here."

"Oh, I wouldn't worry about that, Thomas. We are quite safe and we are not going to be fighting with the redcoats. Why, they will protect us, Thomas, they will protect us."

Lewis was well aware of the unrest brewing, especially in Boston, but he still felt quite insulated and didn't want to alarm Rachel and start an uncomfortable debate that he knew he wouldn't win. So he read the papers keeping the news to himself as if taking it all in stride. Today it was raining which curtailed plowing so he came inside and settled in his study to read the *Boston Gazette* and the first thing he saw was the announcement of yet more taxes imposed by Parliament.[12]

He thought, "So many wars to pay for that they are taxing us on everything from paper to petticoats. People will never stand for it. They've fought the French, Spanish, Russians, Germans, Austrians, East Indians in the last century. 'The Great War for Empire' against the Native Indians and the French, here, on this continent. Every English monarch had a war or two of his or her very own: King William's War, Queen Anne's War, the nasty Yemassee War with the Native King Philip in New England, then on to King George's War and now England rules India. Here it is. They say we stand 'astride the world like a colossus.'"

He sighed, shook and folded the paper, sat still wondering what to do. He came back to the same conclusion: England was all powerful and no one could win over it let alone these people in the colonies who didn't even have a standing army. Besides, England was too preoccupied with wars on other continents, empire building. There was nothing to worry about.

That evening Lewis and Rachel stayed at the table after the servants cleared it. Rachel had something to say. "I was scorned today, Mr. Palmer. Our neighbour turned his back on me without saying a word. Why?"

"I, too, have been snubbed. Just last week, Wilbur Johnson walked past me as if I were not there. We are two bodies now: the turncoats and the loyalists. They are very foolish to think they can beat the English at anything. They have no fighting force, no arsenal, and no experience. There's nothing to worry about, woman. We are on the winning side."

Rachel looked at Lewis then turned her gaze away and across the room. She said nothing and her silence was of more concern to Lewis than anything she could have said. She had doubted him and he was not accustomed to his wife thinking for herself.

That evening Lewis' youngest son, Theodosius, came to his father's study to talk. He said, "Father, England is exploiting and murdering everywhere it goes. It's the secret that everyone refuses to say out loud but keeps safely wrapped in heroics propaganda. And you are doing it too, extolling the glory of the English Empire as the single great power and culture in the world. But, a great deal of resentment is surfacing in the colonies and creating a rift: the loyalists versus the patriots."

Lewis lost his patience. "If you think these people will overcome the mighty armies of King George, you are a fool and you will be the laughing stock of all our relations and friends. Who will lead them, where will they get the armory? They have no money and have never fought a war. And what would happen to the colonies if we did not have England, and, in fact, it becomes our enemy? Have you thought of all these things, son, or are you dreaming like these other people?"

"No, father, I'm not dreaming. I'm sure there will be a war with England. There is a leader in George Washington, and he is gaining the sympathy of Europe."

"So. You are on the side of the turncoats," said Lewis, enunciating his words carefully, his forehead knit with both anger and worry creases.

"Patriots," said Theo. "They are patriots, father."

"Patriots? How dare they call themselves patriots. This country was founded by the English. Where would they be now if not for England? Patriots, indeed!"

Lewis lowered his voice and bitterly said, "You had better say goodbye to your mother."

"And to you, father. Good bye."

As Theo left the room, Lewis' eyes misted and he looked deeply troubled but he would not acknowledge his sorrow. In a few minutes he heard Rachel sobbing and the back door closing. He knew he, and he alone, had, with a few words, completely severed all ties to his son. As well, all the girls had married either rebel supporters or men, it seemed to Lewis, with neither the courage nor the fortitude to support either side, and they were not mentioned in the house. They were not as important as the boys, of course, but it was a further indication of the family torn apart, something that had never happened in all its history. Now, there were times when Rachel and Lewis barely talked to each other. Deep in their own thoughts, they, too, were being pulled apart.

When they did talk, Rachel was articulating her feelings for the first time and it shocked Lewis. "Look what this is doing to our family. I'll never forgive you for sending Theo away."

"Don't concern yourself with such matters. You don't understand the complexities, woman. And I'm still the head of this family!"

Lewis walked away and Rachel wept.

He could feel the other side closing in. Ironically, the land Lewis chose on the west side of the Croton River happened to belong to the van Cortlandts. When negotiations for the land were going on the subject of loyalties never came up. Now, it was becoming evident that Pierre van Cortlandt was adamantly revolutionary.

In the streets the air was thick with suspicion and gossip and no one knew whom to trust. Riding out from his house in Somers, Lewis felt the tension, he nodded to everyone he saw, some nodded back with apprehension, some with a kind of leer as if they knew something insinuative, some turned their back then watched after him askance. The rift in communities was causing untold stress but the rift in families like the Palmers was causing real trauma.

Lewis and Rachel were both there watching it happen. But, they had experienced it differently, and formed very different opinions. They did not explain to each other, to describe it, until someone else, a third party, appeared when a narrative became necessary and Lewis voiced his opinion. Rachel never mentioned her misgivings again.

The family became known—and reviled by the revolutionaries—as "Tory,"[13] royalists in a newly independent country, presently with a new constitution, president and congress.[14] And once again, the Palmers would be caught between powers, in a malignant world of suspicion and hatred.

Lewis' resolve was now beginning to be overlaid with doubts that he was keeping to himself, and for which he would bear the burden the rest of his life. But, in this, the early part of the American Revolution, the sense that he and his family belonged to the United Kingdom as a child belongs to its parent, and that the patron-King would win the war as he had so many others, was pervasive in certain pockets of Westchester County. The English military was, after all, well equipped and trained. Washington's pick-up army seemed hardly worth a second thought. Until it began to emerge that the new republicans were determined and, they were developing a following.

3

Lewis came in from the fields to find Rachel all smiles.

"There was an invitation in the mail, Mr. Palmer, and I could not resist opening it. We've been invited to the spring ball in New York," she said waving a piece of paper. "I must have a new gown and a day frock. And I'll have to go to the city to see what they're wearing this season."

Lewis mumbled a mention of last years' gown. But, he knew it would be done.

"Couldn't be worse timed. You will have to be accompanied and we're in the midst of putting the crops in."

His grumble was as much about his concern about encountering the nationalists between Somers and New York. But, he kept it to himself.

So, Rachel and Lewis rode the ten miles in the Boston-New York mail coach to the ferry at Verplanck's Point and sailed to New York without incident. Rachel looked up friends and gleefully shopped, Lewis did some business and discussed the possibility of civil war with old friends, those he could trust.

"They'll never gain independence. And what would they do if they did, I ask you?"

"No idea how to run a country. Why, they'd run us into the ground in weeks."

"No fear. England will never let go of us, the King will always take care of us."

They returned to Somers four days later on the same ferry and they felt very uncomfortable the whole time. There was talk all around them about what the rebels would do to those loyal to the King, and from the royalists about what they would do to those not loyal to the King. And

now they both knew what Lewis had been trying not to know.

Rachel came back with two gowns and two day dresses. And despite Lewis' protests, they went to the ball a month later. After all, New York was still an established English stalwart.

They were to stay with the Bucklers and go to the ball with other friends but it was decided that it would be safer to go separately, through different streets and to be as quiet as possible, not attracting any attention. Things had changed even in the month since Rachel came to shop and it was worsening daily. Other than a few skirmishes in the street while they were riding in a phaeton, and a sot that threatened them on the way to the harbour, they made the trip without incident.

But, they were not so sure that their loyalty to the King would keep them secure now and Lewis was worried about what could become of his properties, and whether to plant and what to plant and where. He could plant cereal grains or corn, and the crops could be ruined by marauding yahoos hell-bent on destroying anything belonging to a loyalist. He would alert the field superintendents to put slaves on watch hereafter.

For the time being they were dancing, dancing a reel so hard that Lewis lost his wig and Rachel laughed behind her hand. And a man they didn't know drank his fill, lost his balance and fell in a disgraceful heap in the middle of the dance floor and mortified his wife.

Both the *Boston Gazette* and the *New York Gazetteer* were full of it. The first Continental Congress met in Philadelphia in September 1774 and Thomas Jefferson of the Virginia delegation set out his draft of "autonomy of colonial legislative power," subject only to the King, and not to Parliament.[15] And although wealth was difficult to determine since so many people lived off the land, or bartered or were unpaid servants, the Congress made an important decision: to vote by colony or representative rather than by wealth, which would give each colony autonomy in equal degrees. At the same time, Congress put natural rights into the official colonial argument rather than common law.[15a]

Still, there was hope in the minds of many and Lewis Palmer, that they could have it both ways. Pressure was brought to bear on Parliament by committing the colonies to refuse all trade with the English: no import, no export, no consumption until Parliament came round. If and when it did, there would be no need for a second Congress; otherwise, they agreed to meet again the following spring.

The First Congress may have unified the colonies but there had been dissention from individual settlers for the past decade over economic inequality and status, and the attitude of Parliament only helped

to exacerbate an already testy citizenry. Some in the back country felt, with just cause, that they were taxed without representation, there were disagreements over land in up-state New York, and in North Carolina convictions of treason led to English old-style executions.

To those loyal to England and the King, it was nothing to be concerned about. The whole concept was capricious and would soon dissipate.

Lewis Palmer and his family were loyal to the King. It was the cardinal rule to conform and in that strange human phenomenon, it was the nobler thing for the underprivileged to subserve to the overprivileged. Sort of insurance against ostracization and finding oneself on the wrong side.

But, Congress was on the Road to Damascus; the colonies had been a child for too long and it wanted its independence from a controlling master.

Only thing: no other colony had ever successfully broken away from the English, much less established self-government.

Lewis was watching both newspapers with apprehension about the taxes imposed by parliament and now there was a new act: it gave the nearly bankrupt East India Company direct access to the American market without levying the tax it had previously on colonial merchants. As well, they cut them out as middlemen; the English were underselling and monopolizing the tea trade and it didn't sit well.

Women led the boycott in Boston.

Some colonies embargoed whole shipments of tea, some warehoused them and some persuaded East India Tea agents to resign. But, there was resistance in Boston when agents refused to resign. With the governor on their side, they accepted three shipments of tea in Boston Harbour, and that was the turning point.

Lewis tried to understand what the *Gazette* was not saying as well as what was in print when he read that on the 16th of December 1773, three groups of fifty men each disguised as Mohawks went aboard three ships and dumped ten thousand pounds worth of tea into Boston harbour. Boston refused to pay the "Boston Tea Party" damages and a few other seaports imitated it.

A few months later George III took exception to upstarts in the colonies defying him for all the world to see, so, by the spring of 1774, under four orders called the Coercive Acts, and what the colonists called The Intolerable Acts, Parliament had closed the port of Boston, placed Massachusetts under military rule, and with the Government Act, ended self-rule. Then England established a central government in Canada and

The Quebec Act extended Lower Canada into northern Massachusetts, Virginia and Connecticut blocking any further settlement beyond the Mississippi River. As well, it gave French Canadians religious freedom to practice the dreaded Catholicism, (outlawed in New York), and French civil law. Worse than anything, it negated many of the colonists' grants and land claims. In the long term, it was not a wise scheme; now people suspected that the long arm of Parliament might extend like an octopus into the rest of the thirteen colonies, and they had enjoyed independence of a sort for too long to stand for it.

Now, England took exception to the trade embargo and established an offensive in Lexington and Concord, Massachusetts. On the 18th of April 1775, silversmith Paul Revere was charged to ride from Boston to Lexington to inform Sam Adams and John Hancock, the leading rebels, that the English were coming.[16]

The Second Congress, therefore, met in Philadelphia in May and took steps to prepare the country for war. John Hancock sat as president and the Congress placed the colonies in a state of defense with George Washington the general in command of the Continental Army. The odds were completely against them: they had no money, no army, no experience. And, about twenty per cent of the population were loyal to the King.

By August the King retaliated, banned all trade with the colonies in the following months. And still no one talked of separation, at least not beyond their own walls. The King called it a state of rebellion; he was utterly confident of his position.

Congress opened clandestine negotiations with the continental French, who were at odds with the English as a matter of principle, to enlist their help and expertise, but the French were wary of the naiveté of the young country that clearly had no resources of its own, and held back.

Lewis knew now that the foundation was laid for war and he was apprehensive that it just might involve the Palmers a good deal more than they ever thought possible.

4

Spring 1775

In the urgency of spring, when the greening had just begun, the hills in the distance around the Hudson Valley were still white-tipped, rivulets and pools of snow on the slopes. In the Valley the willows' first furry-green leaves had inched out of their sheaths and gave momentum to their lithe skirts drifting across the valley floor. Violets, Johnny-jump-ups and lupines blossomed in the undergrowth and Edmund and Anne Palmer were careful not to step on them as they made their way up the riverbank, toward Somers in Cortlandt Manor and home. The baby was now three months old, old enough to leave with his grandmother for a short time.

The young couple had just come from a few days in New York where Anne did some shopping and Edmund some financial business for himself and Lewis. Edmund also enlisted with the English army.

All during the trip, in New York and on the way up the Hudson on the ferry, men were talking of the Second Congress meeting in Philadelphia, and women were fearfully whispering. Edmund wasn't part of the conversations and he daren't butt in because these were not royalists but the new rebel movement that was looking for a way to gain independence from England. And the blatant talk on the ferry was about war, and how it would certainly sever America's ties to England.

It was just the year before that Edmund married Anne Brown. Friends, relatives came from three states and from England. The house had been full of excitement for months. Two hundred guests filled St. Peter's Anglican Church in Westchester for the high church ceremony, then the

house afterward, and through the night. They danced to Vivaldi and Handel, ate and drank and talked the night away about mutual friends and relatives, their pronounced circumstances, passing judgment and moving on to others. Women were dressed in gay summer frocks with extraordinary hats and lace gloves, men in frockcoats, fine-lined leather boots, some in powdered wigs. The day had been so bright, and fresh as spring, that no one could have supposed anything less than a perfect future for the handsome couple.

Anne looked so delicate in her coral silk frock from London, the full, layered skirt against her stayed bodice made her seem even more fragile than usual, and when she came down the broad mahogany staircase to her father's vestibule, the guests were charmed by her modesty. Edmund, waiting in the garden, looked handsome, the gold watch and fob a gift from his mother, and the pearl stickpin in his stock from Anne's mother.

He beamed with pride and his face flushed when Anne came through the French doors into the garden. It was a glorious occasion, just the kind of milestone parents hoped for, planned for, from the time of a child's birth.

And now there was the infant grandson, Edmund Fowler, named for his father and grandmother. He was Lewis' great concern; what of him?

Edmund rode over to his father's house from his property adjacent early in June. Lewis had been expecting it, Rachel had been dreading it.

"Father, I've accepted a commission. I'll leave at the end of the week, but I want Anne and the baby to stay here with you and Mother, at least for a week or two. You understand."

Lewis looked at his oldest offspring for some time without saying anything. He wished he hadn't understood, didn't have to. It was all very complicated. There were the rebels and the neighbours to be concerned about, and Anne's family who were trying to be non-committal, not take either side. They also lived in Cortlandt Manor and he was very apprehensive about the Palmer's risky overt allegiance to the King, insisting on publicly supporting him.

"Is it Tryon's corps?"

"No, General Brown's."

There was some relief in Lewis' face as, although Tryon was in command in Westchester County, Edmund would not be directly under him. He was a brutal man and it wouldn't be a healthy place for a subaltern. He had been governor of New York before the war, well known abroad and his behaviour was bringing backlash from those who

had been his seconds then, patriots now.[17]

There was another thing. It was rumoured that Israel Putnam had been brought out of mothballs and commissioned general in command of the rebels in the Hudson Highlands. "Old Put," once an illiterate farmer, had been trained by the English in France and India and now he, too, was on the other side. He had a miserable temperament, he was unpredictable and capable of torturous measures to anyone who crossed him. He would be the English General Clinton's counterpart. Lewis was quite sure Edmund knew of all this, but neither of them mentioned it.

Benedict Arnold was offered the post but he objected to the terms. He even went to Philadelphia to try to settle the matter and it was after this that Putnam was commissioned. General Alexander McDougall, a gentler soul, had been in charge all along, but as a brigadier-general of a privateer with little army experience, he was sidelined for a higher ranking officer.

Putnam was also a descendent of an original settler. The family lived in Salem until about 1740 when young Israel left to farm in Pomfret, eastern Connecticut. A little fellow with about five feet six inches of solid body and a noticeable paunch when in the saddle, his face was round, dour, not particularly memorable, but always threatening to man and beast alike. Legend had it that he killed a wolf in her den.

The English had oddly commissioned him second lieutenant even though he couldn't read or write which was, even then, unusual. He was fond of telling about his escapades in taverns wherever he went. He said he was captured by the Natives and just about to be burned at the stake when he was rescued and exchanged. Then in 1760 he led his regiment from Oswego to Montreal, and two years later to Havana where he was one of a few survivors of a shipwreck off Cuba.

Now a hero of sorts and certainly a survivor, he married a second time in 1767 to a widow of means who gave him a leg up despite his lack of education. He opened a tavern and ironically called it *The General Wolfe*. His political horizons opened up considerably.

He had a habit of riding backward and forward behind the troops in battle with his sword drawn, slapping it against his horse as a threat to any evidence of what he deemed to be cowardice. He would knock such men down and swear to stab them. But in vain; they refused to follow him.

Early in his command, two forts, the Clinton and Montgomery, were captured and the town of Kingston was burned on his watch, and by the time the American army was a force to be reckoned with, he had lost his status and the respect of his soldiers. He was old, fifty-eight at the start of the war, now always irascible in his frustration, and his peers

openly said he had destroyed his own command with ignorance and incompetence.

Lewis put his hand on Edmund's shoulder. He knew he couldn't ask any more questions, but desperately wanted to. He was proud of Edmund and, at the same time he had nagging doubts: what if he was wrong, and what if the rebels caught Edmund. They both knew what they could do to him.

But, he did what others were doing. Stalwartly they took the attitude that they would be right, that the colonies would stay with England. After all, the mother country had always triumphed in war after war in the business of empire building. They had to stand against the rebels and they would win, and be rewarded for it. The King would not let them down.

Nevertheless, Lewis wished General Brown had chosen someone else's son, this was his son the army had ordered to raise troops for the King and to walk among the enemy seeking classified information. And he dreaded facing Rachel with it.

"Where's your mistress?" Lewis asked Sarah, his wife's slave and maid of many years, as he came through the side door and into the vestibule where he left his hat.

"In the garden, Massa Lewis."

"Ask her to come in."

He removed his boots with the jack, put on his house shoes, went into his study, sat down in John's worn leather winged chair, and started to look through the mail that had arrived that morning. It took weeks for a letter to come from New York these days. They were secretly sent with trusted, single horsemen under their coats from village to city, and the reply back to the village. First thoroughly smoked in an attempt to kill the smallpox virus, the letters had become the event that everyone looked forward to and dreaded at the same time, as the news could be exhilarating or devastating, or both, but seldom immaterial.

Lewis opened the mail, just as John had done, and the family came into his study while he read each one. But it was Rachel and the girls, when they were still at home, who answered the letters, theirs being the social responsibilities; Lewis took charge of business communication.

Rachel came in through the garden door off the drawing room, along the hall, past the dining room, across the vestibule and the mahogany staircase to Lewis' study. Always stayed and well groomed from the time she came down in the morning, she was wearing the soft green frock that came in last month's shipment from overseas and suited her so well. In spite of nine children and managing their farms these thirty

years, she was still an elegant figure with fine complexion, and rich, brown eyes. Her hair was just beginning to turn white at the temples against her auburn waves and wispy curls around her face that tightened with dampness.

She knocked softly before opening the double doors, and as soon as she stepped over the threshold he could see that she knew. His wife had more locked away in her intuition than he would ever be able to discern. He never knew how her senses augured so much, and, often left her worried.

He tried a diversionary tactic.

"I cannot procure the quality of tobacco I'm accustomed to for my evening enjoyment."

She ignored it.

"When?"

He looked up at with raised eyebrows and succumbed.

"The fifth day, Friday. Anne and the child will bide with us awhile."

"Pray tell me, do you think Zachariah Brown will allow it? And Edmund leaving his young wife and son in the midst of this unnatural struggle."

"That's why Edmund said a week or a fortnight. He . . . ."

He knew better than to finish his thought. Rachel was well aware of what Edmund was enlisted to do and what the perils were. She had pitiful images, and nightmares of what the Whigs might do to him.

"I'm tortured to think what could happen next."

Rachel sat down in the chair facing her husband, a rarity for his wife to come into his study much less stay long enough to sit down. This was his private refuge and, except for reading the mail, women were especially out of place here.

"Husband, if evil befalls the boy, I shall forever hold you responsible."

She wanted to say more about the Palmer family's stubborn conviction and what it was costing them now, but she knew she had little to say about it. Her father-in-law, a staunch loyalist, saw briefly what was coming before he died. He had lived through three wars in America with the English, and although the king always won, John had misgivings about this one as parliament imposed more and more burden on the colonists.

"Don't bother yourself with this, woman. Edmund is doing what he must, and we will triumph. Washington has no hope against the King's army, and he has no naval forces at all."

Small though she was, Rachel could send a look across a room

that laid all the world's responsibility at the recipient's feet. She thought of the mallards that touched down on the lake in the spring, the drake crossing west to east against the current, the hen immediately behind in his wake, a double vee glistening in the unguent water, stabs of light at the crests. She was the hen, and custom and circumstance meant that she had no recourse, she had to accept Lewis' decision, whatever the consequences. Her thoughts, her opinion, would not be solicited.

5

Father and I went down to camp,
along with captain gooding,
There we see the men and boys,
as thick as haſty pudding.
Yankee doodle keep it up,
Yankee doodle dandy,
Mind the muſic and the step
and with the girls be handy

Dr. Richard Shuckburgh,
English army surgeon in Boston,
Yankee Doodle Dandy (1755)

The English attempted to solicit men to serve the King and the King would provide for them: "warm and comfortable uniforms, arms, food and shelter."

Signs appeared along the Post Road:

TEURCRO DUCE NIL DESPERANDOM

FIRST BATTALION OF PENNSYLVANIA LOYALISTS
COMMANDED BY HIS EXCELLENCY
SIR WILLIAM HOWE, K.B.
ALL INTREPID ABLE-BODIED HEROES

WHO ARE WILLING TO SERVE HIS MAJESTY KING GEORGE
THE THIRD, IN DEFENCE
OF THEIR COUNTRY, LAWS AND CONSTITUTION, AGAINST
THE ARBITRARY USURPATIONS
OF A TYRANNICAL CONGRESS, HAVE NOW NOT ONLY AN
OPPORTUNITY OF MANIFESTING
THEIR SPIRIT, BY ASSISTING IN REDUCING TO OBEDIENCE
THEIR TOO-LONG DELUDED
COUNTRYMEN, BUT ALSO OF ACQUIRING THE POLITE
ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF A SOLDIER,
BY SERVING ONLY TWO YEARS, OR DURING THE PRESENT
REBELLION IN AMERICA.

It had all been a safe distance from Somers, but now signs of war were moving up the Hudson and camps were springing up within a few miles. In a game of one-upmanship, forts began to appear all along the River in sequence, Fort Washington then Fort Tryon; no one had more power than the generals in command on both sides. General Tryon had come first to Lewis and then Edmund asking for their allegiance to the King and offering Edmund a commission. For the father and son, it seemed the only thing to do.

Rachel had been quite removed from what was going on in Boston and New York City, but what she feared now was all-out war and she had some strong opinions about the English army.[18]

Since Cromwell's day, the reputation of soldiers had gone downhill considerably. Misfits in the community, they were scoundrels of little or no principal, and in the military for want of an occupation. Eighteenth century soldiers were no improvement.

Until the land disputes in the Ohio River Valley, Rachel had believed everything men told her, including her husband. She had not experienced it first-hand, but she had learned what the English were capable of as her cousins barely escaped the razing and plundering twenty years earlier. They stayed with the Palmer's for months until it was safe to return and when they went back found nothing but the chimney standing of their fine home, everything they owned taken in support of the war.

Unabashed, Parliament issued the Quartering Act in 1775, and sent out an order to the colonists to billet their army. Rachel wasn't having them in her house.

The bulk of royalists were in Westchester County, and about fifty of those

from Cortlandt made no pretence of which side they were on; their names were published after joining the English army. Lewis had made a few sympathetic contacts through the church in Verplankt. They were quite sure at this early stage that England would prevail as she always had, and felt quite secure in their numbers and their conviction. There was also some degree of fear that when England routed the rebels, punishment of defectors would be severe, as the history of the aftermath of English conquests was hideous.

Lewis met with these men, people he knew to be loyal to the King, and yet, one could never be sure where spies might be infiltrating, or even who might be sitting on the fence and changing between meetings. So, they met a few times for a friendly game of cards and talked of nothing that would indicate which side they were on with the view that an infiltrator wouldn't bother to come back after the second or third time. After that they discussed how they could protect their properties and families and help to defend each others' when the worst came, as it surely would.

The lord of Cortlandt Manor—the son of the first one—was now governor of New York and he was a patriot. Pierre Van Cortlandt and several others formed a "Committee of Safety" in the district in December 1775, and they took over the parsonage in Crompond, just a few miles west of Lewis' farm in Somers. They used the manse for meetings and the outbuildings for storage. Ezekiel Hyatt was appointed captain and he was ordered to raise a company of minutemen each of which was to provide himself with: a musket and bayonet, a sword or tomahawk, twenty-three rounds of cartridges, a knapsack, a pound of gun powder, twelve flints and three pounds of balls.

The Militia Bill divided the county into districts or beats, "each containing eighty-three males between sixteen and sixty, and able to bear arms." Twenty-eight such companies were formed in Westchester County which was a stout hint to the Tories that the balance was tipping. Yet, incidents happened almost daily to indicate a swing back.

Lewis and his friends knew that until July 1776, when Congress ratified the Declaration of Independence, the Continental Congress had no power, could not make laws, or order any state to contribute men. It couldn't even raise money. So the minutemen balked at going into service, only three companies volunteered and they were very competitive about the choice of officers. Votes were taken and disputed, patronage was questioned, they were amused at discipline, so personnel changed frequently. They were farmers concerned with crops and, more and more, the safety of their families and property.

Lewis' group watched the proceedings very carefully and

managed to get information on nearly everything, including the secret votes.

On July 2nd, 1776, the first vote was taken on the Declaration of Independence, New York alone abstained; in the next vote all thirteen colonies signed the parchment. But, when the Convention of the Representatives of the State of New York met in White Plains on July 9th, 1776, few delegates were present except those from Westchester. All eleven members were there, and they took an oath of secrecy as this meeting that would finally propose separation from England and it would brand every member a 'rebel.'

> *Resolved, unanimously, That the reasons assigned by the Continental Congress for declaring the United Colonies free and independent States, are cogent and conclusive, and that while we lament the cruel necessity which has rendered that measure unavoidable, we approve the same, and will, at the risk of our lives and fortunes, join with other colonies in supporting it.*
> *Resolved, That a copy of the said Declaration and the foregoing Resolution, be sent to the Chairman of the Committee of the County of Westchester, with orders to publish the same with the beat of a drum, at this place, on Thursday next, and to give directions that it be published with all convenient speed in the several districts within the said County.*

The Convention inserted "unanimously" to check any notion of hesitancy and, further on, added for the first time the words "State" and "The United States of America."

Four days earlier, the English anchored one hundred and twenty ships with ten thousand men in New York harbour. Two days later John Thomas read the Declaration of Independence on the steps of the White Plains courthouse and a week later to the citizens of New York. But, while it scotched the crown's authority and gave itself a great deal of power, it had no means of enforcing it. In Westchester County, loyalists were arrested but the sheriff was a Tory, and in the no-man's-land between army camps all the way north to Somers, rogue militia were free to maraud at will, which was often.

Peekskill had been one of the Palmer's main embarkation points to catch the ferry to New York. The beautiful hills of Peekskill overlooked the landing, the bay and the village at the entrance to the highlands, and the

connection by ferry to Caldwell's Landing on the opposite shore of the Hudson River. There was a silver mine there and minerals: epidote, garnet, sphene and quartz, and just east of the village, Gregory's Brook ran out of Magrigarie's Pond through a wooded glen to the Hudson River near the village landing. The warmth of this early summer settled into the earth under the cover of years of fallen pine needles. Now, Washington's camp was there. Newly mustered and green rebel foot soldiers regularly crossed on the ferry and frequently bedded down here under the thick, soughing boughs. They had little, if anything, provided to shelter them, nor food, nor clothing.

Washington was running a war on promises he couldn't keep to first-time soldiers straight off the farm who were fighting his battle entirely under their own steam. But, then, no politician rises to the top without the ability to manipulate. They supplied their own clothing, weapons, food and shelter in the field, and received little or no money to sever themselves from the English. Soon, they were raiding farms all across the three hundred and seven thousand acres that was Westchester County for the vegetables in the gardens, the stock in the barns, woodlots for warmth and to build cover, and then they moved into houses. Finally, with screaming frustration and anger, they abused and threw families out, took what they coveted, and burned everything to the ground. Wardens were constantly running to ring the warning church bells when rebels started fires and more rebels were trying to stop the wardens.

Women and children were stripped of their clothes and sent out of their homes into the roads and streets. Inevitably, some of those women were pregnant. Social order fell apart, neighbour turned against neighbour depending on which side they took. There were rewards for informants.

But one side was no less guilty that the other. The English redcoats were on the east side of Westchester and they were an experienced army, their navy well seasoned. They were provided with all essentials and closely disciplined, but it was not beneath them to order families to give up their very sustenance, or simply take it when refused.

Both the Republicans and the English enlisted Native Indians from the Six-Nations tribes in the middle-eastern part of the war-zone, and each taught the other the most heinous forms of warfare, the most sub-human acts ever employed even by mercenaries, let alone regulars and the English language had barely adequate adjectives to characterize them. They cut babies from their living mother's wombs, they cut scalps from women's, children's and elder's heads, and limbs from anyone they encountered with hatchets, for trophies, for a price, and for some kind of masterful heroics. They professed that atrocities would be so astonishing

that the enemy would back away, never admitting the reality, that it would surely bring retaliation.

As the historic battle wore on and no end in sight, the brutality became a nothing-to-be-proud-of legend. With the rebels on the west side of Westchester along the Hudson, and the English in Long Island Sound, Cortlandt Manor was a free-for-all, a no-man's land subjected to the worst of all the horrors of the War of Independence. There were men and even twelve-year-old boys inconsistently uniformed, loose in the field, trained for one day or not at all, who used the opportunity to take what they wanted, abuse at will, whose loyalties could shift with a rumour. The English sympathizers, "Cowboys," were very efficient cattle rustlers and the "Skinners," were rebel irregulars and so-called because they skinned their victims of all their possessions.[19]

Lewis rode out to meet with the others along the same road he had traveled for years, and now abandoned; people were afraid to leave their homes. So he was alarmed to see a figure in the distance and coming his way. As they came closer to each other they were both noticeably relieved that neither was the enemy. Lewis dropped his shoulders. It was John Conrad. "I'm worried, Lewis. I had no idea it would go this far. No one is safe anymore. I'm afraid to leave home and even if I were there, I might not be able to stop the rebels."

"I was just on my way to see you and the others, John, to find a way to protect ourselves. Just as you say: we must do something. Come to Verplanck with me now."

They were very watchful along the road. They knew they were being stalked by the rebels and they were afraid they would be ambushed. But, they made it to Arthur Armstrong's house where they immediately learned that a fellow Tory, Daniel Strang, had been taken to Peekskill. Loyalists were to meet at the courthouse to demand the release of the prisoner. There were between three and four hundred that arrived there, but Hyatt, wielding a bayonet, stood his ground.

The rebels called for help from Connecticut and about six hundred volunteers turned up. They were instructed to go through the district and relieve all known supporters of the King of their weapons and take them to the storehouse at the parsonage in Crompond. The next order was to take the leaders of "the mob" from their homes to the Committee at the parsonage to be sentenced and sent to an undisclosed location in the interior of Connecticut.

6

15th August 1776

The pound of hooves on the Post Road, then voices at the approach to the Palmer Road woke the whole house. The jangle of brass and the odour of horse-heat in the dooryard sent a shock of fear through Rachel's stomach. The dogs sleeping outside the back door woke, quickly got up, gave notice with growls, then barked urgently. It came as no surprise to Lewis.

About twenty-five men, some in a wagon and well lubricated, some in a buggy, and a minuteman on horseback who rode up to the side door, took his foot from the stirrup and kicked it with the toe of his boot. In a few minutes Sarah opened the door ajar and he demanded that Lewis present himself at once and to bring out all his weapons. Rachel could be heard protesting and crying while Lewis tried to put her at ease.

"No need to fret, Mother. I'll return soon," the minuteman heard him say quietly. They turned to each other and leered, then amused themselves by menacing Sarah, threatening to break down the door if she dared close it.

Rachel was terrified as she was now totally vulnerable to the rebels and the freebooting Cowboys and Skinners, the guerrilla contingent for each side. There were the servants and slaves in the house and in the fields, but to the rebels, servants and slaves were as women and children: of no consequence, of no hindrance to them having their way.

Lewis and Rachel were now each fifty-six. They had both worked hard, farmed hundreds of acres, raised their children, all now married and in their own homes. Edmund was the only one who settled nearby but he was away in the service of the English. Anne and the baby

had stayed with Lewis and Rachel for the prescribed two weeks then went home. The farm hands were still there but vandals had come in the night and taken several hens and cured hams. Anne was talking about leaving their farm to the vandals and going home to her father.

Rachel gathered up a carpetbag of clothes for Lewis, some extra tobacco, and his shaving gear. By then, he had given instructions to the farm foreman, put on his boots and hat and was ready to leave. Sarah opened the door now and the minuteman standing on the front porch could see Rachel in the lamplight as she stood helplessly watching Lewis walk out the front door. She made the rebels think of their own mothers and most felt somewhat humbled, the leering grins dissolving from their faces.

There were three other men in the wagon taken prisoner, although they were not shackled. They all knew each other, had organized several groups to voice their disapproval of the rebels and so were familiar to the Committee and even some of the volunteers. Lewis was aware of the limited power of the Committee, and he talked in low tones to the others about this and how they would bring this up at the parsonage, first thing. Then, of course, they would simply go home.

After a rough ride on the grown-over road, they arrived at the parsonage where the Committee was making its headquarters, at two in the morning. There was no discussion. The charges were read, "Refusing to take up arms against the King," and without anything further, all four men were taken to the Westchester County gaol, a stinking, filthy place overrun with rats and lice. Once behind bars, there was little they could do. They had been taken there in the middle of the night without anyone knowing where they were. And, as soon as it could be arranged, they would be moved, again in the night, well away from where they could incite other loyalists. And neither Rachel, nor any of the other wives or families would know where their husbands and fathers were or how they were being treated.

The agony was twofold to Lewis. He could not know what was happening to his wife or his property, and he was being treated brutally. The English had developed imaginative punishment for anyone who didn't follow their line of reasoning, and since all but three officers in the American military had received their training from the English, they knew everything they needed to know to practice abuse on prisoners.

For the first week the Committee tried to get their captives to disavow the King and swear allegiance to the new Republic. "Recant or die," they said. There was no official trial, most were illiterate and didn't see the need of recording the event anyway. They withheld food and water,

threatened stripping and hot tarring, then started the beatings. Each could hear the others screaming in pain but adamantly maintaining their position that they were on the right side and time would bear them out.

For about a week the four men were routinely questioned and tormented. Then, before dawn one morning two minutemen bound and blindfolded Lewis and led him to an open wagon. He could tell by the warmth of the sun, they were taking him north and east. The weather was very hot and humid so they had to stop every hour or so to find shade and water for the horse.

They traveled for three days, stopping wherever they found brooks or streams, and slept all together in the wagon. When eventually they stopped, it was at an abandoned mine in Simsbury in northern Connecticut, refitted and renamed after the dreaded Newgate Prison in London. Over time, the ore had been heated, chipped away with stone hammers but with little profit.

They untied Lewis, took his blindfold off, winched him twenty feet down into the shaft on a platform and left him alone in the dank and dangerous pit. A sentry, abusive when drunk, asleep when sober, patrolled in front of the adit, lowered bread and gruel in a basket which he usually upset, and left Lewis to find his own water from the tainted seepage.

He endured the hardship in the dark and pitiful hellhole for a month but the isolation was almost more than he could bear. Then the English army began to close in. The Patriots pulled him up, and again, bound and blindfolded, they took him to a holding pen in western Massachusetts. From then on Lewis was moved whenever there was a threat of being discovered. As winter set in he suffered agony in the cold with few clothes and one tattered blanket.

7

The business of spying was a high-risk undertaking of which Edmund was quite aware. The prescribed tortures by Americans for traitors, the Tories, were equal to the English in brutality save drawing and quartering; they decreed that to be too barbarically English. So, they tarred and feathered victims, paraded them through the town tied to the back of a horse cart; rail riding, or run out of town on a rail, the sharp rail carried between two men and the victim, perhaps tarred, perhaps naked, jogged with the rail between his legs and usually permanently damaged. And incarceration in the dungeon-gaols with little food or water and hard labour. Mobs ran real and suspected Tories to earth, beating, burning and pillaging while the constabulary looked the other way, death by hanging if caught and found guilty.

So far, Edmund had managed to escape discovery when enlisting men for the English. For the most part, he met them in remote loyalist cellars late at night but, when he heard that his father had been taken away he really picked up the gauntlet and infiltrated the rebels' ranks for intelligence.

The English commissioned him because he was educated but Edmund was not a career soldier. There was some rudimentary training, kind of an officer's boot camp that didn't include much about real spying. He was assigned to go out with two others who had some experience, but only twice. So he was learning on the job. When he did this the first time, he hoped to find out where they had taken Lewis, but he was pretty green, he didn't know where to go or whom to chat up and it didn't materialize. He tried again, for any information he could glean about Lewis or anything he could report to his commanding officer. He walked among

the rebels undetected in farm clothes, the same as the Americans wore, and he carried his own rifle which was not exceptional. He confined his rambles to pre-dawn and late evening and gradually got results while listening behind officers' tents. He found out where the Americans planned to attack next, and how. He also found out how badly off they were, that they weren't getting paid, they had no food, no arms, and he couldn't believe how they were able to do anything, let alone attempt to take on the King's army.

Edmund went on enlisting men in secret meeting places. The object was to raise a full company which he would command. But, he wasn't terribly enthusiastic and it was slow going. He was authorized to offer "£10 bounty, three and six a day until they passed muster, and two shillings six thereafter," a full uniform, a rifle, kit, daily mess and comfortable quarters. It often determined a soldier's fealty as life on the other side, or even at home, could be far worse.

He was able to get a pass to go home for a few days in the fall, and was shocked to see many more farms abandoned, burned, boarded up all along the way. He found his own farm barely functioning. Anne was trying to keep things going but the Americans had raided it several times and it was pretty discouraging. When Edmund walked up the road to the house she was so glad to see him and so weary at the same time that she wept and wept. But, he wasn't home to stay, and he hadn't changed his mind about which side he was on. He was even more determined now after seeing the damage the rebels were doing, and getting worse by the day. Anne felt utterly defeated and was so depressed she had no idea how she was going to cope. She was caught between her family and the Palmers while trying to get crops in and taking care of the baby when she went back to her father's at night. It was all too much.

Rachel, on the other hand, had become downright feisty. So far, she and the servants still on Lewis' farm managed to fend off most of the forays and she dared anyone to try it again. She had uncovered a musket in the back bedroom that had been overlooked by the minutemen, and which she handily wielded if anyone set foot on the property.

Muskets were not rifled to make the ball spin, therefore not very accurate. One's best bet was to aim at the broadest target or bunched targets so as to hit something, anything. When the air cleared of black smoke after a volley, it was often the case that balls had scattered in all directions and hit nothing very significant. So, when Rachel saw a man in anything but red, she waited until they were close enough to be sure of a hit, then met them at the door with the musket raised to her shoulder ready to fire. A couple of supercilious young men laughed and foolishly

patronized her: “Here now, old woman, you better give that to me afore you hurt yersel’.” They left the farm on the run, one limping and the other holding onto his hand, new ventilation in their already tattered clothes.

But, it was just a question of time. Both Edmund and Rachel knew that. The longer Lewis was away, the more dangerous it became as word spread of farms with women and children alone. For the young Skinners and Cowboys, such license for complete depravity could never have happened without a civil war. There was no front line, no point of demarcation, and they were free to act outside the law without being found out, on the edge of sanity, with complete impunity. They couldn’t believe the magnitude of power that fell out of the sky and into their dirty hands. And it would be some time before the regular forces made their way to this part of no-man’s-land.

Edmund had to decide what to do. If his wife and mother stayed on in Cortlandt Manor, they were certain to come to a terrible end. In fact, they were lucky to still have a roof over their respective heads, to have escaped fire, pillaging and rape. He couldn’t count on any other members of his family. Benjamin left for Long Island in 1776, Gideon was a lieutenant with the Westchester Loyalists. Alpheus and Theodosius kept a safe distance from both sides and were relatively untouched by the war. All of the girls were in their homes in and around New York. And all but two of the servants, Sarah and Lewis’ long-term farm hand, Joseph, were either released or fled.

The only place of safety was New York City where there was a kind of refugee camp developing. Many friends and relatives were there and it would be a great relief to Edmund if he knew Rachel was there, too. Of course, both properties were certain to be ransacked at least, and perhaps completely destroyed.

Anne wouldn’t go to New York. She adamantly refused but would go to her father’s house and when that became clear, Edmund rationalized that her family would look after her and Edmund junior. They could also turn her against him and the Tories.

Now he had to convince his mother to leave; it took most of one night. The next was to get rid of the stock and anything of value. The Americans had taken a neighbour’s horses, a fine string of carefully bred carriage horses, and slit the throats of all the colts.

It was easy enough to take the animals without so much as a look backward. Normally, Fence Viewers saw to it that all fences were built to specification, and maintained at the proper height and condition, but that had not happened for at least a year and most fences were in a state of disrepair. Before the war the main roads were maintained by farmer-residents whose duty it was, each once a year, to fill potholes and

keep them passable in winter. The general-use farm cart, without springs, was the main method of transportation between homesteads and villages, now shank's mare was more commonly used than anything else.

Edmund closed the shutters of his own house, nailed them shut and all the doors in the house and the outbuildings. Then went back to Rachel's to find that Joseph had closed and nailed most of the shutters. Edmund finished the other buildings by dusk and then Rachel, Edmund, Sarah and Joseph drove the cattle and horses to Anthony's Nose on the Hudson, ferried them across to Bear Mountain and about a mile farther on to Rachel's brother. Of course, they had to pass through dangerous territory on the east side of the River during the night but it was relatively safe in Bear Mountain so far, there had been no attacks and no indication there would be.

Sarah and Rachel had packed as many personal things as they could hiding many more things in a dry well, under a mound of straw and manure, and let the hogs and hens go free into the woods. The hens would soon be found by rebels or vagrants but some of the pigs would survive and become feral. The farm would become overgrown, the fields would lie fallow, and everything could be lost, but Anne, the baby and Rachel would be out of harm's way.

The Fowlers, Rachel's family, had moved across the Hudson some years ago and, as a result, they would probably come through the war relatively unharmed. They hadn't had such vision as to predict the war, Sam Fowler just got to an age where his farm was too big for him to handle alone. And, about five years ago, it became evident that someone had to take care of the old folks. Sam, his wife and her sister, were there alone, and Robert, the middle son, reluctantly sold his property in Eastchester and moved his family in after adding an ell for the grandparents. Normally, this was expected of the oldest son, to take over the farm and stay on until his eldest son took over, but he had drowned before he turned eighteen. So, the responsibility fell to the youngest child to come home and stay with the old folks until they died. But, the youngest, a boy, left long ago, married and made his home in the south.

Edmund hadn't seen his uncle or his grandparents for some time what with the distance between them, and now the war. He had enjoyed going to see his granny when he was a youngster, she spoiled him and doted on him, but when her sister moved in and then Robert with his brood it wasn't the same.

Granny's sister, Adeline, turned the place into a mausoleum the day she came to live with them. An across-the-board virgin, no experience at anything and not much penetrated her mind either, she was

the youngest of her family, and stayed with her parents until they died. Then she stayed on in the family homestead until she was too old to take care of the place. No one offered to take her and rarely came to see her. There was no one else but Granny.

Edmund loved to ask her how she was, then grin and watch the transformation. Suddenly, her face would change. Her eyes had been alert to catch all the gossip, but in this opportune moment she would squeeze her eyebrows together in a state of *pathétique*, drop the corners of her mouth, throw her bony arms over her head and say, "Ohhh, not just the best. I caught something from the neighbour when he was in here last week, I just *know* I did."

Old Sam was alright, but he had a short fuse, no patience with kids, and worse with teenagers. Edmund would try to please him by helping him with a chore, but as soon as he picked up the wrong tool, Sam would fly off the handle, "No, No, No. That one over there." Then mutter to himself as if Edmund were a stick of wood, "Damn kid hasn't got brains enough to carry the guts to a bear."

At dusk, the four of them said goodbye and quietly started the long trek back to the ferry where they would wait until an English vessel could take them down the Hudson to New York. Edmund would have to leave his mother at Kings Bridge and go back to his barracks at Fort Prince Charles.

"Well, mother, I'll try to get to New York to see you. And, if you hear from father, please try and get a message to me."

"Be careful, son. I pray this alarum is soon passed and we will all be home again."

Rachel was worried about both her husband and her son. She was helpless to do anything and she had trouble holding back tears as Edmund walked away.

Edmund had heard that some of the Westchester loyalists were taken from Connecticut to a gaol in Massachusetts; the Committee was moving them around to avoid any contact with other Tories.

But, he didn't mention this to his mother.

8

They all heard the news, of what was going on in the colony. The papers were full of it and it was increasingly worse; nearly every day there was something else. The rebels set a schooner and a sloop alight on the Hudson, and then adrift into the English ships moored at Yonkers. The schooner drifted silently into a tender and burned it to the water line, then the sloop attached itself to the *Phoenix*, a man-of-war. It was an old trick, one that worked.

Schemes were plotted and uncovered. The Committee on Conspiracies arrested, judged and sentenced anyone it found not to be a partisan. Loyalists allegedly planned to kill the officers at King's Bridge, then take Washington prisoner; a mayor was found guilty and in cahoots with General Tryon; Thomas Hickey of Wethersfield was tried for traitorous correspondence, and hanged.

Nathan Hale was caught spying on the English and executed without a trial. His final words were, "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country," and an eyewitness said, "he behaved with great composure." Agents on all sides took note.

The talk in Edmund's camp at King's Bridge was that Washington was desperate, and that there was infighting. Washington sent a letter to Congress with a request to raise a standing army. The two American generals, Washington and Lee, were rivals, and John Adams, the chairman of the Board of War favoured Lee. When the letter was read, Adams dismissed the request saying, "The English force is so divided, they will do no great matter this fall," and cited the danger of military despotism in a standing army. So, the old method of ordering troops from

states and officers by appointment, regardless of skill, was maintained.

Washington remained in Harlem Heights with his army all during September resting and watching General Howe. He installed redoubts and fortifications between Harlem and the Hudson and a fort on Mount Washington. On October 12th, 1776, Howe landed his army in ninety flat boats on Throgg's Neck between the East River and Long Island Sound. Washington sent a contingent to occupy lower Westchester and moved his men to the village of White Plains and his headquarters at the rear of Fort Lee on the west side of the Hudson. Fifteen thousand English soldiers dug in to the hills at White Plains and lay in wait for thirteen thousand Americans.

On the 28th, they met in battle array in the village, but Howe hesitated and called a council of war on horseback. He decided to build a bridge across the Bronx River for his troops to cross, then climb Chatterton's Hill and drive the Americans out. Washington also called a council of war and retreated to New Jersey with five thousand troops. What the Americans claimed at nine in the morning, the English took at one thirty in the afternoon. The Americans lost about one hundred men, the English, one thousand. They took prisoners, filled the gaols of New York and their prison-ships, "wherein there were dreadful suffers."

The *Gazette* published Philip Freneau's "The English Prison-ships," a poem in three cantos aimed particularly at the Tories on the ships who took part in the mistreatment of the prisoners and David Sproat, the English Commissary of Prisoners who was notorious in his brutality.

That Britain's rage should dye our plains with gore,
And desolation spread through every shore,
None e'er could doubt that her ambition knew
This was to rage and disappointment due;
But that those monsters whom our soil maintain'd,
Who first drew breath in this devoted land,
Like famished wolves should on their country prey,
Assist its foes, and wrest our lives away,
This shocks belief and bids our soil disown
Such friends, subservient to a bankrupt crown.

No masts or sails these crowded ships adorn,
Dismal to view, neglected and forlorn!
Here nightly ill oppress the imprisn'd throng
Dull were our slumbers, and our nights too long
From morn to eve along the decks we lay,

Scorch'd into fevers by the solar ray;
No friendly awning a welcome shade;
Once was it promis'd, and was never made.
No favors could these sons of death bestow,
'Twas endless cursing, and continual woe;
Immortal hatred doth their breasts engage,
And this lost empire swells their soul with rage.

Here, generous Britain, generous as you say,
To my parch'd tongue one cooling drop convey;
Hell has no mischief like a thirst throat,
Nor one tormentor like your David Sproat.

The most notorious of English floating gaols was *The Jersey*, moored in Wallabout Bay. It had been a sixty-four-gun ship, but was gutted for service as a holding pen. Up to one thousand men were packed into the vessel at one time, and deprived of food and water, they lived in filth and disease. At sunset the order was bellowed, "Down rebels, down," and in the morning, "Rebels, turn out your dead." Eleven thousand were sewn into blankets, taken to the shore and buried in shallow graves. Only one list of eight thousand prisoners was kept by the English War Department but no record of their disposition. Thirteen Whiggish Palmers were imprisoned on the grisly *Jersey*.

On October 3rd, 1776, John Marsh had testified before the Committee of Safety that he had met one Edmund Palmer in Cortlandt Manor and ". . . that he was on his way to enlist men . . . and the examinant believes he is now at Nine Partners on that business, and is to command a company if he can raise one."

The English seemed to be taking everything from the Americans: they took what little navy they had at the Battle of Valcour Bay; Howe captured Fort Washington and took the precious stores of one hundred cannon, thousands of muskets and ammunition; the Americans lost Fort Lee and three thousand men to Cornwallis; and the English took the naval base at Newport, Rhode Island.

Thomas Paine was with Washington and published *Common Sense*:

> *These are the times that try men's souls: the summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country, but he that stands it now deserves the*

love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like Hell, is not easily conquered. Yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph.

Rachel knew that Washington had been driven back to Pennsylvania, then with the Congress, left for Baltimore when there was intelligence of a threat of attack by the English. "Why are we imprisoned here, then? Why aren't we at home looking after the farm?" she asked of anyone she knew to be a loyalist.

But, Christmas night, Washington crossed the Delaware from Pennsylvania to Trenton, New Jersey, and surprised the Hessians, the King's Hanoverian countrymen, with a raid and took one thousand prisoners. Then in January 1777, he defeated the English at Princeton. His army, however, was decimated during the harsh winter to about one thousand men when enlistments expired and men deserted, until spring when new recruits arrived. In light of these victories, Congress felt it was safe to return to Philadelphia.

On the 4th of January 1777, Daniel Strang was court-martialed for collusion with the enemy, for raising recruits, and spying. The prisoner pleaded guilty to the first charge, and not guilty to the second. Witnesses said they had met him within the lines and he admitted he had enlisting orders which he attempted to conceal. When asked if he had anything to say in his defence, Strang replied, "No."

The court delivered its verdict:

The court are of the opinion the prisoner Daniel Strang be hanged by the neck until he is dead, dead, dead.

A white oak tree at Oakhill was selected and on the 27th "the Rev. Sackett of Crompound stood on the cart and prayed and preached an excellent sermon." The whole army paraded, with General McDougall and General Pomeroy on horseback, and the army in a circle around the gallows to hear the sermon and behold the melancholy spectacle.

In the spring, an "act of grace" was announced which offered pardon to all those who would take the oath of allegiance to New York or the Americans. The court announced it would sit through May and June if necessary and hand down judgment on men with fines from fifteen dollars to hanging until dead, dead, dead.

9

March 1777

In March, Lewis was paroled to his farm for a month and warned not to leave there. Rachel had been formally advised where he was before Christmas and given permission to write to him, so he knew the house and outbuildings were closed. And, he knew that he was going to break parole and go to New York to wait out the war with Rachel. But, of course, he stopped by his property on his way from Massachusetts and found the place had been ransacked, perhaps by irregulars, perhaps by Redcoats. He would never know.

Edmund heard from an outrider that Lewis was on his way home and he got leave to meet him. Both he and his commanding officer were aware of the risks. Whenever Edmund left camp, there was always the possibility that he would not return. He and his father were trophy material to the rebels, Edmund for spying and recruiting for the English and Lewis for refusing to take an oath to the new Republic. If caught, both would be charged with treason. So they each had to be careful to keep out of sight, never mind being seen together.

He knew it would be foolhardy to try to get a message to Lewis, but he could send one to Rachel in New York so that she would know that her husband was alive and that Edmund was going back to Cortlandt Manor to wait for his father to come home. So he left his barracks at King's Bridge dressed in mufti and caught a English frigate going up the Hudson to Verplanck. He stayed on board until dusk then walked east to the Valentine Fork where he waited quietly in a pine grove for his father. Lewis would use this road regardless of which port he was going to, but at the Fork he could go due west to Peekskill, or take the shortcut

southwest to Buchanan. And, Edmund couldn't judge which dock his father would go to because he had no way of knowing how much Lewis knew about which side was now holding which port. He would be walking along the Old Post Road, not on the road itself where he might be seen, but on a parallel path locals had made through the trees and tall grasses.

A year into the war and the inhabitants of Westchester County were barely visible. As the war bore down, houses and whole farms were destroyed, and the streets became desolate from New York to Boston, grass grew shoulder-high, carriage tracks grew over until the roads disappeared. The war would release the pioneered land back to its origins.

Edmund was dozing against a tree when he sensed movement. He sat up slowly and carefully and froze. It could be rebel spies or it could be his father. It was about eleven o'clock, raw and damp but he had to stay down until he could identify him; if he could just see an outline in the dark he could tell by his gait. But, he could not have known how much damage these seven months in various gaols had done to his father. The figure approaching was an old man in tattered clothes, his head down as he laboured toward him. Edmund recognized him, but barely. He wanted to be careful not to give him a heart attack by startling him, so when he was close enough to hear, he said barely above a whisper, "Father."

Lewis collapsed in front of him. Edmund caught him and kept him from falling, pulled him off the path and under a pine tree. He gave him water from his canteen, then wrapped him in his bedroll and, for half an hour, rubbed his legs and feet first, then his hands and arms.

"Sleep, now. I'll wake you at three o'clock. There's an English frigate sailing for New York at five and you must be on it. Mother will meet all the vessels until you arrive, and you will be safe there."

Lewis relaxed his body with great relief and nodded his head. It was all the energy he had left. Edmund lay down beside his father to give him the warmth of his body.

At three o'clock, Edmund took some rations from his haversack and discovered his father was starving. He gave him all he had and knew it wasn't enough. Lewis got up with some difficulty, his bones and muscles suffering from beatings, atrophy and malnutrition. But, he set out with determination and they made it to the road down to the dock at Buchanan where they separated. Lewis arrived at New York harbour, and Rachel, and safety. But, father and son would not see each other again.

Lewis had been confined in a solitary dungeon overrun with rats and fleas, allowed no communication with anyone other than the gaoler who beat him at will, and gave him just enough bread and gruel to keep

him alive. He had walked for about a week or more, he thought, resting every few hours, sleeping in the woods. And, he had survived.

In New York Lewis and Rachel felt reasonably safe as it was the English headquarters. It was taking some time for him to recover and the circumstances were not helping. Rachel had left behind everything in the house and taken only a few precious things. They were living in a flat in a house belonging to friends of friends, a temporary arrangement that felt as it they were camping, and worse, as if they were intruding on these people.

As soon as he was well enough to think straight, Lewis made an attempt at apologizing to Rachel. "I didn't mean to put you through all this, Rachel, but I am still persuaded to be on the side of the King."

"Never mind, now. You will need all your strength for I fear much worse is to come."

The *Gazeteer* summarized the Revolution to date.

> *Now the two armies are withdrawn leaving an expanse of the country wide open to anarchy, where neither military nor civil laws are recognized. Where there had been communal trust for generations, doubt and suspicion prevail. People bury what possessions they have left in the dark of night, the very essential church services are no more, nor school, even Reid's Mill ceased to function regularly. And, there is no work. Even those few farmers still living on their own property are not about to plant crops only to have them raided by vandals or requisitioned or just taken by one side or the other. Often stock is taken, or more likely stolen, leaving nothing for the family to work with or live on, cows are hidden under the house in the cellar or in the woods along with the horses. Men also have hiding places as they will be taken prisoner if found on their property.*
>
> *The Convention of the State resolves to purchase all cattle from the County of Westchester fit for the use of the Army. And, resolves that any person refusing to sell their cattle, the Commissary be directed to drive them down to the Army. And that the farmers in the County of Westchester immediately thresh out all their grain as the straw will be necessary for the Army . . . .*

Lewis regained some of his health but the rest was very slow in

coming. His bones and muscles pained and his lungs gave up before he reached his destination. But, he needed approval so he read the paper and went out to the General Store or the local tavern to talk to other Tories.

Isaiah Buckler related the gossip. "It was decided in England that General Burgoyne would move south down Lake Champlain to the Hudson and Howe would come north crushing the rebels in between. Burgoyne would battle his way from Canada through Washington's headquarters at Peekskill and other American forts along the Hudson until the rebels were boxed in between the English forces on the move and their stronghold, New York."

Lewis offered, "Burgoyne has sailed back from England—it was he who presented the plan to the King—and left Quebec for New York with forty-two hundred English regulars, four thousand German troops and several hundred Canadians and Indians. They say he's hampered himself with personal accoutrements, one hundred and thirty-eight cannon and his companion who made the trip in her own carriage."

They exalted the English accomplishments and resented and begrudged that of the rebels.

"Howe went to Chesapeake Bay, defeated Washington at Brandywine and Germantown and took Philadelphia." Although it seemed a resounding success to take the seat of government, it made little difference; they simply met elsewhere. And it kept Howe tied up and unaware of the main thrust of the English plan. He may have been expected to move north, but the message never reached him.

"They are fighting nearer and nearer my farm," lamented Lewis. The others heard him and stopped to look at the frail, old man. No one told him that it was no longer his and likely never would be again as the likelihood of the English winning the battle was less certain each day; for each Tory win, there was a Whig conquest. No one said these things out loud for fear it would make a definitive decision in favour of the rebels.

Lewis' battle was over now and he felt helpless and hopeless. His son was doing dangerous work and he couldn't contribute anything. It just added insult to injury and he became so frustrated that sometimes he railed at Rachel by the end of the day. She understood his grief and allowed him to rail on by leaving the room. Then Lewis felt worse at having lost control; his wife didn't deserve this.

10

July 1777

General Tryon thought to give his men a rest before infiltrating enemy camps, now manned by skeleton forces. General Brown gave Edmund ten days' leave to go home and classified orders for his return.

He had to be very careful. He was known now to be recruiting for the English and probably a spy, too, and it was not safe anywhere outside his base camp. Dressed in mufti, he sailed up the Hudson on an English man of war to Verplanck and walked back over the same path his father had taken that night in March, dreading what he knew he was going to see. Lewis told him what he had seen three months ago and it could only have gotten worse since then. Every day there was new savagery in Westchester County, the finger always pointed at the irregulars, but it was tacit knowledge that the English, Americans and everyone in between were equally guilty.

The rebels had moved quickly at the outset to form a government, to punish the Tories and confiscate their property, while the outnumbered Tories had no recourse but to look to the English for protection. Lives were saved when thousands went to New York, the English stronghold throughout the war, but Tory life's work was taken, apparently with impunity, as booty.

Edmund came to his father-in-law's farm first and half-way up the road Anne came running out to meet him, the little boy, Edmund the younger, standing in the open doorway in wonderment. He was now walking and standing on his own and had only a vague idea of who his father was and what the fuss was all about. His parents had a long hug

then walked toward the house, and the little boy ran frightened and crying to his grandmother. The child instinctively perceived all strange men to be dangerous.

The grass all around the house had grown almost as tall as Edmund, the farm tools lay idle against the outbuildings and the house was in darkness, the only light a lamp in the summer kitchen in the ell at the back which no one could see from the road.

It was hard to know how he would be received by his in-laws, but he suspected not with open arms. However, his mother-in-law gave him a hug and bussed his cheeks, and Zach Brown shook his hand and asked, "How are you, son?"

Edmund and his firstborn spent some time getting reacquainted before the boy was put to bed, then the grown-ups settled down to war talk, the Browns hoping for good news straight from a soldier. But, most of what Edmund knew was classified. His army life, such as it was, was not that of a normal officer's, it was not even wise to get familiar with the men on the base let alone civilians. He was a spy, everything he did was clandestine and therefore subject to secrecy and a lot of isolation.

Edmund agreed to stay the night at the Brown's and planned to go to his own farm early in the morning. He wasn't looking forward to it. Anne told him about the arbitrary destruction by the abject Skinners, taking whatever they liked at gunpoint while she and the servants helplessly looked on. They broke windows when the doors were wide open, set fire to sheaves of straw, and carried off family heirlooms while leering at Anne with rotting teeth. The buildings looked as if they'd been abandoned for months and no crops were in.

Both the Browns and the Palmers were so tired it was all they could do to keep up a conversation. When Anne and Edmund went to bed they found young Edmund sleeping fitfully, already feeling the sway of a war which hadn't yet reached Somers. There was an ominous atmosphere everywhere now and no way to escape it, such that a child of two, incapable of being the cause of the terror or protecting himself from it, was directly affected in a way that would leave its loathsome footprint for his lifetime.

The insidious politics of individuals in the war were discharging the tentacles that would, one day soon, entrap Edmund Palmer.

All the generals were appointed by Congress but two had been commissioned by the Crown before the war. Three of those had been born in England and served in the English army. But, when they turned their coats, they did so with a vengeance.

And, it was Lieutenant General Sir Henry Clinton who took

Forts Montgomery and Clinton from Major General Israel Putnam in whose mind it would forever burn as the most humiliating defeat of his career.

Edmund spent his leave repairing his house and outbuildings and saving what he could of the silage and stock, but aware, given the kinship of bullies to cowards, that as soon as he left his farm the guerrillas would be back. There was some comfort in knowing his wife was with her family, although everyone knew no one was really safe but subject to the whims of generals and bandits alike. Nevertheless, he outfitted the farm hands with rifles and ammunition and gave them some instruction on how and when to use them. Then, after dark with his orders in his breast pocket, he said goodbye to his wife and son and began the walk back to his regiment. It was the 17th of July, 1777, very hot and sultry, even at night, and he had to get to the Hudson under cover of darkness.

Edmund's route to the River was a long, hard walk and nearly all in dangerous territory. Both Washington's and Putnam's headquarters were on the Post Road at Peekskill, but Putnam thought himself in command of a sweep of about ten miles east including Crompond, too close to Somers. Edmund had to walk along the old Crompond Road where even in the wee hours he had to be careful to skirt the village. He was dressed in farm clothes and a round, brimmed hat giving no indication of his affiliation with any army.

Suddenly, just when he seemed to have passed the most risky part of the trip, several Americans—some said three, some said six—came out of the woods and pounced on him. They threw him to the ground, tore at his clothing looking for his papers and found his orders to sign up soldiers for the English. Then they tied him to a cart and dragged him by the neck the six miles to Putnam's camp.

> *Brigade Orders, 18 July, 1777.*
>
> *Edmund Palmer that Noted Tory was taken Prisoner and Confined in ye Provost Guard for Robing the Inhabitence & Levying war against his Country; is to have his Tryal Next Tuesday at 9 o'clock in the Morning by a General Court Marshel—all Persons that can give Evidence Against sd Palmer are Requested & Required to Attend the Trial.*
>
> *Putnam's General Orders, 31*

The requisite witnesses for the defense in a court martial were not so ordered.

Putnam was sinister and ignoble. At last, he had revenge. He

gave the captors extra tots of rum and leave.

Not long after Anne heard the awful news the next day, the Americans came back. Minutemen rode up to the house and ordered Anne to leave. She could do that, they said, or the farm would be "burn't t'the groun' with you and yer child locked inside the house." She wasn't even allowed to gather her personal belongings. She left her home carrying her son, and walked with her head down along the same footpath Edmund had taken the night before. She kept out of sight because she was going to friends in Crompond who were trying to be neutral and she had to be careful not to implicate them or the Americans would raid their home too.

Headquarters Peekskill, July 24, 1777
Edmund Palmer was arraigned & tried for being a Spy for the Enemy.

The Court finds him guilty of the whole against him & sentence him to suffer the Pain of Death.

The Genl approves the Sentence & orders it to be put in Execution on Fryday, the 1st of next August ensuing between the Hours of 9 & 11 in the Morning—by hanging him up by the Neck until he is dead, dead, dead.

Putnam wanted to try Edmund as a common criminal but the charges of "Robing" didn't stick.

And then, Edmund's commanding officer, Mumford Brown violated the code and identified his lieutenant. He wrote:

By his Excellency Brigdr Genl Mumford Brown &c &c.
I do hereby certify the Edmund Palmer has been a Commissioned Officer in my Brigade, and that he had always behaved well & Consistent with the Character of Gentlemen, during his stay with my Corps.

Given under my hand & Seal & Arms at Camp Kingsbridge July 21st, 1777.

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But, on the 31st of July, the daily orders announced:

Ye Execution of Edmund Palmer & Amos Rose which was to

> *be tomorrow is Respited til munday next [August 4] at ye Same time of the Day*

Orders appeared for:

> *. . . regiments . . . to be Mustered tomorrow morning at 5 o'clock. All ye Brigades are to Perade to morrow morning on ye Hill by the gallows to Attend the Execution of Amos Rose & Edmund Palmer . . .*

Anne was frantic while waiting for the decision of the court-martial. She could not get any rest now and the stress from the helpless frustration was intense. When the verdict arrived she at first thought there must be some mistake, it just wasn't possible that they would find her husband guilty let alone sentence him to a brutal death.

"Are you sure of the verdict?" she asked the horseman. "Might it be another man's sentence instead?"

"No, ma'am. They did say there is another man, Amos Rose, and he is to be shot the same day, first day of August."

When she was convinced she collapsed and as soon as she was aroused with ammonia she was violently sick. But instinctively knew she had to find a way to stop this incredible turn of events within two weeks. She could not remember the exact conversation with the runner, just, "No, ma'am," and those words rang through her mind like an incessant drum beat.

As soon as she gathered herself up she took the first obvious step: she sent a letter to Edmund's commanding officer pleading for him to intervene. A trusted horseman was sent to the camp at King's Bridge with the letter hidden under his clothes and the trip there and back took nearly four days of painful waiting. But there would be more. Much more. The horseman returned with an answer that a flag would be sent but the letter didn't say when.

Edmund was being held in the provost guard where his welfare was of little consequence and he was not permitted to receive visitors or communication. He was given enough food and water to keep him alive and was regularly manhandled. Waiting for some sign of reprieve became a daily, agonizing exercise and when the appointed day passed, he and Anne both assumed Putnam had changed his mind.

Days went by. Rumours were plentiful and cheap. One day it was being said that there was a stay of execution, the next that it had happened in secrecy. It was enough to drive anyone mad and it was all Anne could do to keep her sanity.

At last a flag from General Clinton's office arrived and Putnam's reply was quickly produced and given to the dispatcher:

Head Quarters 7 August 1777

Edmund Palmer, an officer in the enemy's service was taken as a spy lurking within our lines: he has been tried as a spy, condemned as a spy, and shall be executed as a spy, and the flag is ordered to depart immediately.

Israel Putnam

The message was recorded and would be repeated for generations.

The execution was to be early the next morning. Exhausted and very weak, Anne carried her baby in her arms and hurriedly went to Putnam's camp with her friends.

Putnam's aide-de-camp came out of his tent to find a sergeant bracing her while she made her plea for an audience with General Putnam. The sergeant led her to a stump where she sat and waited, trembling, until the aide came back to say the General would see her in an hour. They both knew that there was no need of a holdup except to further humiliate. This was not a social call, the subject was her husband's life. She walked back toward the wagon to wait. The small, delicate figure, becoming smaller as she walked farther away from the tent, reached to take her son in her arms from her friends and they reached for her to hold her and comfort her.

Putnam, in a display of power, kept Anne waiting for an extra ten minutes then sent his aide to fetch her to his tent, and when she arrived and was barely inside, he began to lecture. With the baby in her arms, her face glistening and her bonnet ribbons limp with tears, Anne endured the patronizing, pedantic lecture about the Revolution, the cause, the treachery of spies, and the likes of her husband.

He was dressed in a blue uniform, the red one having gone the way of his career with the English, he wore white breeches, spurred riding boots and a white wig covered his baldness. As was his habit, he kept himself seated, the better to conceal his insufficiency of stature.

With the struggling energy of a drowning woman, Anne asked Putnam, "Do you not have a son, kind Sir, do you not have the love of a good wife? Can you not see the exquisite pain of this wife and mother. And what of the child? What will it give you to take a father's life from his babe barely out of his mother's womb? Are you not a Christian, General? Do you not break this Commandment of such exceeding gravity for revenge? And if revenge is your purpose, how will you be forgiven

your sin?"

"I am not in need of your effrontery, Madam. I make the decisions here and I say your husband will hang tomorrow morning."

"To take the life of a young man of such fine character and attainments barely sprung from his youth, what does it give you, Sir? What can I give you for my husband's life? You have taken my home, my crops, my husband, my life."

"And so you have the good fortune to live. Have you not been spared?"

"Without my husband, it matters not, Sir."

"You are young and comely and the memory will fade with a new suitor."

"Is there such venom in your veins that you would torture a woman and child with such an odious spectacle fated by your hand and yours alone?"

Putnam smiled as much as he was capable of and said, "This is the consequence when you conspire against our great nation."

"In this unnatural struggle, certain men have become less than human, Sir, but not my dear husband. Whatever you may accuse him of will never reach the depths of your order to end his life. I beg you most earnestly to reconsider and return him to us."

While the child in her arms shuddered with sobs of fear transmitted through his mother, General Israel Putnam signaled to his aide to remove Anne and the baby from his tent.

All three looked back at Putnam in utter amazement as they left, and his face revealed the smug pleasure of a man having trumped the enemy, albeit by way of a helpless woman and her child.

11

The construction of the gibbet at Gallow's Hill, on the eastern slope of a knoll just outside of Peekskill was nearing completion, a rude fabrication of logs from which would hang a looped cord. Hundreds would rise early tomorrow morning, the 8th of August 1777, to watch the spectacle.

In the camp, while the daily functions of war went on, news of the meeting spread very quickly and the empathy of the soldiers began to turn. The sergeant walked Anne back through the grounds past horsemen and riflemen, wood cutters and water carriers, and they all stopped their labour to look after her, a young beauty, heartbroken and inconsolable.

"In a state, i'n't she."

"Reckon you'd be too if we was going to garrote your mate tomorrow morning."

A gun-shy hound heard her controlled sobs and furrowed her brow, tilted her head and looked up with pity to watch Anne pass.

When they reached the wagon and her friends, Anne turned to the sergeant and said, "Please, may I see my husband?"

"I cannot say, Ma'am, but I will ask the General's aide. Wait here."

She put the baby down in a wicker cradle in the wagon, wearily rocked it back and forth and searched for soothing words for the child. And while she waited she tried to consider the exigencies of the litigious nature of aberrant death, of family, of church, of burial, of future. She would have to get a message to Edmund's parents waiting out the war in New York City, to give Lewis power of attorney. Edmund would need to draft his will naming Anne his executrix and to return her dowry. His last words would have to be composed in letters to his family.

None of the family, not even Edmund, were aware that the rebels

had taken his farm.

His personal belongings and kit were in his barracks in King's Bridge and someone would have to collect them. Anne would bury her face in his uniform, to smell the essence of the man she had loved so recently, to bring him back as close as she could ever have him again in the folds of the red wool. And she would wrap them carefully to keep the scent inside the package for as long as possible.

It was such a needless tragedy. Had it been any other commanding officer than Israel Putnam in Peekskill, Edmund Palmer would have lived and carried on with the ordinary business of war just as countless other officers on both sides had been doing and would continue to do for the duration of the war.

The sergeant returned to say that the General decreed that Mrs. Palmer may not see the traitor, Edmund Palmer, but may write a final letter to him.

The letter was so difficult to write because of her trembling hands and the endless tears, but it was the concussion, the awful, howling, black void in her stomach radiating up through her breast that threatened her very core.

Birds should have been singing, the jangle of horse brass should have been audible, and rifle report should have been heard in the distance, but there was no sound. Had Anne been able to look up from her ordeal, she would have seen that the concentration of the entire camp was on her. But, she neither knew nor cared.

In the few hours left before Edmund's execution, Anne's letter had to be delivered in to Edmund's cell and his last wishes brought out without exchanging a word or a gaze or a sense between them. They both understood what was expected of them and how to behave. Edmund would minister his own ablutions and make his own peace during the long night in the stifling humidity multiplied in the airless cell, and he would die with dignity and fortitude.

Anne left the compound and spent the worst night of her life, of anyone's life, wide awake and powerless, and the hours passed more quickly than ever they had before. She did not see the parade when it left the camp early the next morning nor hear the thrum, thrum, thrumthrumthrum of the regimental drums on Gallow's Hill.

At a precise moment a minister offered a prayer and a doctor pronounced the conclusion of Edmund Palmer's life, the weighted inert remains were removed and carried to a waiting wagon by a few men to a broken young woman. She knelt beside her husband's body so recently vibrant and flush while they lugubriously traveled through the grim countryside to a place where, in pathetic and sad secrecy, they lovingly

interred the handsome young lieutenant.

In the Republican paper of Peekskill, the editor gave an account.

> *In the summer . . . and for some time preceding and following, on the southern and eastern sides of the hill, and along the rich valley which lies at its base, was quartered a division of the American army under the command of Gen. Putnam. Disaffection and treachery prevailed on every side; men there were who from fear or from other base causes refused to take part on the side of virtue and patriotism, and remained as neutrals, wavering between each party, and acting as their personal safety seemed most to require. Many, calling themselves Whigs, were constantly endeavoring by covert means to blast the hopes and discourage the gallant few who were struggling at the side of liberty, by giving to their enemies that information of their situation and prospects which they had obtained by the most abject treachery. To destroy these evils required the greatest vigilance and severity on the part of the American commander. Early one morning, in the month of August, a party of the militia, three in number, brought a young man by the name of Palmer, whom they had taken on suspicion of his being a spy and having enlisting orders from Tryon, the English general then commanding in New York. The enormity of his offence was such, that if proved, it demanded the most vigorous punishment. A court martial was therefore immediately convened and from the circumstances given to the court by those who arrested him, and the evidence of many of the country people, who gave an unfavorable account of his conduct, he was convicted and executed as a spy.*
>
> *The prisoner was a young man of athletic form, and possessed elegant attainments, had a wife and children residing in Yorktown, the place of his nativity, and was connected with some of the most respectable families of West Chester. The most urgent intercessions were immediately made to obtain his release, but in vain; the stern justice of Putnam was not to be overcome by any feelings of pity. The English general wrote a letter to the American commander, demanding his prisoner, and threatening him with vengeance if a compliance with his demand was not immediately acceded to; but he received for answer that the prisoner was "taken as a spy, tried as a spy, convicted as a spy, and that he should be hung as a spy." Here*

the matter rested until the morning previous to his execution, when the wife of Palmer presented herself before the commanding officer in his tent. She had come there with her child in her arms, to throw herself with humble submission at the foot of the man who by a word, she thought, could relieve her aching heart of its load of misery. In the artless and winning eloquence of a bursting heart, she represented to him the awful situation in which she would be placed should the fearful sentence that had been passed upon her husband be carried into effect. She implored him, by every tie of affection that bound two young hearts together—for the sake of the infant she pressed to her bosom, who, if left fatherless, would wander through the world disgraced and an orphan—by his own feelings as a father and a husband, to have mercy on him who was all to her this world could bestow. Her tears, her deep distress and her passionate exclamations fell deep into the heart of the war-worn soldier; but they did not alter his stern resolve. With a dignity of purpose and a countenance that told how intense were the feelings then glowing within him, he told her he must die. Insensible, she was carried from his presence and conveyed back to her friends. The following morning, at the hour appointed for his execution, on an enclosed spot of ground near the summit, on the eastern side of the hill, was seen a gallows rudely constructed of logs, with a rope appended thereto. The trees and fences were filled with men, women and children who had come far and near to witness the awful scene, and the prisoner was led out to the appointed spot where his last view of the world was taken, and prepare his mind for its sudden transit into eternity. It is but just to say, that whether hung guilty or innocent, he met his fate with the fortitude of a man. The body, after being suspended a suitable time, was taken down and given to his friends for interment.

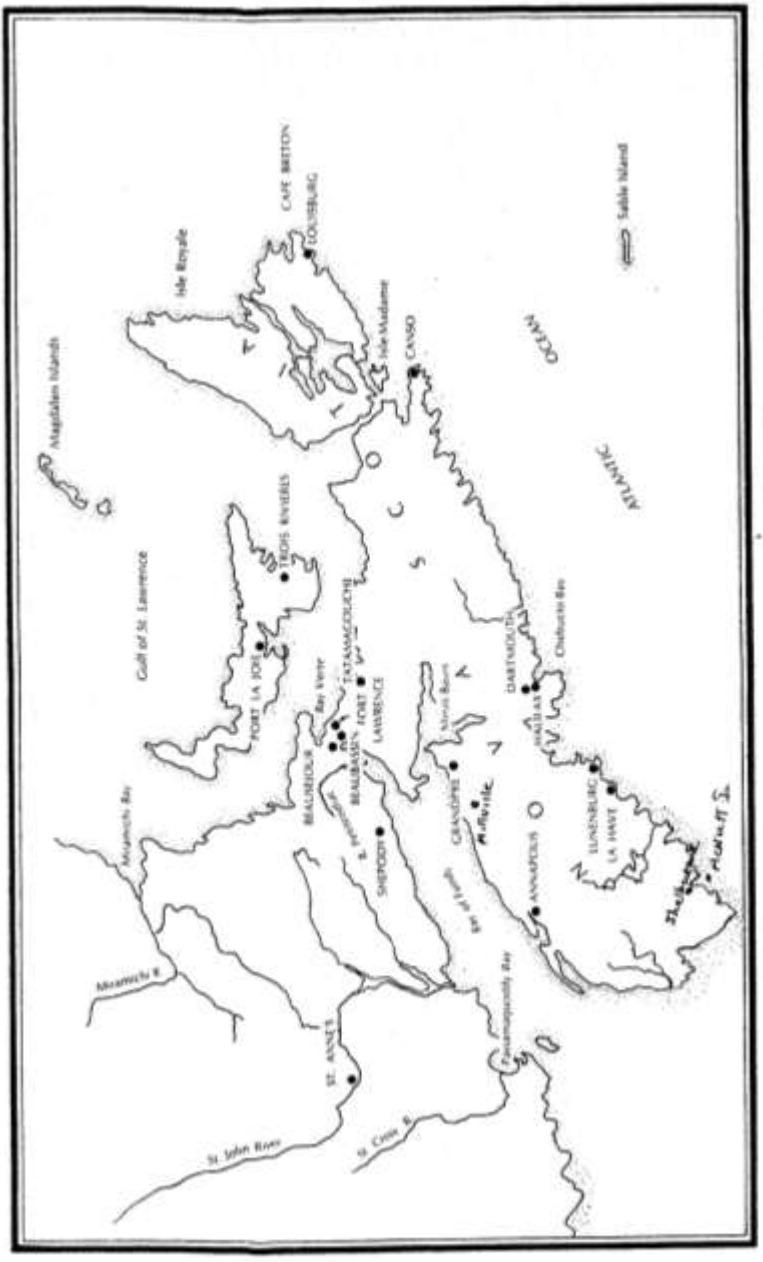
Such is the story of Gallows Hill. The sad fabric of logs which had been raised for his execution remained standing for several years after the war, an object of dread and superstition to the more ignorant of the country people whose daily avocations compelled them to pass it.

Robert Bolton,
History of the County of Westchester, (1848) pp.72-3

PART THREE

Overview

A Diaspora of thousands of Tories are deported, their land and possessions seized by the newly formed United States of America and sold to feed their barren coffers. Ironically, the Palmers arrive in Nova Scotia to be granted land seized by the English from the Acadians all of whom had taken it from the Natives. New generations are born and die here for a century, Canada becomes a Dominion, and Nova Scotia has its heyday. England wars on with empire building, still enslaving, still exploiting but the Palmers live in peace. Then all hell breaks loose. World War I is declared and the family is coerced to fight for the English in a contrived battle for crowns and space. Brothers, Major and Jack, join a Highland regiment in Nova Scotia, train and ship out to the very spot on the globe where their ancestor, William Palmer, lived and worked three hundred years earlier. But, they soon find themselves in the front lines and the awful trenches of northern France. Maj disappears in Vimy's notorious mud. Millions more are killed and millions are wounded as the war goes on for five years in the worst contest in history. Jack, suffers from mustard gas and sibling guilt, rises from ploughboy to lieutenant, meets Meg when on leave in Aberdeen and makes plans to take her back to the Annapolis Valley



Acadia at the Time of the British Conquest

Part Three

Forget not yet the tried intent
Of such a truth as I have meant,
My great travail so gladly spent
Forget not yet.

Sir Thomas Wyatt
Forget Not Yet

1

The magnitude of the politics that spawned the macabre strangulation of young Edmund Palmer, and the kind of mind that conceived and enforced the horror, were of premium concern to some of the authors of the shiny new American Constitution. It promulgated all manner of justice but did nothing about the kind of character power espoused, and the kind of propaganda that persuaded certain individuals to virtually dismiss their sanity. Perhaps the victim, for he was, indeed, a victim, was more the victor by virtue of his intrepidity.

The abiding pain of the indictment and the life ended by vengeful decree would be Anne's and her son's for their lifetime, and the scar tissue left by the deep wounds in Lewis and Rachel would be closely guarded against meddlesome neighbours and never exposed outside the family walls.

In the immediate few months a few spies were brutally taken in retaliation, first by General Clinton, then Putnam, but many other intelligence gatherers carried out their business and escaped the cruelest

side of fate and the madness of generals throughout the war.

Lewis, now permanently debilitated, could not have imagined how much further his reality would descend and when it did, he fell into a depression that would stay with him for years. Rachel was, at first, inconsolable, then very angry, first with Lewis, then Clinton, and decidedly with Putnam. Given the power, she'd have dispensed each of them an appropriate sample of her justice. But, both she and Lewis were helpless.

They didn't try to leave New York City to go to the funeral. Lewis would have been captured by Putnam's toadies, waiting and watching at the private liturgy and would likely have found their way to the carefully concealed gravesite. They both held on to the last time they saw him at Verplankt, the hanging kept out of mind and conversation on the principle that if it wasn't talked about, it never happened. They had each held Edmund in their arms before leaving for New York and if they concentrated they could still feel the pressure of his young, healthy body against them.

Having been charged with treason under the bills of attainder, Lewis, and the rest of the family by extension, became non-persons. They could not buy or sell land, they could not institute a lawsuit even if they had uncollected debts (but the state could collect forty per cent of the bill), and they could be libeled with no remedy.

Congress legislated taxes no less severe than Parliament had, Tories to bear double and triple the going rate. The war was costing both sides dearly and it would encumber them for years. And, as refugees kept coming to New York prices kept rising, housing and food the most vulnerable to inflation. Both were allotted to the fighting forces first, exiles got whatever remained. Neither soldier nor refugee was above a little extortion.

Lewis and Isaiah Coombs sat on a bench down by the remains of the city wall facing Wall Street. They would have enjoyed each other's company in normal circumstances but they were worried old men now, trying to overcome their uselessness with important pronouncements they picked up from gossip and the papers.

The two men had much in common: they had both lost all their possessions and Isaiah had lost his wife as well. They hadn't known each other before coming to New York—Isaiah from East Chester—but had taken to each other like old friends.

"If only General Howe had been properly advised . . ," the Tory lament standard fare for each meeting.

Lewis said, "It is becoming clear that there is every possibility

that the new republic can win the war. Loyalists have dropped to one in six in the colonies, they have abandoned their King and forgotten what the crown has meant to this country."

"The English are not accustomed to fighting in the winter. They break camp and go home for the season. Children of soldiers are always born in July. But, the patriots fight on even though they haven't enough warmth to endure and that forces the English to stay."

Isaiah, sitting with his arms folded across his ample stomach and his feet planted firmly apart said, "The King is losing the propaganda war, the mightiest power on earth is inept at getting its message out. The rebels are very skilled at propaganda and telling half-truths. When they recruit farmers to 'fight for freedom' they neglect to mention that there is little or no recompense, or food or shelter. And they use this to bring neutrals, even some loyalists into their ranks. But, the most adroit of propagandists is Benjamin Franklin. It was he who went to France in 1776 and is still there endearing himself to those in charge of the purse that keeps Washington's miserable army together."

"These warriors, the rebels, march to a different drummer than those in the European contests. This is a civil war and a political war; it is about loyalty."

But, the war was excruciatingly divisive and, this was, perhaps, the first breach in the empire's foundation.

Isaiah was right. Even Native Mohawks in Upstate New York were loyal to the King because they were loyal to the Johnson Manor of the Mohawk Valley. On the other hand, the pragmatic Six Nations Iroquois, Molly and Joseph Brant, judged the English to be the victors in any skirmish they undertook and simply fought with them in hopes of retaining their land in return.

2

New York
1777-1783

For five years after his escape to New York City, Lewis and Rachel lived in the English military base. Both loyalists and patriots waited for the war to come to an end in an isolated space controlled by the English. The city was in a state of confusion and at times, bordered on anarchy.

Houses abandoned by rebels were labeled "GR" and the military promptly moved in. Warehouses became English supply stores, churches became hospitals, and a city vestry provided for essential services.

Some Whigs stayed and carried on business in the city as they always had because they were needed. Merchants, bankers and provisioners of all stripes exploited the war, providing services for the army and navy, refugees and everyone else in the city. But, the streets of New York were now littered with all manner of waste and manure, the council unable keep up with the functions of the city as there was neither the money nor the will. Even the washhouses were dirty. The breadth of the slums increased daily, factories and looms closed within and the war prevented inhabitants to move without.

For Tories such as Lewis and Rachel and Isaiah, these years were miserable. Aside from the state of the city, a loyal refugee's life was very different from that of a loyal colonist. From cadet to commanding officer, the English held American royalists in contempt as second-class citizens, barely tolerating them, let alone protecting them. Rachel crossed the street when she saw uniforms approaching. Lewis refused, was often pushed off the footpath and once just avoided a gob of spit from a young

subaltern.

During the recent century, societal changes took place in the colonies that hadn't in the Old Country: the class system gave way to individual achievement. Although Tories claimed that such a thing would reduce "all men to a state of nature," they had long since accepted it.[20] And now, the Whigs they loathed were establishing a representative republic.

The arch test of loyalty to the King was to don the Red Coat and march to the English drummer. General Tryon persistently recruited, "a door is still open," for "honest but deluded people," to be "restored to the King's grace and peace."

Some said the King was unstable but such gossip was unacceptable to Tories. They took these things to be meant to disabuse them of their allegiance.

Benjamin tried to get to New York to see his parents but couldn't get past the rebels and Elizabeth, the oldest daughter, also sent a scout, her son, to determine the possibility of seeing her father. But, her odds were even less likely than her brother's. They did write; the letters were censored but family news was welcome, Rachel being most concerned about her grandchildren. It was she who declared that none of her children or grandchildren would carry a weapon or be any part of its manufacture. Hadn't they learned anything from their Quaker ancestors? She didn't see the need for this war in the first place, for running roughshod over the colonies. And for taking her son's life. She was not convinced that the English were as evil as Washington's ragtag farmers because her devastating experience in Somers had been with them, not professional Redcoats. All of it left her against this insanity and she wanted to be sure her family never took part in it again.

Lewis had aged while in prison but dramatically more since, the worry lines on his forehead deepening and he couldn't seem to gain weight. The hanging was like a black shroud that hung over him and he wasn't interested in much of anything, much less food.

His legs were particularly painful but Rachel insisted they go out regularly. "We can sit here for the duration, Lewis, but that won't keep us whole. And I don't want anyone to think we are unwell."

They tried to make light of it and enjoy themselves just like the old days, but the war permeated. They went to the theatre, to concerts and plays. Every theatre was in use offering dramas and comedies such as *The Mock Doctor*, and *Devil to Pay*, the demand for distraction exceeding the supply. And after the theatre, they patronized the more urbane public houses where bands played *God Save the King* at regular intervals. On the

King's birthday there were great celebrations with dancing and fireworks and sailors trampling on the thirteen stars and stripes.

They mocked Washington and his army.

"Flash in the pan."

"Barely know the muzzle end of a rifle from the butt."

"Great wonder they don't shoot each other."

Rachel dressed in her best black day dress for church on Sunday, met friends and commiserated. They usually went to St. Paul's, the church that survived the fire of 1776 and destroyed the south end of Manhattan. But, Lewis had some doubts about his faith now. What kind of God would allow his son to be hanged?

Rachel said to Mary Whitcomb, "Here we are, waiting it out together."

"I felt strongly in need of my faith now," Mary replied. "But my husband has lost a good deal of his."

"So has mine, and for good reason," said Rachel. "I can't find it in my heart to fault him."

Rachel wrote letters; Lewis' hand was not steady enough and he was glad of the excuse, anyway. But, ink, powder and paper were getting scarce and expensive so she used them sparingly. It was critical to the family to maintain contact so letters came and went nearly every day.

New York City
10th May 1780

Dearest Elizabeth. Father and I were well pleased to hear that the new Baby is faring well. The men will be Planting now and requiring extra Hands for you to board. What Crops are you putting in this year. We are going to a Concert this week where we hope to meet friends and join them in the White Horse after the Performance. We cannot tarry there long as Father still suffers his Legs and Feet most awfully. We so miss seeing you and wish you were near to hand.
Your loving Mother

Treason

3

In October, 1781, the first decisive sign of earthmoving change came when Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown and Parliament arbitrarily decided to discontinue hostilities. It was utterly incredible to Lewis and he talked about it for days to Isaiah and other men on Wall Street, first thinking the report was a mistake, then a lie. But confirmation came that winter when Carleton took command of the English forces in America and his first assignment was to withdraw all troops from New York, Savannah and Charlestown. Loyalists were left stripped of what little security they had inside the city and they knew exile was imminent.

Their American deeds and bonds now worthless, Congress would sell Tory possessions to patriots, the clear profits going into the meagre coffers of the new republic. Three million, six hundred thousand pounds made its way there and at least that much again was routed through the underworld and homespun corruption.

There was no record of Tory casualties during the war.[21]

In the fall of 1782 England and the United States signed a preliminary treaty. Now, their years of fighting and sacrifice for the King written off, the loyalists felt utterly betrayed. Lewis and Rachel Palmer were forced to leave, to go, but where?

To go or not to go; that is the question
Whether it were best to trust the inclement sky
That scowls indignant; or the dreary Bay
Of Fundy and Cape Sable's rocks and shoals,
And seek our new domains in Scotia's wilds,
Barren and bare, or stay among the rebels,
And by our stay rouse up their keenest rage.

W.O. Raymond, in
The Founding of Shelburne

Forced decisions were now being made by everyone. Some of the outcasts, acquaintances of the Palmers, went immediately to the motherland where most endured a miserable life of poverty and discrimination. And some went to the colonized islands in the West Indies. Two of Lewis and Rachel's children, Alpheus and Benjamin got together in Long Island and after much thought and discussion, decided to go to Nova Scotia, to what a generation earlier had been Acadia. Theodosius and the girls would remain in New York State.

Lewis told Isaiah that he was afraid of what could happen to his children who stayed behind. "They are tarred with my brush. The rebels are free to abuse at will."

"The girls should be alright as long as they are married to the other side but your son could have a hard row ahead."

"Two of my boys are going to Nova Scotia and I think we will go too."

"We are going to the Old Country. Hah. I nearly said, 'We are *going back* to the Old Country.' I will miss you, Mr. Palmer, and I will wonder about you and your goodwife often, my friend."

"And I will miss you."

So it was that Benjamin, Alpheus, their families and their parents would go to Port Roseway, to clear the land and start again.

Lewis and Rachel were sixty-three years old and they would have to learn how to survive for the first time in their lives. The family heirlooms: jewelry, silver, paintings, precious books that they took with them would be of little use in Nova Scotia. And they would be left to wonder and imagine what was happening to their land, their home and possessions, but never know if it was being nurtured or lying fallow and left to the elements, lived in or pillaged and burned.

And the children. Rachel thought it was entirely possible that she would never see them or her grandchildren again, never hear them laugh, never be able to please them and see their faces beam, or see them progress, grow up, fail and succeed. She thought she wouldn't even be able to buy gifts for them in this new settlement, this wilderness. Both Lewis and Rachel were also carrying an incredible weight of culpability and felt they were abandoning Edmund.

With one awful Diaspora now history, Nova Scotia was readied to make way for yet another: the victims of the American Revolution were moving a few hundred miles north and stepping into the space left by the brutally evicted Acadians.[19]

The English tyranny in North America was going on as it had for

nearly two hundred years, most recently and with eerie, prophetic engineering, the genocide of the Acadian French as they were driven out of Nova Scotia, just as Lewis and Rachel had been driven out of the province of New York. And they would gladly, even gratefully, fill the vacuum.

The Palmers arrived on the *Apollo* the 8th June 1783. They missed the King's birthday ball on the 4th, but it rained anyway, muddied the newly cleared streets still rough and well manured, and spoiled much of the revelry.

The three hundred and sixty-one ton vessel sailed out of New York harbour after a two-day delay waiting for stores and a favourable wind. One hundred and fifty-one people were on board: thirty-eight men, fourteen unlisted women and thirty-five children. There was David Porter, carpenter; Lieut. Henry Hodgkinson, hairdresser; Edward Green, cord weaver; Captain Robert Williams, merchant. And the Palmers: Lewis, gentleman, Alpheus and Benjamin, farmers.

Also on board were fifty-four unnamed servants and many of those were slaves who, it was decreed, would be freed and paid for their services. In New York, Sir Henry Clinton had declared all slaves coming to Canada free and meant to separate them from their owners by giving them passage and their own land. George Washington, now a wealthy plantation and slave owner, protested vehemently, saying that the Treaty clearly stated that all property was to be restored to the United States, slaves included in the upper reaches of property. While the argument dragged on, patriots were busy looking for slaves to steal from Loyalists before they left the United States and actually went so far as to drag them out of their beds in the night.

They may have come to Nova Scotia as free men and women but they were segregated to Birch Town, a patch of inhospitable land on the northwest side of the harbour and some distance from Port Roseway. They were discriminated against in general, and in particular by the idle ex-military—whose skills were no longer in demand—when they vied with them in the labour market. And recompense might have been law but it didn't always happen. Loyalists had become accustomed to the free labour of blacks and indentured servants. Nonetheless, many loyalists brought their servants, the Palmers with fully one-quarter of those on board the *Apollo*.

Benjamin left with his wife, five children and three servants, and Lewis and Rachel brought two servants: Sarah and Joseph. Alpheus had eight servants when he landed and he was one of the people who denied slaves or indentured servants wages and provisions. Twenty-seven

complaints were registered by two thousand blacks and three of those were against Alpheus. He not only refused to pay, he demanded they pay him for government provisions drawn in the servants' names.

In the nine days it took to make the journey, not one mention of Edmund or the subject of hanging had occurred in the Palmer's presence. There were those who suddenly realized that the parents and siblings of the executed man were aboard and were silenced when they were about to ask, "Is that . . . ?" And further, not to gawk over one's shoulder while being pulled away. But, something had to be said. "Poor devil."

Rachel wrapped herself in a black cloak—she thought she would wear black for the rest of her life—to ward off the chill of the sea and the chill of her apprehension and walked the below planks looking quite sophisticated while clandestinely supporting Lewis on her arm. He had been a strong man that one could rely on, and many did. Now he felt both inadequate and apathetic. He didn't want to remember how he had been, his old life running three farms, hundreds of acres, upwards of thirty hands in season. A founding member of Somers, he had been a prominent decision maker in town meetings, in church, school, the volunteer fire brigade.

He was so tired. He wanted to rest in his own house on his own property where it was safe. Just rest. He didn't care if the house ever got furnished as long as he had a bed.

The Palmers were only able to take the few special items that the boys had retrieved from the house soon after Lewis arrived in New York. Rachel had not seen the farm since she left with Edmund in 1776, nor had Lewis since that night in 1777. The slaves had tried to hold on to the other farms but they were seized, first by the English, then Washington's men seized the land from the English along with the slaves.

Rachel made a list: the children's rocking horse for the grandchildren, some silver pieces, china in a barrel, and pictures painted when they were married, Lewis in his prime, the children when they were small, and the farm in Somers. The settle made by John when they married and his chair, a much needed loom, a bedstead and bedclothes. Such possessions as silver maintained their class rank, a major point in taking them to Canada. And the necessities: skillets, kettles, bowls, spoons, the knives the kitchen slave used to slaughter pigs while holding them upright between her legs.

Everyone took something precious, something personal, irreplaceable. Lewis and Rachel knew many of the passengers and the boys introduced their acquaintances to their parents and their parents did

them the same honour.

"I hear it's a very agreeable place."

"It'll never be like home."

"We won't be going back, you know."

"I wonder who is on our farm, in our kitchen, our bedroom."

"Bastards!"

There were squalls and some people were seasick and the smell of oxen, cattle, pigs and sheep in the hold was not helpful. Women were below where they gathered comfort and support from each other. There was sustenance in the warmth of the bodies pressed together, wanting to hold on to each other. The prospect of letting go at the pier was frightening. Most of the men were away from the women on the main deck, huddled in corners and cursing about the seriousness of this trip among themselves.

"Don't know how to run a country."

"Run it into the ground before they are through."

"Stolen property. Selling stolen property. Is that the way to build a country?"

"Years, generations of work, cutting villages and towns out of the wilderness."

"Cultivated the soil, built schools, churches, government buildings, roads."

"Dug wells, built houses and barns."

4

Port Roseway was a little space in the southeastern tip of peninsular Nova Scotia that would be renamed Shelburne, ironically after the unpopular politician who became the English prime minister, but who had laid down his sword and ceded the war to the rebel Americans. It was a curiosity of conflict that certain of the vanquished were decorated. And the Loyalists, who had become inured during the war as anathema to everyone, were promptly given heroes' welcomes in Canada. They had never failed in their loyalty to the King and were therefore champions. It came as a welcome revelation.

The Palmers were among the fortunate, they were recommended to the Port Roseway Association. Captain Dole nominated Benjamin to the Association, and he nominated his brother, Alpheus. Captain Pitcher recommended Lewis and Rachel. The group was formed by four hundred of the wealthier evacuee families, according to the Minutes, to prevent it from falling into American hands.

But others were not so fortunate. They came by the thousands: on foot and on horseback, in carriages and in all manner of vessel, abandoning their history to be exploited by the rebels. Many died on the way, many gave up and did nothing of notice ever after.

There was a cautionary tale before the Palmers left New York: the *Martha* ran afoul of the reef off Nova Scotia, with one hundred and seventy-four Maryland Loyalists and a disbanded corps, aboard. The captain pushed on after dark as he had sighted land. But, he had old rigging and had lost a topsail that his scant crew was trying to replace when they ran aground. The mainsail fell and crushed the longboat and the captain took the only jolly boat, rowed to a cutter leaving crew and

passengers to sink or swim. Three officers and two soldiers clung to wreckage for two days and two nights, others made it to shore and survived on berries and rainwater until they were rescued. Ninety-nine were lost, fishers saved seventy-five.

The papers said that one hundred thousand refugees left the Thirteen Colonies, thirty-five thousand of those from New York State. The evacuation deadline had been set for the 1st of April 1783 but there were so many people to move out that a four-month grace period was granted. About half of the evacuees went to Canada, thirty-five thousand to Nova Scotia where the population extant was about twenty thousand.

In all, about twenty thousand royalist refugees made it to Port Roseway and Shelburne. More than thirty sail carried the three thousand souls in the first fleet that began on the 4th of May, 1783.

A second fleet left in the fall. Among those who made claims for restitution, most were farmers, but there were also eighty-one doctors, fifty-five lawyers, twenty-one teachers, sixty-three Anglican clerics and seven others. Merchants and artisans totaled nearly eight hundred.

The passengers saw a few fishing shacks dotted along the rocky shore and a wood of stunted trees in the background. It wasn't encouraging. They stepped on the wharf with the help of government officials. "Welcome to your new home," they said without adding anything that would come back on them later.

Lewis and Rachel had prearranged to stay with the Pollards until they were in their own home. Peter and Anne Pollard had left New York two years earlier when they were certain the war had turned and they would be exiled. So they sold their belongings, came here to Port Roseway and resettled.

They, too, were retired from a substantial farm in Westchester, had managed to sell it and take most of their possessions to Nova Scotia but all their children stayed in New York. The comparison in the appearance of the two couples was quite startling, the Palmers having aged so much. While they were now grey and worried, the Pollards were youthful in countenance and carriage. No one mentioned it.

They were there to greet the Palmers with hugs and so delighted to see so many people coming to settle in this tiny patch of real estate. The passengers' arrival was recorded and their belongings were stored in the inadequate warehouse space made available to them. They would keep personal belongings with them: clothes, pictures, and the silver.

The years of helplessly waiting and worrying now over, the Palmers were sprung loose from psychological trauma and free to busy themselves with starting again. They were able to rest for the first two

weeks and it made a difference in their outlook, enough to rise to the occasion. Lewis' depression was persistent, however. He took care to keep it covered but he was unaware of the seriousness of his illness. He had dropped into the abyss years ago while incarcerated without knowing he was there, without knowing what normal was, what the opposite of the hellhole was like. And he was suicidal. No one knew that, not even Rachel who endured his moods, helped him with his memory lapses, and kept her distance when his patience ran short. Both Lewis and Rachel were able to bury their personal problems under stories. There was so much to tell and they told anecdotes, near fatalities that they could now relate with amazement, even amusement.

Lewis and Peter got busy with drawings even though they weren't sure of the lay of the land grant. They talked to contractors, one who had come with them, one who lived there and could turn a hand to just about anything.

The Pollards were about half a mile from the town and Lewis walked with his cane every day to keep up with the pace of doling out land. The self-imposed pressure to get into his own property kept his mind occupied. He invariably got caught up in the sudden increase in population that kept a steady stream of traffic shoving and pushing its way toward settlement and causing irritation at every turn. People yelled at each other.

"I'm trying to tell you that I still don't have my survey."

"You'll get your survey when we get it done."

"Next."

The class system had also arrived in Port Roseway. The four hundred who would fit into the best of ballrooms were transported from New York and were the upper crust here, superseded the aristocracy neither of which was above saying who thought what of whom. It was they that got their surveys in good time.

But, assigning land was taking time. The surveys were not necessarily exact and settlers tended to take exception when a neighbour's line overlapped theirs. Benjamin Marston had arrived as chief surveyor with a scouting party in May to chart Port Roseway's ancient forest but had barely escaped being tarred and feathered by a mob in Marblehead before leaving. He'd left his young wife behind and she died shortly thereafter. Now, he could barely keep up with the drive to ready lots for the throngs arriving every day and he was taking the brunt of their scorn. Fights broke out when some people received their land soon after they landed and many others did not. Lewis and his sons got theirs within a couple of weeks.

The town was laid out in about two hundred and eighty-eight

blocks, sixteen lots in each. But that was a mere forty-six hundred; they would need many more, and soon. So, to maintain peace and equality, it was decided that everyone in the Association would draw for grants. The Palmers drew warehouse lots fronting on Water Street just in front of the Common, town lots of twenty acres each in Pattersons' Division north and east of the Cove. They were in separate but adjacent blocks: Lewis on Digby at Fanning Street, Ben at Hammond and Morris, and Alph on Mowat and Duke. Lewis and Ben were each granted two hundred acres on Pells' Road, the way to Annapolis. Alph was also given fifty acres on McNutt's Island.

The Pollards had built their house to accommodate their seven children, should they come to visit. The kitchen was underground where the servants cooked in the huge hearth fire. There was a drawing room where Anne and Peter spent most of their time when alone, a dining room with a table that would seat twenty-five people, a library and study, the sitting room, a grand foyer and staircase, and servants quarters at the back. Unseen from the street was a subsistence farm and garden behind the house.

When the Palmers first arrived they were greeted with servants who took their coats and carpetbags and showed them to their respective rooms; their own servants would sleep on the floor in the kitchen. Then they were welcomed into the sitting room with a toast to their arrival with imported Madeira from Portugal. Ben's children were sent to their rooms for a nap and the adults talked about the trip, the state of affairs in New York and their plans for the future. "Mr. Palmer is so anxious to be on his own land," said Rachel of her husband. Supper was announced with a saddle of venison the main course.

But, wildlife was being pushed back by the sudden and rapid development. Often a deer or moose would venture out into a new clearing and they and the new settlers would gaze at each other. Sometimes a moose would charge, its space violated by these aggressive creatures.

The weather turned down to drizzle and fog for days on end and as the gravel roads were under construction they were often mud ruts. But it was still spring and much drier, hotter and humid weather would come.

There were no proper roads yet to go up the coast or to the valley, just the cut through the rocks and trees to Annapolis. But, there was a direct route of about sixty-five leagues or two hundred miles from Halifax by sea and Governor John Parr made the eventful trip in July.

On Sunday, the 20th of July, he majestically sailed out of Halifax harbour

heading southwest along the Atlantic coast in the sloop *La Sophie*. He stopped first at Liverpool with guns ablaze to announce his coming and was escorted to Point Carleton to examine the fortifications. The next day he dropped anchor off Port Roseway and received dignitaries before coming ashore on Tuesday to the thrill of more cannon fire. He said he was well pleased with the layout of the town except for the warehouse lots. He walked up King Street which was dutifully lined with armed Loyalists, to a meeting where he officially gave the town the bitterly resented name of Shelburne. ". . . the joy and pleasure I felt," he wrote to the peer in London, "at the universal satisfaction that appeared, upon my naming Your Lordship aloud, and the immediate firing of the Guns of the Town . . ."

He appointed justices of the peace: James Robertson who published the first newspaper in the town, two men who were founding members of the Port Roseway Association, Ben Marston, Henry Knox was named notary public and Alexander Murray, coroner. But, the Palmers had lost too much to do more than survive and would not be mentioned in documents as founders and developers of new settlements ever again.

Parr dined with prominent Port Roseway settlers in James Robertson's home and attended a public supper and ball in his honour that evening. The dozen or so resident families: fishers, a cobbler, a smith, a cooper, a miller, were not included.

Rachel and Lewis and the boys went to the ball and like most of the other disenfranchised Americans they showed their gratitude for the Governor's presence and the grants he promised.

Lewis and Rachel gradually got caught up in the revelry. They were fine dancers, the parents many times before outlasting the children.

Parr made merry until five the next morning, then boarded the *Sophie* with his suite. He said he was highly satisfied with the entertainment and the very agreeable company and sailed back to Halifax.

So Shelburne it was, the indignation of the plebeians irrelevant to the political suction to-and-fro the Atlantic.

From Halifax, Governor Parr's council proffered émigrés grants of choice land, some of which had belonged to exiled Acadians. And where there's politics, acquisitiveness is sure to follow. An underground real estate market was taking shape as people arrived to draw for lots and promptly sell them, people as crooked as a dog's hind leg, they said.

The refugees were promised recompense; would they really get it and when?

"Whitehall has decreed that we will be furnished for the first

year, at least," Benjamin told his father.

"With what?"

"They say a suit of clothes, two pair of shoes, stockings and shirts, farm tools and daily provisions: thousands of barrels of flour, cured pork and beef, hogsheads of rum, tobacco and snuff packaged in bladders."

"I think that is only for exiles in need," said Alpheus.

"I think we are all in need," said Lewis.

Peter said, "No provision was made for Natives, servants or slaves."

After sorting out the needy from the greedy among Loyalists and neo-Loyalists newly arrived from England, supplies were allocated. Those who were not literate, a sizable number, were left out of the handouts by the King and barely survived. George Washington said they would all have been better off had they "long ago committed suicide."

Copious quantities of building supplies arrived from the Old Country by schooner and brig: spikes, axes, nails, saws. They were meted out and construction got underway. Progress was quite remarkable. Within eight months, eight hundred houses along with shops, inns and warehousing were roof-tight and occupied, and in less than a year eleven hundred and twenty-seven buildings appeared. Many began as log cabins, and were later framed and finished with cladding. Still, it was not fast enough or complete enough and there were a good many lean-to's and tents, inadequate against the harsh weather of the south coast of Nova Scotia. Too many women and small children died of exposure, exhaustion and just plain deprivation, the least liable and the least deserving, the casualties of war.

Notes and barter were what turned the wheels of commerce. No one had much in the way of currency although there were many: Halifax, American and York dollars, English pounds, French francs, not all of face value, particularly American.

The Palmers hired builders.

Lewis, on his cane and carrying his drawings, went to town to try and discern who in the building trade knew best what they were doing, and to arrange for adequate supplies for his house. He spread his plans out on the back of Sam Jenkins' wagon.

"We've decided on the practical saltbox design," Lewis told Sam, which evidenced English by citizenship, but American by experience.

Pointing appropriately to the drawing he said, "And I want a stone-lined cellar deep enough for root storage and another dugout under

the back ell for animal care. I'll need a smokehouse next to the summer kitchen and the barn at the back of the property. And we'll need five bedrooms." Sam raised his eyebrows in approval of such extravagance.

They needed a house large enough for their own household, and to put up friends and relatives who were just visiting or waiting for their own house to be habitable. Many of both would come to stay for weeks and months just as they were staying with the Pollards. The first inn was not yet finished but nearly everyone who belonged to the Association took other families in as soon as they had a house of their own.

There was ample work to do, to put it mildly, but there was always time to gossip and commiserate. "I mind that nor-easter'll bring rain 'fore night," Peter Pollard told Lewis.

"And there'll be no building when it does."

"Patience, Lewis. I'm still waiting for my ell to be built and now I expect to it be a lot longer. Yours will come first now." Peter laughed. "We need to get you housed else you'll be here with us until you are."

Neither Lewis nor Rachel was in any frame of mind for a gay social life in the beginning. It was difficult to set aside the sacrifice of all their possessions, but everyone else had made the same sacrifice. It was the execution of their son that would never leave their minds. At times, it seemed to be more than they could bear.

However, they were rarely alone or without solace from friends and neighbours. Someone was always dropping in on their way. They would gather at the front gate or on the veranda. John Watson and his sons were just such people. "I see the manse is roofed. The minister'll be in there 'fore you know it."

"Which one is that?"

"The one I don't like," said Lewis.

"Now, Mr. Palmer . . . ," said Rachel.

"The man's a fool. No, Sir, I won't be listening to any of his harping."

"Well, some are saying one of them better go. We got three here now for two churches which don't seem just right," said John.

"Don't know why they want to be where they're not wanted, anyway."

English commemorations gave rise to frequent celebrations: the King's birthday, the Queen's birthday, various dukes' birthdays, several saints and Guy Fawkes Day. The Palmers took part dressing in what remained of their evening dress and gradually getting to know people. All events called for banquets and balls and they were always hailed from the ships in the harbour with feasting in the barracks.

But, all was not pristine and picturesque in Port Roseway. Both Church of England clergy had been invited to lead the flock and they were immediately at odds. Since there was no bishop to step in, church construction was delayed, and separate parishes emerged. When the Methodist preacher arrived, he was greeted with curse words, and someone threw a rock at him. Lewis left them to sort it out themselves; he was finished with wars, religious and otherwise.

There were so many refugees arriving daily, felling enough trees to meet the demand for housing was hardly possible. And there was no time to allow the timber to season. It wasn't long before dissention broke out, first between the surveyors and those that came later who complained they were being denied the choicest sites given to those who landed first. But, farmers generally pushed ahead, cleared their grants and installed animals and crops as soon as they could. Fishermen went to sea as soon as they could man a boat.

There were those who were neither farmer nor fisherman and one was bound to encounter them: the discharged soldiers in their cups on the promenade. Rum was cheap and plentiful. When the economy failed to provide efficiently for all, the less fortunate looked for someone to blame. The soldiers didn't have far to look; ex-slaves were getting much of the work and for meagre wages. Ex-military torched blacks' houses in Birch Town in retaliation and the soldiers promptly came to be the underclass, treated with contempt by the Tories and the upper class. The members of the Port Roseway Association took the high road over the military, blacks and anyone else with less than they had.

It was understood here too that those who were underprivileged subserved to those who were overprivileged. "Them as has, gits." So there was no point in trying to achieve if the gods had gifted all there was to them that had. Like a black tide, it was useless to struggle. And there was precious little to balance the inequity in a culture so inured in the class system.

By fall Lewis' house was complete enough to move in except the ell and the smoke house. But, he had been working all along with the felling crew to clear his plot and the more they cleared the more the rocks appeared. Grazing land was scarce in the shallow soil. Benjamin said he had misgivings, farming wasn't going to be easy here. Finding enough forage for cattle, never mind trying to grow crops was not likely on this little patch of land. Within a year they knew they had to go elsewhere to survive, that they could not farm in Shelburne. Lewis said, "We'll have to go, Mrs. Palmer."

Alpheus, always on the lookout for opportunity, elected to stay

put and try his hand in the real estate business. As more and more people left, there would be countless properties going for a song. Alph was in fine voice for the job. And they left by the score. Within three years "there were 360 empty houses, two years later, two-thirds of the town was uninhabited."[22] As the scent of spring spontaneously drew them back in time, many Loyalists were bent on trying to return to their old homes in the United States.

The paper said that two thousand ex-slaves left Birchtown and dissipated into the ether. In the winter of 1792 another five hundred and forty left Halifax for a hard journey and an uncertain future in Sierra Leone, but at least they were returning to their roots. Now they had to be very careful not to be recaptured, enslaved again but to help others avoid the slavers, suppliers for what was still a major trade in the United States and England.

5

The government offered grants of five hundred acres to families to settle in Grand Pré where the Acadians had been driven out by the English. Lewis accepted but Benjamin chose Waterville, a hamlet not yet settled just east of Old Kingston. Their houses, this time, were modest in comparison, and servants were a thing of the past. The Palmers would never again enjoy their habitual luxuries.

Rachel barely had the heart to move again but Lewis reasoned that it was better to do it sooner than later when they would find it much more difficult to abandon yet another home and friends and family. With Will Palmer's history repeating itself a century and-a-half later, Lewis was given a small farm, "14 acres of dykeland lying in Grand Paree," where the soil was lush, the Acadians having nurtured it for nearly two hundred years. Although much restoration needed to be done, the house and barn were still standing and they were both grateful not to have to clear the land and start again. Lewis wondered if the Americans who were living on his land would have the same gratitude.

Ben cleared the first section of his grant and built the homestead on what came to be called The Palmer Road. It was where the future line would be born and where many would die. It was a world away from what had been a life of comfort and security in Somers.

This meant that Rachel and Lewis were separated from the rest of the family and would rarely see them. It was a long trip from Waterville with a horse and buggy and much longer from Shelburne. And, the boys had many preoccupations. Ben and Philena had a growing family to raise as seven more children would be born in addition to the five they immigrated with from Westchester. Alpheus eventually married

too and had one child, a son, Alpheus II.

Rachel could almost brave the hardship in Horton, but the isolation was, at times, unbearable. She fell into despair but if she wept, she did so alone. She had come here with her husband. If there had been a choice, no one offered it or even asked her opinion. She left her elegant life and home in Somers, and even in New York, with dignity, without looking back, having no idea what she would be faced with next, and had she known she might very well have bid Lewis farewell at the dock in New York.

But, she was here now. She decisively rose to overcome her own ignorance of this rude, primitive life, and while she was learning, she unerringly set a proper table. Her small body looked barely able to carry a parasol let alone knead bread. She had aged dramatically but the soft aristocratic features and gentle comportment were always there.

She would wear a simple day dress, a shift, and an apron, for most of her life now, and would learn to do her part on the farm although she had never milked a cow or churned butter. She learned to sew and make work clothes from wool, towcloth and linsey-woolsey for herself and Lewis. Keeping clothes clean, scrubbing farm-soiled shirts and trousers by hand with hard water and homemade soap, was another laborious but necessary task she had to do.

Lewis was secretly not unhappy to see the end of frock coats and breeches having passed his prime and breeches having become more and more closely fitted. Rachel packed her fine undergarments away: stays, petticoats and silk pantalets. She saved her lace-embroidered chemises that would soil easily and would be silly under the workday garments she wore on the farm. Although she would never allow herself to think it, there was always an unconscious hope of a return to a more refined life. She stored her imported gowns, hats and slippers, too ostentatious to be worn in public, and no suitable occasion would arise anyway. On Sunday they dressed as elegantly as was acceptable for church, the only regular outing in the beginning, but as important as anything they did.

The Church of England was the church of state, and none but English or Scottish clergy could perform a marriage. If the family was to get anywhere or have any place in the community, they had to go to church. If they failed to attend, and very regularly, or to contribute as much as they could muster, they would soon be ostracized. “Place” was to the New World as “class,” was to the Old Country where there was little hope of rising above the class one was born into, but here, it was up to the settlers to make their place and carefully maintain it.

Alpheus made his father's claims for losses to the English government in Halifax on the second of January 1786. Lewis was granted forty-seven hundred pounds for his property, his loyalty, and his son's life. He still supported the King; it was a lifelong habit and precluded the risk of change and the unknown. It had always been the winning side and therefore the side to be on, and anyway, it was hardly the time to abandon Mother England, it having been constant in its convincing sanctimony. Except this one anomaly it was never vanquished, never checked, and all puffed up on its own rhetoric the crown seemed to be licensed in its relentless drive to take over the planet and transplant every human on it with an Englishman and every resource in it back to its own treasury.

On the 6th of February, 1794, nine years after he moved to Horton, Lewis appointed Rachel his executrix, his Shelburne property to be divided among three of his sons, his wearing apparel to Alpheus, and a note outstanding of two hundred and eleven pounds he bequeathed to his grandson, Edmund junior, when it was paid.

Scar tissue was welted deep in Lewis' underbelly where the memory of the farm in Westchester County, and of his beloved son, lay buried. On the 2nd of May, 1794, he took it all with him.

The boys came to the wake and the burial and to pay homage to their mother asking if she would come and live with them now. She wasn't quite alone, she had a hired hand on the farm and a hired girl in the house. Alpheus said he would have her with him but it was so very far away. Benjamin smiled and said he thought she should come and stay with him and he wouldn't be worried about her then. She said she understood and would think about it. He would build an addition on the house for her, he said, or she could live with the family.

At Ben Palmer's place in Waterville there was much to do. Children and stock needed more space and he couldn't clear the land fast enough. Years before, this once verdant part of the Annapolis Valley had been completely ravaged by a forest fire quickly followed by a hurricane and a new, young wood lot had come out of the ashes. A belt of very fine sand threaded through the property where wild blueberries snuggled in and produced mightily. Ben found the good earth, cleared it and burned the stumps after they had dried to some extent. In the meantime, between the stumps he set out an apple orchard and planted grains and corn.

The gabled two-story homestead was a thriving hub of humanity. And in the next hundred years it would be added to twice to house two, sometimes three generations. Windows weren't taxed so Ben installed as many as he needed. The main floor had a sick room and a

parlour, the kitchen that took up half the space, and behind that were the summer kitchen and the granary under which apples were stored. Four bedrooms upstairs and a wonderful attic above that where there were some of the few possessions Ben and Philena had brought with them in trunks. Children tried on clothes and boots, played with toys from another era and read mysterious pamphlets denouncing the Revolution. In this way the few remnants salvaged from the American Revolution were kept and treasured by subsequent generations: the rocking horse, the pictures and silver.

Ben and the older boys fashioned some of the household furniture: the kitchen table, carving boards, bed frames, storage chests. Other things were purchased: butter prints and paddles, feed pails, chairs, the wooden sink and drain boards, the kitchen lounge. The parlour furniture, some stuffed with horsehair that people were loathe to sit on, was all imported.

Philena's hens clucked, a rooster made a nuisance of himself in the farmyard, Ben's cattle and sheep grazed the peaceful meadows. His ox team ploughed the fields in spring and pulled logs out of the woodlot in winter. Cheese, soap, candles were made in presses and forms under the back lower stairs, wool was spun in the summer kitchen, woven and knit into clothing for children of all sizes, sick lambs and calves were nursed under the north ell, and the larder was prepared and preserved from the garden, the orchard and the barn in the big kitchen.

It became an idyllic spot in which to grow up. There was always a newborn in the stable, a mother cat chortling to new kittens in the mow, and stories on a grandmother's lap in a big chair by the kitchen hearth. There were acres and acres in which to inspect nature: the brook so clear you could watch trout and tadpoles watching you, and the woods, where a young, inquiring child might listen to a songbird, see a deer, a rabbit, a squirrel, a moose, even a bear. And always, there was work to be done.

The Palmers, Ben and subsequent generations, became great friends with the Mi'kmaqs, especially the Jeremys. They were neighbours, the kids went to school together, they swam in the summer and ice sailed in the winter on the Annapolis River and it wasn't long before the adults were on board. Louis Jeremy and his ancestors built all sizes of birch bark canoes in the Waterville area and nearly every family had at least one to run the rapids and errands.

Lewis and Ben had arrived in Nova Scotia nearly a century before Canada became a country, when it was governed from Whitehall and Native affairs were administered by the British Indian Department which was a branch of the military. In contrast to its treatment of the

Acadians, England issued the Royal Proclamation in 1763 that implied respect for Natives. In fact, it said they shall not be "molested or disturbed" and their lands would be preserved as hunting grounds.

Relative to other such governances, it worked quite well for over a hundred years.

The Jeremys visited the Palmers and the Palmers called on the Jeremys. They gathered around the elders who told about the great Glooscap, the handsome, giant Creator. He was twice the size of an ordinary man, he had a magnificent muscular body, soft copper-brown skin and thick, blue-black hair. The elders told the children how there was nothing but forest and water until Glooscap made fire and man and the animals. They said there was no sun, or moon or stars until this Great Spirit came to create everything you see and to protect us all.

"Have you seen him?" the children wanted to know.

"I see him behind my eyes and I love to talk to him there and he answers me with his great wisdom. He is always with me."

By the time Ben reached middle age he had cultivated a substantial patch of his grant and stock were grazing on more. As the children matured he offered them each enough land to farm but it was Elijah who carried on when Ben retired, or pretended to. And subsequently, there was Elijah's son, Benjamin, who married Charlotte Tupper of Charles' family and, then, their son Leander.

6

1867

Leander was the patriarch when imperial England took control of the northern half of the North American continent—Turtle Island—to became the Dominion of Canada, and with Confederation in 1867 things began to change. The new Indian Act ghettoized Natives to Reservations and children were removed to Residential Schools to be disabused of their cultural beliefs, forced into English education and damning religion. It was a policy of assimilation, a policy designed to move Aboriginal communities from the savage state to that of civilization and thus to make one homogenous community in Canada, a non-Aboriginal one.

The Jeremys disappeared. The Palmer children didn't understand and few other people did. There had been such a long history of a family relationship that to suddenly break it off now seemed totally unfair to young best friends and both wept.

The hypocrisy was patent. The inscription carved in stone above the main entrance to the Central Criminal Court at the Old Bailey in London read "Defend the children of the poor and punish the wrongdoer." But, with the onset of the Industrial Revolution, severe abuse to children became particularly salient in England. Poor children were used in the workhouses where their cheap labour made the Revolution a success, and a few adults, rich. From as young as five years old, boys and girls laboured long hours over the backbreaking work in cotton mills and, some became deformed in such as the iron factories. In the 1830s, half the funerals in London were for children under ten. As they were not required to attend school, factory and mill agents freely

scoured the streets for lone children and coerced them into labour. Severe punishment in the workhouses was commonly administered, often just to set an example.

They were better off working than on the street, and further, they ought to be grateful, they said.

Having become inured in selective culling wherever they set foot, the English took their skills across the Atlantic for a final decimation of the Native Indian in Canada. Following the American example, the Canadian government relegated six hundred and fifty Aboriginal Nations to reservations in which to contain Natives suitably away from white Europeans. As savages, albeit noble but not citizens, they were not allowed to have any self-determination let alone vote. Like African slaves, they carried or wore identification so as not to wander off their designated allotment of land, this land that was 'given' to them by whomever occupied the throne which generosity was unabashedly written into presumptuous documents.

But it was the Residential School System modeled after mission schools in eastern Canada that predated confederation, that doomed Aboriginals all over North America. In Canada, before confederation, English missionaries from various Christian churches began making 'apples' out of Natives: red on the outside, white inside. The awful fate of future generations was sealed. They were to endure the violent European customs in Residential Schools designed to homogenize and remove all evidence of Indianness. Relegated to the badlands, isolated and abused in residential schools, starved of food, education, culture and family, poverty of mind and body became the norm for most Natives.

The authority, the churches said, was in the Bible.

If ever they saw each other again, the Palmers and Jeremys would still be friends, but it could never be the same.

Leander saw it in the *Royal Gazette*: the return of the slave trade. The rape of big countries by small countries was not over.

There was one such European country that had missed the munificent slave trade and its King was just the sort of man to see it as his personal due. He was Leopold II of Belgium and the Congo was his choice of all Africa to exploit first for ivory, then natural rubber. And for that, he forced Natives into slavery. It was just about the time other slavers were being forced out of the business by public opinion, then laws of abolishment and Leopold was anxious to fill the void.

In one of the inscrutable turn-of-events in timing for success in history's underside, Leopold developed a means and the end came to him: a man named Dunlop invented the inflatable tire in Belfast in 1885. In the

next twenty-three years, Leopold would take control of a country nearly seventy times the size of his own, ship out massive quantities of raw rubber and ivory, and send in guns and bullets to meet his quotas. And the quotas were met with decapitation, severing hands and feet and murdering whomever it took of the Natives to meet the ends. There were between five and eight million victims.

And he would get the major powers in the world to recognize "The Belgian Congo," with a propaganda taken from other successful tyrannies: humanitarianism. It was the "white man's burden" to civilize Africa. One of his officers said:

> *. . . a hundred heads cut off, and there have been plenty of supplies ever since. My goal is ultimately humanitarian. I killed a hundred people . . . but that allowed five hundred others to live.*

Ex-slavers, England and The United States, were aware of Leopold's private army in The Congo, *Force Publique*, they were not in the slightest ignorant of his *raison d'être*, and fully aware that Natives were the one and only supply for the gruesome forced labour and did nothing to stop it, rather more to abet it.

Genuine humanitarians actually saw the pathological insanity as it happened and took steps to broadcast it. One was eventually executed and the other sentenced to hard labour, both by England.

Leander put the paper down and said to his children, "Do you know anything about the slave trade."

"Sure, father. We're slaves in haying season," said Lorne. The others laughed at his daring, glad he had done it for them.

"You don't know what you're talking about, young man. But, I'm going to tell you."

"Yes, father."

"Did you know that our family came to this country with slaves?"

"That's awful," said Helen.

"It wasn't so awful then. Most people had some and the Palmers apparently had quite a few. They brought eight or ten when they came here in 1783 after the American Revolution."

"Wasn't there a law to stop them from having slaves?"

"Not for a few years—1787 in Nova Scotia, I think. But in England the abolition of slavery wasn't until 1833. They had a lot of free labour to protect and they hung on for a long time."

"What happened to the ones we had?"

"Some were freed, others preferred to stay with us until they died. The point is that the paper says that Belgium has opened the slave trade up again. They are enslaving Africans to produce rubber for inflated tires and some of the things they are doing—that's what's awful."

"What is it?"

"They cut off the slaves' hands if they don't do what they are told. And let that be a lesson to you," Leander said while peering at the children over his spectacles.

"Yes, father."

Most of the families in Waterville were descendants of original settlers, the Pattersons, Whitmans, McNeils and the Palmers.

They were steadfast, the eldest son usually staying on the family farm adhering to the old, strict primogeniture system that had been practiced by the settlers as far back as anyone could remember: the homestead was willed by eldest son to eldest son and each was expected to take over and run the place to his father's satisfaction—without discussion. In some families the system failed; there were no sons, or they didn't live long, or they discussed it and left. In that case, the youngest girl, was 'kept back' to look after her parents in their old age, and she probably would never marry. Either way, it would likely be the end of the homestead, the painful day when the last generation living there died, and the property changed hands. The system at the Old Palmer Place hadn't failed in all these years, but they had always known it would, they just didn't know when.

When the heir married, the newlyweds lived in the ell, the one built for Rachel, a one-bedroom suite with a kitchen and parlour, for the first year or two or until the first baby arrived, then they exchanged quarters with the old folks who no longer required a five-bedroom house, reluctant to relinquish it on one hand, and glad to be rid of the work and the upper stories on the other. By then the new daughter-in-law had learned enough from her mother-in-law to manage the kitchen, adjusted it all to her own taste, and was starting to raise her own brood at the same time.

The two women divided the work and tried to get along; some did, others not so much. But they always seemed to be just fine together, the elder being a well disciplined philosopher and sociologist having been a farm wife for most of her life, and the younger either eager to please or wise enough to be still when she might have preferred to have a thing or two to say.

The first church, a mile or so from the Palmer Place at the eastern end of the Post Road in Aylesford, was the place of all social

gatherings and doubled as a school for a few years. Education was nearly as important as it had been to the Puritans. Both boys and girls went to grammar school when they could be spared from the farm and proper young ladies learned something about music and the social graces and were offered a little more schooling.

The third Edmund Palmer came to Nova Scotia for a time. He was an energetic teenager with an edge of aggressiveness that his grandfather would have wondered at. He was sent to school to put some of his precociousness to good use and he worked on the farm with his cousins, but he had the Palmer drive to own land. In 1828 he bought property in Kingston, just a few miles west of Waterville. He bought about a quarter of the town from the Kingston Village Road west half way to the Walker Brook. A year later he bought a matching parcel on the east side of the Village. And it, too, would stay with Edmund's descendants, this time for one hundred and fifty-five years.

By 1871 Waterville had been renamed Millville and the mill in question on the Annapolis River was a thriving business supporting several families.

Treason

7

Will Palmer had escaped England's tyranny in 1635 but his descendents joined hands with it one hundred and fifty years later and now, in 1915, they were being asked to do the ultimate: go to war for England. Many picked up the gauntlet for the adventure; they didn't know.

England was in its death throes as an empire but was still one of the "Big Four" wielding its power to muster the next generation to come from all over the world to save Leopold's descendents from Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany in World War I.

Leander's family had grown up and given him grandchildren and it was they who accepted the challenge. Helen and Archibald farmed a section of the Palmer grant. Arch died in middle age leaving Helen with five young children to raise and now her sons, Frank, Jack and Major, were all eligible to enlist in this abject insanity.

Whom the gods would destroy,
they first make mad with power.

Charles A. Beard

By the early part of the 20th century, the bowels of Europe were about to erupt again, having been relatively peaceful for a few years and now feeling wealthy enough to look around for someone else's real estate to take over. The war came about, not out of conflict, but the aggressive obtrusion of one state into another for power and control: the whim of Franz Joseph of Austria-Hungary to add another nation to his crown, and the greed of Germany's Kaizer Wilhelm.

In 1914 much of Europe was in the hands of related crowned

heads who were stubbornly fostering memories of long gone skirmishes and slights. The dark, beastly side of colonialism had come to the surface and the Industrial Revolution was making commerce and competition for resources a prime source of eruption as it shifted the established continental military balance of power to Central Europe, the new, economic power. The Revolution was having an impact on the United States, too. Henry Ford was devising an assembly line to speed up the production of his black Model T's, and women and children were meeting high production deadlines in factories, one of which burned in New York's East side with one hundred and forty-six women trapped inside.

In Germany, Otto von Bismarck was operating on the Clausewitz principle of war as an extension of politics. He first isolated Austria, Denmark and France, then waged small, limited wars against them, weakening, but never totally defeating them. By the turn of the 20th century he had made Germany the dominant power in Europe and nearly every other country living in fear of it. Still, they were eager for war; it was all the rage there.

An opportune moment presented itself, as it inevitably would, on the 28th of June 1914 when Franz Joseph's nephew and heir, Franz Ferdinand, and his wife, Sophia, were assassinated while on a state visit in Sarajevo.[25]

In the village of Millville people were untouched, even unaware of the plans in Europe and had no idea they would ultimately be drawn in. No one in the country could have imagined what lay ahead, nothing like it had ever happened before in history nor had Canada ever been directly involved in Europe's chronic bedlam. Helen read the papers and was aware of what was happening in England and Europe. But that was there, there was a farm to run here.

The Canadian west was just opening up with large numbers of European immigrants taking over the land. Rail service across the country made it possible to transport everything from grain to textiles within Canada and without. The wheat fields created a booming economy and Jack contemplated going to the prairies to work alongside many others of his generation.

Nova Scotia was the up-and-coming place to be. Alexander Graham Bell had launched his first flight on the ice in Baddeck in February, 1910; Thomas Wilby and Jack Haney drove a 1912 REO (Ransom E. Olds) across Canada, starting from Halifax on the 27th of August and arriving in Victoria on the 17th of October; Maritime Telephone and Telegraph was incorporated in 1910 and shares were

offered at ten dollars each; The Nova Scotia Carriage and Motor Car Company, which had been making carriages in Kentville since 1868, started to make automobiles in 1912; in 1911 the Blomidon Railway Company was built entirely within King's County; and Yarmouth Light and Power was established in 1912. From here on, nearly everyone would have access to electricity, a telephone and an automobile.

No other province was so industrious and Nova Scotians thought of themselves as the bright light in the country. There was boisterous talk of joining Maine, but Maine was giving some thought to joining Nova Scotia. It was all talk and it went on for years.

All that changed with the cross-country rail system. Trade that had been north-south changed to east-west and the Maritimes were soon left on the edge of a dying economy.

8

Threats of war and what little information the government doled out to the press was carried in *The Daily Echo* in Halifax which, it said, was taking additional cable and telephone services to provide the best and most authentic service possible. Deluged with phone calls, they asked the public to refrain from bothering their busy staff, instead to call St. Paul 1100 and ask for Information.

It wasn't our war, they said. They might be English citizens but they had never been expected to fight for the English in Europe so there was little to be concerned about.

Anyway, it would all be over before Christmas.

But, Christmas came and went and Western Europe was in a downward spiral. The big push for English patriotism came to Ottawa from Whitehall. They chose grammar schools for their first edition of propaganda. In Nova Scotia, prominent citizens accompanied by pipers in full regalia made the rounds all through the Valley and disseminated rhetoric in schools, halls and churches. The Union Jack was displayed in classrooms, children were taught patriotic songs, and the commander of the 85th Highlanders, Allison Borden, sent a letter to school children who took the message home to older brothers, fathers and uncles, first choice being those who were unmarried and between the ages of eighteen and forty-five. There was no one to deliver these letters to Helen but the news spread quickly in the village. Mrs. Patterson came out to see her when she went down for the mail. "This awful war, Helen. Your boys and ours. Supposing they went over there? So far from home. I'm so worried and all John can say is, 'Don't worry about it.'"

"I know what you mean. I'm as concerned as you are, Jean. All

three of my boys are eligible and there's nothing I can do about it."

John met Leander and Lorne in the field where he talked very differently. "I'm not going to step in if the boys decide to go but I don't like it. And Jean, the poor soul, worries about it day and night."

"Borden says he won't conscript but he will. You watch. They're making deals behind the scenes in the Old Country."

"It won't be in the paper either until it's done. We'll be the last to know."

"Bastards."

It didn't stop there. Ministers delivered sermons on the illusive moral issues of the war from the pulpit every Sunday. In three weeks, three battalions were raised for the rapidly growing Canadian Expeditionary Force. Helen and Jean were vindicated in their concerns but it wasn't the kind of victory they were in need of.

Helen came in from the garden to find her family gathered in the kitchen, looking very sombre and watching her expression while the boys told her what they were planning. On the 16th of October, Jack and Maj had enlisted at Aldershot near Kentville. She was not surprised. If they hadn't volunteered people would have maligned them in public. Mothers of men who had already enlisted were encouraged to shame those who had not and children were particularly cruel to each other. But, the boys had gone off to do this without consulting Frank; he was, they decided, to be left behind to run the farm. He was confounded as to why they did such a thing but never mentioned it.

They had three weeks in which to clean up any loose ends. There were friends in Aylesford and Auburn and relatives on the Palmer Place to see before leaving. Jack finished cutting and hauling out a stand of timber, Maj harvested the last of the garden, packed carrots in barrels of sawdust, potatoes in the bin in the cellar, slaughtered and butchered a pig, and finished cutting enough wood for winter.

On the 6th of November they went back to Aldershot where they were officially attached to the 85th Highlanders out of Cape Breton. Neither had ever heard a bagpipe nor worn a kilt let alone fought any kind of battle beyond hunting down a moose.

"What's a kilt?" asked a kid from Yarmouth.

"It's a skirt, ya damn fool," said a fellow from Halifax.

"G'wan. The government wouldn't be telling us to wear a skirt in a war, now would they?"

"Wanna bet?"

But, first, they would be stripped and queued "like so much meat on the hoof" for head to toe physicals, their naked bodies examined

summarily by local physicians, both enlisted and civilian, at fifty cents a head. Then they were shifted off to another queue to be measured, to have eye and hair colour recorded both of which were rarely accurate, the colour of complexion and distinctive marks, religion and "apparent age." And they were all vaccinated against small pox, the bane of all wars.

They passed inspection along with thousands of others: relatively good vision and hearing, regular heart beat, "sufficient" intelligence, all toes intact, testicles suspended, no sign of varicose veins or speech impediment and they met and surpassed the minimum requirements for chest expansion and physical height.

"Congratulations, young man. You've passed all the examinations," the officer at the recruitment desk said to Maj.

"What the hell did they expect? We been working all our lives, not sitting behind a desk getting pink hands like these high and mighty . . . ."

They volunteered to serve for "one year or until the war ended, plus six months."

Jack was twenty-five and Maj twenty-two. Neither had a birth certificate. Maj said, "They'd have taken my word at any age. But, I told them what Mum told us."

They compared notes afterward. Jack, a towhead with very blue eyes, laughed and said, "That fool over there filled in dark hair and eyes for me."

Recruitment was moving so quickly that supplies and kit were not yet available. In fact, they went to the front without kilts and didn't get them until half way through field duty. Their first issue was blankets and a tick or paillasse to fill with straw but as the barracks was not ready either, they slept on the cold floor in tents until cots arrived.

"I've lived better in lumber camps than this," said one of Jack's friends.

"And so have I," replied Jack. "It makes me wonder what is yet to come."

The shocking boot camp experience was what was yet to come.

Kit, when it came, was not good, the wool of the uniform badly flawed as they were ordered to be completed too quickly. But, in due course Jack and Maj were issued ill-fitting khaki tunics, breeches, boots, greatcoats, "inch-thick" underwear and the famous puttees. The wool would be rough and harsh and hot in the summer.

Jack said, "I hope the girls find some more cotton underwear soon. And, I don't need one of those kilts. I'd wear my own pants if they'd let me."

"Yeah, me too," mumbled several others in his tent.

There were those who didn't take well to discipline and responded by telling an NCO to "go to hell" or going AWOL over night, and losing a day's pay or detention in barracks for a week was worth it. The business of keeping clean and keeping quarters organized according to the army's regulations was a new experience to most who might have bathed and shaved for a special occasion and had never kept anything tidy in their lives.

"Damned if I'm going to kowtow to this brass. They'll drive me into the ground first," said a rough looking man standing in the middle of the tent in his underwear.

"A-ten-shun!" bellowed a sergeant at the tent flap.

Surprised, everyone jumped to attention.

A sergeant-major swaggered in in a serge uniform and looked the place over before seeking out the owner of the voice who was willing to be driven into the ground. He found him and looked at him while stroking his chin for a while, then said, "When did you last shave, soldier?"

"Yesterday morning."

"Yesterday morning?"

The nearest man nudged him and said, "Sir, you fool."

"Yesterday morning, Sir"

"What made you think yesterday would do for today?"

The soldier thought about it and said, "I'm not going anywhere." "Sir."

"You're mistaken, mister. You're going to the showers. We'll teach you about army hygiene."

The soldier was marched out in his underwear and bare feet, and paraded in front of the sergeants to a large tent on the other side of the camp. There three men held him down, stripped and scrubbed him with a brush and lye soap, shaved off all the hair on his body and deloused him. His underwear was thrown out and he was given army issue to wear over his sore, red body. He walked back to his tent with his legs well apart as if he'd been in a saddle all day.

A few hard living young men huddled in one end of a tent. "I ain't goin' to salute none of these bastards. No Sir. Not me."

"Me neither. No bowing and scrapin' for me."

"One of them fellows come from the back woods, over there back of the north mountain. I know for certain sure he ain't no bettern' me."

But, they fell out to morning parade freshly shaved and washed. Saturday night they cleaned themselves all over and Sunday morning they paraded to church with everyone else but were turned away at the door.

"Sorry, you can't come in here." Their reputation had gone before them.

Once the shock was absorbed they decided they were free to go into the single restaurant in town only to be turned away again. They took it personally and, certain of understanding from their squad if not the whole platoon, decided to tell all at the base. "We was down to the church this mornin' and they wouldn't let us in," Jimmy Johnson said the minute he set foot in the mess tent. People otherwise fully involved with their own conversation looked up puzzled and annoyed at the interruption. Then, realizing what Jimmy had said and who Jimmy was they filled the tent with a chorus of laughter. Poor Jimmy. He and his pals stood under the flap, faces fallen and looking back in complete bewilderment at the letdown of their comrades.

Looking at each other they all backed out of the tent. Jimmy said, "I'm getting' outta here."

"So am I."

That night three of them went AWOL. The RCMP was alerted and the offenders were brought back the next day. The first issue at hand was prescribed time in the guardhouse and then there was the possibility of a dishonourable discharge.

In jail they settled down to spit and polish boots and brass, go on a route march every morning with blistered and bleeding feet, parade in tight formation and to say, "Yes, Sir," on demand. They also learned to maintain army hygiene by the book and their tent smelled much better.

But Jimmy planned to get out any way he could and the army was happy to accommodate him. He was dishonourably discharged leaving a blight on his record for life.

Jack and Maj became willing subordinates to do precisely what they were ordered to do without question, dismissing all reason and logic. They learned to stand at attention, their heels slammed together, feet at twenty degrees, arms rigid at their sides, thumbs aligned to their trouser seams for as long as it amused the officer of the day. They learned to salute all officers anywhere and everywhere and, some out of ignorance, some to send up officers, honoured anyone wearing braid, say, a hotel doorman.

Jack wrote papers for his first climb from private to corporal and encountered boys still in their teens; to them he was an older brother. Most had never been away from home and needed someone to talk to. Jack wasn't the ideal candidate for this but he did remarkably well for a shy ploughboy. It worried him and he talked to Maj about it. "Some of these boys have never seen food like it is here. Why, they probably never had three full meals a day in their lives. Poor devils had to get into a war for it and it won't be like this overseas, either."

"And homesick. Lord, some in my tent are still in knee pants. They won't forget this for a long time."

"Fifteen dollars a month and they are fed, clothed and housed. Pretty good for some."

But, to each soldier, the camaraderie, as it developed, was singular to the war and it would settle warmly in their soul for life. Perhaps it was life in the hell of war that made the companionship so necessary and the memory of choice.

Things fell into line as they will when coerced and then the waiting began. For months they fell out and paraded every morning, marched and target practiced, and jammed bayonets into feed bags stuffed with straw. Then they put in long hours playing cards and gambling illegally for which they were "admonished" when caught.

English officers were sent to base camps to give Canadian soldiers quick lessons in the fine points of English soldiery but they were so resentful of the task and this comedown in their career that they were utterly contemptible. The English had nothing good to say about Canada and Canadians, and the soldiers wondered why they were going to war for them. But, of course, they were sworn to allegiance to the King, George V.

Headquarters was in Halifax and the training camp at Aldershot. Jack and Maj fell into the pattern. Reveille at 5:30 a.m., and everything from roll call to hygiene and prayers in fifteen-minute legs before breakfast at 6:30. Then drill, physical training, grenade tossing, lectures on machine guns and trenches that no one had ever seen, and general "hardening" for the real thing. They paraded to the church of their choice every Sunday morning whether they wanted to or not, and paraded back, and now and then, as part of the drama, paraded through the town to the beat of the drummer and demonstrated their new skills. Drill sergeants mustered their most threatening timbre and bellowed two-word, three-syllable orders, the last one always staccatoed into a primal scream:

FOR'RD **'ARCH**
EE-BOUT **'URN**
PREE-SENT 'RMS

They did look silly presenting wooden rifle replicas until the new Lee Enfields arrived. They had been using the infamous Ross rifle—it jammed when heated by rapid fire—as ordered by Sam Hughes. He stubbornly refused to admit that the Ross was more problem than weapon, and it wasn't until he was dismissed in the fall of 1916 that the

new rifle was issued.

Another Christmas passed and in the spring they were offered farm furlough to help local farmers or if they could prove a need, to go home and help with the planting. After a summer of heat and humidity, black flies and mosquitoes, Jack and Maj were given leave to go home for two weeks which made it quite clear to most that they were going overseas after all, however late. They stood at ease in uniform, their hands behind their backs, and their sisters, Olive and Ethel, took their picture. And someone photographed Maj on the lawn with a shy girlfriend.

There was only one other soldier from Millville and just three from Aylesford. And, in spite of the history of abuse, Natives: Mi'kmaq Indians, joined, some of which were Jeremys and friends of Jack and Maj.

The girls and their mother rounded up socks and underwear, washed and mended them and set up their knitting needles for new woolens for the boys. They made hundreds more socks, mitts, gloves, scarves and balaclavas for their brothers and the Red Cross throughout the war. They packaged them including a little ball of darning wool, favourite cookies, cigarettes or pipe tobacco, and letters from everyone. Then they wrapped them all in brown paper and walked the parcel down the road from the house to the mailbox for the mailman to take to the post office to make the long journey overseas. In every free moment they picked up the four needles and repeatedly knit two, purled two for the ribbing in mitts, gloves and socks. They pushed a needle through the loops while talking and looking elsewhere as if the set was a natural appendage, turning a heel or binding off a thumb barely watching what they were doing.

Finally, on the night of 13th of October 1916, the 85th Regiment boarded the Dominion Atlantic Railroad for Halifax and from there to the *SS Olympic*, a troopship waiting in Bedford Basin, for the trip across the Atlantic to Liverpool. The crossing was rough, and the boat was crowded with men, horses, equipment, baggage and more than one hundred and thirty-five thousand bags of flour as Canada's gift to England in support of its cause. Officers were quartered in cabins while soldiers were crammed into the stinking steerage. They slept in hammocks, were fed sparse and awful meals and had little to do but grumble for six days. Theft was scandalous, not by the soldiers but the ship's crew. Complaints grew daily until a near riot situation developed. When, at last, they docked, they were herded into the small but fast English trains bound for Milford Station between the North and South Downs in the south of England. They were just a few miles west Aylesford and Maidstone,

Kent, from where William Palmer fled to America in 1635. Three hundred years later, little had changed. They seemed to have come full circle, back to their ancestral seat to prepare to kill men they didn't know because one monarch they had never heard of schemed to sit on three thrones and another exploited that situation to run amuck over Western Europe.

From the station, they marched the three miles to the camp at Whitley, where at least, they would be living in huts instead of tents.

Five days after they landed, Jack was appointed Corporal. He had written his papers in Canada.

Landing leave was doled out soon after they arrived and most of the 85th went up to London where they were treated rather more civilly by people on the street than by the English military in camp. They went to the Music Halls, toured the Parliament Buildings, and walked the streets of Westminster and Soho. They didn't have to be ordered to write home about it; this was the experience with which they had been coaxed into the army.

They were offered trips to Wales and Scotland during leave and Jack went to Aberdeen along with several others from the 85th. They were in a highland regiment, after all. Highland dancers performed for them at St. Nicholas Church, and among them was Meg Buthlay, a pretty, vivacious young woman and Jack was smitten. He discovered that all the men in her family save two brothers had been wiped out by German mines laid by their U-Boats in the North Atlantic. On three separate occasions, Meg's brothers, her father and her grandfather went to sea and never returned. They, too, went to war for England despite their brutal exploitation and abuse of the Highlanders. They were fishermen whose vessels were commandeered to locate and mark the mines meant to dispatch all vessels in order to stop the flow of supplies, including foodstuffs. Hundreds of vessels were blown out of the water until the British Isles was woefully short of imports such as sugar and rationing was introduced for the first time. Now Jack had purpose and he would go back to Aberdeen each time he got leave.

But the 85th would stay in Whitley through yet another Christmas.

In nearby Bramshott, they were retrained by the English even though Hughes insisted he had sent first class soldiers. While the English were of the opinion theirs were the better troops, Canada's top brass were certain that theirs were and they meant to prove it.

On February 10th, 1917 the regiment was finally called to go the front but Jack and Maj and two hundred and sixty-seven others had the

mumps. They wouldn't be going anywhere until the 28th of March. Then they marched back to the station, took the train to Dover and were ferried across to Calais. (The 85th brought its own band although it wasn't meant to. The instruments were smuggled across the Channel with the quartermaster's stores). From there they went west along the coast to Étaples, the base camp where, in the notorious Bull Ring, English *Canaries* bullied recruits into submission for the fun of it. And where eventually, the troops mutinied.

When Maj and Jack caught up with the regiment at Bouvigny, they were quartered in the chateau which the Germans were regularly shelling. It was their aim to destroy all chateaux since that was where the townspeople were traditionally harboured in times of crises and civilians were fair game to the Germans in this war. The mess and orderly room were in the main hall but soldiers stayed wherever it was deemed safe such as the cellar. Officers were billeted in homes in the town.

All winter the camp had been preparing to take Vimy Ridge and the traffic in the slippery mud was a sight to see: miles of infantry, military vehicles, mule trains, wagons and bicycles moved along country roads behind the front lines and now and then a team of sixteen draft horses pulling a cannon. They were so close to the line that in places "Jerry" was only thirty yards away. Shells whined over heads on both sides and they were eventually able to determine which way they were going: from "George to Bill," or from "Bill to George." The 85th had already moved fifteen tons of gas in tanks into the trenches and sent it in the direction of the German lines where the wind changed and sent it back.

The men on tunnel detail walked four miles twice a night to do their work to dig miles of trenches and their feet, along with most others, were usually blistered and painfully sore. The relentless wet created splits between toes and every other crevice and cleave. The treatment was warm whale oil and clean socks. Clean, dry socks were at a premium, especially those from home.

The English had taken the Ridge for two days, then lost it, the Australians had tried and failed, now the Canadians were being asked to take the "blood-soaked ground" where more men had died than anywhere else. In preparation for the battle there were engineers and tunnelers, pioneers and infantrymen in working parties. They were digging trenches, tunnels, dugouts, caves, laying tram lines, and gun emplacements. Tottenham Cave, just five hundred yards from the German line, was big enough for a whole battalion. The rain-soaked trenches and dugouts were where the men lived sometimes for weeks at a time in the endless mud

and driving rains. They rested and ate their rations during the day and raided the Germans at night. And the bearers stood by to move bodies out of the way and, if they were alive, back from the front to the hospitals. Thousands of bodies of horses, mules and men disappeared in the mud, the liquefied remains an incredible stench often uncovered by the tunnelers. Such was the abomination of war.

Water was chlorinated and inoculation and re-inoculation kept most troops immune of typhoid. Keeping the men deloused and an underground population of well-fed rats at bay was a full time job.

Four trenches leading to Vimy Ridge were being prepared for the attack, equipped with electrically powered gas engines and medical dressing stations. Supplies, equipment and men were moved in and out at night but the watchful Germans sent up flares and if one didn't stand rigidly still like a tree stump, they were strafed.

Riflemen carried a minimum of sixty-eight pounds of kit on their back: a weapon and ammunition, a MacAdam trench shovel, a haversack of food, a waterproof sheet, mess tin, water, flares, grenades, a respirator, and extra clothes.

"The Hun" had been there for a couple of years and their tunnels and caves on the other side of the Ridge were quite incredible. Some were thirty metres underground and complete camps were set up in the adjoining caves. One was said to have a piano bar with constantly running fans to keep the instrument dry.

Janet Hudgins

"Canadian Soldiers Returning from Vimy Ridge 1917" reprinted with permission from Veterans Affairs Canada
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9

The 85th was now part of "D" Company, 4th Canadian Division, and it was moved opposite "The Pimple," a northern rise in the Ridge and the first trench. The other three to the south were manned by the 1st through 3rd Divisions. While they waited for zero hour, soldiers mopped up: carried waste to dumps and latrines, cleaned out dugouts and trenches, carried ammunition and whatever "tasks as under" were necessary. Each trench was outfitted with a tramway to carry in supplies and troops and carry out excavation which contained a high percentage of chalk easily detected by aircraft. Aerial photography was being used for the first time and revealed everything that could not be seen from the ground so the chalk was moved some distance away.

On the 8th of April, Easter Sunday, Catholics went to Mass and Protestants attended church parade at 10:00 hours. The band played the advance party out of the camp at 13:00 hours and "A" Company was the first to leave as their post was the farthest south. Jack and Maj were in Number 15 Platoon in "D" Company and they left at 18:12, Lieut. Wylie, the officer in charge. By midnight all companies were in place.

The first attack was Monday at 05:30. All timepieces were synchronized. At the precise moment a barrage of an hour and forty minutes began during which six million shells, one thousand per second, were fired over Vimy Ridge. The earth and everything on it was torn to shreds and the thunder could be heard for miles. Some people said they could hear it in England. An English soldier cabled, "I am King of the Pimple." He neglected to mention that the Canadian Expeditionary Force had taken the hill and the English managed to maintain this oversight for generations.

That afternoon orders came for the 85th take Hill 145 at 18:00. As the most inexperienced soldiers on the front line and still without kilts, they had not yet gained much respect from the other regiments. But, they strode forward with more naïve fervour than caution, someone said, "as if they were on parade," and took the Hill. In an hour it was over.

Now, the 85th Regiment got some respect. And kilts. Canada had done what no one else had been able to do. But, the Ridge had to be completely taken and then held. They were given three days to get cleaned up and their sore feet healed before they went back to the front until the 28th of April when they were relieved. Now, there were periods of a few hours of silence and during these brief retreats, remarkably, the birds sang again: skylarks by day and nightingales at night.

Twenty-five per cent of the regiment was lost. Able German prisoners were ordered to carry the wounded back behind the lines where injured prisoners were also treated by the medics. It came as a great surprise to the Germans who by then were barely able to feed themselves.

The dressing stations in the wet tunnels were where troops and officers came face to face with the horror of this war. Limbs blown off and raw flesh laid open, brains exposed, stomachs and chests ripped open. A serious wound was a near guarantee of death, but if a soldier made it to the hospital and nurses and doctors at base camp, he had a chance to survive. In many cases, the wounds were so god-awful soldiers preferred death to treatment; there are worse things than death. Those that fell in the field had to be left there while the others jumped over them and they often bled to death and sunk into the endless mud.

Life in the trenches was wet and dirty and miserable. They slept in relays in dugouts in the walls, and ate beans, bully beef and mouldy bread over a tommy cooker. The combination of the wet earth, dirty men and latrines was not a particularly welcoming place.

Now, "home" was a series of huts and tin shacks at Bouvigny on the Music Hall Line equipped with makeshift cots strung with chicken wire and a thin pallet on top, ammunition boxes to sit on, candles to read by and write home. And, there were crude, outdoor showers where a soldier could spend an entire day getting cleaned and healed. Compared to the trenches, it was palatial.

Now Tell Us All About The War
And What They Fought Each Other For

Robert Southey,
After Blenheim

All during May they exchanged duty on the front for a few days with

other regiments, recovered to some extent and went back for another tour. Dawn and dusk was when Jerry attacked and for those two hours everyone "stood to." After daylight, they could stand down and clean their rifles, then rest. At night it was the rum ration.

On the 5th of June, Jack was appointed Sergeant and on the 13th he was badly gassed when the Germans attempted to take back some ground lost the day before. When it was unsuccessful they threw gas shells and twenty-nine men were badly affected with phosgene and hospitalized for weeks. Nurses stripped, embarrassed and bathed them time and again to get rid of the gas.

Jack was sent to hospitals in Wimereaux, then Boulogne and finally Étaples on the 27th of June. He was in Boulogne when he heard about Maj. The 85th recaptured Eleu dit Leauvett and Maj had been in the field when The Heinie strafed the regiment with machine-guns. He was reported missing, his body never found. He was the youngest brother and Jack felt responsible that he had not been there to look out for him. Writing home to Helen and his sisters was much harder than facing the enemy. As if to state the permanence of his disappearance, Maj's name would be on the front of a magnificent monument erected twenty years later on the crest of Vimy Ridge.

Lying in a hospital bed gave Jack long hours to think and it changed him. Vimy, The Pimple and Hill 145 came at a high price: ten thousand, six hundred and two Canadian casualties. He never understood the need of this war. It didn't make a damn bit of sense. Grown men killing and mutilating each other with impunity while other grown men, wearing scrambled eggs and brass, drove them on.

And the brutality: boys in their teens and early twenties were shot for what some officer deemed cowardice. England executed three hundred and forty-six of its own citizens in World War I, Australia refused to conform, curiously Canada shot twenty-five. It happened at dawn.

Guards strapped the victim to a post behind a canvas screen, blindfolded him, and placed an aiming mark on his chest. The firing squad (chosen from his own platoon) save for one man with a blank round, did its best; an assistant provost marshal waited to deliver a *coup de grâce*. Then the troops marched past the dead body.

Three years into the war and no one ever mentioned Franz Joseph; most people had never heard of him. And it was never clear what Kaiser Wilhelm was trying to accomplish, just what he wanted to take from

France and Belgium, and why. The futility of wasted young lives, the beautiful landscape blown to smithereens, farms destroyed and their owners robbed of their land, nowhere to go now, their bloated animals and crops strewn about and pocked with craters. Cursed war, Jack thought. We've never learned how to share the planet or to save it from ourselves.

People in villages treated Canadian soldiers like heroes, but, unsophisticated soldiers who couldn't hold their liquor well were scorned. Beautiful young women and girls offered flowers, what little food they had, an aperitif, themselves.

Jack Wrote to Meg.

Boulogne,
Tuesday, 31 July 1917

Dear Margaret:

Well, they told me Maj got it sometime Saturday night. The 85th took Horse Shoe Trench between Eleu dit Leauvett and Avion and he went out to help bring in the casualties. He didn't come back and they haven't found him. This cursed, senseless war is costing too many, too much. Like you, I can't even bury my dead.

I've been in this damned place for so long I've forgotten what it's like to carry a rifle. If I don't get back to the front soon, I'll be useless. But, about a dozen others who were gassed are still here and we are all still having trouble breathing and sleeping. I suddenly get very sick and lose my breath for no apparent reason and I can still feel the pain in my lungs when that happens. My eyes are much better now. For a while I thought I might not see again.

But, I want to get this war over and I can't do that laying here. They say they are going to keep me here for another three weeks, then promise a week's leave. All things being equal, I should see you about the end of next month.

Lots of love
Jack

The regiment had been ordered to move again to Chaudiere Wood in

Lens, nicknamed Annapolis Valley by the Nova Scotians, and it would be a long tour of forty days. Jack rejoined his platoon on the 30th of August. The trenches and tunnels were swamps of the filthiest, most vermin infested hellholes they had yet to endure. The front line now ran through Avion and Lens to the north. A lot of digging had to be done to restore the trenches, install tramlines, and extend tunnels farther and farther into enemy lines. But, they steadily advanced.

A wounded Hun cried out for help during the night and they decided to risk taking him prisoner, doctoring him and questioning him for information. The 85th was not backward in seizing the moment whether there was an officer about or not. If it needed doing, they got it done, sometimes taking the consequences later.

Sunday morning, the 7th of October they marched in to Bruay, just north of Lens. For five days the townspeople billeted them and for the first time since they arrived on the front, they were in comfortable, home-like surroundings. It gave their sore, weary bodies new life.

It was here they learned they were on their way to Belgium and Passchendaele. They would leave on the 12th, go as far as the French Flanders by train, meet the other companies, the rest of D Company and march across the border. They had been astounded at what the Germans had done to the French landscape, but in Belgium it was far worse. And if it had been a sea of mud in France, Belgium would qualify as an ocean. They were only thirty-two feet above sea level, no trenches here and impossible to dig in.

Once inside Belgium, they boarded another train for Ypres, and commenced the march along the Zonnebeke Road Sunday afternoon, the 28th of October. They were constantly shelled, incendiary bombs lobbed over them lit up the column and scattered mules, horses and men. On the 29th they were in formation behind the line. Here and there were the infamous pillboxes the Germans used in France; sometimes manned, sometimes not. On the night of the 28th - 29th, D Company had lost all its officers with only three subalterns left. Many a runner was lost and Jack wondered if his number wasn't up.

Just as D Company moved into formation to take over from the Western Battalion, the Germans charged and all hell broke loose. An officer loaned from another company ordered D to drop kit, fix bayonets and attack. They roared huzzahs and ran for the Hun. The Germans panicked, broke and ran.

After a short rest they went back to Ypres and boarded the train for France. Jack was resting and healing in the camp at Vimy on, November 11, his birthday, and at Christmas there was a cease fire for two days. Germans and Canadians met each other half way and shared

Christmas cake, exchanged tots of rum and they discovered they were all the same: young men, somebody's sons. Damned war.

When the truce was over, they went back to their posts and began all over again this pathetic, abject insanity of war. They would fight for nearly another year taking eight more sites in the Somme. The entire fighting force of the CEF would be lost: of six hundred and twenty thousand Canadians, sixty-six thousand young men would remain in Flanders Fields.

Jack rose through the ranks to Lieutenant and was awarded the DCM. And then, one of Meg's remaining brothers, a mate on a White Star liner, was lost overboard on a return crossing from New York to Liverpool and, once more, the family fell into mourning. The marriage was set aside for six months. Jack worked at headquarters in Witley cleaning up loose ends and when he had leave he and Meg went to the Highlands where there was a kind of peace. Meg was so proud of her handsome swain and his officer's uniform shifted him a notch up from all the young soldiers on the street that young girls seemed to be taken with. And Jack was so pleased with his bright, red-haired newfound love so many miles from home who turned heads everywhere she went.

Jack was still a whole man then and loved to hunt grouse with Meg and her younger sister who was sent along as chaperone. They would be together all day making memories, Jack in his uniform, Meg in a tweed suit, felt hat and brogues, bringing home a fine brace of birds for the table.

Within the next five years, the trauma would leave Jack with a handicap: he resigned from life. He didn't understand what had happened to him, he thought he had put it all away when he didn't mention the war or his brother. His family said his body came back but his mind never did. He had grown up intellectually on the spot but emotionally he was stuck where it happened. Bombarded with the ugliness of war, he never knew what kind of a man he was meant to be.

Canada Mourns, Canadian World War I monument at Vimy
courtesy Jasmic in *Flickr*
http://www.flickr.com/photos/jasmic/1456619939/

Janet Hudgins

TREASON APPENDIX
-ADDITIONAL NOTES
-AUTHOR'S NOTE
-ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
-RESOURCES

TREASON
ADDITIONAL NOTES

PART ONE

1 FROM WHENCE THEY CAME

Kent was situated precariously between London and the Dover coast where Julius Caesar first set foot in 55 BC. He settled on Kent as the strategic location for his Roman army base and built a road straight up to London. He took incredible quantities of ragstone out of Maidstone, up the Medway to the Atlantic, west into the Thames then overland to the northern periphery of the city and constructed a barrack, eleven city gates and twenty foot high by nine-foot thick walls around London. As the city grew and acquired assets, confrontation insinuated itself into everyday life and defenses were established: twenty-six foot high towers for catapult machines were inserted at intervals and a riverside wall was added along the Thames. Now, Londiniums were inside a wall patrolled by trained, armoured soldiers behind the crenelations. Mid-way between the Thames and Bishopsgate, Caesar built the great half-mile-square forum and basilica. Then, the Romans went home and Kent made its own history.

The romance of the heroes of William Palmer's home was the stuff of English folklore. It had a long line of hero-sons who attracted contests

between knights and bishops and kings for centuries. Henry II ordered Thomas à Becket murdered in Canterbury Cathedral in 1170; Wat Tyler of Kent revolted against Richard II's poll tax in 1381 and Jack Cade led the Kentish rebellion against Henry VI in 1450. Nearly everyone lost his head.

But, Maidstone's great heroes were the Wyatts of Allington Castle, Kent's and Maidstone's knight-protectorate. Sir Henry Wyatt, Thomas' grandfather was the subject of an inventory of legendary arrests and tortures. He was once incarcerated for his taste in royalty in a cold, narrow tower in Scotland without food or water, a bed to lie on, or a blanket against the cold. One day a cat came through the grille and lay on his bosom to warm him.

She came again, he made much of her, and won her love, and she brought him a pigeon. So it was that he survived until Henry VII seized the throne from Richard III (who had seized it from his nephews), released Sir Henry and knighted him at his coronation in 1509.

Sir Henry's son, Thomas the Elder was an outstanding student, matriculating at Cambridge when he was twelve years old and an arts undergraduate three years later. He was tall with powerful muscles, a full beard, an abundance of hair and golden in youth but sparse in maturity. He traveled in Italy as befitted his station, became a pioneer of the English sonnet, and was declared the finest poet in Henry VIII's court. His love songs were among the earliest in the English language, he produced a metrical version of the psalms of David, and was declared one of the best translators of the Latin poets of his era.

Thomas the Elder and Anne Boleyn had been playmates as children and he had plans for their future until she was appointed lady-in-waiting to the Queen, Catherine of Aragon, when Henry made his own plans for Anne having disposed of Catherine. But Anne, too, failed to meet Henry's expectations and when she was beheaded, Thomas was in the midst of one of his incarcerations and witnessed the event from the Bell Tower.

These bloody days have broken my heart.
My lust, my youth did then depart
And blind desire of estate.
Who hastes to climb seeks to revert.
Of truth, circa Regna tonat.

Sir Thomas Wyatt
V. Innocentia (1536)

In accordance with the laws of primogeniture, Thomas the Younger inherited Allington Castle, the Wyatt estate about a mile downstream from Maidstone. It dated from the Domesday Survey in 1085 when it was a manor, a small part of the extensive possessions of a Bishop. It was expanded in 1281 and crenellation was granted by Edward I as one of seven such fortified castles in Kent in the service of king and country.

There were four D towers, with crowns at the top of both walls and towers, battlements with merlon and crenelles between them and a gatehouse with a pointed arch and a chase for portcullis. The lodgings were on the west side, the great hall on the east side. The ground-level floor of straw-covered beaten earth had triple doorways in the screens leading from the buttery, kitchen and pantry. In a time when the fires never went out, the hearths in the great hall and the kitchen burned constantly and eventually darkened the wood carvings, the marble skirts and the fine creations on the ceilings. Surrounding it all was a ditch about sixty-five feet wide with a great mound of earth on the south side.

In 1553, Mary I, the Tudor Mary, had just come to the throne and soon announced her intention to marry Philip of Spain. Philip was Catholic and it didn't sit well with the anti-papists. It was the height of the Spanish Inquisition, Spain was England's rival on the high seas, and it was just the thing for the younger Thomas. He had come from a long line of earnest disturbers and it was his turn; he rose up against Mary in 1554.

On Thursday, January 25th, market day in Maidstone, Thomas rode out from Allington. Drums rolled and church bells rang as he read the proclamation to the crowds in the square.

"Will we have Spain on the throne and in Parliament, in our forts and our ships, in our homes and our beds?"

Kent was split, but fifteen hundred men rallied to the cause in Maidstone, with a promise of another five thousand to follow. Three other knights were committed to meet Thomas in London, but one failed to materialize. Thomas was told the devastating news and that all had been revealed to the Bishop of Winchester.

Thomas hitailed back to Allington. In blazoned armour, he rallied his Kentish men and rode to royalist Rochester. It capitulated, he raised his standard and seized the castle. But he stayed too long, until the following Monday, before going on to Blackheath and London Bridge. In the interval Mary was brought to London, the city was fortified, and the royalists blocked London Bridge. Thomas reconnoitered a week later, Monday, February 6th, crossed the river at Kingston and there was overcome by Mary's men, ten thousand strong. The savage contest lasted an hour.

Thomas surrendered his sword to Sir Maurice Berkeley and was mounted up behind him.

> *Dressed in a shirt of mail with sleeves so fair, and over it a velvet cassock and a yellow lace with the windlace strap of his dagger hanging on it, his boots were equipped with spurs and he wore a good hat of velvet decorated with broad bonework lace.*

His lieutenants were taken prisoner and mounted up behind other officers. There were so many that day, the overflow had to be crowded together in prisons and churches to wait while the gallows were built. Several of the cabal and his young son, Edward, joined Thomas in the Tower. The Bishop interrogated the boy on the rack to purge him of what he knew of his father's relations with the Princess Elizabeth who, he decreed, was the likely suspect of this grand treason. Both children of Henry VIII, Mary was Catherine's daughter and Catholic, Elizabeth was Anne Boleyn's daughter and Protestant. The only male heir had died in his youth, and the two women, lesser heirs presumptive, were not what Henry had in mind for the future of the English throne.

On Saturday, February 10th the prisoners were arraigned: forty-two Kentish men were convicted and sentenced to be hanged, drawn and quartered. By Thursday evening between 80 and 100 bodies were swinging from the gates of the city, even St. Paul's churchyard. Every crossroad presented the horrid spectacle of suspended human corpses or their parts. On Monday, heads rolled again: Lady Jane Grey's husband was beheaded on Tower Hill and Jane, having been put on the throne for a few days while the Grey Men endeavoured to keep Mary off the throne, immediately afterward on Tower Green. Thomas, in a bizarre encore drama, witnessed her execution from his cell in the White Tower.

On Tuesday, twenty men were suspended at various places in the city from Charing Cross to Cheapside. In the morning they were cut down and sent to Newgate prison where they were quartered and boiled, the heads and body members hung over the gate. The massacre went on until the 15th. Ten of Thomas' men were condemned to be butchered, and twenty others were taken back to Kent and hanged at Maidstone, Rochester and Sevenoaks. Lord Suffolk, Lady Jane's father, was flushed out of a hollow tree and beheaded February 17th and Thomas' young son, Edward was shown no mercy; he, too, was sentenced to be hanged, drawn and quartered. More lenient treatment was handed down for rebels of influence and higher social status. And some of the cabal were allowed to flee England and return after Elizabeth was on the throne.

Thomas was put on the rack and severely tortured in an attempt

to implicate Elizabeth, but without success. He wrote to her that she should get as far away from the city as she could for her own safety. On April 11th Thomas was taken from the Tower for his execution.

Black bunting covered the scaffold, its floor covered in straw and in the basket near by. He removed his gown and untrussed his points, shook hands with the masked executioner, the bishop and officials who would witness the end of his life, tied a handkerchief over his eyes himself and laid his head on the block. In one stroke it was over for the martyred hero.

Before the drawing and quartering, his head was held up and the handkerchief removed to confirm there had been no substitution. His quarters were hung in four different places from Mile End Green to Waterings, and his head on a stake at the gallows at High Hill. By April 17th, Thomas' head had been stolen, and his blood taken up by a mob struggling to dip their handkerchiefs in it.

Maidstone was now in disgrace, without incorporation or freemen. Mary became Bloody Mary having also burned alive three hundred Protestants in Coventry, including the Archbishop. And plots thickened; Mary put Elizabeth in the Tower. But Mary lived only a few years longer and Elizabeth took the throne. "This is the Lord's doing. It is marvellous in our eyes," she said, and a year later she restored the coronet on the top of Maidstone's mace and gained the support of the burgher fathers.

2 CURRENCY

The Natives exchanged peltry for blankets, shot, strong water. Wampum was accepted, the tiny base of the periwinkle and henspoquahoc or quahaug shell were equal to an English penny. Musket balls and tobacco "bought many a good wife."

These were not much prized abroad but a source of monetary exchange was necessary in the New World. One might have brought shillings from England but they were of little use to the Natives or established settlers.

One man was forced to sell his ox team in order to pay his servant and told him he would have to dismiss him if he had to do this the following year as he would have no cattle left and no reason to keep him. The servant allowed as how that would be quite satisfactory since he would have the cattle then, and his master could work for him. So he would stay on, thank you.

3 MARRIAGE FOR WOMEN

Marriage for women had to be the choice for survival, a logical step in some direction—up, down, lateral—and a very sombre undertaking more closely related to a business arrangement and carefully disassociated with emotion. They were enjoying a degree of economic and intellectual freedom in this, the run-up to The Age of Enlightenment. In 1600, more than two-thirds of the businesses in London were owned and administered by women. But now, Europe was just whispering of developing a power base of capitalism and removing the barriers to production and trade; women's liberty would be the sacrifice. They would be forced aside over the coming centuries to become the chattels of men, the property of their fathers, husbands, brothers and at their mercy for mere survival. Educated women would soon be an anomaly. Of course, there would still be tutors in the social graces for the wealthy. But, in The New World the sustenance-level economy was family-based and women were labourers for the good of the whole. It began early: little girls were expected to begin work at age six or seven, sometimes earlier.

It was understood by women that their usefulness and consequent value was first to bear children successfully and if she survived herself, she was prized for her breeding stamina, she earned her keep, so to speak. And she was aware of her place beyond that: she was meant to be her husband's life support, that is, the keeper of his home—not hers—from emptying his chamber pot to feeding and nurturing him, and being gracious to his associates, his friends and family, all at his whim; her own will was not part of the marriage contract. If she failed, she was at risk of abuse and abandonment, as by law, she had no resources of her own.

4 COME LIVE WITH ME . . .

And we will sit upon the rocks,
Seeing the shepherds feed their flocks,
By shallow rivers to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

And I will make thee beds of roses
And a thousand fragrant posies,
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle
Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle;

A gown made of the finest wool
Which from our pretty lambs we pull;

Fair lined slippers for the cold,
With buckles of the purest gold;

A belt of straw and ivy buds,
With coral clasps and amber studs:
And if these pleasures may thee move,
Come live with me, and be my love.

The shepherds' swains shall dance and sing
For thy delight each May morning:
If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me and be my love.

Christopher Marlowe (1599)
The Passionate Shepherd to His Love

5 DALLIANCING AND THE CONSEQUENCES

Everyone in the New World was keenly aware that persons indulging in careless relationships could expect to be severely punished by the Puritans. Churches excommunicated members for sexual offenses along with the prescribed punishment.

An unfortunate child born out of wedlock who survived its mother in childbirth was called Benoni, Hebrew for "child of sorrow." Punishment was established for the parents of all firstborns emerging from their mother's womb in less than two hundred and seventy days after marriage. John Thorp and his wife Alice were sentenced to sit in the stocks and fined forty shillings because Alice conceived a child before marriage. However, because of their poverty, they were given twelve months to pay the fine.

The remedy for dalliancing was more painful.

On 23rd July 1633 the governor and council sentenced William Mendlove, the servant of William Palmer, (unrelated), to be whipped for attempting "uncleanes with the maid servt of the said Palmer, & for running away from his master."

Jane Powell, servant to Wm Swift of Sandwich, confessed to a charge of fornication with David Ogillior, an Irishman, servant to Edward Sturgis, saying she was lured into it "by him goeing for water one evening, hopeing to have married him, beeing shee was in a sadd and miserable condition by hard service."

> [A girl] dallyance divers tymes with Tinsin, an Indian, and after committing the act of uncleanesse wth him as by his owne confessions by sevall interpters is made apparent, the

> Bench doth censure the said Mary to be whipt at a carts tayle through the townes streets, and to weare a bad[g]e upon her left sleeve during her abroad within this govnt; and if shee shal be found without it abroad, then to be burned in the face with a hott iron; and the said Tinsin, the Indian, to be well whipt with a halter about his neck at the post, because it arose through the allurement & inticement of the said Mary, that hee was drawne thereunto.
>
> . . . [a man] convicted of whoredom aggravated with diverse circumstances and sentenced to be whipped at a cart's tail, with the number of stripes not to exceed twenty to be determined by whichever magistrate would oversee the punishment
>
> . . . [a man and woman] having layne in one bed together in the absence of her husband, both were sentenced to whipping and wearing AD for Adulterers in a conspicuous part of their clothes.

Unwed mothers often revealed the source of their travail to the midwife when cursing him during labour. The town fathers then exhorted the father to marry her, mainly so that she and the child wouldn't become a burden of the town.

> Ruth Everett of Scituate having a bastard child Born of her Body which by the complexion appears to have been begotten by an Indian and she will not confess who the father of it is," and thus she was sentenced "to be whipt 30 stripes: 15 now at Plimouth and 15 at Scituate . . . unless she in the meantime confesses who the father of her child is."

Dorothy Temple a servant to Stephen Hopkins, was sentenced on June 4th, 1639 to be whipped twice for, "uncleanes and bringing forth a male bastard." But she fainted after the first whipping, and the second was cancelled. She was allowed to deliver the baby and recover before the whipping. She named the baby's father as Arthur Peach who had shortly before been hanged for murdering an Indian.

Rape was on the books as a capital offence in theory but in practice whipping was the punishment as the man would nearly always deny it, his word against hers, which the court conveniently settled on as an impasse.

Richard Turtall was accused of "lascivious carriage" toward Ann Hudson, the wife of John Hudson.

> . . . taking hold of her coate and inticing her by words, as alsoe by taking out his intrument of nature that hee might prevaile to lye with her in her owne home.

An Indian named Sam confessed to raping an English girl.

> . . . wickedly abusing the body of Sarah Freeman by laying her downe on her backe, and entering her body with his. Hee was centanced by the court to be severely whipt att the post and sent out of the country [colony].

Thomas Graunger, later servant to Love Brewster of Duxborrow, was this Court indicted for buggery with ". . . a mare, cowe, two goats, divers sheepe, two calves, and a turkey, was found guilty and received sentence of death by hanging untill he was dead."

The executioner was Mr John Holmes and he claimed expenses.

> £1 for ten weeks boarding of Mr. Granger, and £2/10 for executing Granger and eight beasts. Mr. Bradford (a witness) described Granger as about 16 or 17 years of age. Someone saw him in the act with the mare, and he was examined and confessed. The animals were individually killed before his face, according to Leviticus 20:15 and were buried in a pit, no use being made of them. . . .

Bradford asked Granger and another sodomer where they had learned such practices, "Had long used it in England," Granger said he had been taught it by another and had heard of such things in England.

6 THE ENGLISH STATE OF AFFAIRS: CHARLES I AND CROMWELL

The chronic wars in Europe kept both King Charles and parliament preoccupied, for the time being. And, as empires extant, Spain and Portugal, lost their dominions, the King made plans to slip into the void by transforming his tiny island into a global empire, often crushing other countries with unprovoked aggression to do it. In due course, his strategy would find its way to America.

The King found himself opposite Cromwell's army on the battlefields of

Edgehill. It was the beginning of a long and bloody series of civil wars between King and country.

> . . . composed of persons superior in station and education to the multitude. These persons, sober, moral, diligent, and accustomed to reflect, had been induced to take up arms, not by the pressure of want, not by love of novelty and license, not by the arts of the recruiting officer, but by religious and political zeal.

John Pym emerged as leader of the opposition to the King during the run-up to Charles' demise. His education at Oxford and the Middle Temple were linchpins for his career as Exchequer, then member for Wiltshire in 1614 and every subsequent election until he died of cancer in 1643. He maintained the unity of the House of Commons with no organized parties or whips, and was the balancing voice from the middle group he headed. When the House of Lords was troublesome, he reminded them that the Commons could run the country very nicely without them and he organized the committees in the House and in the counties that shaped England's political system for centuries afterward. He believed the king must not rule alone but with Parliament, and it was his lengthy speech of grievances—along with the persuasive New Model Army—that dissolved Parliament in 1640.

A Puritan's puritan, he opposed papism and the high Anglican church, and he had the dubious honour of being hunted by Charles for his insubordination. And in time, he became an expert on colonization, and the treasurer of the Providence Island Company. He mechanized the Petition of Right, the impeachment of the Duke of Buckingham, the prosecution of the Earl of Stafford, and the execution of the dreaded Archbishop Laud.

When he died he was given a state funeral and buried in Westminster Abbey. But after the Restoration of the crown with Charles II in 1660, his bones and Cromwell's were exhumed and thrown into a common grave, perhaps with common criminals at Tyburn. But, his descendants would take their place in the English parliament without interruption for centuries into the future.

During this time, Cromwell was exercising his authority over Great Britain. He invaded Drogheda and Wexford in Ireland in 1651 to rid it of Catholicism. He took on 35,000 swordsmen first, incarcerated them, and deported them without their families to those eastern European countries not at war with England. Then he sent bounty hunters equipped with whips to round up women and children and any men they found to put

them in holding pens on the outskirts of towns. From there they were herded onto cargo ships and sent to the British West Indies as indentured servants, or more likely, slaves.

> *In Barbados . . . the Irish were crushed beyond repair. Not one Irish slave ever returned. The first generation of Irish women were cold and had to be beaten into submission. After two generations all awareness of their Catholic faith was said to be eradicated and they were trained for service in breeding farms and bordellos and as "wenches" were much in demand.*
>
> Emmett O'Connell,
> *Sunday Business Post*, Dublin, Ireland. 5 Nov 2000

As Catholics—therefore not Christian—they were not worthy of identification, so no records were kept of who they were or where they came from. Eighty to 100,000 mainly widows and orphans, were sent to Montserrat and Barbados and other islands in the Caribbean. Seven hundred and fifteen thousand more were killed or starved which left about 616,000 from a population of 1,466,000. It was called "the Cromwellian holocaust."

7 THE PHANTOM SHIP

In Mather's Magnalia Christi,
Of the old colonial time,
May be found in prose the legend
That is here set down in rhyme.

A ship sailed from New Haven,
And the keen and frosty airs,
That filled her sails at parting,
Were heavy with good men's prayers.

And the ships that came from England,
When the winter months were gone,
Brought no tidings of this vessel
Nor of Master Lamberton.

When, steadily steering landward,
A ship was seen below,
And they knew it was Lamberton, Master,
Who sailed so long ago.

Janet Hudgins

On she came, with a cloud of canvas,
Right against the wind that blew,
Until the eye could distinguish
The faces of the crew.

And the people who saw this marvel
Each said unto his friend,
That this was the mould of their vessel,
And thus her tragic end.

And the pastor of the village
Gave thanks to God in prayer,
That, to quiet their troubled spirits,
He had sent this Ship of Air.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1863?)

PART TWO

8 JOHN PALMER

At a court of sessions held at Westchester, for the county of Westchester, by their Majesties authority, present John Pell, justice and quorum, president of the court, John Palmer, justice of the peace and quorum, Daniel Sharpe and William Barnes, Esquires, justices of ye peace. December ye 1st, 1691.

Robert Bolton, Jr.
History of the County of Westchester (1848)
p.182

9 SAMUEL PALMER

Samuel and Mary and their six sons put their furniture and farm tools in the wagon, tied their sheep and cattle behind, hitched up the ox team and started off over the rough wagon trail to Mamaroneck. When they arrived they found a six-and-a-half square-mile township, a harbour with a rough dock, eight freehold families settled on the land nearest the harbour—and very little else.

Judith Doolin Spikes
Larchmont, NY (1991)

10

. . . to have their winter wheat ground into flour at the mill on the Mamaroneck River before they built their own grist mill at the mouth of the Premium River, to purchase cloth from William Lounsberry and perhaps have it made into shirts by Hannah Griffen, "seemster," to have cowhides tanned by Samuel Fayerweather and made into shoes by James Coles or Gideon Florence, and to have their horses shod by blacksmith Thomas Barker.

Judith Doolin Spikes
Larchmont, NY (1991

11

. . . rectangular, framed of heavy, squared timbers put together with mortised joints and wooden pegs, sided with rough planks and roofed with shingles. There was a large fireplace and chimney at one end, made of Native stone and mortared with clamshell lime. The house probably had one large room on the ground floor and a loft above, reached by a staircase beside the fireplace.

Judith Doolin Spikes
Larchmont, NY (1991)

12 PALMERS IN SOMERS

The Palmers were all quite insulated from the obsessions of the English and took news of events as it arrived, well after the fact, in stride. They had been left to their own devices by the English and therefore living in peace in Westchester County for nearly 150 years and had become very comfortable with it.

Parliament had been ignoring the everyday life of settled colonists in the American colonies for some time and, except for the demand for taxes to pay for it, gone off to other conquests. So major conflict was now almost foreign to the colonies but a major part of the English culture abroad. England was terrorizing all over the world, marching into countries, taking land and resources, enslaving Natives, and proudly flaunting its mastery over the defenseless. And the political manipulation that it imposed on other countries split not just countries, but whole communities and families leaving hate, bitterness and the basis for other wars for generations and hundreds of years afterward.

War was the human condition in the English lexicon, and every generation had a right to its glorious destruction and the great pride in adding yet another notch to the empire, at least once, if not several times.

And that philosophy, pride of conquest for country, would be the basis of English propaganda for ever after.

They were "colonizing," they said, "to everyone's benefit," and doing a piece of work on the Natives.

The New England states were offering a bounty: first a few pence for a scalp, to £12, then £100 all in the space of 20 years and they continued the practice well into the 20th century. George Washington called for the total destruction of Indians and the Natives made a logical decision: they allied themselves with the French with whom they had had a very civilized relationship for more than a century.

But, this was the Age of Reason and Enlightenment and times were rapidly changing. Superstition, acceptance of things as they happened was old hat and intellectuals began to question; they "dared to know." Government with less monarch and more citizen was what Voltaire was advocating in "self-evident truths." People were getting more and better education now and some actually rejected established religion. Future American icons, Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson were both Deists and rejected the authority of the church.

It would take time to evolve in Westchester.

13 WHIGS AND TORIES

Whigs and Tories were the two opposing sides at this stage, before parties were formed or even thought of. Historically, Whigs, from the Scottish whiggamore, or cattle driver, were brokers, land magnates, and republicans. Tories in mid-17th Century came from *tóraidhe*, Irish guerrilla fighters, but the term gradually became associated with supporters of the king as head of state, an unwelcome philosophy in the thirteen colonies during the American Revolution.

14 John Adams wrote:

> *Much remains yet to be done.*
> *Our soldiers have not yet, quite the Air of Soldiers. They dont step exactly in Time. They dont hold up their Heads, quite erect, nor turn out their Toes, so exactly as they ought. They dont all of them cock their Hats—and such as do, dont all wear them the same Way. . . . A Disciplinarian has affixed to him commonly the Ideas of Cruelty, severity, Tyranny &c. But if I were an Officer I am convinced I should be the most decisive Disciplinarian in the Army. I am convinced their is no other effectual Way of indulging Benevolence, Humanity, and the tender Social Passions, in an Army. . . . Discipline in an Army, is like the Laws, in civil Society. . . . Obedience is the*

only Thing wanting now for our Salvation—Obedience to the Laws, in the States, and Obedience to Officers, in the Army.

L.H. Butterfield, Friedlaender and M. J. Kline
The Book of Abigail and John, 1762-1784 (2002)

15 NATURAL RIGHTS AND IMPERIAL CONSTITUTIONALISM: THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AMERICAN AMALGAM

There was widespread agreement that this intervention in colonial government could threaten other provinces and could be countered only by collective action. After much intercolonial correspondence, a Continental Congress came into existence, meeting in Philadelphia in September 1774. Every colonial assembly except that of Georgia appointed and sent a delegation. The Virginia delegation's instructions were drafted by Thomas Jefferson and were later published as *A Summary View of the Rights of British America* (1774). Jefferson insisted on the autonomy of colonial legislative power and set forth a highly individualistic view of the basis of American rights. This belief that the American colonies and other members of the British Empire were distinct states united under the king and thus subject only to the king and not to Parliament was shared by several other delegates, notably James Wilson and John Adams, and strongly influenced the Congress.

The Congress' first important decision was one on procedure: whether to vote by colony, each having one vote, or by wealth calculated on a ratio with population. The decision to vote by colony was made on practical grounds—neither wealth nor population could be satisfactorily ascertained—but it had important consequences. Individual colonies, no matter what their size, retained a degree of autonomy that translated immediately into the language and prerogatives of sovereignty. Under Massachusetts' influence, the Congress next adopted the Suffolk Resolves, recently voted in Suffolk county, Massachusetts, which for the first time put natural rights into the official colonial argument (hitherto all remonstrances had been based on common law and constitutional rights). Apart from this, however, the prevailing mood was cautious.

The Congress' aim was to put such pressure on the British government that it would redress all colonial grievances and restore the harmony that had once prevailed. The Congress thus adopted an Association that committed the colonies to a carefully phased plan of economic pressure, beginning with nonimportation, moving to nonconsumption, and finishing the following September (after the rice harvest had been exported) with nonexportation. A few New England and Virginia delegates were looking toward independence; but the majority went home hoping that these steps, together with new appeals to the king and to the British people, would avert the need for any further such meetings. If these measures failed, however, a second Congress would convene the following spring.

15a . . . The truth is that the colonists came to America in an exercise of their natural right to withdraw from England. When they did that, they were in effect in a state of nature, free and equal with one another, capable of contracting into a new political society. They acted conservatively in some ways, for they again accepted the King as part of their government and they adopted much of the English common law as their law. The legislative authority is quite another thing from the executive role of the King, however. Just as the English could not reasonably place their legislative power in an irresponsible officer like the hereditary monarch, so the Americans could not reasonably be construed to have placed their legislative power in the hands of a distant and unrepresentative parliament. "From the nature of things, every society must at all times possess within itself the sovereign power of legislation." The Americans have placed this power in their own legislatures, a placement confirmed by the fact that the colonial assemblies have been unchallenged in making law for the colonies from the beginning.

Michael Zuckert
Political Science, University of Notre Dame
See Zuckert, Natural RightsRepublic,chap.6.

16 *Listen my children and you shall hear*
Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere,
On the eighteenth of April, in Seventy-five;

Hardly a man is now alive
Who remembers that famous day and year.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
Paul Revere's Ride (1863)

17 GENERAL TRYON

Stories ran before Tryon after he plundered Danbury, Connecticut. His troops seized patriot goods from homes and churches, grain and meats from storehouses and burned them in the street. "It is said that the fat from the burning meat ran ankle-deep in the street. No less free ran the rum and wine, although not in the same direction," said the *Gazette.* On the other hand, rebel soldiers drank and reveled into the night when they were ordered out to mark Tory houses with a cross and to burn the rest.

Tryon's appointee, Henry Ludington, was a revolutionary colonel before he turned to defend the English. It was Ludington's daughter, Sybil, who rode through the night to re-muster her father's disbanded soldiers from their farms to establish a defense against Tryon. The sixteen-year-old galloped through the dangerous no-man's land of Westchester County in a man's saddle, a hemp halter to control her mount.

18 Abagail Adams wrote to her husband in April 1771:

Women you know Sir are considered as Domestick Beings, and altho they inherit an Eaquel Shore of curiosity with the other Sex, yet but few are hardy eno' to venture abroad, and explore the amaising variety of distant Lands. The Naturual tenderness and Delicacy of our Constitutions, added to the many Dangers we are subject too from your Sex, renders it almost imposible for a single Lady to travel without injury to her character. And those who have a protecter in an Husband, have generally speaking obstacles sufficient to prevent their Roving, and instead of visiting other Countries; are obliged to content themselves with seeing but a very small part of their own. . . .

and by the way in the new Code of Laws which I suppose it wil be necesary for you to make I desire you would Remember the Ladies, and be more generous and favourable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the Husbands. Remember all Men would be tyrants if they could. If perticuliar care and attention is not paid to the Laidies we are determined to foment in Rebelion, and will not

> *hold ourselves bound by any Laws in which we have no voice, or Representation.*
>
> *That your Sex are naturally Tyrannical is a Truth so thoroughly established as to admit of no dispute, but such of you as wish to be happy willingly give up the harsh title of Master for the more tender and endearling one of Friend. Why then, not put it out of the power of the vicious and the Lawless to use us with cruelty and indignity with impunity. Men of Sense in all Ages abhor those customs which treat us only as the vassals of your Sex.*
>
> L.H. Butterfield, Friedlaender and M. J. Kline
> *The Book of Abigail and John, 1762-1784* (2002)

19 Washington Irving, who beguiled generations of school children with *Sleepy Hollow*, wrote:

> *Neither [Cowboys Nor Skinners] stopped to ask the politics of horse or cow which they drove into captivity; nor, when they wrung the neck of a rooster did they trouble their heads to ascertain whether he were crowing for Congress or King George.*

PART THREE

20 NEW YORK DURING THE WAR

"Guilt by association, mob rule and the lynch trial all came into flower during the treatment of the Loyalists in the United States," wrote Walter Stewart in *The Loyalist Legend.*

The army dictated the anomalous rules in the city but legislation came from Congress. No one was allowed on the streets after eight without a "lanthorn" but that did little to protect the Tories from Whig mobs who hauled them through the streets each with a lighted candle and threatened to push it in the victim's face if he flagged. Beating Tories became a blood sport unhindered by the authorities. George Washington wrote, "To discourage such proceedings [would] injure the cause of Liberty . . . and nobody would attempt it but an enemy of his country." English sailors raided the city's private homes nightly. Whigs, sailors and all comers were free to steal Tories' last possessions that included their

indentured servants and slaves. Mounting a Tory on a horse bareback, backward and with his coat turned was great sport; humiliation was the chief exercise in all man-made conflicts.

But then, farmers were ordered to hold all their fodder, grain and wood for the "King's use" or pay a severe fine if caught using or selling them and every citizen was ordered to enroll in the militia under pain of imprisonment or banishment.

A small pension was provided for a handful of loyalists from the proceeds of penalties, fines extracted from violators of the army's regulations, tavern licenses and ferry rents, lotteries and benefit performances. Most of the violators were the less fortunate Tories.

Loyalists were accused of all robberies in New York and convicted by law especially instated for Tories. And some of the accusations may have been well founded. Among those who plotted to kill George Washington in New York in June 1776 were the mayor, a shoemaker, two gunsmiths, several farmers, a pensioner, two doctors, a silversmith and one "damned rascal." Several loyalists were arrested when they were accused of a plot to blow up a rebel powder magazine. Some suspects escaped to hide in outbuildings outside the city but, Thomas Hickey, actually, one of George Washington's bodyguards, was hanged for treason before 20,000 duty-bound spectators.

Local gazettes published rumours and subscribers were easily taken in. They lived in fear of Washington invading on one hand, but were consoled by the story that 36,000 Cossacks had been offered to the English army by a treaty with Russia. In reality, none of it was true.

21 BURGOYNE SURRENDERS

At Saratoga, Burgoyne encountered the number of Americans equal to his command. He decided to fight and formed three columns moving south along the west Hudson River road to the Freeman Farm where the battle actually took place. Within an hour, Burgoyne lost 400 officers and men. Benedict Arnold, in a display of bravado, charged across the open field on horseback and led the Americans from a redoubt on the opposite side. Had be been killed there, his history would have been written with a very different pen. But, he was merely wounded, lived to argue with another general and was summarily dismissed. The American force had swelled with new troops in the meantime while the English lost a third of theirs and on October 8, 1777, Burgoyne surrendered.

It was the turning point that finally brought the French army into the war and it was said in France the cost was the source of their extreme poverty and the catalyst for the French Revolution. As well, America was a good deal more democratic than Europe even before the Revolution so

French soldiers who came from rural farms to fight in America saw that there were no feudal restraints and that some farmers were actually well off.

The concept of the inexperienced country fighting for liberty against the English monolith created enmity in Europe against Great Britain. Spain entered the fray after the French and soon the Dutch severed ties with Britain and that left her with few allies. From there it was a question of time until the King's army fell to the Americans.

Now the English became even more brutal and in one instance an unnamed officer was so monstrous to Sarah Bishop in Long Island that she became a hermitess in a cave on Lake Wacabuck, in northeast Westchester County, not far from Somers. She had been a beautiful young woman with all possibilities for her future, but she never entered society again.

22 THE ACADIANS

Inured to toil, familiar with the storm,
Around our coast these hardy boatmen swarm,
With nerves well strung to battle with the wave,
And souls as free as are the winds they brave.
Acadia loves to hear her rocky shores
Echo the music of their dashing oars;
And hails the offspring of her sea-girt strand
The strength, the pride, the sinews of her land.

Joseph Howe
Acadia

Well before Will Palmer left Maidstone, another saga of the British Empire began to evolve in Canada parallel to the events in America where the English were intent on driving both the French and Native Indians off the face of the earth. And Lewis was aware of much of what was happening not far north of New York but in recent years he was absorbed in the Revolution and what it was doing to he and his family.

The Acadians were the first European settlers in Canada and were there long before the English settled in New England. They came down the St. Lawrence River and to Terres de l'Accadie in 1604, most as excellent farmers from the south west of France. They raised geese and hens, sheep, pigs, horses and horned cattle. They dyked the marshes at the Bay of Funday and grew all manner of cereals and vegetables: peas, corn, shallots, parsnips, chives, greens. They brought with them the seeds for Annapolis Valley orchards: Normandy apples, russet pears and cherries.

And, significantly, they got on well with the Mi'kmaq who taught them how to survive through the bitter winter blizzards and the spring floods. In fact, the suffix of certain Native-named places such as Shubenacadie was a likely link between the Natives and the Acadians: the French *Acadie*, and the Mi'kmaq *e'katie*, "land of."

The Acadians in Nova Scotia had been fighting it out with the English since the early part of the seventeenth century. Caught in the middle, between the Québec colony and New England, the tiny appendage in the Atlantic was bound to be trampled on whenever the perennial opponents came together on another whim of war.

Empire-building plans in Whitehall included Acadia and parts west and the threat of a French and Catholic settlement abutting the American colonies was the *casus belli* the English seized on to display some muscle. Over the next hundred and fifty years Acadia would be tossed back and forth so often one could never be sure who might have taken charge of one's life between going to be at night and getting up in the morning.

The first raid was in 1613 when Samuel Argall, an English privateer, attacked from Jamestown, Virginia. In the fashion of the seventeenth century, the French had had a religious rift that split the settlement in the Fond de la Baie, Bay of Fundy, leaving the factions vulnerable. Argall killed a priest, burned the settlement, then went to the abandoned village of St. Croix and obliterated it, just because it was there. But he didn't occupy the colony; he was on his way to try his hand at bringing Québec to heel. So, Acadia was still French.

In 1621, Charles I granted the province to a confrere-poet from Scotland named William Alexander—Charles was accustomed to making arbitrary decisions—and, unabashed, Alexander renamed it; he called it New Scotland. Then, a band of English pirates, the Kirke brothers, arrived in 1628, pillaged Acadia and exploited it for the next four years when Charles, now hard up, sold it back to the French for hard cash. In the meantime, Alexander sent his eldest son across the Atlantic, he took his band of men, settled into Habitation at Port Royal, the Acadian citadel at the west end of the valley, and called it Charlesfort.

Next, in 1636, arch rivals, Charles d'Alene and Charles La Tour, squared off over the governorship of Acadia. La Tour was a commoner who had married a Native Mi'kmaq and was well established in the territory. Newcomer d'Aulnay, was an aristocrat, and he set out to dethrone La Tour. For five years they battled during which time La Tour's wife died. In desperation, he went off to Boston to seek assistance from the English leaving his new French wife alone in the fort. D'Aulnay found out and sailed up the Bay of Fundy demanding her surrender. She

waved a red flag and he attacked. Madame went on the defensive until she exhausted herself and her arsenal. D'Aulnay offered peace and security and as soon as she accepted he talked out of the other side of his mouth. He hanged her supporters before her one by one, and incarcerated her where she mysteriously died a few weeks later. But, by 1650, d'Aulnay was also dead, La Tour returned, convinced d'Aulnay's widow to marry him and they began the task of rebuilding commerce in Acadia.

However, in 1654 Robert Sedgewick took Port Royal, and the English stayed in control until 1670 when yet another agreement gave Acadia back to the French. By now, the English throne was occupied by Charles II who was in exile in the Netherlands. But he wanted to go home and the little neck of land was the forfeit for his return in the Treaty of Breda.

William Phipps of Boston mutilated Port Royal in 1690 and with the quickened pulse of success he went on to Québec and demanded Governor Frontenac's surrender to which the Governor offered his cannon.

During Queen Anne's war from 1702 to 1713, the French and English attacked each other in New England and in retaliation the "avenging Puritan," Colonel Benjamin Church, attacked Acadia five times. "A fierce messenger," he called himself, and was pleased to report that his victims "were troubled to see their cattle, sheep, hogs, and dogs lying dead about their houses, chopped and hacked to death with hatchets."

In 1710 Francis Nicholson took Port Royal and Subercase, the Governor, pleaded to France for help but it never came. But, he overcame two invasions and then the Mi'kmaq launched a counterattack against the English and more than 30 soldiers were killed in a tiny hamlet that would become known as Bloody Creek. Both the Acadian larder and arsenal ran low and Subercase finally succumbed. "Rarely in the history of human conflict had so little been achieved by so many against so few," they said. Nicholson changed Port Royal to Annapolis Royal and tried to tax the now impoverished French to pay for English wars.

The Natives kept on with their own battle so the English brought on 100 Iroquois. Their brutal reputation preceded them so that fear kept the peace until the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 ceded Acadia to the English, New France, Québec, to the French. For the next 40 years there was relative peace and prosperity; it took some getting used to.

By 1753, aside from Native land, the French pretty much controlled most of Eastern Canada and reached deep into the innards of the American colonies: the Ohio Valley and Pennsylvania where they built Fort

Duquesne—twelve-foot walls, eight cannon each—at the mouth of the Ohio River. And, young George Washington was dispatched to the Ohio Valley. He was twenty-one, in the English military and he was sent to warn the French to leave. But, he either misunderstood or was duped into allowing his surrender to the French for which he was roundly criticized by the English. The French sent Washington packing, and prepared to defend their territory against the English.

He was a petulant young man not given to accepting blame with grace, and stoutly defended himself, to no avail. So now The Seven Years' War, The French and Indian War, The Great War for Empire, was underway and Washington was responsible. With his connections and patronage, he had been aiming high in the English military but, that was truncated and new momentum began in his id in the America versus England arena.

Despite its name, this was not a war against the Indians, it was between the English and French over control of North America, but most of the Indian tribes sided with the French.

Now, the French were being attacked at Fort Louisbourg by English redcoats, and at Fort Duquesne by American soldiers enlisted by the English. For the next nine years both sides repeatedly pushed forward and fell back until their treasuries and fortitude were depleted. From there to Acadia was not far and just a matter of time.

Tensions mounted and France sent one of her renowned commanders, Louis-Joseph de Montcalm who defeated James Abercromby at Ticonderoga in 1758 only to have another English officer, Jeffrey Amherst, take it the next year. The English turned their attention westward in earnest. William Pitt, the newly elected prime minister, changed the long-standing policy of supplying naval and logistical aid only to the colonies and sent regulars to command the combat operations.

He was also building a world-class navy—which ran interference on the French who were trying to supply their forces in their colonies—and running a war concurrently in Europe: France, Russia, Austria and Spain versus Britain, Prussia and Hanover. Austria and Prussia had each determined to take over Germany; France and Britain thought it an opportunity made-to-order as each had resolved to be the world's most powerful nation.

ENGLISH PLAN TO EXPULSE ACADIANS

By now England and its confederates on both sides of the Atlantic were well practiced in marching in and routing the denizens wherever they took a notion to do so. In Boston, protestant ministers railed against the papists from the pulpit, papers directly attacked the "perfidious French," but it was

with England's appointed Governor of Massachusetts, William Shirley, that the long, slow death of the Acadian establishment began and he was agitating to drive out the Acadians as early as 1746. He wrote to the Board of Trade in London, "the [French] will soon find a way to wrest Acadia from us if we do not remove the most dangerous French inhabitants and replace them with English families." He rallied Nova Scotia's Lieutenant Governor Charles Lawrence, the Chief Justice and two army officers and colluded to get rid of the Acadians. His initial plan was to immigrate 6,000 English families to Acadia in lots of 2,000 from England, New England and retired loyal soldiers from anywhere, they being handy harassment material in their idle time.

John Robinson had come from York in 1774 to tour the province with a view to purchasing farmland and moving his family to Nova Scotia. The settlers that had been sent by the English, both from England and New England to take over and populate Acadian land, he found to be somewhat less than acceptable. In his diary he recorded his observations.

> *They plough here a little, and there a little, and sow it with the same grain, without ever a fallow, till it will grow nothing but twitch grass . . . . The French, when in possession of this place, had their marshes diked in and ploughed, which grew wheat in such abundance that they sold it . . . however, the present inhabitants do not grow so much as is sufficient for themselves . . . would they but properly cultivate their own lands, leave off the use of rum, which they drink before breakfast; and to which, in a great measure they owe their poverty.*
>
> *Nothing can be said in favour of the inhabitants as to their management in farming. They neither discover judgment or industry. Such of the New Englanders into whose manners and characters we particularly inspected, appeared to us to be a lazy, indolent people. In general, they continue in bed till seven or eight o'clock in the morning; and the first thing they do, after quitting it, is to get a glass of rum, after which they prepare for breakfast, before they go out to work, and return to dinner by eleven. They go out again about two, and at four return to tea. Sometimes they work an hour, or two after, and then return home, both masters and their servants, amongst whom there seems to be no distinction; and you scarce can know one from the other. They are all Misters and Sirs, and their maidens all Misses so that you never hear a Christian name mentioned. They usually all eat together at one table,*

except amongst a few of the wealthier fort.

Johnson said that the government had supplied the settlers with provisions for the first few years leaving a dependency that was a "condemning habit of mind."

Governors came and went in Nova Scotia and they had a tendency to use their authority to suit their own need and greed. Following Shirley's plan, Edward Cornwallis brought 2,500 new settlers from England in 1749. And then he started the English program to put the French on the offensive; he told them that his predecessor had exceeded his authority with the conditional oath of allegiance exempting the Acadians from conscription. And that was the sole instrument with which to harass the French.

But, the purported *casus belli* for this genocide—the French refusal to sign an oath of allegiance without an exempt condition from fighting for the English—was not as it seemed. An anonymous dispatch published in a Halifax paper in 1755 made the motive clearer.

> *We are now upon a great and noble Scheme of sending the neutral French out of this Province, who have always been secret Enemies, and have encouraged our Savages to cut our Throats. If we effect their Expulsion, it will be one of the greatest Things that ever the English did in America; for by all the Accounts, that Part of the Country they possess, is as good Land as any in the World: In case therefore we could get some good English Farmers in their Room, this Province would abound with all Kinds of Provisions.*
>
> *We are now hatching the noble and great project of banishing the French Neutrals from this province; they have ever been our secret enemies and have encouraged the Indians to cut our throats. If we can accomplish this expulsion, it will have been one of the greatest deeds the English in America have ever achieved; for, among other considerations, the part of the country which they occupy is one of the best soils in the world, and, in the event, we might place some good farmers on their homesteads.*
>
> Col John Winslow, July 1755

It was two governors later when Lawrence arrived and soon affected the horrible holocaust with William Shirley. He promised enough ships to remove 7,000 Acadians.

In 1759, a thirty-two-year-old man from just south of Maidstone, Kent, arrived in Nova Scotia. James Wolfe stopped in Acadia on his way to Québec and his final confrontation. But, first he took Fort Louisbourg. He drove the French out, and the tide turned dramatically in favour of the English. The Native tribes reversed their loyalties and the governor, Charles Lawrence, demanded the French take an oath of allegiance to the king, or leave. He called it the *final resolution*. Nova Scotia army officer and Shirley's confederate, Robert Monckton, led the persecution.

TREATY OF PARIS ENDS THE WAR

In 1763 the Treaty of Paris ended the French and Indian War, and awarded England the top half the North American continent including New France and Acadia except Saint Pierre and Miquelon which they agreed France could keep. As well, sovereign independence was recognized for the whole eastern seaboard of the bottom half—the thirteen colonies, from Massachusetts to Georgia—and granted to the new republic, now called the United States. Many other trades and barters went to and from the agencies of France, Spain and Portugal, and His Britannic Majesty, the most serene and potent George III, conceded that his new subjects might practice the Catholic religion.

And, the *Royal Proclamation* of the same year guaranteed safe haven, considerable land and even some degree of sovereignty to Natives:

> *And whereas it is just and reasonable, and essential to our Interest, and the Security of our Colonies, that the several Nations or Tribes of Indians with whom We are connected, and who live under our Protection, should not be molested or disturbed in the Possession of such Parts of Our Dominions and Territories as, not having been ceded to or purchased by Us, are reserved to them, or any of them, as their Hunting Grounds . . .*

The new American Republic, not now a shrinking violet after its outstanding victory in 1783 and anxious to test its new-found prowess, were immediately casting about to annex the other half of the continent.

At the onset of the American Revolution, the English had thwarted Benedict Arnold's invasion into Québec, but six months later Congress tried the diplomatic approach and sent a committee to Canada to persuade it to become a 14th colony. Canada was expanding westward and the prospect of a united North America, a bulwark to deter any further incursion of the

English Empire into the continent, appealed to the new Congress. And during the Paris negotiations at the end of the war, Benjamin Franklin stepped up the American demands to include Québec, John Adams proposed that Nova Scotia be in the pot. Both escaped the final document when the English suggested the Americans would be liable for Loyalist losses in the war, in which case, said the Americans, when would the English be anteing up to the Acadians.

23 PORT ROSEWAY

Surveyor Benjamin Marston arrived in Port Roseway's ancient forest with a scouting party on the 2nd of May. There was ample timber: spruce, oak, pine, maple, and ample granite boulders. Rocks were plopped on rocks pushed and dragged down the coast in some glacial epoch and never touched by a warm hand or wounded by its lethal swath for all these thousands of years. Sixteen men had been appointed to head up the 16 companies of the Association and they, along with the scouting party, deemed it to be prime farmland. "Wants nothing but cultivation," they said.

Now to the eye its glowing charms revealed,
Now, like a bashful Beauty, half concealed
Beneathe the robe of spotless green she wears,
The rich profusion of a thousand years.
No axe profane has touched a single bough,
No sod has yet been broken by the plough. . . .

Joseph Howe
Acadia

24 THE PALMERS LEAVE SHELBURNE

Marion Robertson in *King's Bounty* wrote that within three years "there were 360 empty houses, two years later, two-thirds of the town was uninhabited."

25 THE NEXT GENOCIDE:
CANADIAN ABORIGINALS

By the latter half of the 19th century, imperial England had taken control of the northern half of the North American continent through various wars, established boundaries and formed governments. As soon as it could, the federal government set up a Department of Indian Affairs and the reservation system to isolate Indians in ghettos on some of the poorest land

in the country. And by 1884, in spite of the fact that Native bands were in favour of formal education, status children were legislated into Residential schools.

It was a policy of assimilation, a policy designed to move Aboriginal communities from the savage state to that of civilization and thus to make in Canada one community—a non-Aboriginal one.

Discipline by corporal punishment for children was a deep-seated part of the European child-rearing tradition and indicative of the prevalence of breaking and controlling children's will. Even before the Pilgrims had taken firm root in America, Puritan John Robinson advocated that:

> *stubbornness, stoutness of mind arising from natural pride must be broken and beaten down so that the foundation of their education being laid in humility and tractableness, other virtues may in their time be build [sic] thereon.*

Delegating authority to the bible, fundamentalists and other religious zealots advocated very severe punishment. "Corporal punishment was a concerned act of last resort, not of abuse."

And there was another thing. With the onset of the Industrial Revolution, severe abuse to children became particularly salient in England. Poor children were used in the workhouses, their cheap labour made the Revolution a success and a few adults disgustingly rich. From as young as five years old, boys and girls laboured long hours over the backbreaking work in cotton mills and, some became deformed in such as the iron factories. During Queen Victoria's reign, the masses—the poor and their children—were barely surviving in the filthy streets of London and other towns in England. Unattended disease and starvation were common, 80,000 prostitutes plied the back streets and 8,000 of them died each year, little girls were sold in the street, and in the 1830s, half the funerals in London were for children under ten. As they were not required to attend school, factory and mill agents freely scoured the streets for lone children and coerced them into labour. Severe punishment in the workhouses was commonly administered, often just to set an example and was the subject and great passion of much of Charles Dickens' work. This mentality arose again in Canada in Residential Schools.

It was years before Ben found out that the whole Jeremy family of three girls and two boys had been brutally abused for ten years in a Residential School. They lived in Bloody Creek now and Louis, their father, made the journey up the valley each winter with baskets and snowshoes on a sled and spent the night at Ben's house in Millville. The Palmer kids were fascinated

with Louis' stories about nature and Mi'kmaq legends and traditions and would sit listening quietly when they would otherwise be yawning with boredom. But, he never mentioned what white men had perpetrated on his own kids. It was such a deep injury and it hurt too much to cry, they said.

Along with other Native children, they were forcibly taken away from home because, said the General Secretary of the Methodist Church of Canada:

> *Experience convinces us that the only way in which the Indians of the Country can be permanently elevated and thoroughly civilized, is by removing the children from the surroundings of Indian home life, and keeping them separate long enough to form those habits of order, industry, and systematic effort, which they will never learn at home...The return of children to their houses, even temporarily, has a bad effect, while the permanent removal (back home) after one or two years residence results in a loss of all they have gained.*

Once out of sight and sound of Native families and communities, teachers and staff began a regimen of designer English-style child-rearing with additional severity to force assimilation.

The children were not permitted to speak their own language, wear their own clothes, or leave the school. If any of these were violated, they were beaten, and, as a matter of course, starved, overworked, nearly frozen, sexually violated, and certainly not educated.

For over 100 years, 100,000 Native children in Canada endured hellish treatment merely for being in the way of English "progress" and like all people of colour in the world wherever England forced its way in, they were punished for it.

A century of abuse flowed like lava to burn the consequential hatred into young minds instead of legends and traditions, the genocide having taken culture, language, hope and faith and given deep welts of ignorance and violence.

26 SLAVES

The Unites States of America had human slavery for almost one hundred years before that custom was recognized as a social disease and people began to fight it. Imagine that. Wasn't that a match for Auschwitz? What a beacon of liberty we were to the rest of the world when it was perfectly acceptable her to own other human beings and treat them as we treated cattle. Who

told you we were a beacon of liberty from the very beginning? Why would they lie like that?

Thomas Jefferson owned slaves, and not many people found that odd. It was as though he had an infected growth on the end of his nose the size of a walnut, and everybody thought that was perfectly OK. I mentioned this one time at the University of Virginia, of which Jefferson was not only the founder but the sublime architect. A history professor explained to me afterward that Jefferson could not free his slaves until he and they were very old, because they were mortgaged and he was broke. . . .

Kurt Vonnegut
Fates Worse than Death p.84

'Britons never, never, never shall be slaves.'

It may surprise some of you to learn what an old equation that is. The Scottish poet wrote it, James Thomson, died in 1748—about a quarter of a century before there was such a country as the USA. Thomson promised Britons that they would never be slaves, at a time when the enslavement of persons with inferior weaponry was a respectable industry. Plenty of people were going to be slaves, and it would serve them right, too—but Britons would not be among them.

So that isn't really a very nice song. It is about not being humiliated, which is all right. But it's also about humiliating others, which is not a moral thing to do. The humiliation of others should never be a national goal. . . .

Kurt Vonnegut
Fates Worse than Death p.142

27 SCHLIEFFEN STRATEGY:

The idea of the plan was to win a two-front war quickly by first triumphing in the West again before the Russian Steamroller would be able to mobilize and descend upon East Prussia—the plan scheduled 39 days for the fall of Paris.

It envisioned a rapid German mobilization, disregard of the neutrality of Luxembourg and Belgium, and an overwhelming sweep of the powerful German right wing southwest through Belgium and Northern France, letting the last man on the right brush the Channel with his sleeve, in the words of Schlieffen, while maintaining only a defensive posture on the central and left wings, in Lorraine, the Vosges, and the Moselle.

RUN UP TO WWI

At some point in the past century, most of Europe had been at war with itself and territory had been lost, stolen, traded, swapped and exchanged to compromise or meet the demands of various treaties, agreements and leaders. But on no account with the knowledge or consent of the populace. One went to bed a citizen of Bosnia and woke up a Turk when it was seized by Turkey and it was an everlasting powder keg of contention within Bosnia itself and with the surrounding countries. In the Balkan Wars of 1912, Bosnia drove the Turks back to Constantinople and the Balkans fought among themselves over territory.

Then Franz-Joseph annexed Bosnia under the pretext of preventing the Turks from reclaiming it, and took some of what the Balkans had gained in 1912. Serbia, in a bid to unite the country, threatened Franz-Joseph; Tzar Nicholas of Russia supported Serbia, its brother Slav; Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany, to advance his own agenda, supported Franz-Joseph. The First War might have begun then but Nicholas backed down.

France had lost Alsace-Lorraine to Germany in the Franco-Prussian War in 1870-1, and wanted *revanche* and its return. England wanted foreign markets to consume the production that came out of the Industrial Revolution and so created the *Entente Cordiale* with France, its old enemy, in 1904. Russia signed an *Entente* with England in 1907, then all three formed the *Triple Entente*.

The treaties were set up by Bismark ostensibly to keep peace in Europe but they were failing after he was fired by the new Kaiser, Wilhelm II, grandson of Queen Victoria. Wilhelm sided with the Boers in South Africa (1906), congratulated the Boer leader for defeating England and George V had serious misgivings about his cousin.

In 1911, Wilhelm threatened France over its colonization of Morocco, and England came to its defense as it had given it Morocco in a previous agreement. Wilhelm agreed to leave France alone in Morocco for a piece of the French Congo. Another war was thwarted.

By this time, the drive for war in Europe was palpable as certain monarchs lay in wait for the opportunity that could be turned into a crisis. Perception was all that was necessary; truth was not even a value to be considered, and not a requisite to generate the worst horror man had ever devised. It would not matter how the war was fought, but, in accordance with the culture of war, who won: the victor. And, it would be the perfect, deliberate threshold for yet another atrocity 25 years later when the next army of mostly young men bequeathed their very own hell to future generations to endure for the rest of their lives.

Some countries were forming alliances for stated economic and

security reasons but always, there was the manipulation by bodies politic. European imperialism and colonialism had brought expansionism to certain countries, isolation and fortification to its opposites and a life of apprehension by ordinary citizens.

And what was referred to as the "art" of war was about to turn into a bloody slaughter of people of all stripes if they happened to be in the way of the huge arsenal raised for the event. Until World War I, a code of ethics had been adhered to by combatants, who, among other things, made war with each other, never with anyone who was not enlisted. But that was about to change.

Now an arms race was underway. Both England and Germany excitedly began to increase their standing armies, to expand their navies, and a new kind of arsenal would be developed—a product of the Revolution—that would create the most hideous of wars thus far in the history of civilization.

In 1914, the aging Franz Joseph planned to add Serbia to his Double Monarchy. He would die soon and time was of the essence. If he succeeded it would be the end of Serbia's plan to unite the state. Several young nationalists, some dying of tuberculosis, agreed to sacrifice themselves for the cause when Franz Joseph's nephew and heir, Franz Ferdinand, and his wife, Sophia, went to Sarajevo on a state visit. They chose the most sacred day in Serbian history: their defeat by the Ottoman Turks on the plains of Kosovo. The first two assassination attempts failed and the would-be murderers promptly took cyanide provided by their movement, *The Black Hand*, but a third, Gavrilo Princip succeeded when the driver of the couple's car stopped to change course just where Princip was standing. His pistol easily found its targets from about five feet away fatally wounding Sophia in the stomach and Franz in the jugular. Sophia was pregnant. Princip didn't get a chance to take cyanide before he was arrested. He was a small man, and emaciated, and the police beat him mercilessly.

This was the opportunity Wilhelm had been waiting for. He pledged full support to Franz-Joseph then pressured him to punish Serbia. Franz-Joseph issued an ultimatum, a long list to be met in 48 hours. The main demands were to suppress all propaganda including that for nationalism and against Austria-Hungary, to fire and take legal action against certain officials named by it, and to admit Austrian personnel into Serbia to officiate during investigations, proceedings and trials concerning the murders. Serbia ceded all but the latter and asked for an International Tribunal at The Hague to hear the dispute. It went just the way Wilhelm planned: the request was rejected and war was declared on Serbia 28th July 1914.

Countries quickly aligned themselves: Germany and Austria were The Enemy; England, France and Russia The Allies.

Nicholas mobilized against Franz-Joseph and supported Serbia, Wilhelm threatened war if Nicholas didn't withdraw. On August 1st Germany declared war on Russia and on France on the 3rd. It invaded neutral Belgium on its way to France, and then England declared war on Germany. Kaiser Wilhelm got what he wanted. He got it through a most ridiculous course, and what was even more ridiculous, world leaders fell in.

The fact that Germany launched an immediate attack on France, in the opposite direction of Serbia, came as a considerable surprise to the allies. The plan was to take France, then Russia and England would refuse to fight which would give Germany and Austria-Hungary complete freedom in Serbia. Germany reasoned that it could defeat France in about six weeks. It sent 90 per cent of its army thinking neither Russia nor England were ready and could not come to France's defense. The Schlieffen strategy proposed that Germany advance through Holland and Luxembourg to converge on and take the easier route through the flat plains of Flanders in Belgium with 34 divisions leaving just eight to meet Russia from the east.

But, Belgium defended itself, Russia went into East Prussia and the English quickly raised an Expeditionary Force. Serbia would have to wait.

Then reports of the action began to filter across the Atlantic with accounts of assault on Belgian towns, of civilians captured and executed by the Germans and the mood changed; the west was in high dudgeon that such barbarity should come to the Congo slavers, and that was what was needed to enlist thousands of inexperienced men. But, there was no real reason for war. Kaiser Wilhelm's move to take Paris and Serbia, with little interference, they thought, was the catalyst. Franz Joseph and his plan to take over the Serbian throne was forgotten.

The momentum for war was underway and governments invented a huge marketing plan to promote it.

Both at home and in the colonies, England was dispatching a new weapon of war: repetitive propaganda. It kept the machine in motion. Information was withheld and doctrine issued, both distorted and exaggerated, then offered up to the main organ of dissemination, the newspapers. As no correspondents were allowed on the battlefront in the beginning, no one contradicted the printed word and allied politicians were handled by military brass whose dictum it was that the public had no right to know what they were up to. But, by 1917 the press was involved in the propaganda. Lord Beaverbrook, a Canadian ex-patriot media mogul living in London, was appointed to head up the English War Mission, the

propaganda agency in the United States.

In England Prime Minister Asquith wrote to Winston Churchill:

> *My Dear Winston:*
>
> *The papers are complaining, not without reason, that we keep them on a starvation diet.*
>
> *I think the time has come for you to repeat last Sunday's feat, & let them have thro' the Bureau an 'appreciation' of the events of the week; with such a seasoning of condiments as your well-skilled hand can supply.*
>
> *For all that the public know, they might as well be living in the days of the prophet Isaiah, whose idea of battle was 'confused noise & garments rolled in blood.'*

Posters were plastered in public places and in barracks: a mother telling her son to join up lest he shame her; an appeal for women to make munitions; a heinous-looking Kaiser Wilhelm holding a bayoneted infant angel aloft. Soldiers were ordered to write home once a week but no letter left any camp without clearing the censor, each letter was read and bold, black lines were stroked through words, whole sentences and paragraphs. In time, the public accepted the rhetoric, however extraordinary, and politicians and generals heard little opposition.

And the literary talents of Britain's foremost writers were put to work for the government's propaganda: H.G. Wells, Thomas Hardy, Rudyard Kipling were in charge of the colonies, and one, George Bernard Shaw, dared voice his objection with a pamphlet. He said that the government used the German attack on Belgium as a pretext to get into the war and, for that, he, too, was threatened with censorship. Wells' pamphlet said that this war would end war, and also, with a substantial dose of hypocrisy, said:

> *We are, I believe, assisting at the end of a vast intolerable oppression upon civilization. We are fighting to release Germany and all the world from the superstition that brutality and cynicism are the methods of success, that Imperialism is better than free citizenship.*

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Compelling though it is, much of Canadian history has been buried under that of empires-in-power for most of our existence, and we have been deprived. *Treason* came from my own fascination with the life and times of other ages and a necessity to know, to know about the passageway from here to there, to discover it all. Custom, social class, religion, survival, husbandry, language, emotion, family, women, children, education, costume, colour, fabric, cooking, sleeping, work, play, music, wildlife, the significance of governance, land and water, fatalism and superstition, communities and institutions, Christianity in respect of Nature.

And insidious empire building: the ethnic genocide, ravage and rapine so horrible it would creep through the ages and everyone it touched from then until now.

This is the story of the Palmers who were early settlers in New England and Nova Scotia. They were Puritans in the seventeenth century, Quakers in the next century, in the Loyalist Diaspora to Shelburne, Nova Scotia after the American Revolution, and Canadian soldiers in the trenches of World War I. They owned, and were stripped of by the Americans hundreds of farm acres in Westchester, East Chester, Somers in Cortlandt Manor, all of Larchmont and City Island in Long Island Sound, New York. And until the Revolution, the family was always among the founding officials of each of the American communities in which they lived.

Treason begins in 17th Century England when the minority:

monarch, aristocracy, government and not least, the church, comprised the omnificent layers that promulgated the dogma that controlled the majority that included William Palmer and thereafter his descendants, all of whom endured the constant challenge for the use and abuse of power and suffered the cause and effect of politic individuals on their life and times.

In the time and place where Will was born and grew up, the royal absolutists were in constant fear of losing power, while in Whitehall, demagogues were finding ways to keep the monarchy out of government, some with honourable intentions. But, it was the all-powerful church that hung its dour canon over the heads of all from the monarchy down, and all lived in fear of the torment of their mortal souls.

There is the question of fact versus fiction, which is which. I was able to follow the Palmer family through sources recognized in "Treason Resources," historical societies and individuals acknowledged herewith. And during more than eight years of searching records and walking on site, I have endeavoured to create a narrative around their lives.

Janet Hudgins

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When I was able to go to these places, I walked on sites where the Palmers had settled in Connecticut and New York State, in Aberdeen where Meg was born and grew up, and in the Somme where Jack survived the hell and Maj did not. My guide and hosts, Rod and Jackie Bedford from the village of Mailly-Maillet between Arras and Amiens, took me through the

World War I battlefields, the trenches, the unchanged countryside and to Paulette's home in the village where there had been an underground hospital in the war. And in the last few hours of my stay there, during reminiscent cold, hard wind and rain, we found Maj's name on the front of the massive Canadian monument in Vimy. "And yet," they said, "the skylarks sang."

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THE PALMERS
1635 – 1920

WILLIAM and MARTHA

Joseph Benjamin **SAMUEL** Obadiah Thomas Martha Philip
MARY

William Obadiah Nehemiah Samuel **SYLVANUS** Solomon
MARY

JOHN
REBECCA

LEWIS Joseph Marcus Benjamin Esther Philip Thomas Martha
RACHEL Edmund Alpheus

BENJAMIN Theodosius Elizabeth Philena Matilda Mary Euphemia
PHILENA

Alfred Betsy Enoch Rachel **ELIJAH** Enoch Elizabeth Benjamin Philena
ELIZABETH Margaret John Mary

Mary Jane **BENJAMIN** Eliza Amy Louisa Ann Sarah Thomas Richard
CHARLOTTE

LEANDER Edgar Amelia Euphemia Arabel Helen James Reed Handley
SARAH ANN

Edith Ernest Meredith Whillaby Newcombe Thomas Lorne **HELEN**
ARCHIBALD

Frank Olive **JACK** **MAJOR** Ethel

Janet Hudgins

REVIEWS

"This book would have made history classes fun."
March, 2009
History has come a long way. The teaching of it, that is.
In the 'good old days' you know what it meant at school – dates, official proclamations, names and battles. And perhaps a good snooze.
School history texts are still not page turners, but they're getting better.
This new book, Treason: A Violation of Trust (Xlibris), by Janet Hudgins, has brought the method a little further along the way. It wasn't intended to be a school text. Hudgins' intention was to pass along the story of British colonization in North America as it affected her own family. The result teaches history, for kids or adults, is a way that gets you involved personally.
It was written almost as if it were a novel, with liberal doses of 'history'. But you want to know the 'history' because it affects the characters so vitally. Which means it affects the reader strongly because Hudgins can get you involved in their lives emotionally. You suffer with William Palmer saying goodbye forever to his parents in 1635 when he leaves England for the New World, when he struggles with the filth and danger of the ocean crossing, and with the hardship and joys of a new life.
During the war of independence in the U.S. one of Palmer's descendents, a Loyalist, is hanged for spying by a commanding officer seeking cold vengeance in circumstances in which any other commander would have shown mercy. You feel the pain with his family.
The Palmer family followed other Loyalists to Nova Scotia, where they started life anew without the wealth and comfort they had amassed over the years in New England. The book ends with descriptions of the Canadian victories at Vimy Ridge fought in terrible conditions.
The book could have used more editing. There are awkward spots, confusing timelines, and passages that are hard to understand. But those are secondary problems to what is offered – a feeling of personal involvement in some of the history of both the U.S. and Canada.
This book would have made history classes fun.

Harry Goldhar
Vice-President, Editorial
Chestnut Publishing Group
Toronto, ON

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Another Perspective on the Revolutionary War
February 2, 2009
This novel is rich in historical data and covers a wide time span. It begins when Will is preparing to leave England for the wilds of a young America and ends with his descendants fighting for England during WWI. The family is forced to flee to Canada (along with many others) when they chose to remain loyal to the crown during the Revolution. If you ever wondered what happened to those people after they left, this book is for you.

Anita Mott, Utah
Mose, Outskirts Press, Inc. Denver, CO, 2008
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Janet Hudgins