THE PURITAN CONNECTION

"Why don't you speak for yourself, John?" If my cousin Arthur's research is right, that quote from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's "The Courtship of Miles Standish" is not only one of the most famous lines in American literature, it also immortalizes the romance between two of my great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great (that's nine "greats") grandparents—John Alden and Priscilla Mullins. Longfellow may have invented most of his poem, especially the famous question, which Priscilla poses when John, out of loyalty, woos her on behalf of his friend Captain Standish instead of confessing that he loves her himself. But John Alden and Priscilla Mullins were not figments of the poet's imagination. Instead, they were actual passengers who came over on the *Mayflower* in 1620 and helped settle the Plymouth colony in what later became Massachusetts. Longfellow, a direct descendant of John Alden and Priscilla Mullins, said their story was part of his family lore.

The poem ends with John and Priscilla's wedding. No one has found a record of their marriage, but it probably took place a year or two after they arrived in New England. The Aldens lived in a house that still stands in Duxbury, a town near Plymouth. John and Priscilla Alden's ten children produced sixty-nine grandchildren and nearly 500 great-grandchildren. The result is that millions of Americans can now trace their lineage back to the couple. In fact, although roughly half the ship's 102 passengers (including Priscilla Mullins's family) died of various diseases during their first winter in Plymouth, which they spent on the ship, enough survived that a substantial chunk—at least 10 percent—of the current U.S. population can trace its ancestry back to the *Mayflower*.

So, not such a big deal to have *Mayflower* ancestors after all. It *was* considered a big deal when I was young, however. The thing is, I had no clue about any of this until 2012, when I received a six-by-nine manila envelope from my cousin containing the results of his research into our family history. His findings seemed in line with certain truths about my character that I had discovered years earlier, in a detective story, of all places. Here's what happened.

At my first professional job, I had an office with a gorgeous view of the Pacific Ocean and worked alongside interesting, compatible people. But let's face it, editing and summarizing reports about decisionmaking or economics five days a week can be tedious. Luckily, Ben, the editor in the office across the hall from me, kept a collection of paperbacks in a bookshelf inside his door. One day, I

pulled from Ben's bookcase a copy of E. C. Bentley's 1913 detective novel, *Trent's Last Case*. The story is about how amateur detective Philip Trent tries to solve the murder of a nasty character called Sigsbee Manderson, an American tycoon found dead at his English vacation home—shot through the left eye.

The novel describes Manderson as someone who would sacrifice anyone "in the pursuit of his schemes, in his task of imposing himself and his will upon the world." To investigate Manderson's death, Trent relies on an old friend, Nathaniel Cupples, uncle of the deceased's beautiful young widow Mabel, with whom Trent of course falls in love. On page 90 of the book (which I never returned to Ben's bookcase), I read the following exchange between Mr. Cupples (speaking first) and Trent:

> "This is a terrible time in which we live, my dear boy. There is none recorded in history, I think, in which the disproportion between the material and the moral constituents of society has been so great or so menacing to the permanence of the fabric. But nowhere, in my judgment, is the prospect so dark as it is in the United States."
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> "I thought," said Trent listlessly, "that Puritanism was about as strong there as the money-getting craze."
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> "Your remark," answered Mr. Cupples, with as near an approach to humor as was possible to him, "is not in the nature of a testimonial to what you call Puritanism—a convenient rather than an accurate term; for I need not remind you that it was invented to describe an Anglican party which aimed at the purging of the services and ritual of their Church from certain elements repugnant to them. The sense of your observation, however, is none the less sound, and its truth is extremely well illustrated by the case of Manderson himself, who had, I believe, the virtues of purity, abstinence, and self-restraint in their strongest form."

I put the book down and gazed out my office window. Sunlight bounced off the ocean, sailboats scudded across the bay beyond the Santa Monica pier. *Purity, abstinence, and self-restraint.* That's me, I thought. Those are the ideals I absorbed, the behavior that was expected of me.

Good golly, Miss Molly!

I'm a born and bred *Puritan*!

Little did I know. Forty-odd years later, I received my cousin's envelope. Inside were a dozen pages detailing his research into our shared family tree. His mother, my Auntie Mae, born a Potter like my father, had died the year before (at age ninety-six) and he was curious about her ancestry. The story I had always

heard was that the Potters originally came from England, even that they might once have been landowners there—the myth of the lost estate that passed to the Crown after its owners left the country. But no one had ever mentioned ancestors who were part of the great exodus from England in the seventeenth century, much less that our family tree went back to the *Mayflower*. Could this be right? If so, why was my cousin the first in our family to discover it? I couldn't believe it. When I told my friend Penny about it, she pooh-poohed the idea. "I've heard that from lots of friends," she said.

So I put Arthur's envelope aside for a couple of years. Then I retrieved it and went online to see if I could reproduce his results. I signed onto a genealogy website and hitched rides on a couple of others. Except for some minor stumbling blocks, my results jibed with my cousin's. I telephoned Arthur: "This looks really good!" Maybe I actually *was* a born and bred Puritan.

But wait. Wasn't it the Pilgrims who settled the Plymouth colony? Were the Pilgrims and the Puritans the same? Yes and no. Fact 1: Both Pilgrims and Puritans were dissident religious groups who left England for the New World in the 1600s. Fact 2: The Pilgrims arrived first and settled the Plymouth Colony. Fact 3: The Puritans were another group that founded the Massachusetts Bay Colony in nearby Boston a decade after the *Mayflower* reached New England.

What the Pilgrims and Puritans shared was dissatisfaction with the Anglican Church that King Henry VIII had established in 1534 as a breakaway from the Roman Catholic Church. To the dissenters, as Mr. Cupples told Trent, the Anglicans retained too much of the pomp and ceremony of the Catholics. The beliefs of Pilgrims and Puritans were not identical, however. The Pilgrims wanted a complete separation from the Anglican Church, earning them the name Separatists. The Puritans still considered themselves Anglicans, but they wanted to purify the church by eliminating the rituals and paraphernalia associated with the Church of Rome—the Book of Common Prayer, the wedding ring ("a diabolical circle for the devil to dance in," one Puritan called it), clerical robes, kneeling to receive communion, altar rails, wax candles, paintings, statues, stained-glass windows, organ music, church bells.

John Alden was a crewmember on the *Mayflower.* He hired on in Southampton, England, as the ship's cooper, or barrel-maker, a vital role because barrels held the *Mayflower*'s drinking water, beer, and other supplies such as flour, dried meats, and vegetables. The Pilgrims had won a charter from the Virginia Company (the group King James authorized to settle Jamestown) and planned to land in the northern part of the Virginia Colony (today's Manhattan), but heavy seas forced them farther north. Shortly after the ship anchored off Cape Cod, forty-one men on board, including John Alden, signed the Mayflower Compact, which became the basis of the Plymouth colony's government.

In 1621, John and Priscilla Alden would have participated in the Pilgrim's first Thanksgiving, described by William Bradford, governor of the Plymouth Plantation, in his journal:

> They begane now to gather in the small harvest they had, and to fitte up their houses and dwellings against winter, being all well recovered in health & strenght, and had all things in good plenty; for as some were thus imployed in affairs abroad, others were excersised in fishing, aboute codd, & bass, & other fish, of which they tooke good store, of which every family had their portion. All the sommer ther was no wante. And now begane to come in store of foule, as winter aproached, of which this place did abound when they came first (but afterward decreased by degrees). And besids water foule, ther was great store of wild Turkies, of which they tooke many, besids venison, &c. Besids they had aboute a peck a meale a weeke to a person, or now since harvest, Indean corne to that proportion. Which made many afterwards write so largly of their plenty hear to their freinds in England, which were not fained, but true reports.

* * *

Among the Puritans who helped settle the Massachusetts Bay Colony were two of my putative ancestors. One was Roger Williams, the founder of the Rhode Island colony. The other, Robert Potter, helped found the town of Warwick in the new colony of Rhode Island.

I admit to being a bit starstruck when I discovered Roger Williams on my family tree. Williams is known for establishing Rhode Island as a place of religious freedom, and our Founding Fathers incorporated his ideas about the separation between church and state into the U.S. Constitution. From his writings and the testimony of contemporaries, Roger Williams was a strong character—intelligent, persuasive, opinionated, resourceful, visionary. He was gifted in languages and "ready with tongue and pen," in the words of an early twentieth-century Williams biographer. We could say he had chutzpah—a description he would have relished, given his interest in words and his talent for languages.

The date and place of Roger Williams's birth are uncertain, his records having gone up in the Great Fire of London in September 1666. But it appears that he was born around 1603, the year Queen Elizabeth I died, childless, and her cousin, King James VI of Scotland, succeeded to the English throne as James I. (James was the great-grandson of Henry VIII's sister, Margaret Tudor. His mother, Mary Queen of Scots, whom the English executed in 1587, was Elizabeth's first cousin once removed, making James her first cousin twice removed—I think.)

These were contentious times. In England, after the death of Elizabeth, relations between the Crown and Parliament, with its increasingly Puritan membership, went from bad to worse, leading to the English civil wars of the 1640s (also known as the Puritan Revolution). On the continent, the Thirty Years' War was devastating large areas of Europe, especially Germany. Though these conflicts seem at first blush to have been religious in nature—Catholics vs. Protestants in Europe, Anglicans vs. Puritans in England—at bottom, in the view of many historians, they were about political dominance.

In England, the fundamental political question was whether the king or Parliament would rule the country. During the course of events leading to the civil wars, King James I and his successor, Charles I, dissolved Parliament repeatedly. (Charles ruled eleven years without it.) Both king and Parliament raised armies, and fighting broke out in 1642. By the time the civil wars ended, Parliament had beheaded King Charles's righthand man, Thomas Wentworth, First Earl of Strafford; William Laud, the Archbishop of Canterbury; and finally, in January 1649, King Charles himself. Parliament then abolished the monarchy and declared England a commonwealth.

The Puritan leader Oliver Cromwell, who had distinguished himself in the civil wars, declared himself Lord Protector over the commonwealth. He ruled only three years, however, and when he died in 1658, the commonwealth fell apart. Within two years, the monarchy had been restored and Anglicanism reinstated as the Church of England. But things did not wholly revert to the *status quo antebellum*. In what is known as the Glorious Revolution of 1688, the Dutch Prince William of Orange invaded England and overthrew King James II, a Catholic convert. William went on to rule England jointly with his wife, James's Protestant daughter Mary. In 1689, Parliament passed a Bill of Rights that limited the monarchy's power, set out the rights of Parliament, and barred Roman Catholics from the throne of England.

Born into England's merchant class, Roger Williams, through education, not to mention audacity, rose to become one of the most important religious figures of his time. As a boy, he was clever enough to learn shorthand. That system of writing had recently been introduced in England, though its use went back to ancient Greece and Rome. How else to take rapid, accurate notes of speeches before the invention of recording devices? It could be argued that shorthand was what opened the future to Roger Williams.

In his early teens, Williams is said to have visited the Star Chambers, the English court of law in Westminster Palace, to practice his shorthand. The judge, Sir Edward Coke, was not only the most famous lawyer of his time but is also regarded as one of the greatest jurists in English history. He had risen to prominence during the reign of Elizabeth I and had nearly come to blows with

King James I, who believed in the divine right of kings, when he insisted that even the king was subject to the law.

Sir Edward Coke's writings organized and systematized the English common law—which is based on precedent, not statute—and his doctrines of individual liberty had a profound effect on history, including that of the United States. He was largely responsible for drafting the Petition of Right (1628), for example, whose provisions, such as habeas corpus, are seen in the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights.

Sir Edward, author of the saying, "The house of every one is to him as his castle," was a great example to Roger Williams. Williams wrote in his letters of the "many thousand times" he thought of his mentor's "person, and the life, the writings, the speeches, and the examples of that glorious light."

In the Star Chambers, as the story goes, Sir Edward noticed young Roger Williams taking notes, checked and found that they were accurate, and became the boy's patron. With Coke's help, Williams attended the Charterhouse School, one of the original English public (private) schools, then entered Pembroke College at Cambridge University, where he became acquainted with John Milton. (Christ's College, Cambridge, where Milton had enrolled, was a hotbed of Puritanism.) By the time Williams graduated in 1627, he could read and speak Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, in addition to the French and Dutch he had learned from immigrant neighbors as a child, and was also trained in grammar, logic, and rhetoric. Williams was by now a committed Puritan and, rather than become an Anglican priest as he had originally planned, he went to work as a family chaplain in Essex, where the Puritan migration to America was being organized.

In 1629, Roger Williams married a young woman named Mary Barnard, and the next year they traveled together to Boston. By that time Williams was not only a Puritan but also a firm Separatist, which put him more on common ground with the Pilgrims at Plymouth than with the Puritans of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. When offered a position at the most prestigious church in the Massachusetts Colony, Williams refused because the church was still affiliated with the Church of England.

Williams continued to challenge the authorities in Massachusetts with his views about the impurity of their church and the necessary separation of the state from religion, until the Massachusetts Colony finally banished him in 1635. After wandering through the New England wilderness during the harsh winter of 1636 and being rescued by Indians, he settled on Narragansett Bay in a place he named Providence. Williams paid for the property, being opposed to the general English practice of simply appropriating Indian land, and began referring to its location as Rhode Island.

The Rhode Island colonists agreed to be governed by mutual consent, and they welcomed people of all religions. The colony, which had no established state church, became a haven for Baptists, Quakers, Jews, and other religious minorities. More than a hundred years later, Thomas Jefferson wrote that a "wall of separation" must be maintained between church and state, echoing Roger Williams's call for a "hedge or wall of separation between the garden of the church and the wilderness of the world." The separation of church and state is enshrined in the First Amendment to the Constitution.

As leader of the Rhode Island colony, Roger Williams tried to keep peace between the Indians and the colonists. He also fended off efforts by the Massachusetts Bay Colony and others to take over all or part of Rhode Island, and traveled back to England twice to protect the colony's independence. He made his first trip in 1643 (less than a year after the English civil wars broke out) to obtain a royal charter that would officially recognize Rhode Island and confirm its boundaries. While in England, Williams published a vocabulary and commentary on the Algonquian Indian language, in addition to numerous pamphlets and a treatise called *The Bloody Tenent of Persecution* that was publicly burned (after he left the country) for its radical ideas of "tolerating all sorts of religion." Williams sailed again to England in 1653 to confirm the royal charter for Rhode Island and publish more books.

Williams served three terms as president of the Rhode Island colony after his return and participated in the colonists' war with the Narragansett Indians, known as King Philip's War (1675–1676), which he had tried to prevent. Williams's house, as well as the rest of Providence and nearby Warwick, burned to the ground during the conflict. The date of Roger Williams's death, like that of his birth, is uncertain (no one seems to have published a note of his passing), but it occurred in Providence sometime in early 1683.

Roger Williams's story has a weird ending. After two hundred years, someone decided to look for his remains and found an apple-tree root in what might have been Williams's grave. The root looked as if it had taken the shape of a human body, with a long spine ending in two branches that turned upward into "feet." People called it "the root that ate Roger Williams," and it is still on display at a museum in Providence.

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The first Potter on my family tree is an Englishman named Robert Potter, who would have been my eighth great-grandfather. Robert Potter sailed to Boston in 1634, was banished from the Massachusetts Bay Colony three years later, and then helped establish Warwick, Rhode Island. The ancestors of Robert Potter,

according to a letter written by his descendant Henry Potter, an Episcopal bishop of New York in the late 1800s,

> came from Coventry in England, where Thomas Potter . . . was knighted by Queen Elizabeth and where the said Thomas, who was Mayor of Coventry, and a dyer and wool stapler, made an excellent blue dye; whence came the proverb "True as Coventry blue," a motto of which we are very proud.

Robert Potter was made a freeman (stockholder and voter) of the Massachusetts Bay colony soon after he reached Boston, but he became a supporter of the religious activist Anne Hutchinson and, with her, was banished from the colony in 1637. They had become embroiled in the Antinomian Controversy, one of the many theological conflicts of the time that are now nearly forgotten. Antinomian, meaning "against the law," refers to an old doctrine according to which Christians, because they are saved by their faith and the sacrifice of Christ, are not obliged to obey the laws of the Old Testament (including the Ten Commandments). Antinomians were thus open to accusations of licentiousness and other ungodly behavior. To accuse people of Antinomianism was almost as bad as claiming that they copulated in the streets.

The Puritans, as followers of John Calvin, believed in predestination, meaning that a person's ultimate fate—heaven or hell—is determined at birth. Eternal life is a gift from God—grace—that cannot be earned by good works on earth. There is nothing people can do to save themselves. A contrasting belief is that eternal life, or God's grace, can be earned through good actions, by following God's laws.

Anne Hutchinson believed that people were saved by God's grace, not by deeds, and she accused the Massachusetts Puritans of emphasizing good works as the way to heaven (which might strike us as a practical way to keep the colony working). Mrs. Hutchinson preached her ideas to gatherings at her house. Her views threatened the authority of the Massachusetts fathers, who also took a dim view of a woman speaking out against them. She and her followers were accused of immoral behavior (Antinomianism), and after a long religious trial, she was excommunicated for holding unorthodox and sinful beliefs and banished from Boston.

In the fall of 1637, Anne Hutchinson's followers, with the help of Roger Williams, bought Acquidneck Island, in Narragansett Bay, from the Indians and established the settlement of Portsmouth. Robert Potter joined a dissident named Samuel Gorton in Portsmouth, but after both had run into trouble (Potter lost the right to vote and Gorton was banished), the two men joined in purchasing from the Indians a tract they first called Shawomet but later named Warwick, after Robert Rich, Second Earl of Warwick. Robert Rich, a Puritan, was Lord Admiral

of the English fleet and head of the English parliamentary commission for government of the colonies. Rich granted Gorton a charter for the settlement in 1648.

Meanwhile, in 1643 the Indians complained (probably induced to do so by interested parties) to the Massachusetts Bay authorities that they had not been paid for their land. Massachusetts responded by sending an expedition to Warwick with a warrant that ordered Gorton to appear before the court. Gorton and the other Warwick men, including Robert Potter, refused on the grounds that they were outside the jurisdiction of Massachusetts. The wives and children of the Warwick men ran for their lives into the woods or fled by boat to neighboring settlements, while the men barricaded themselves in a house. The Massachusetts men attacked, but to avoid bloodshed, the Warwick men eventually surrendered. They were arrested and taken to Boston. Isabella, the wife of Robert Potter, died while living in the woods.

Once the Warwick men were in custody, Massachusetts switched the charges against them to heresy and sedition (no mention of the Indians' original complaint): "wee do charge you to bee a blasphemous enemy of the true religion of our Lord Jesus Christ and his holy ordinances, and also of all civil authority among the people of God." The men were tried, sentenced to death if they ever repeated their blasphemies or criticized the religious or civil authorities of the colony, put in irons, and confined in separate towns. Robert Potter was sent to the town of Rowley, Massachusetts, but he eventually returned to Warwick, where he died in 1656.

The link in my family history between the Robert Potter and Roger Williams lines was forged by the marriage in 1728 between Fisher Potter, a great-grandson of Robert Potter, to Mary Winsor, a great-granddaughter of Roger Williams. The *Mayflower* connection was established in 1795, when Pardon Potter, a grandson of Fisher Potter, married Rhoda Carver, a direct descendant of John and Priscilla Alden.

Fisher Potter (1706–1789) is listed as a joiner or carpenter in Yale University's Rhode Island furniture archive. Fisher's descendant Pardon Potter was born in Rhode Island like his forebears but moved at some point to Courtland County, New York, where he died in 1858 and was buried at a place called Potter Hill. According to the listings for the Potter Hill cemetery, forty-five Potters were interred there from the mid-1800s to 1910.

Oliver Potter, the son of Pardon and Rhoda Potter, was also born in Rhode Island but ended up farther west, in Eel River, Indiana, where he moved in the 1830s with his wife, the former Clarissa Barnes. The date and place of death of Oliver and Clarissa Potter are uncertain. But they had eight children, one of whom

was my great-grandfather, Charles Potter, M.D., born in 1827. Dr. Potter, who in 1856 married a woman from Virginia named Caroline Maiden, lived as a country doctor, rancher, and farmer, first in Scott, Iowa, then in Harper, Kansas, where he died in 1890. My paternal grandfather, Sherman Stephen Potter, was the youngest of the seven sons of Charles and Caroline Potter. He was born in Iowa in 1874, moved to southern California in the early 1900s, and died in 1954 in Springfield, Oregon, having landed about as far west of his Rhode Island roots as he could.

To cross a final *t*, another possible ancestor of mine, a certain Vincent Potter, was one of the fifty-nine commissioners who signed the warrant for the beheading of King Charles I in 1649. Vincent Potter was a founding member of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, was a member of the parliamentary army during the English civil wars, and served under Oliver Cromwell. When the monarchy was restored, Vincent Potter was tried and condemned for treason (regicide) but died in the Tower of London before his sentence could be carried out.

As parliamentary commissioner to the army, Vincent Potter drew up "Potter's lists" of former soldiers to settle pay arrears—making him the original "poop-sheet Potter." That was my father Paul Potter's sobriquet at my high school, where as vice-principal, he would attend meetings before such events as basketball games and read from a clipboard the "poop" that participants should know about.

NOTES

3 "*a diabolical circle for the devil to dance in*" Quoted in Wilson Waters, *History of Chelmsford, Massachusetts*, 1917, p. 690 <accessed online at archive.org>.

3 *they wanted to purify the church by eliminating the rituals and paraphernalia associated with the Church of Rome* Protestants believed at the time that the Pope was the Antichrist, i.e., that he represented the powers of darkness (Satan) rather than God. Not until I went back to the history of England in the 1600s did I come across this idea (it had not been discussed in my history classes or in Sunday school). Christians had accused each other of being false prophets from the beginning, of course, but identifying the papacy as the Antichrist became widespread after the Protestant Reformation of the 1500s. Puritans such as Roger Williams were among those who held this view of the papacy. It was part of an elaborate theology involving Biblical predictions of the return of Christ (the Second Coming) and the establishment of his kingdom on earth.

The "binding" of Satan in a pit for a thousand years, as described in the Book of Revelation, was at the center of the theology. The binding was supposed to have occurred at the time of Christ. The Antichrist, whoever he was, was thought to have been born around A.D. 600. Then in A.D. 1000, according to the chronology theologians worked out, the Antichrist unlocked the gate of the pit where Satan was bound and, disguised as the Pope, took over the church and transformed (corrupted) the Christian religion. (The true Christian church was kept alive by congregations in Britain and Ireland and by medieval heretics in Europe such as the Albigensians and Waldensians.)

At the time of their civil wars, English Protestants believed the Second Coming was going to happen soon and that it would happen in their country, the "elect nation." In particular, they believed the English civil wars were the slaughter foretold in the books of Daniel and Revelation to start three-and-a-half years before Christ reappeared on earth. (For more information, see especially H. R. Trevor-Roper, *Catholics, Anglicans and Puritans: Seventeenth Century Essays* [University of Chicago Press, 1988].)

4 *They began now to gather in the small harvest* Governor Bradford's text is reprinted from the original manuscript in William Bradford, *History of Plimoth Plantation* (facsimile edition published in Applewood Historiography Series, Applewood Books, Carlisle, Massachusetts, 2010; originally published by Wright & Potter Printing Co., Boston, 1898), p. 127 <accessed online via Google Books>).

4 "*ready with tongue and pen*" Description by biographer Edmund James Carpenter in *Roger Williams: A Study of the Life, Times and Character of a Political Pioneer* (New York: The Grafton Press, 1909), p. 42 <accessed online via Google Books>.

6 *the Petition of Right (1628)* Sir Edward and others who championed individual liberty in the 1600s regarded Magna Carta, the charter agreed to by King John at Runnymede in 1215, as the first guarantee of individual rights in England and as a legal foundation for rights such as habeas corpus. Magna Carta actually applied only to the relations between English barons and the king, but it persists as a symbol of individual liberty.

6 *Williams wrote in his letters* "But how many thousand times since have I had honorable and precious remembrance of his person, and the life, the writings, the speeches, and the examples of that glorious light. And I may truly say, that beside my natural inclination to study and activity, his example, instruction, and encouragement have spurred me on to a more than ordinary, industrious, and patient course in my whole course hitherto" (*Letters of Roger Williams 1632–1682*, John Russell Bartlett, ed. [Providence: Narragansett Club, 1874], pp. 239–240) <accessed online at archive.org>.

6 *In the Star Chambers, as the story goes, Sir Edward noticed young Roger Williams taking notes* The source of this story is a nasty note that Anne Sadleir, Sir Edward Coke's daughter, appended to a letter Roger Williams sent her while he was in London in 1653: "This Roger Williams, when he was a youth, would, in a short hand, take sermons and speeches in the Star Chamber and present them to my dear father. He, seeing so hopeful a youth, took such liking to him that he sent him to Sutton's Hospital [Charterhouse School], ... full little did he think that he would have proved such a rebel to God, the king, and his country. I leave his letters, that, if ever he has face to return to his native country, Tyburn [where criminals were executed] may give him welcome" (*Letters of Roger Williams 1632–1682*, pp. 252–253) <accessed online at archive.org>.

7 *according to a letter written by his descendant Henry Potter* Reported in George Hodges, *Henry Codman Potter, Seventh Bishop of New York* (New York: Macmillan and Company, 1915), p. 2 <accessed online via Google Books>.

9 "*wee do charge you to bee a blasphemous enemy*" Quoted in Samuel Greene Arnold, *History of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations*, vol. 1, *1636–1700* (facsimile edition published in Applewood Historiography Series, Applewood Books, Carlisle, Massachusetts, 2010; originally published by D. Appleton & Company, New York and London, 1859), p. 184 <accessed online via Google Books>.

9 *Yale University's Rhode Island furniture archive* "Rhode Island Furniture Archive at the Yale University Art Gallery" <http://rifa.art.yale.edu /detail.htm?id=33397&type=1>.

10 *and read from a clipboard the "poop" that participants should know about* According to Webster's dictionary, "poop" in the sense of "information" is slang dating to about 1941. The *Dictionary of American Slang* (HarperCollins, 2007) dates "poop sheet" to about 1935 and its origins to students and soldiers <http://www. dictionary.com/browse/poop-sheet>.