

Castle Chronicle



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The Question of Aquila Keech

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Image courtesy of
the Rhode Island
Historical Society,
Udike Papers,
MSS 770, Box 1,
Folder 21.

a true copy examined On Jth Addington Day
See Mr. Thiff's Night Captain General i. Ford
in chief of the Province of Massachusetts Bay
made on the 19th of ~~the~~ May 1692 before me a Not
Commis sitting at Boston the will of Robert and
Smith of Boston Planning and all in New Eng lands
having their goods rights & credits in their hands
of this Province - Remembrance was committed
to Edward Updike who surviving execution
done July 12 1692
Mr. Thiff

Edward Updike married a daughter
she was a doctress & had a practice
in her own way. She married the black soldier
he and she both - she was sent for to come from town
The New his came from Boston - The destruction of New
York of the same family - the other hunting his wife
brother
Mr. Neal came from Boston & married Elizabeth
the daughter of B. Smith son & sister to the Major
Aquila Keech ~~he~~ married a daughter of
the Major was an illegitimate child of Major Smith
he brought him from England with him but
the mother never came over here and after his
death and Thomas Withers married Aquila
Keech's widow & she died without issue &
was in possession so long that he & the Province who
claimed from Smith had a lawsuit about it
& from Great Withers
The Elizabeth mentioned as his sister was Mr. Neal

The public life of Richard Smith Jr. is well documented from land dealings, political appointments, and correspondence with public officials, such as John Winthrop Jr., governor of Connecticut. His private life, however, is filled with mystery, especially during his younger years.

The earliest record we have for Richard Smith Jr. is his baptism in Gloucestershire (Thornbury) England in 1630. From that date until 1651 when he acted as an agent on behalf of his father in selling property in New Amsterdam, the records are silent. In the 1650s, we have no idea whether he lived with his father at Cocumscussoc or in New Amsterdam. He appears in land records of the Narragansett country in the late 1650s but also in land records in New Amsterdam until the early 1660s.

Richard Smith Jr. was about seven years old when his family came to America and the logical assumption is that he came with his family. However, some histories have suggested that he actually grew up in England and served as a major in Cromwell's army (he would have been in his late teens towards the end of the English civil war). The honorific, "major" refers to his appointment in 1686 as "Sergeant Major and Chief Commander of His Majesty's Militia, Both Horse and Foot, in the Narragansett Country" and almost certainly not from service in Cromwell's army.

Existing records indicate that Richard Smith Jr. was likely a man with little formal education. However, in the 1650s when he was in his 20s, Smith was acting as a factor, or agent, in his father's trading business in New Amsterdam.

—continued on page 8

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Note from the President

Even as the tour season winds down, Smith's Castle remains a busy place from late summer to early winter. Many thanks to Mary Nunes for organizing the chicken barbecue in September that brought our members together for a good time and a delicious dinner. About 70 attended the feast and concurrent silent auction, which earned about \$500 for the Castle.

The Colonial Harvest Festival in October was a great success, in spite of no one officially chairing the organizing committee! Many thanks to the hard working committee members who stayed focused and organized and pulled it off. This year the Festival was accompanied by an art exhibit and sale by East Greenwich artist, Susan Dwyer, who painstakingly developed a series of Smith's Castle paintings especially for this fund raiser. Gross sales were \$2,776, 40 percent of which went to the Castle. We are indebted to Susan for her hard work and for her imaginative renderings of Smith's Castle and its historic residents.

Beginning in late October, a group of hard-working volunteers replaced the failing arbor that was buckling under the weight of the 100-year-old trumpet vine. The crew trimmed back the vine and rebuilt the structure, replicating the original as closely as possible. We are indebted to Jules Cohen, Humbert DeGregory, Lou Cadwell, Charlie Samson, and Gordon Jones for their extraordinary effort and the beautiful result.

As we go to print, volunteers are preparing for Christmas at the Castle (December 1 & 2) and the member holiday party (December 9). I hope to see everyone there.

As 2007 draws to an end we should assess our accomplishments over the past year and begin to plan for the year ahead. Soon, committee chairs will be asked to develop a list of their accomplishments this past year, their goals for next year, and prepare a budget necessary to make it happen. In early January, board members and committee chairs will meet to discuss these plans and prepare for the annual meeting in February (date as yet undetermined).

Smith's Castle is currently facing a fall-off in public interest. We are not alone among historic sites experiencing this downward trend in visitors and members. Although this year the season began well—walk-in visitors for regular tours were up ten percent in May/June over the same period last year—we ended the year down ten percent.

In 2001, our peak year for visitors, 1,376 people toured the site. After 9/11 that number plummeted and it has never recovered. We must ask ourselves what is required to inspire our community and tour-

ists to visit Smith's Castle. More hands-on programs? More subject-targeted tours? Rotating exhibits? Better publicity? It may be a combination of all of these. If you have any ideas, please send them my way.

Our membership is also down. From a peak of approximately 300, we now have about 180 active memberships. We must think about how to retain current members and attract new members. We must determine what membership means and what its benefits are, and we must better communicate that to the community.

Smith's Castle is positioned better this year than it was in 2006, both financially and organizationally, but we need to keep this momentum going. What can you do to help?

- **Renew your membership.** Make sure you renew your membership when you receive your renewal notice. Better yet, give a gift membership this Christmas to friends, family members, or that new neighbor who just moved to town.

- **Donate.** We will shortly be sending out our annual appeal for financial help. Like last year, all of the proceeds will help Smith's Castle meet its annual operational needs. Your donation makes a difference!

- **Volunteer.** We are looking for people to help in our youth education programs, gardens and grounds maintenance, building maintenance, grant applications, and more. A little time helping out goes a long way. E-mail or call the office (294-3521) to find out how you can get involved.

- **Visit.** Stop by and see what's new at the Castle when we reopen for tours in May next year. Our enthusiastic docents will engage you with tales of the extraordinary people who lived at Smith's Castle, and their mark on North Kingstown and Rhode Island history. You will always learn something new when you visit Smith's Castle, and you'll enjoy it. Bring a child or grandchild and introduce them to their past.

Wishing you happy holidays and a joyous new year!


—Neil Dunay, President

Welcome New Members

Jillene Caswell
Margot S. Grosvenor

—as of 11/30/07

Archaeology Wraps Up

Datum Points Established

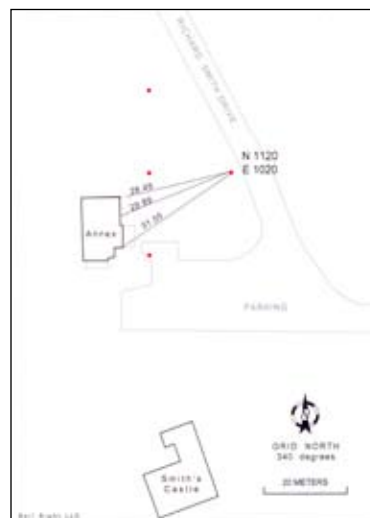
An important goal of the archaeology project recently concluded at the Castle was to place the work within the context of past investigations that have been conducted at the site. In doing so, future archaeologists and researchers will be able to easily find locations referred to in the reports of the current archaeologists.

Soil Site, LLC, with the aid of Gray & Pape staff, recently installed four permanent datum points for the archaeological grid. While only one datum is needed to reconstruct the grid, four were surveyed in case future alterations to the site should disturb one or more of the points. The diagrams to the right show the locations of the four datum points.

An advantage of triangulation is that no angles, only distances, are needed to find a point. Anyone can locate a datum point and recreate the grid without survey equipment—just two tape measures are required. To find a datum, the tape measures are pulled at the same time from two different corners of the Annex. The point at which the specified distances on each tape measure coincide is the datum. There can be only one intersection where both tapes will read the correct distance.

Two of the permanent locations (N1120 E1020) and (N1120 E1000) are marked by eight-inch galvanized iron spikes inserted into a three-quarter-inch PVC pipe (photo). At the other two points, (N1100 E1000) and (N1140 E1000), eight-inch galvanized iron spikes were driven without the PVC liner because of ground conditions. The spikes will be easy to find with a metal detector when soil and grass eventually cover them.

It is important the Cocumscusoc Association maintain a record of the location of these datum points. Future researchers will benefit greatly if they can easily locate the points and reconstruct the project grid. ■



Historic Howick

The Museum World Down Under

Neil Dunay and Darrell McIntire

A recent trip to New Zealand gave us the opportunity to compare and contrast an English colonial village in New Zealand with those we are familiar with in New England. We visited Howick Historical Village in Auckland. Howick is an assembly of thirty moved and restored period homes and public buildings from the four original British “fencible” (defensible) settlements in New Zealand. Think of it as a southern hemisphere version of Old Sturbridge Village. Howick was named after the Rt. Hon. Sir Henry George Grey, Viscount Howick and later the 3rd Earl Grey (of tea fame). He was secretary for the colonies from 1846–1852 and resided at Howick Hall, Howick, Northumberland, England.

With the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, New Zealand became British territory. To secure its new possession, soldiers were sent to the colony with the promise of land and housing. These soldiers-settlers,

known as the Royal New Zealand Fencible Corps, had served in the wars for Britain in the 1830s and 1840s and had retired on a pension. They were offered a new life in New Zealand, free passage with their families, and a cottage with an acre of land to become theirs after a seven year term, in return for certain military duties including compulsory Sunday church parade.

Upon arrival, the promised cottages were nowhere to be seen. As in New England, New Zealand’s early settlers survived with the help of the native peoples. The settlers spent a year or longer in temporary shelter, first in tents and then in native Maori huts made with bulrush called raupo. These small crude dwellings with low ceilings were furnished with Victorian iron beds and Staffordshire china, a striking juxtaposition of British and Maori cultures. Eventually, the huts were replaced with small cottages, typically one-story high plus a bed loft. They were built as duplexes to accommodate two families, one on either side of a central chimney.

Although Howick Historical Village is a much larger organization and represents a different time and place, the site does share some unexpected similarities with Smith’s Castle.

John Bycroft’s Flour Mill. John Bycroft built a flour mill in 1855 at Manurewa. The millstone comes from his Onehunga flour mill. The ironwork of the water wheel is original.





Sense of place. Howick has a strong sense of identity, interpreting 40 years of New Zealand history (1840–1880). Objects are placed appropriately in context and related to specific historical persons who occupied the cottages shown. Visitors walk away not only with a general sense of life in the past, but a concrete idea of how specific families lived at that time and what objects (material culture) surrounded them.

Monthly volunteer days. Howick holds “Live Days” on the third Sunday of every month, when up to 30 costumed villagers (mostly volunteers) go about their daily tasks. Each month’s activities are different, based on the seasonal activities of the settlers, and visitors are encouraged to join in some of the activities. (For example, the November Live Day focuses on preparing and decorating the village for Christmas.) Could Smith’s Castle find enough volunteers for a monthly live day? Could it spur visitor interest in our site?

Self-guided tour. If it is not a “Live Day” visitors receive an initial historical overview by a docent, after which they are on their own. There are static graphic displays posted at several spots that enable the visitor to learn details of locations that interest them. As Smith’s Castle moves toward developing its grounds, creating similar self-guided tours will become a challenge.

Dwindling attendance. We visited Howick on a bright, warm spring Saturday, yet only two other tourists could be seen! Why were there so few visitors to such a lovely location on such a beautiful day? Janet Lewis, our knowledgeable docent told us an all too familiar story. They had experienced a significant fall off in attendance after 9/11 and had not yet recovered. She was also familiar with historic sites in England with similar experiences. It appears the dramatic drop in historical site attendance following 9/11 is not just a U.S. phenomenon. She also opined that today’s younger audiences have grown accustomed to fast paced, ever changing digital media and are increasingly impatient with information presented in more traditional static formats. Again, an all too familiar story in the museum community here as well. Howick, much like Smith’s Castle, is trying to attract visitors with targeted tours (e.g., a candlelight evening tour) and more regular hands-on family activities.

Like its beautiful English cottage gardens of lavender, rose, phlox, and foxglove blooming amongst huge tree ferns and palm trees, Howick presented a series of familiar images juxtaposed against the unfamiliar. However, in view of Historic Howick’s distance from New England, we were most surprised to find we had much in common. Even down under history museums have many of the same difficulties and face many of the same challenges that we do here at Smith’s Castle. Maybe it’s not so far away after all. ■

Top. The building on the left in the background is **Johnson’s Cottage**. It was built in the 1840s as a sweet shop and residence in Parnell, Auckland. It now houses the Children’s Museum. Next to it is **Colonel DeQuincey’s Cottage**. Built in 1863, the cottage houses exhibits of Maori and European settlements. In the foreground on the left is **Ngamapu’s Raupo Thatched Mail Runner’s Cottage**. Ngamapu, a Maori mail runner, delivered the mail to Auckland.

Center. This view of the **Colonel DeQuincey Cottage** shows its English cottage garden.

Bottom. The small structure is a shelter for a Maori dugout canoe. Behind it is a corner of the **Bishop’s Creek Dame School**, a Maori school from 1840 to the 1850s. It then became a “Dame School,” a school for young children for the three “Rs”—reading, writing, and ‘rithmetic—generally run by a woman.

Smith's Castle Items Shine at Skinner's November Auction

Six lots of items de-accessioned from Smith's Castle's collections were sold at Skinner Inc.'s premier *American Furniture and Decorative Arts* sale in Boston on November 3 and 4, 2007. As in most auctions, some Castle items fared better than others relative to their estimates, but several items realized astounding results that pushed the final total well beyond Skinner's estimates. Just one lot, a charming child's paint-decorated potty chair, estimated at \$400 to \$600, failed to sell and will likely be returned to Smith's Castle.

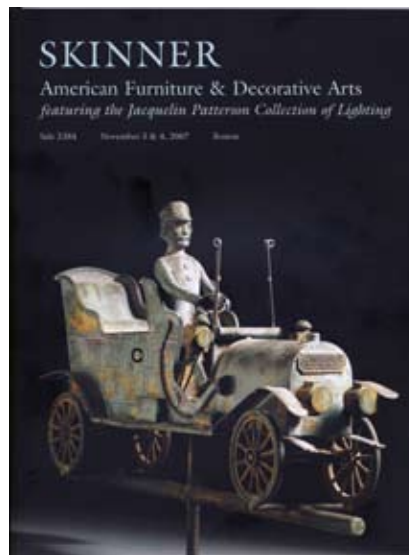
Two items sold precisely within their estimated range: A vinegar grain-painted box from the 1830s, that formerly stood in the c 1678 Richard Smith Jr. bedchamber, estimated at \$400 to \$600, sold for \$500 (hammer price). Three silhouettes, including one by Sears dated 1844, estimated at \$600 to \$800, sold near the top of the range at \$750. (Several others Sears silhouettes in this auction sold for much higher, but the Castle's silhouette was in inferior condition.)

The remaining three lots sold well above the auction estimates: A pair of 19th century George Washington mirror supports, probably never displayed at the Castle, were estimated at \$400 to \$600 but sold for \$2,100. A federal walnut, two-drawer server,

possibly from southern Virginia, that stood for many years in the entry, was expected to be the top seller of the six lots with an estimate of \$1,500 to \$2,500. It sold well above expectation at a hammer price of \$6,000. But the top performer of the group was a painted tin (tole) box labeled "J M Witcher," that had been displayed in the alcove above the kitchen fireplace. Estimated at \$800 to \$1,200, it sold for an astonishing \$8,500. This item's prominently placed photo in Skinner's pre-sale printed catalogue may have helped.

The six items (including the unsold chair), expected to bring in \$4,100 to \$6,300, actually fetched \$17,850—nearly three times the top estimate! The Castle will soon receive a check for the net proceeds from the auctioneer (hammer price less a 12 percent commission and handling fees). A restricted account, set up with proceeds from this and the previous auction, will be used only for conserving collections items or purchasing new items for the collection. The Smith's Castle lots sold to date, expected to bring in \$8,650 to \$13,275, have yielded a total of \$24,020.

Four remaining Smith's Castle items are scheduled to go under the hammer in auctions on November 29, December 1, and January 12. ■



Skinner, Inc.

Skinner American Furniture and Decorative Arts Auction: Boston, November 3 & 4, 2007

Lot #	Smith's Castle Items Sold	Estimate		Hammer Price
		Low	High	
862	Paint-decorated child's potty chair	400	600	UNSOLD
895	Vinegar grain-painted box	400	600	500
158	Silhouettes (Sears Saratoga NY, 1844; man with cane; lady in rocker)	600	800	750
395	Enameled brass Washington mirror supports (pair)	400	600	2,100
457	Federal walnut two-drawer sideboard, possibly Virginia	1,500	2,500	6,000
699	Tole box, J.M. Witcher	800	1,200	8,500
TOTAL		4,100	6,300	17,850



Paint Decorated Tinware Trunk,
America, early 19th century,
dome-top trunk with hinged lid,
the front panel painted white
decorated with red and green
tulips and flowers centered with
a rectangular reserve with the
name "J.M. Whitcher" painted
in yellow on a black ground, the
sides decorated with white bands
with similar floral decoration,
on a black ground with yellow
foliate brushstrokes, (wear),
ht. 7, wd. 10, dp. 6-1/2 in.

\$800-1,200

Skinner, Inc.



Federal Walnut Sideboard,
possibly Virginia, c.1800-10,
brasses appear to be original, old
refinish, (repairs and impecfec-
tions), ht. 40-3/4, wd. 38-3/4,
dp. 21 in.

\$1,500-2,500

Skinner, Inc.

Aquila Keech *(from page 1)*

That position would have required a broad range of knowledge, skills, and experience including, for example, familiarity with a number of trade commodities and currencies (including wampum) and their ever-fluctuating values relative to one another, as well as an understanding of the intricate rules, regulations, and procedures of the Dutch West India Company. English was his native language, but he must have known Dutch and perhaps some Algonquian. He would have been familiar with the Dutch legal system and the real estate market in New Amsterdam (he was involved in several court cases and handled a number of property transfers for his father). Finally, He must have possessed the record keeping and bookkeeping skills necessary to keep track of it all. This strongly suggests that Richard Smith Jr. came of age in America learning at his father's side and did not grow up in England.

Again, we have no documentation of when or to whom he was married. This is all the more unusual since the marriages of his sisters Johan and Karheryne are found in the records of the Dutch Reformed Church in New Amsterdam during the 1640s, which is when and where we would expect to see a marriage record for Richard Jr. as well. From his letters and other records we know his wife's given name was Esther (also appearing as Hester in several places). Her name first appears in documents in a Narragansett land record of 1659, to which she signed her own name (unlike some of the men who had to use their marks). Esther's family name is a mystery. In his correspondence, Richard Jr. frequently referred to his wife as "my cousin." If she were his first cousin, she may have been the daughter of John Smith, Richard Smith Sr.'s brother who was killed at Mespit in 1642. Or she may have been the daughter of William Barton, Smith's uncle (his mother's brother) who remained in England and with whom Smith Jr. maintained correspondence.

No records show any births to Esther Smith, and certainly the couple did not have children that lived to adulthood. However, could it be possible that Richard Smith Jr. had children by another woman? This is, in fact, the assertion of one 19th century writer.

A manuscript in the collections of the Rhode Island Historical Society claims that Aquila Keech was the illegitimate child of Richard Smith Jr. The document consists of a single sheet with handwriting on the front and back. The author is unclear. The name "George Allen" and another illegible name appear on one side where it is noted that the document contains information received from "Mrs. Lee"—presumably Anstis Updike Lee (1765–1864), eldest daughter of the second Lodowick Updike and eldest sister of Wilkins Updike. The docu-

ment is dated August 1858. The handwriting is unlike either of the names that appear on the back, and it is presumably Anstis' own handwriting. Beginning on the front of the document is a transcript of part of Smith's 1690 will that continues onto the back page. Following the will are notes that appear to be in the same hand as the will transcript, although the writing style is slightly different and more compact, as if added at a later date.

Of the numerous documents made during his lifetime, the will left by Richard Smith Jr. is an especially rich source of information about the Smith family, including their landholdings, their slaves, their lifestyle, and their family relationships. Certain items in the will have always raised questions, and this new document highlights one of these questions: Who was Aquila Keech?

Following is the portion of the will that is transcribed in the Lee manuscript (not included is the beginning of the will where Smith, after the usual preliminaries, provides for his wife, bequeaths the bulk of his estate to nephew Lodowick Updike, and portions out additional items to his family). The document begins:

Item I give unto my sister Elizabeth Viall alias Newnan, my farm on Boston Neck, which Alexander King lived on after my wife's decease to her, and as she shall dispose of it to her children, and them and their heirs forever.

Item I give to Aquila Keech all that house and land within fences, and an hundred acres to be laid out to it, where Thomas Withers lives and his mother, and to him and his heirs forever. Also I give unto my negro Caesar and to his wife Sarah, their freedom after my decease and one hundred acres of land in convenient place, to be laid out by Lodowick Updike on some of my outshares of land either mortgage or surplusage of the neck. Also I give unto Caesar's children all their freedom when thirty years old and to Ebed-melich the like freedom, and the land Caesar is to have to him and his heirs forever, this after my wife's decease, not in her life time, for she shall possess her life in all.

In the first item above Smith gives land to his sister, Elizabeth Viall. In the next item, he gives freedom (and land) to his slaves, Caesar, Caesar's wife Sarah, their children, and Ebed-Melich. In between stands Aquila Keech, whose identity and relationship to Smith has always been unknown. Since he is noted in the same item as the slaves, could he also be a slave? Or perhaps an indentured servant? To whom does "his mother" refer and why is she mentioned?

—continued on page 10

Transcript of the "Anstis Lee Manuscript"

A true copy examined Per Is^a Addington Sec'y.
Sir W^m Phipps Knight Captain General & Gov[ernor]
in chief of the Province of Massachusetts Bay
that on the 19th March February 1692 before me & the
Council sitting at Boston the will of Richard
Smith of Rhochester Narragansett in New England
having divers goods, rights & credites in divers parts
of this Province—Administration was committed
to Lodowick Updike sole surviving executor
done July 12 1692

W^m Phipps

Lodowick Updike married a Newport [sic, Newton]
She was a Doctress & ~~used~~ had practice
as far & [wide?] [as] Warwick. She made the black salve
the art since lost—she was [out?] for to cure fever sores.
The Newton's came from Boston. The Newtons of New
Port of the same family—the other Newtons her [own?]
Brothers. Mr Vial came from Boston & married Elisabeth
the daughter of R. Smith sen & sister to the Major.
Aquila Keech ~~her~~ married a left handed daugh
ter & was an illegitimate child of Major Smith
he brought him from England with him ^{with} ~~but~~
the mother never came over her and after his
Death and Thomas Withers married Aquila
Keech's widow & she died without issue &
was in possession so long that he and the [Boones?] who
claimed from Smith had a Lawsuit about it
& [Boone?] beat Withers
The Elisabeth mentioned as his Sister was Mr. Fial [sic]
[narrative stops here]

a true copy examined Per Is^a Addington Sec'y.
Sir W^m Phipps Knight Captain General & Gov[ernor]
in chief of the Province of Massachusetts Bay
that on the 19th March February 1692 before me & the
Council sitting at Boston the will of Richard
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was in possession so long that he and the Boones who
claimed from Smith had a Lawsuit about it
& Boone beat Withers

The Elisabeth mentioned as his Sister was Mr. Fial

Aquila Keech (from page 8)

In her notes following the will, Anstis relates the fascinating information that the first Lodowick Updike's wife (and first cousin), Abigail Newton Updike, was a locally renowned "doctress." Indeed, Daniel Berkeley Updike (1860–1941), the famous Boston printer and grandson of Wilkins Updike, said the mortar and pestle Abigail used to make her salves was handed down through the family to him, and he donated it to South County Hospital in the 1930s. Unfortunately, the whereabouts of these artifacts is unknown today.¹ The "other Newtons" (Thomas and James) mentioned earlier in the will, Anstis tells us, were Abigail's brothers.

Next, Antis identifies the sister mentioned in the will, Elizabeth Viall. Records indicate she was the wife of John Viall, a vintner. In addition to the land inherited from her brother, in 1666 she had inherited about 700 acres north of Smith's Saugo farm from her father. Nevertheless, the family apparently never lived on these lands, residing instead in Boston and later Swansea.

Then, Anstis reveals the family story about Aquila Keech. With words stricken and added the narrative raises many questions. However, what jumps out is the clear assertion that Aquila Keech was the illegitimate son of Richard Smith Jr. who he brought over from England.

Anstis explains that Thomas Withers (mentioned in the will as living on the property bequeathed to Keech) married Keech's widow, who had no children, and that the land bequeathed in the will later became the subject of a lawsuit between Withers and the Boone family.

A search of Rhode Island judicial records has not revealed a case between Withers and Boone, although a case between Lodowick Updike and Thomas Withers in 1709 was found,² and Thomas Withers appears in records (along with other Smith friends) as one of a group of accused rioters in Kingstown in 1699/1700.³

The unusual name Aquila raises several questions. Obviously, it is not a common English name. It means eagle in Latin, and in mythology Aquila is the bird that belonged to Zeus and carried the mortal Ganymede to the heavens to serve as Zeus' cup bearer. Aquila is also the name of a biblical figure. Within the context of the will, Aquila is closely associated with the Roman-named slave Caesar and the biblical-named slave Ebed-Melich. Perhaps Aquila is also a slave. We know that slaves in Narragansett were named by their masters and that classical and biblical references were common.⁴

Although he has a slave-like name, two things suggest that Aquila probably was not a slave: First, Smith does not grant him freedom as he did for Caesar and his

family and Ebed-Melich, suggesting that he was in fact a free man. Secondly, Aquila has a family name, Keech. Narragansett slaves were not given family names. (It should be noted that slaves in New Amsterdam as a rule did have family names, and it is possible that Aquila was obtained in New Amsterdam during the Smith family's residency there in the 1640s.)

Further research has yielded no clarifying information. No mention of Aquila Keech/Ketch⁵ has been found in any other documents. The name Keech or Ketch is rare in 17th century Rhode Island records. A Benjamin Keatch/Keech was admitted as a freeman in Glocester, Rhode Island, in 1733, and he had sons Benjamin and William. Keech genealogists indicate this line traces from a George Keech who immigrated to Newport in the 1670s. Could Aquila be related to this family?

The language in the will referring to "his mother" raises additional questions. Anstis strikes out the words "the mother never came over her[e]" and inserts the phrase, "...he brought him from England with the mother..." Were it not for this note, one would assume "his" referred to Thomas Withers, i.e., Thomas Withers and his mother were living in the house bequeathed to Keech. However, we must wonder if perhaps Anstis is intending to say that "his mother" means Keech's mother?

The Lee manuscript raises many questions. Who was the mother? When was Aquila Keech born? When did he arrive in this country? Despite her striking the phrase, did his mother come over? Clearly, further research is needed to get to the bottom of this fascinating family tradition. But it does give one pause when we read or repeat the statement that Richard Smith Jr. died without children. ■

—Neil Dunay

Notes

1. In 2008 we hope to integrate the story of Abigail Updike's medical skills into our room furnishings and the house tour.
2. Newport County Supreme Court General Court of Trials, Vol. A 1671–1724, Archival 8109, p.188.
3. Interestingly, there was a Withers family that lived in Thornbury, England, at the same time as the Smiths.
4. For a discussion of slave names in Narragansett, see Robert Fitts, *Inventing New England's Slave Paradise: Master/Slave Relations in 18th Century Narragansett, Rhode Island*. Garland Publishing, Inc., New York & London, 1998, p. 181.
5. Even though the Lee MS and The Smith will clearly render the name Keech, Charles Wilson in his *Op Dyck Genealogy* of 1889 transcribes the name as Ketch, as does John Austin in his *Geneological Dictionary of Rhode Island* in 1887.

Recommended Reading

Children in Colonial America

Edited by James Marten with a Foreword by Philip J. Greven

New York University Press, 2007

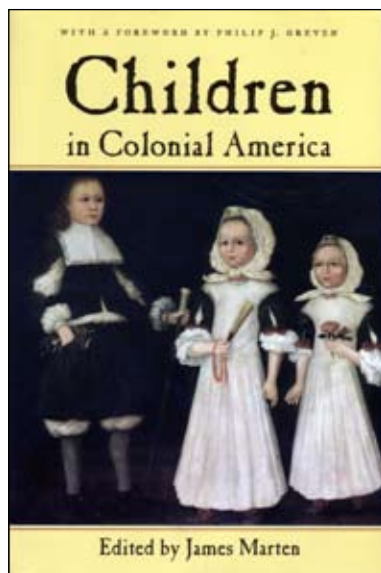
Softcover, 253 pages

Over thirty years ago the historian Ross Beales criticized the accepted notion that colonials viewed children and youth as miniature adults and ignored the fact that childhood and adolescence were distinct stages of human life. Today most historians agree with his conclusion that children in colonial America, no matter what their racial or ethnic background, were distinct from adults and viewed by their elders in this manner.

This series of essays written by academic historians investigates childhood in a variety of colonial cultures in the New World from Europeans to Native Americans to Africans and Hispanics. In the introduction, the editor of the collection, James Marten, points out that the book is an outgrowth of the “new history” of the 1960s that sought to include people left out of previous studies such as women, workers, servants, slaves, and non-Europeans. Until recently, however, scant attention was paid to the history of children. In addition to the scholarly essays, the study includes several primary documents authored by notables including Anne Bradstreet and Benjamin Franklin along with lesser-known memoirs such as those of Venture Smith, a slave boy captured in Africa. Footnotes and suggested readings complete the study. Ten questions for thought and analysis at the end of the book make this a useful book for college level courses in colonial history or early childhood education.

In the introduction written by the scholar Philip Greven, who is considered to be an expert on early American family life, the point is made that the key to understanding the emotional, intellectual, political, and religious dimensions of adulthood rests with an analysis of childhood. Each group in the Americas developed their own approach to this period of life. The book investigates children’s lives across a variety of colonial cultures.

Some of the essays tell us what most readers already know. For example, it was no surprise that slave children endured more hardships and less of an actual childhood



than any other group in the western hemisphere. One essay confirms the notion that attitudes toward child labor in England were naturally transferred to the British-American colonies, especially Jamaica.

The previously ignored subject of the relationship of siblings in different cultures is explored in Part II of the study dealing with “Family and Society.” Unlike modern times, siblings of all cultures spent much time together due to the lack of graded schools and the compact nature of most homes. Africans developed the strongest bonds among siblings, a carry-over from their West African heritage.

The essays dealing with colonial New England should be of most interest to Castle members. “Colonizing Childhood: Religion, Gender, and Indian Children in Southern New England, 1600–1720,” has several references to the Narragansetts, but mainly concentrates on the missionary villages, or “praying towns,” as they were called, in Massachusetts. An excerpt from an account by an English settler in Plymouth, Edward Winslow, entitled *Good News from New England*, was written in 1624. In this brief essay, he describes how Native Americans in that area raised their children while emphasizing that “the younger sort reverence the elder.” An investigation into the concept of “idiocy” in colonial Massachusetts and a study entitled “From Saucy Boys to the Sons of Liberty: Politicizing Youth in Pre-Revolutionary Boston” complete the sections dealing with New England.

Although the collection of essays reflects the diversity of childhood in colonial American and serves to fill the gap left by past historians who concentrated on studying mainly colonial New England families, it may have limited appeal to the general reader. Some of the essays are tedious while others, especially J.L. Bell’s “From Saucy Boys to the Sons of Liberty,” are interesting and readable. The eight page bibliography would be useful to graduate students investigating colonial childhood. ■

—Norma La Salle, PhD

Recent Events

Docent Tea

Photos by Barbara Crudale

1. (l to r)
Kelsey Vivian,
Kristel Henry, and
Karen Depaw.

2. (l to r)
Marcia Brennan,
Mary Shillaber,
and Jane Rawlings.
Wilfred Royle
(in back).



2

1

Veterans' Day

Photo by Carol Palmer

Pictured (l to r):
Richard Chellis,
Bridget White,
Grace Palmer,
Michael White,
Jasper White,
Chris Kassal,
Lou Sansone,
Mary Shilaber,
and Gene Pouliot
(standing).



Recent Events

Colonial Harvest Festival

Photos by Barbara Crudale



1



2



3



4

1. Chris Kassal
2. (l to r)
Chris Kassal,
Alexander Crudale,
Barbara Crudale,
and Kristel Henry.
3. Kristel Henry
4. Virginia Royle

Hearthside Cooking

Contributed by Barbara Crudale

The holidays inspire us to dust off our favorite cookbooks and look for new recipes, or “receipts” as early generations would have called them. Here are three delicious receipts which may become part of your family traditions—

Crab Cakes

The practice of making minced meat cakes has ancient roots, and the English settlers brought the skills to make these with them to the colonies. Taste and economy prompted many early cooks to extend the meat by adding bread or other fillers. Many receipts labeled variations of this dish as “to fry crabs,” “to dress crabs,” or “crab patties.” The term “crab cake” appeared in the 1900s. My family made these crab cakes last year as a colonial addition to my husband’s traditional Italian Christmas eve celebration.

From *The Accomplish Cook* by Robert May, 1685; reprinted in *Early American Life*, Christmas 2006.

beat up the butter thick and put some of the meat that was strained into the sauce, warm it and put it in a clean dish, lay the meat on the sauce, slices of orange over all, and run it over with beaten butter, fried parsley, round the dish brim and the little legs round the meat.

Modern Recipe:

1 pound regular crab meat
2 tablespoons lemon juice
3 eggs, divided
2 tablespoons mayonnaise
1 cup bread crumbs, divided
1 teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon white pepper
2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
1/4 cup milk
1/4 cup flour in a shallow bowl
1 teaspoon paprika
2 teaspoons chopped parsley
Butter for frying

Medium cream sauce
1 tablespoon butter
1 tablespoon flour
1/2 cup milk
salt to taste

Sort through crab meat, discard pieces of shell. Sprinkle crab meat with lemon juice and set aside. Make a medium cream sauce by melting butter in a heavy pan over medium heat, stirring with a whisk. Add the flour, milk, and salt to taste. Continue stirring until mixture is smooth and thick.

Beat 2 eggs. Add the cream sauce, mayonnaise, 1/4 cup bread crumbs, salt, white pepper, and Worcestershire sauce. Stir well. Gently combine crab meat and egg mixture. Chill until firm enough to shape into 10 patties.

Mix together the remaining egg and 1/4 cup of milk. Mix the remaining bread crumbs with the paprika and place in a shallow bowl. Lightly coat the crab cakes by dipping them in the flour, then the egg mixture, then the breadcrumb/paprika mixture. Fry in butter, turning only once so they remain intact. Serve with Mornay sauce and fresh parsley. Makes 5–6 servings.



Early American Life

Traditional Receipt:

To fry Crabs—Take the meat out of the great claws being first boiled, flour and fry them and take the meat out of the body strain half of it for sauce, and the other half to fry, and mix it with grated bread, almond paste, nutmeg, salt and yolks of eggs, fry in clarified butter, being first dipped in batter, put in a spoonful at a time; then make sauce with wine vinegar, butter or juyce of orange, and grated nutmeg,

Mornay Sauce

2 oz. Gruyere cheese
¼ cup butter
¼ cup flour
1 teaspoon salt
⅛ teaspoon white pepper or to taste
½ cup milk
½ cup half and half
Old Bay seasoning

Melt butter. Add flour, salt, and pepper. Slowly add milk and half and half. Stir constantly. When thick, add Old Bay seasoning to taste. Remove from heat and whisk in cheese.

Gingerbread Cookies



Early American Life

Sugar was often saved for special occasions, such as the holidays or when friends and family came to visit.

Traditional Receipt:

Three quarts flour, three quarters of a pound of brown sugar, a large spoonful of pounded ginger, one teaspoonful of powdered cloves, sift it, melt half a pound of butter in a quart of rich molasses, wet the flour with it, knead it well and bake.

Modern Recipe:

1 ⅓ cup sorghum molasses
⅔ cup butter
4 ¼ cups all purpose flour
⅔ cup brown sugar
¾ teaspoon ground dry ginger
¼ teaspoon ground cloves

Warm molasses and butter in a small saucepan until butter melts. In a large bowl, mix dry ingredients.

Pour molasses mixture over flour mixture and stir to moisten. Chill at least 30 minutes. Roll a tablespoon of dough in a round ball and place on greased cookie sheet. Flatten the balls with the bottom of a glass dipped in sugar, or use a decorative cookie stamp. Bake at 350 degrees for 7 to 10 minutes or until lightly browned on the bottom. Cool cookies on a rack. Store in an airtight container. If cookies get hard, put a slice or two of apple in the storage container overnight to soften them. Makes 3–4 dozen.

From *The Virginia Housewife* by Mary Randolph, 1824; reprinted in *Early American Life*, December 2007.

Spiced Rum

If possible, use dark Jamaican rum, as it would have been preferred by the colonists.

Stud an orange with cloves at about ¼ inch intervals. Slice into sections, about ¼ inch at the widest, each section carrying a line of cloves down it. Remove excess membrane to leave only the meatiest ¼ inch of the rind. (Excess material will cloud the bottle.) Pour a quart of dark rum into a decorative bottle, adding the clove studded orange.

Serve warm with a cinnamon stick and a pat of butter, or thinned with a bit of orange juice or cream. If you add a cup of orange juice and a scant cup of sugar to the quart of rum with the studded orange rinds, you would have a “Rum Shrub” (1740s).

Reprinted in *Early American Life*, Christmas 2005.



Early American Life

The Cocumscussoc Association



This Winter at Smith's Castle

December

Day	Time	Event
Saturday, 1	12:00–4:00 p.m.	Christmas at the Castle
Sunday, 2	12:00–4:00 p.m.	Christmas at the Castle
Sunday, 9	5:00–7:00 a.m.	Member Holiday Party

January

Day	Time	Event
Monday, 7	7:00 p.m.	2008 Planning Meeting Board of Trustees and Committee Chairs
Saturday, 12	10:00 a.m.	Dogcent meeing

February

Day	Time	Event
TBD	TBD	Annual meeting

The Cocumscussoc Association
55 Richard Smith Drive
Wickford, RI 02852-4414

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