

Children of Misfortune: Growing up Poor in Early New England

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Friends:

This paper is an overview of a book project. I had originally intended to present a complete chapter of the book plus sections of the introduction for context, but I realized that would make a ridiculously long seminar paper. Instead, here is a portion of the introduction plus sample material from each chapter. I have tried to keep the focus on legal aspects of pauper apprenticeship, since colonial family law is our session topic. To keep this paper to a reasonable length, I have had to sacrifice a lot of detail, and I realize you may have a lot of questions. I will do my best to answer them on December 6.

Thanks for reading.

"Children of Misfortune" tells an unexpected story of New England between the late 1600s and the early 1800s. Stories of poor children constitute the core—children who fell into (or were born into) misfortune, separated from their parents, and placed into other families. Whatever propelled them into difficulty, all of these children came under the scrutiny of Boston magistrates who assessed their situations and bound them out as "pauper apprentices" or "poor apprentices." Less than a third of these children remained in Boston; most were moved into households scattered widely throughout Massachusetts (including what is now Maine). Between 1676 and 1816, Boston magistrates bound out at least 1,500 of these young laborers, and town officials in the rest of New England bound out thousands more.

Narratives of these children illuminate the realities of growing up as a bound laborer in a household headed not by one's parents but by a master and a mistress. Few are rags-to-riches stories; few are stories of blatant abuse and exploitation. Most reveal circumstances common in early New England: sudden tragedy and loss; family ties broken and new ties formed; much labor and scant leisure. These children were not powerful and important people, but their stories form an essential counterweight to elite narratives (our usual informants about early American life). The existence of these stories reveals gaps and distortions in our master narrative, which gives prominence to neither children nor the poor.

This project also illuminates early American cultural attitudes towards family and children. The sheer numbers of bound children challenge the widespread notion that early New Englanders prized nuclear family households of biologically related kin. In fact, early New Englanders expected "proper" households to include slaves, servants, and apprentices. Through pauper apprenticeship, magistrates broke up nuclear households of the "poorer sort" and

Herndon, "Children of Misfortune," 3
redistributed family members in households of the "better sort." On the surface, pauper
apprenticeship solved obvious social problems—disorderly behavior in the child's family,
illegitimacy, and parental death, desertion, or neglect. At a deeper level, however, the institution
reveals a contentious intersection of public and private interests. Magistrates' prescriptions for
children's lives—their education, their labor, their place in a family—were shaped by prevailing
assumptions about race, class, and gender. Through pauper apprenticeship, the state mandated
what a "proper" household should look like.¹

"Children of Misfortune" analyzes statistical data about all the children I could identify
as Boston pauper apprentices and also presents stories I pieced together from scraps of
documentary evidence and organized in coherent themes.² This prosopographical approach
illuminates a group of people whose individual lives cannot be fully traced, but who share
common traits: the status of child; the condition of poverty or social disapproval; and the system

¹ For a detailed analysis of the institution of pauper apprenticeship in a wide range of early American communities, see Ruth Wallis Herndon and John E. Murray, eds., *Children Bound to Labor: The Pauper Apprentice System in Early America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009).

² To my knowledge, no other scholars have traced the lives of non-elite children in early America in this fashion. Several scholars of pauper apprenticeship in England have reconstructed the lives of poor children. See especially Jane Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour in the British Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2010), and Katrina Honeyman, *Child Workers in England, 1780-1820: Parish Apprentices and the Making of the Early Industrial Labour Force* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2007). Honeyman's *After Apprenticeship* project, which followed a group of parish apprentices into later life, was cut short by her untimely death in October 2011. Two scholars of early America have looked at Boston's pauper apprentices within particular contexts and as support for other arguments about economy and labor. Neither, however, took poor children as the sole focus. See Barry Levy, *Town Born: The Political Economy of New England from Its Founding to the Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), and "Girls and Boys: Poor Children and the Labor Market in Colonial Massachusetts," *Pennsylvania History* 64 (Summer 1997): 287-307; Lawrence William Towner, "A Good Master Well Served: A Social History of Servitude in Massachusetts, 1620-1750" (Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1955), reprinted as *A Good Master Well Served: Masters and Servants in Colonial Massachusetts, 1620-1750* (New York: Garland Press, 1998), and "The Indentures of Boston's Poor Apprentices, 1734-1805," *Past Imperfect: Essays on History, Libraries, and the Humanities*, eds. Robert W. Karrow and Alfred F. Young (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 36-55.

Herndon, "Children of Misfortune,"⁴ of pauper apprenticeship. The resulting collective biography reconstructs the life patterns of pauper apprentices, emphasizing their common experiences and relationships. In an earlier book, I followed this methodology to describe the lives of poor adults warned out of Rhode Island communities.³ "Children of Misfortune" describes the children of such unwelcome Americans. Many parents of pauper apprentices had come to Boston from other communities. Many had been officially warned by Boston magistrates, so they could not claim poor relief benefits in Boston.⁴ If these parents were still alive, they had been deemed unfit to raise their children. Thus, children who came from the margins of their societies were placed as servants in households that stood at the center of their societies or even at the very top of the social hierarchy. The more we learn about the fates of pauper apprentices, the more we understand the societies that prescribed who should raise them and how they should be raised.

Boston's pauper apprentices illuminate the transnational character of early New England society, because their birth families and their host families were part of the larger Atlantic world. Some of these children had English or European parents newly arrived in New England, and others had Native American and African parents who had been conquered in battle or taken captive in slavery. David and Catherine Spade emigrated from Germany to Boston, but fell on

³ Ruth Wallis Herndon, *Unwelcome Americans: Living on the Margin in Early New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001).

⁴ A number of scholars have studied the warning out system as it operated in Massachusetts. See especially Jacqueline Barbara Carr, *After the Siege: A Social History of Boston, 1775-1800* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2005), 97-106; Gary B. Nash, *The Urban Crucible: Social Change, Political Consciousness, and the Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979); Douglas Lamar Jones, "The Strolling Poor: Transiency in Eighteenth-Century Massachusetts," *Journal of Social History* 8 (1975): 28-54; Allan Kulikoff, "The Progress of Inequality in Revolutionary Boston," *William and Mary Quarterly* 28:3 (July 1971): 375-412; Robert W. Kelso, *The History of Public Poor Relief in Massachusetts, 1620-1920* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1922; repr., Montclair, NJ: Patterson Smith, 1969); Josiah Henry Benton, *Warning Out in New England, 1656-1817* (Boston: W.B. Clarke Co., 1911). Sharon V. Salinger and Cornelia H. Dayton have undertaken a close analysis of the records of Robert Love, one of Boston's warners in the 1760s.

Herndon, "Children of Misfortune," 5
hard times and ended up in the Almshouse. They parted from two of their children when young David and Mary were bound out from the Almshouse in the early 1800s. As the Spades and many other immigrants could attest, post-Revolutionary Boston continued to appeal to Europeans looking to better their lives.⁵ When Boston merchant Ebenezer Dorr brought back Indian Bill from the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii) and Indian John from Nootka Sound (Alaska) and had these boys bound to him in 1798, he signaled Boston's involvement in the Pacific trade.⁶ When 32 children of "Christian" Indians were bound into English households in 1676, they revealed the strained circumstances of both Native Americans and English at the end of a bloody war.⁷ When Ruth Newell was placed in Cesar and Chloe Speare's household in 1800, she was an example of Boston magistrates' new willingness to permit former slaves to be master and mistress to a poor child.⁸ These children's life stories—and the collective biography they create—put early America into an international context.

The key sources for this project are the indentures themselves, paper contracts detailing the terms of binding. It is impossible to create an authoritative list of all children bound out by Boston selectmen and overseers of the poor before 1820. About 1,100 paper indentures are located in a six-volume collection at the Boston Public Library.⁹ (Figure 1) Dozens more exist as loose papers in manuscript collections at Massachusetts Historical Society and the Boston Public Library. (Figures 2 and 3) Indentures are missing for other pauper apprentices who

⁵ See admission of Mary Spade (child) to the Boston Almshouse on January 10, 1806 (bound out June 18, 1806) and admission of David Spade (child) on July 4, 1808 (bound out June 7, 1810).

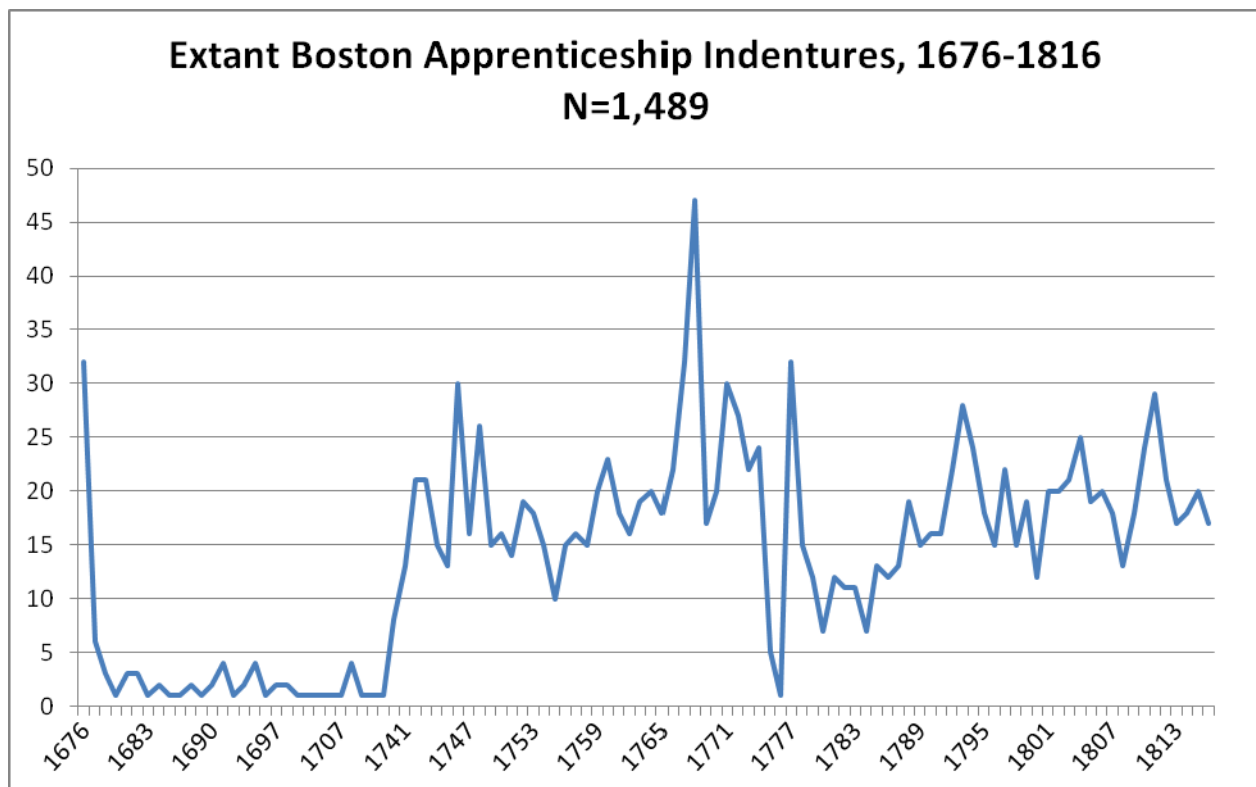
⁶ Indentures of Indian Bill and Indian John, March 25, 1798, "Indentures of Poor Children Bound out as Apprentices by the Overseers of the Poor of the Town of Boston [1734-1805]," 6 vols., Rare Book Division, Boston Public Library, 6:106 and 6:109. Hereafter "Indentures."

⁷ See narrative of the Indian children below.

⁸ Indenture of Ruth Newell, February 3, 1800, "Indentures," 6:136.

⁹ "Indentures."

Herndon, "Children of Misfortune," 6
appear in the Boston selectmen records or in the Boston Almshouse register as children ordered to be bound. It seems likely that some contracts were destroyed or are lodged in collections that I have not discovered. The lopsided chronological spread of the extant indentures (see chart below) strongly suggests that overseers of the poor were not particularly careful about preserving these contracts and orders to bind before the 1740s.



Tracing some of these children is possible because a rich documentary lode exists in Boston archives and throughout New England: town selectmen minutes and vital records, overseer of the poor records, Almshouse registers, and a wide array of state and local records that reveal details about family life, exchange of property, civic and military service, economic status, and religious and benevolent associations. For each narrative, I began with a paper contract or order to bind, which I could link to other documents that give more detail about the

Herndon, "Children of Misfortune," 7
child, parents, or master. I am tracing the children's stories upstream towards their births and downstream towards adulthood. Most stories cover sizeable slices of these children's lives but are not birth-to-death biographies, for children raised in poverty and obscurity are poorly represented in the documentary record.

Binding-out was not unique to Boston, to Massachusetts, or to New England. Anglo-Americans inherited English systems of care for vulnerable people. English poor law created pauper apprenticeship, by which local magistrates removed orphaned, illegitimate, abandoned, destitute or otherwise at-risk children from their birth households and bound them out to officially approved masters, sealing the placement with a legal indenture that governed the exchange of labor (by the child) and daily maintenance and education (by the master).¹⁰ In the American colonies, local authorities adapted pauper apprenticeship to their own needs. Elected magistrates identified children in distress, negotiated contract terms with potential masters, and bound the children accordingly. Tens of thousands of these indentures were enacted in North America, beginning in the early 1630s and extending well into the 1800s.¹¹

Before 1640, while the original Boston proprietors were still laying out land lots, the Massachusetts General Court was already compiling a code of laws that explicitly mandated the removal of "rude, stubborn, & unruly" children from their parents and their placement with masters who would "force them to submit unto government." In 1642 the Court adopted this as part of the colony's "Body of Liberties."¹² In 1692, with a new charter in place (combining

¹⁰ On pauper apprenticeship in England, see Steve Hindle and Ruth Wallis Herndon, "Recreating Proper Families in England and North America: Pauper Apprenticeship in Transatlantic Context," in Herndon and Murray, *Children Bound to Labor*, 28-29.

¹¹ Herndon and Murray, *Children Bound to Labor*, 5.

¹² *The Book of the General Lawes and Libertyes Concerning the Inhabitants of the Massachusetts* (Cambridge, 1648), reproduced in *The Laws and Liberties of Massachusetts, Reprinted from the Unique*

Herndon, "Children of Misfortune," 8
Massachusetts Bay and Plymouth colonies), Massachusetts lawmakers decreed that selectmen had the right to "bind any poor children belonging to such town to be apprentices where they shall see convenient, a man-child until he shall come to the age of twenty-one years, and a woman-child to the age of eighteen years, or time of marriage."¹³ Boston selectmen and overseers of the poor did indeed find it "convenient" and they used the system steadily well into the 1800s. The first specialized asylums in Boston for poor girls (1803) and poor boys (1814) still stated that binding out was their goal for these "objects of charity."¹⁴

A series of changes to binding out laws in the 1700s granted greater latitude to local magistrates in apprenticing children and thereby took power away from the parents. In 1703, the Massachusetts General Court, concerned that "the law for the binding out poor children apprentice is misconstrued by some to extend only to such children whose parents receive alms," stipulated that town selectmen could bind out "all such children whose parents shall, by the selectmen or overseers of the poor, or the greater part of them, be thought unable to maintain them (whether they receive almes or are chargeable to the place or not)."¹⁵ Selectmen no longer needed a concrete measurement of poverty (receiving poor relief in some form) in order to remove children from their parents. In 1710, the binding out law was revised again, changing the previously gender-neutral terms of literacy education by reducing girls' training. The 1703 law provided that both boys and girls were to be taught to read and write "as they may be

Copy of the 1648 Edition in the Henry E. Huntington Library (San Marino, CA: The Huntington Library, 1998), vi, 11.

¹³ *The Acts and Resolves, Public and Private, of the Province of the Massachusetts Bay: to which are prefixed The Charters of the Province, with historical and explanatory notes, and an appendix.* 5 vols. (Boston: Wright & Potter, 1869-86), 1:67.

¹⁴ *An Account of the Boston Female Asylum* (Boston: Hinckley & Co., 1833), 2; *An Account of the Boston Asylum for Indigent Boys* (Boston: William L. Lewis, 1831), 3.

¹⁵ *Acts and Resolves of Massachusetts Bay* 1:538.

Herndon, "Children of Misfortune," 9 capable."¹⁶ The 1710 law stipulated that masters were obliged to teach "males to read and write; females to read, as they respectively may be capable."¹⁷

A major revision of the colony's binding out law in 1772 addressed the tendency of parents to move from one town to another to avoid magistrates' interference. Previous laws limited overseers' authority over poor children to those who "belonged" to their jurisdiction, and this led to "much charge and expence" as overseers sent children back to their home towns. In the new law, made retroactively effective to August 1, 1771, overseers of the poor "of any town or district within this province" had power to bind out "any poor children or minors" who "shall come, be left, or found dwelling" in their jurisdiction, as long as the children met the criteria of need established by previous laws. While granting magistrates this increased power, the law also clarified masters' responsibilities. It limited the length of indenture to 21 years old for boys and 18 years old for girls, thus clearly ending any lingering tendency to bind children to 24, as the original English statute provided. It also increased the literacy education masters were obligated to provide: males should be taught "reading, writing and cyphering" and females "reading and writing."¹⁸

After the American Revolution, when Massachusetts compiled its first state laws in 1788, legislators included "An Act providing for the support of the poor," which reaffirmed the provisions of the 1772 binding law, including the power of local magistrates to bind out any children in their jurisdictions whose parents they considered "unable to maintain them."¹⁹ In 1793, another revision of the law constricted local authorities' jurisdiction by stipulating that

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ *Acts and Resolves of Massachusetts Bay* 1:654-55.

¹⁸ *Acts and Resolves of Massachusetts Bay* 5:161-62.

¹⁹ *Acts and Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts* (Boston: Adams & Nourse, 1788; reprinted

Herndon, "Children of Misfortune," 10
overseers could bind out only those children "whose parents are lawfully settled in and become actually chargeable to their Town or District." But those same magistrates now had power to bind out children into situations that were explicitly servitude, not apprenticeship to some viable craft or trade: "as apprentices to be instructed and employed in any Lawful art, trade or mystery, or as servants to be employed in any lawful work or labour." Masters were still required to teach boys to read, write, and cypher, and girls to read and write, but they did not have to give the child trade training. Masters could take on a child specifically to work as a servant.²⁰

What the Massachusetts legislators prescribed was one thing; what local magistrates actually did was another. Perhaps the most telling of Boston's local laws was passed by the town meeting in 1723: "That every free Indian[,] Negro[,] or Molatto shall bind out, all their children at or before they arrive to the age of four years to some English master, and upon neglect thereof the selectmen or overseers of the poor shall be empowered to bind out all such children till the age of twenty one years."²¹ Massachusetts legislators in general may not have been worried about Indian and black families, but Boston freemen were.

Provincial authorities recognized that Boston had unique concerns. In 1735, the General Court passed an "Act for employing and providing for the poor in the town of Boston," which granted Boston overseers special privileges because that town "is grown considerably populous, and the idle and poor much increased among them, and laws now [in] force relating to them, not so suitable to the circumstances of the said town, which are different from those of the other towns in the province." The new law allowed Boston overseers to bind out children whose

Wright & Potter, 1894), 98-102.

²⁰ *Acts and Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts [1793]* (Boston: Adams and Larkin, 1793; reprinted by Wright & Potter Printing Company, State Printers, 1895), 481-82.

Herndon, "Children of Misfortune," 11
parents were "rated" for taxes if the overseers deemed them "unable or negligent to provide
necessaries for the sustenance and support of their children." Overseers could also bind out into
"good families" children who had been brought up "in such gross ignorance that they do not
know, or are not able to distinguish, the alphabet of twenty-four letters, at the age of six years."
This, the Court hoped, would provide "a decent and Christian education" to all children and stop
the "great scandal of the Christian name" occasioned by parents neglecting to instruct their
children properly.²² Boston magistrates could now use a literacy test as cause to remove children
from their parents.

Further, Boston custom did not extend to actual documentation of these compulsory
bindings or at least not to preservation of the indentures. The indentures of Thomas, James,
Ruth, and Robert Humphreys are the only extant Boston contracts for children of color between
the 1723 Boston law and the Massachusetts Supreme Court case of *Commonwealth v. Nathaniel
Jennison* (1783) which effectively ended slavery in the state. "Free Negroes" John and Betty
Humphreys belonged to Boston's Christ Church and had their children baptized there in 1750.²³
After John Humphreys died in 1756, three of his children—Thomas, James, and Ruth—were
bound to Alexander Chamberlain, a prosperous sailmaker and lay pillar of Christ Church.²⁴ The

²¹Boston Town Meeting, March 11, 1723, Boston Town Records (1700-1728), 423; reproduced as A
Report of the Record Commissioners, vol. 8 (Boston: Rockwell and Churchill, 1883), 173-74.

²²*Acts and Resolves of Massachusetts Bay* 2:757.

²³The children were all baptized on 14 March 1750; see Mary Kent Davey Babcock, ed., "Christ Church,
Boston, Records," *NEHGR* 99 (October 1945):34.

²⁴For Chamberlain's baptism and marriage in Christ Church, see Babcock, "Christ Church, Boston,
Records," *NEHGR* 99 (1945):285 and 100 (1946):297. For Chamberlain's contribution to purchase a ring
of bells for Christ Church, see Arthur H. Nichols, *NEHGR* 18 (1904): 67. For Chamberlain's sponsorship
of children's baptisms, see Babcock, "Christ Church, Boston, Records," *NEHGR* 100 (1946):138-139.
For the baptism of Chamberlain's "Negroe" servants and slaves, see Babcock, "Christ Church, Boston,
Records," *NEHGR* 102 (1948):34-35. For references to the John Smith family, see Babcock, "Christ
Church, Boston, Records," *NEHGR* 100 (1946):31, 236

Herndon, "Children of Misfortune," 12 fourth child, Robert, was later bound to John Smith, also a member of Christ Church.²⁵ These linkages suggest that the four Humphreys children were regarded as appropriate subjects for apprenticeship indenture (or that their indentures were appropriate objects for collection and preservation) because of their parents' status in the church and community. Most children of color who were bound in compliance with Boston's 1723 law never received formal contracts or those contracts were not saved.

The custom of the Boston magistrates moved in advance of the law on two other specific and significant matters. First, Boston overseers began to bind out children whose parents were not legally settled inhabitants of Boston—or recipients of Boston poor relief funds—as early as 1757, fourteen years before colonial law gave this power. The language of the indenture shows the change: instead of "poor child belonging to Boston," the clerk wrote simply "poor child."²⁶ Second, Boston overseers of the poor actually began to add "cyphering" to girls' contracts despite the absence of a provincial law requiring it. The custom began in 1746, when six of the eleven girls bound out that year were promised math training.²⁷ Whatever impulse prompted that departure from convention was quickly squelched. For nearly forty years, cyphering was excluded from girls' contracts. Not until 1785 were promises of math education once again included in girls' contracts.²⁸ In a few cases, the clerk carefully underlined this word,

²⁵ Indentures of Thomas, James, Robert, and Ruth Humphreys (August 26, 1756, August 29, 1756, October 6, 1756, and May 4, 1757, "Indentures," 2:78, 2:79, 2:83, 2:91). Robert Humphreys was later rebound to John Stoddart (October 26, 1768, "Indentures," 3:160) and — ten days later — to John Smith (November 1, 1768, "Indentures," 3:167).

²⁶ See, for example, the indenture of Penelope Curtain, "a poor child," on August 4, 1757, and that of Robert Clark, "a poor child," on September 13, 1757, "Indentures," 2:95 and 2:96.

²⁷ Indentures of Mary Oliver, Mary Sturges, Ellenor Scolly, Martha Smith, Margaret Matthews, and Elisabeth Mills (all 1746, "Indentures," 1:97-111).

²⁸ The inclusion of "cypher" in the girls' contracts begins with the indenture of Mary Gordon (August 4, 1785, "Indentures," 5:65) and continues through the indenture of Johanneh Spooner (February 15, 1790, "Indentures," 5:156).

Herndon, "Children of Misfortune," 13 emphasizing the departure from custom.²⁹ For five years, girls and boys were promised identical literacy education in their apprenticeship contracts; then, in 1790, cyphering was once again excluded from girls' indentures. In the early 1790s, the clerk occasionally slipped, added "cyphering" to a girl's indenture, and then wiped it away.³⁰ Finally, in 1795, cyphering was included in girls' contracts for good.³¹ State law did not require cyphering, but Boston custom did.

All this suggests that overseers of the poor in Boston gave themselves more latitude (for good or for ill) than a strict interpretation of statute law would admit. I see this as part of the increasing power of the office over the long eighteenth century.

Boston elected its first overseers of the poor in March 1690/91.³² Overseers took office only reluctantly in the late 1600s in early 1700s.³³ Between 1690 and 1710, 49 men were elected to office, serving an average of 2.5 years. Attitudes gradually changed. Between 1710 and 1740, epidemics of refusal no longer occurred. 37 men were elected to office, serving an average of 8.1 years. By the middle of the 1700s the post was considered desirable. Between 1740 and 1766, 34 men were elected, serving an average of 13 years, with some serving 20 years and more. Eight men who served multiple terms as overseers in mid-1700s later served on the governor's council. Andrew Oliver (Figure 5), who served nineteen years as overseer and

²⁹ See, for example, the clerk's triple underlining of "cypher" in the indentures of Mary Covel (June 21, 1786, "Indentures," 5:72), Peggy Garrison (May 9, 1787, "Indentures," 5:89), and Nancy Hinds (November 1, 1787, "Indentures," 5:84).

³⁰ See, for example, the indenture of Elizabeth Farrier (August 19, 1792, "Indentures," 5:177).

³¹ The addition of "cyphering" begins with the indenture of Charlotte Gordon (September 1, 1795, "Indentures," 6:72). From that point on, no child was promised anything less than reading, writing, AND cyphering.

³² Robert Francis Seybolt, *The Town Officials of Colonial Boston, 1634-1775* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1939), 82.

³³ At the Town Meeting of May 14, 1705, six new overseers had to be elected to replace six who had resigned or refused to service. Seybolt, 112.

Herndon, "Children of Misfortune," 14
twenty-one years as member of the governor's council, went on to become lieutenant governor of the colony. Ebenezer Storer, who served sixteen years as overseer of the poor, was a prominent Boston merchant (Figure 4). Professionalization of the office included formal division of the city into twelve wards, more careful record-keeping, and the first political squabble over the position. In 1767, when the two most popular overseers (John Barrett and Royall Tyler) were not re-elected, most of the other board members refused to serve, relenting only when the voters re-elected Barrett and Tyler at a subsequent town meeting.³⁴ The overseers of the poor had become an eighteenth-century power bloc.

After the upheaval of British occupation at the beginning of the Revolutionary War, the newly constituted board of overseers in 1777 proved as durable as those boards that governed the poor in the years just prior to the revolution. From 1777 to the end of the century, the office of overseer of the poor became even more professionalized and influential. Sixteen men were elected to office in this 23-year period, serving an average of 13.0 years each. Careful records of the almshouse and meetings of the overseers document their activity. Newly elected overseers invariably started out at the bottom of the board—overseer #12—and moved up the ladder as overseers died or retired. Little turnover in the office occurred; overseers served 20-25 years in office with few exceptions. Men of great wealth and status—famous men with "Honorable" and "Esquire" attached to their names, men with their portraits painted and displayed in prominent places—routinely took on the position. Official state legislation regarding treatment of poor people (including pauper apprentices) originated in meetings of the Boston overseers of the poor.

The dramatic shift in the popularity of the office raises a question about the benefits to the overseers of the poor, who were elected annually for the task that had no publicly

³⁴ Boston Town Meetings of March 9, March 16, and March 23, 1767; Seybolt, 321-23.

Herndon, "Children of Misfortune," 15
acknowledged financial reimbursement. These were men who could afford to leave their occupations for considerable amounts of time to do their civic duty. They shared a certain understanding of how society should function—hierarchically, with them at the top. They had ideas about where everyone fit in that hierarchy, and how order might be maintained in the community by the proper placement of the lower sort. Until the late 1700s, these were men well accustomed to slavery, since New England (Boston and Newport in particular) financed the American branch of the transatlantic slave trade. Some Boston elites had slaves at work in their households, warehouses, and fields. For them, overseeing the poor was a corporate, genteel parallel to overseeing slaves. Both systems put people where they "belonged."

When overseers placed pauper apprentices in a household for ten or more years, they were effectively providing cheap labor to that family. Since overseers received no wage or reimbursement for their labor on behalf of the town, it is quite probable that they were drawn to the economic advantages associated with binding out poor children to labor for others. The records are silent on the subject of bribery, kickbacks, or other cash profits the overseers might have received from labor-hungry masters. The records give more information—if indirectly—on the subject of profitability of a child's labor and the social value of the child's service to the overseers and the masters. Few overseers actually bound a child to themselves, but more probably ensured that particular poor children went to friends and relatives. In return for such provision, what "thank you" might have come back to the overseer?

Perhaps the Boston overseers' sense of privilege and power explains why the apprenticeship indentures they enacted differ significantly from those generated in other New England seaports. New London, New Haven, and Providence together provide a database of about 500 pauper apprenticeship indentures from the 1700s to compare with Boston. Boston

Herndon, “Children of Misfortune,” 16 appears progressive in its treatment of white girls: giving more girls the benefit of contract, promising them more literacy education, and binding them at a later age (thus leaving them longer with parents). But Boston also appears racist by excluding so many children of color from the privilege of written contract.

| | Boston | New Haven, New London, Providence |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Sex ratio | 43% girls; 57% boys | 33% girls; 67% boys |
| Racial designations | 6% of color; 94% white | 33% of color; 67% white |
| Average age at binding | 9.5 for girls; 9.8 for boys | 7.3 for girls; 9.3 for boys |
| High literacy promised | 17% of girls; 98% of boys | 0% of girls; 82% of boys |

Girls’ high representation among bound-out children in Boston is unusual. Outside New England, in the rest of eighteenth-century North America, boys typically constituted two-thirds to three-quarters of the children bound out,³⁵ presumably because magistrates and masters placed a higher value on male labor and wanted to secure it via contract. But in Boston, girls sometimes formed a numerical majority of the children bound out. If the period 1780-1795 is examined as an isolated moment, one would conclude that the system had no gender bias at all, for girls accounted for 54 percent of the indentures during these fifteen years.

All but a handful of Boston’s white girls were promised training only in “housewifery” skills (no marketable trade). About 40 percent of white boys were promised training only in “husbandry” skills (no marketable trade); about 8 percent of white boys were promised training in seafaring, navigation, or other maritime skills; and a little over 50 percent were promised training in a marketable trade such as coopering, tailoring, or carpentry. The few girls of color

Herndon, "Children of Misfortune," 17
bound out were promised only training in housewifery, never a trade; the few boys of color
bound out were never promised training in seafaring, seldom promised training in "husbandry,"
and usually promised training in a low-status trade or "the work of a servant."

Many lives intersected when a child was bound out as a pauper apprentice. The overseers of the poor who enacted the contract are by far the easiest to track, since most of them were prominent citizens who left a substantial body of textual material and even paintings. The masters (and their families) are also relatively easy to identify in the documentary record, since they were usually of the middling and upper sort in their communities. The children are difficult, but not impossible, to track, since masters left evidence that applied in some measure to all members of the household, and many of the children left independent evidence as adults. Ironically, it is often the parents of the pauper apprentices who are the most elusive. These poor people, often immigrants and people of color, were seldom named in the indentures, and sometimes impossible to find in the record. The narratives in this book put the children in the center, but try to connect each child to parents and siblings, overseers, and masters. Then we get a better understanding of competing ideas about childhood and childrearing in early New England.

³⁵ Herndon and Murray, *Children Bound to Labor*, 15.

The Narratives (Chapter 2-6)

A series of short narratives form the core of the book, describing the lives of poor children bound out by the Boston overseers of the poor between the late 1600s and the early 1800s: their misfortunes, options, limitations, and accomplishments. I have organized the stories in chapters that follow the individual's life path. Each chapter begins with a brief introduction explaining the connecting theme and placing the stories within the larger contexts of New England and Atlantic world history.

Chapter 2: Family Disasters: Becoming a Poor Child

This chapter describes misfortunes which brought children to the attention of local officials and made them candidates for binding out. I show how New Englanders dealt with tragedies and how children (and their families) come to be designated as "poor." Bastardy, abandonment by parents, disability and/or death of parents constituted the most common reasons for children being bound out, but sometimes magistrates removed children from parental households simply because they were "poor" or because their parents were identified as "Negro," "mulatto," "black," "mustee" or "Indian."

The first narrative is a composite one: 32 Indian children who were bound at the end of King Philip's War by the victorious English settlers in Boston. (Figure 6 and 7) On August 10, 1676, Daniel Gookin, head of a commission authorized by General Court, drew up a list³⁶ of

³⁶ The original of this document is held in the Boston Public Library Rare Book and Manuscript Collection, Ms X.Ch.A.2.36. It has been transcribed and reproduced as "Indian Children Put to Service, 1676," *New England Historical Genealogical Society Register* 8 (July 1854): 270-73. I have compared this transcription with the original document and find a few discrepancies, but it is accurate in the main. The *Register* article includes another document, without source or attribution, which is a transcription of the General Court's endorsement of Gookin's committee's disposition of the children.

Herndon, "Children of Misfortune," 19 Native American children who "came in" with John, sachem of the Indian community in Pakachoog, one of the "praying towns" set up by Puritan missionaries in New England.³⁷ The Massachusetts Bay colony was not the first to do this. A few months earlier, in June 1676, Plymouth colony's Council of War ordered that "majestates of this jurisdiction" had authority to "dispose of the children of those Indians that have come in and yielded themselves to the English," placing them in English households until they "attaine the age of twenty foure or twenty five yeers."³⁸

Gookin wrote nothing about this act of binding Indian children in his *Historical Account of the Doings and Sufferings of the Christian Indians in New England [1675-77]*. He did describe the murder of Indian women and children by Englishmen on August 9, 1676, the day before he wrote out his list.³⁹ Gookin expressed deep shock and horror at this brutality and deplored the "hypocrites" and "evil-doers" among the English. "I wish and pray, that both English and Indians were all better than I fear they are; 't is not my work to judge men's hearts; that belongs to God."⁴⁰ He asserted that the English must "endeavour to convince and reform them [Indians], if God please to be instrumental to correct them, and turn them to God effectually."⁴¹ Gookin certainly presented himself as having the Indians' best interests at heart, and when he assigned Indian children to English masters, he was probably thinking about the Christian instruction they would receive. In the list he drew up, he identified most of the

³⁷ On the praying towns during the "Indian resistance movement known as King Phillip's War," see Jean M. O'Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees: Indian Land and Identity in Natick, Massachusetts, 1650-1790* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 6, 13-90, and map on p. 29.

³⁸ July 22, 1676, *Records of the Colony of New Plymouth, Court Orders, Vol. V: 1668-1678* (Boston: William White, 1856), 207.

³⁹ Gookin, *Historical Account of the Doings and Sufferings of the Christian Indians in New England, in the Years 1675, 1676, 1677* (1677; reproduced in *Transactions and Collections of the American Antiquarian Society*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: University Press, 1836), 513-14.

Herndon, "Children of Misfortune," 20 children by their parents' Indian names (Annawekin, Aswitankus, Sukamuck), but assigned most of the children English names, many with Biblical associations (John, Jabez, Joseph, Sarah, Rebeckah). The children were "put to service" until they were 24 years of age and "religiously educated & taught to read the English tounge."

The choice of masters is telling. Samuel Symonds, deputy governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony at the time (1673-78), received the first two children listed. The third child went to Thomas Danforth, a member of the committee that determined the children's fates. Danforth would become Deputy Governor of the Massachusetts Bay colony for the periods 1679-1686 and 1689-92. Daniel Gookin assigned several children to himself. And Capt. Thomas Prentiss, noted for his military service during the Indian resistance and also a member of the commission, became master to one of the children. Were the commission members trying to protect these Indian children from the abuse that was almost sure to fall on Native people after the war? Was the selection driven by confidence in the ability of the masters to protect the children? Or did the selection reflect a sense of who had contributed to the English cause during the war and who thus deserved some compensation in the form of labor?

I considered mapping where these 32 children were "located" before they were bound out and analyzing the geographic pathways of their dislocation. Most of the children (Figure 7) were bound to settlers in Cambridge or adjoining towns. However, no authority can certify the exact location (latitude and longitude) of some now-vanished praying towns (Quantisset, for example). Further, the Natick area served as a gathering point for Indian refugees dislocated from other parts of southern New England, so a child who supposedly came from Pakachoog might have

⁴⁰ Ibid., 515.

⁴¹ Ibid., 515.

Herndon, "Children of Misfortune," 21 stronger ties to a community elsewhere.⁴² But much more importantly, English notions of geographic fixity as a sign of civilization clashed drastically with Indian ideas of seasonal migrations as part of the natural rhythms of life.⁴³ I concluded that mapping the children's movements would assist Gookin in his attempts to "fix" Indian children in place—first in an Indian place, and then in an English place. It would colonize the children retroactively, as pauper apprenticeship was meant to do. None of the Indians on Gookin's list were described as "poor." No suggestion of poverty looms anywhere in the document. Rather, English warriors adapted pauper apprenticeship to rationalize the servitude of young prisoners of war.

Chapter 3: The Almshouse Community: Waiting for Binding Out

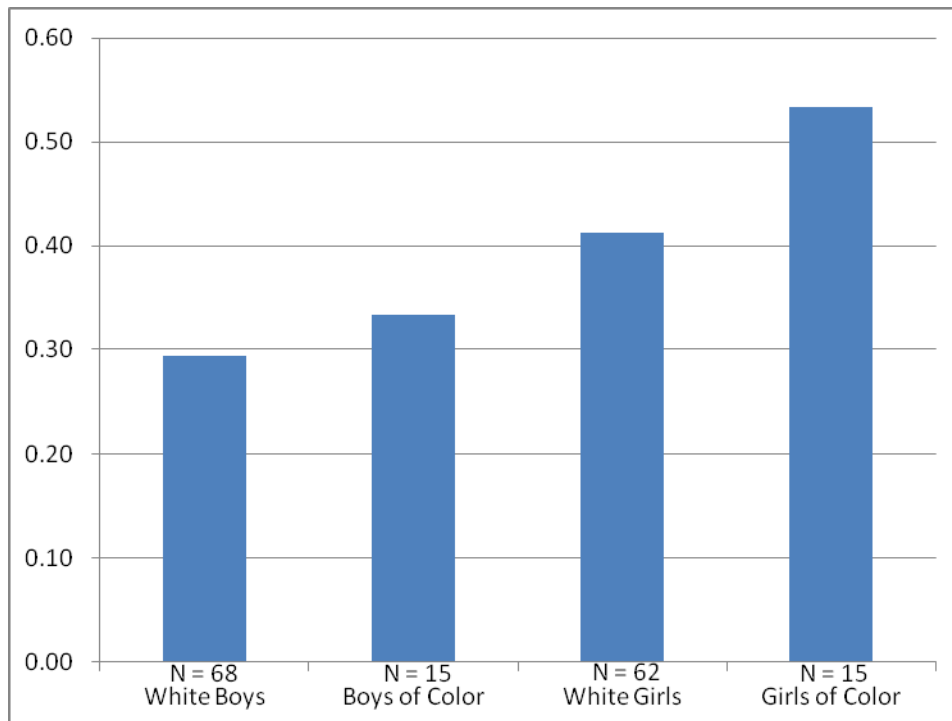
This chapter addresses the social environment of the Boston Almshouse, a welfare shelter from which overseers of the poor plucked many poor children for binding out. I trace the shifting demographics of the Almshouse, paying particular attention to the presence of children. Between 1795 and 1817, 308 children were bound out from the almshouse, a figure calculated from the data in the Boston Almshouse Register No. 4, the first to provide sufficient detail about the fate of the children who entered its doors. Perhaps the most appealing pair of pauper apprentices are John Adams Mann and George Washington Mann, born May 18, 1799, and named by their parents for the first two presidents of the United States. In May 1802, when the twins were three years old, their mother Mary brought them and their sister to the almshouse. The sister was bound several months later (no indenture exists for her), and the brothers were bound out two years later, when they were about five years old, to the same master—David

⁴² O'Brien, 11.

⁴³ O'Brien, 14-26.

Herndon, "Children of Misfortune," 22
Parker of Reading, to learn farming.⁴⁴ Who would not want to know what happened to children so distinctively named?

The mean stay in the Almshouse before binding out was a little over 14 months, with the shortest stay being one day and the longest stay being ten years. For some children, the almshouse was the only home they knew, because they had been born there. The mortality rate of children born in the Almshouse was pretty dismal, but for girls and girls of color more than dismal: 29% for white boys, 33% for boys of color, with gradations as noted in the chart of three-year mortality rates below.



The Taylor story shows the Almshouse as a place of refuge and support for a father raising children on his own. 42-year-old John Taylor and his four children entered the Boston

⁴⁴ Admission of Mary Mann and children George Washington, John Adams, and Mary, Almshouse Register No. 4, May 4, 1802; Indentures of George Washington Mann and John Adams Mann to David Parker, Esqr., April 4 and April 6, 1804, "Indentures," 6:186-87.

Herndon, "Children of Misfortune," 23 almshouse together in December 1758,⁴⁵ probably propelled by the death of the mother, Jane Taylor, who had died in the almshouse between the August 1756 census (on which she was listed) and the November 1758 listing of inmates from which she is missing.⁴⁶ Jane probably had entered the Almshouse to give birth: her youngest child (and namesake) was born July 31, 1756.⁴⁷ John Taylor tried to keep his family together but was unable to cope without his wife's assistance. After his admission with the children in 1758, he entered and exited several times, sometimes sent to the workhouse (an adjacent facility where able-bodied persons labored for their upkeep) and sometimes sent back to the almshouse on account of lameness.⁴⁸ Taylor's four children were bound out to different masters. Twelve-year-old Charles went to a Marblehead "gentleman" in February 1759⁴⁹; nine-year-old John went to a Boston chair-maker in May 1759⁵⁰; and ten-year-old Rebecca went to a Boston schoolmaster in February 1760.⁵¹ Jane, the youngest and most frail child, lived in the almshouse for more than seven years. Her first master did not keep her⁵²; she was sent back to the Almshouse and was bound to a Boothbay housewright Samuel Adams in December 1766, when she was ten years old.⁵³ John Taylor apparently tried to keep in touch with his children through the Almshouse, probably gathering scraps of information from the staff and perhaps seeing his youngest, Jane, with some frequency until she was sent away to her second master's home in what is now Maine. One feels for John Taylor. The overseers most certainly saw him as an unsuitable parent: he was lame, he could

⁴⁵ Nellis and Cecere, 126.

⁴⁶ Nellis and Cecere, 118, 125.

⁴⁷ Indenture of Jane Taylor to Samuel Adams, December 5, 1766, "Indentures," 3:82.

⁴⁸ Nellis and Cecere, 128, 140, 156.

⁴⁹ Indenture of Charles Taylor, February 7, 1759, "Indentures," 2:119.

⁵⁰ Indenture of John Taylor, May 2, 1759, "Indentures," 2:124.

⁵¹ Indenture of Rebecca Taylor, February 28, 1760, "Indentures," 2:141.

⁵² Indenture of Jane Taylor to Thomas Wendell, February 6, 1765, "Indentures," 3:41.

Herndon, "Children of Misfortune," 24 not support his children, and he needed the Almshouse for the basics of life. He could not prevent the dissolution of his family after his wife died. He disappears from the Almshouse records after his children were bound, and he probably made his life on the streets of Boston, once he had only himself to support. Samuel Waldo's painting of "Old Pat, Independent Beggar" (Figure 8) evokes the distress John Taylor must have felt when he contemplated the fate of his children.

Chapter 4: Binding Out: Moving Out, Moving Up, Moving Down

This chapter describes the collective experience of moving from one living situation to another as a result of binding-out: leaving one's parents or the Almshouse, traveling to the master's house, getting through the period of transition and adjustment, sometimes being sent back to the Almshouse because of some physical problem or family conflict.

This narrative focuses on magistrates who were also masters of pauper apprentices. Overseers and their close colleagues, wardens and selectmen, brought to their office the combined experience of men accustomed to ordering public affairs and managing extensive private affairs. They headed large households with many servants and children and owned large enterprises employing many underlings. They doubtless could spot a good laborer among the poor children for whom they were accountable, and they were in an excellent position to take advantage of "first claim" on such children. Many men in rural communities where pauper apprentices were sent had friends in high places on the board of overseers in Boston and could ask a colleague to keep an eye out for a "likely" boy or girl.

The stories of girls bound into households of magistrates highlights not only shows the

⁵³ Indenture of Jane Taylor to Samuel Adams, December 5, 1766, "Indentures," 3:82.

Herndon, "Children of Misfortune," 25 rise in status of these girls—coming from the margins and going to the heights—but also shows how town magistrates could use their position to acquire labor for their own households. Girls significantly outnumbered boys among children bound to magistrates connected to the overseers of the poor, suggesting that magistrates and their wives were most interested in the housewifery services all girls were bound to perform. Ten-year-old Mary Ann LePierre was bound in 1740 to Abiel Walley, Boston justice of the peace, selectman, and member of the ward visitation committee.⁵⁴ His public push for reform of binding out law and practice coincided with him taking LePierre into his household.⁵⁵ Eight-year-old Frances Neat was bound in 1751 to Thomas Hubbard, prominent Boston merchant, deacon in the Old South Church, and long-time overseer of the poor at the time of the binding.⁵⁶ Twelve-year-old Lydia Gregory was bound in 1767 to Benjamin Austin, another eminent Bostonian who had served as selectmen for eight years just before he took Gregory into his household.⁵⁷ Six-year-old Abigail Hatch was bound in 1778 to Henry Prentiss, another wealthy Boston merchant and also a Revolutionary military officer at the time of binding; after the war he served as one of Boston's overseers of the poor.⁵⁸ Fifteen-year-old Jane Galley was bound in 1794 to Jonathan Loring Austin, famous Revolutionary Patriot and statesman who had been an overseer of the poor for ten years at the time of Galley's binding.⁵⁹ In the eighteenth century, even six-year-old Abigail Hatch would have been considered capable of contributing useful labor to a household. By age ten, most girls were paying for their upkeep through their labor. At fifteen, Galley would have brought significant profit to the household

⁵⁴ Indenture of Mary Ann Le Pierre to Abiel Walley, August 6, 1740, "Indentures," 1:6.

⁵⁵ Town Meetings of May 8, 1741 and May 22, 1741, reproduced in *Boston Records from 1729 to 1742*, Report of the Record Commissioners 12 (Boston: Rockwell and Churchill, 1885), 276-77 and 280-81.

⁵⁶ Indenture of Francis Neat to Thomas Hubbard, November 15, 1751, "Indentures," 1:214.

⁵⁷ Indenture of Lydia Gregory to Benjamin Austin, June 3, 1767, "Indentures," 3:101.

⁵⁸ Indenture of Abigail Hatch to Henry Prentiss, July 1, 1778, "Indentures," 4:193.

Herndon, “Children of Misfortune,” 26 through her housewifery skills, and Loring’s family got three years of her labor in return for the cost of her upkeep. The political power of these men gave them an advantage in selecting particularly promising laborers for their households. This pattern, repeated numerous times, suggests that these unsalaried magistrates found ways to benefit from their positions. The girls in turn probably considered their situations advantageous: these were elite “fathers of the town” with wide resources and connections. In return for faithful service and discretion in keeping family secrets, these girls might have expected the benefits of patronage.

Chapter 5: In the master’s house: living and laboring as a pauper apprentice

This chapter illuminates life in the master’s household. I discuss the qualifications for being master of a pauper apprentice, revealed in the endorsements required for anyone who requested to take a child out of the Boston Almshouse. (Figure 9) I assess the daily life of a bound child, showing the wide range of living conditions the children endured or enjoyed.

Ruth Newell’s story illuminates the master’s place in the local hierarchy and reveals the race, class, and gender realities of Boston after the Revolution. Massachusetts in 1765 counted about 5,000 “black and mulatto” people among its 224,000 inhabitants (2 percent).⁶⁰ In 1776, half of Massachusetts’ “Negro” persons lived in Boston and its northern environs.⁶¹ How many of these had been slaves? How many still were slaves? New Englanders ended their involvement in slavery incrementally and (in some cases) reluctantly.⁶² In 1780, Massachusetts

⁵⁹ Indenture of Jane Galley to Jonathan Loring Austin, September 1, 1794, “Indentures,” 6:58.

⁶⁰ John J. McCusker, “Population of Massachusetts” (Table Eg 117-131), in *Historical Statistics of the United States* 5:658-60. See also Evarts B. Greene and Virginia D. Harrington, *American Population before the Federal Census of 1790* (Gloucester, Mass: Peter Smith, 1966), 17.

⁶¹ Greene and Harrington, 30.

⁶² Arthur Zilversmit, *The First Emancipation: The Abolition of Slavery in the North* (Chicago: University

Herndon, "Children of Misfortune," 27 wrote a state constitution, beginning the first Article with the phrase: "All men are born free and equal, and have certain natural, essential, and inalienable rights."⁶³ Massachusetts commentators argued over the meaning and application of this language, and state judicial decisions chipped away at slavery, beginning with *The Commonwealth v. Nathaniel Jennison* (1783).⁶⁴ Massachusetts listed no slaves in its first federal census of 1790, although other evidence shows that some inhabitants continued to hold and trade slaves and that judicial opinion was not firm or unanimous on the unconstitutionality of slavery.⁶⁵ In 1793, as noted above, ten years after *Jennison* and three years after the federal census in which Massachusetts claimed to have no slaves in residence, town officials received power to bind children "as apprentices to be instructed *and employed* in any Lawful art, trade or mystery, *or as servants to be employed in any lawful work or labour*."⁶⁶ Never before had New England binding-out laws expressly described pauper apprentices as "servants" or expressly identified their upbringing and training as "employment" of "servants."

Pauper apprenticeship was a handy precedent for New England lawmakers wrestling with the problem of how to end slavery. Lawmakers expected the children of slaves (gradual emancipation) or former slaves (judicial emancipation) to spend their childhood in bondage, to maintain prevailing race and class hierarchy during revolutionary upheaval. Pauper apprenticeship could be used to keep children of slaves under control while New Englanders

of Chicago Press, 1967).

⁶³ Massachusetts Constitution of 1780, Article 1.

⁶⁴ See the transcription of Chief Justice William Cushing's notes of *The Commonwealth v. Nathaniel Jennison*, along with commentary, in *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* vol. 13 (1873-75): 292-304. The Massachusetts Historical Society holds the original Cushing notes and displays them on-line at: http://www.masshist.org/database/onview_full.cfm?queryID=670 See also Zilversmit, 113-15.

⁶⁵ Zilversmit, 115-16.

Herndon, “Children of Misfortune,” 28 distanced themselves from slavery. In this post-Revolutionary environment of complicated race and class relations, “Negro” child Ruth Newell was bound out to a black master and mistress.

Ruth Newell was daughter of Luce and Cato Newell and sister of Sally Newell, who were admitted to the Boston Almshouse in the 1790s.⁶⁷ In early 1800, ten-year-old Ruth was bound to Cesar (“black man”) and Chloe Spear,⁶⁸ former slaves who had married while still in bondage.⁶⁹ Freed during revolutionary upheaval in Massachusetts, and with their own children grown, the couple began a boarding house in rented quarters. Chloe was baptized and joined the Second Baptist Church in 1788; according to her church friends, Caesar was less inclined to religious devotion, spent his time on the town, and left the boarding house business in Chloe’s hands. The Spears saved enough money to purchase a small house on Hanover Street, move out of rented quarters, and edge towards real economic competency.

When the Boston magistrates bound Ruth Newell to Cesar Spear (and “his wife”), they demonstrated their confidence that the couple would be “proper” masters to a pauper apprentice. Cesar signed the indenture in a legible hand. (Figure 1) Ruth Newell’s service was almost certainly for Chloe, to assist in the running of the boarding house. Something went wrong, however. In late 1803, Ruth Newell re-entered the Almshouse and was bound out in early 1804 to a blacksmith in Bridgewater.⁷⁰ Perhaps Cesar and Chloe Spear had fallen on hard times and the overseers of the poor apparently determined the Spears were no longer appropriate masters.

⁶⁶ *Acts and Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts*, 479-93, quotation on p. 481. Emphasis mine.

⁶⁷ Admission of Luce Newell, October 8, 1790; Admission of Cato Newell, April 23, 1798; Admission of Sally Newell, July 18, 1799.

⁶⁸ Indenture of Ruth Newell to Cesar Spear, February 3, 1800, “Indentures,” 6:136.

⁶⁹ Information about Chloe Speare comes from her posthumous memoir written by church friends, *Memoir of Mrs. Chloe Spear, a Native of Africa, who was Enslaved in Childhood, and Died in Boston, January 3, 1815, aged 65 Years, By A Lady of Boston* (Boston: James Loring, 1832).

⁷⁰ Admission of Ruth Newell, October 20, 1803; Indenture of Ruth Newell to Josiah Snell, January 17,

In her nearly three years of working alongside Chloe Spear, Ruth Newell received a practical education in the gender and racial politics of Boston. Ruth Newell had been placed with a virtual celebrity. Widow Chloe Spear gained considerable fame as a free black woman whose story became abolitionist fodder for the anti-slavery cause. (Figure 10) Ruth Newell does not appear in Chloe Spear's memoir and historians familiar with the memoir have overlooked the presence of this child.⁷¹ We need a fuller recounting of the Spears' lives to include their participation as free black people in this social institution of pauper apprenticeship and to show their connection to Ruth Newell, child of misfortune.

Chapter 6: Becoming free: life after apprenticeship

This chapter describes the process of becoming free—the arrival of a predetermined date, the exchange of indentures, occasional legal questions of freedom age and conditions met, and the receipt of freedom dues by the apprentice—by tracing the trajectories of lives of former apprentices. The last story in the chapter (and in the book) is that of Thomas Banks. This narrative shows the potential for pauper apprentices to move from destitution to solid citizenry. It also contrasts the desperate situation of some parents with the far better situation of their bound-out children. The patronage and support of master and neighbors were crucial to such success.

John Banks and Mary Batten married in Boston on September 17, 1744.⁷² John was

1804, "Indentures," 6:6:184.

⁷¹ Margot Minardi, *Making Slavery History: Abolition and the Politics of Memory in Massachusetts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), and Margot Lee Minardi, "The Inevitable Negro: Making Slavery History in Massachusetts, 1770-1863," (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 2007), esp. 198-204.

⁷² *Boston Marriages from 1700 to 1751*, Record Commissioners Report 28 (Boston: Municipal Printing Office, 1898), 278.

Herndon, "Children of Misfortune," 30 probably the son of John (a distiller) and Sarah Banks; he was born in 1722. About Mary no record remains except that she became the wife of John.⁷³ John and Mary's first child, son John, was born on August 16, 1745.⁷⁴ A daughter, Mary, was born within the next few years, and perhaps another child who did not survive.⁷⁵ Son Thomas was born in 1752⁷⁶ and daughter Hannah in 1756.⁷⁷ As the family grew, their fortunes declined. The overseers of the poor removed the oldest son John from the family and bound him out in 1759, when he was fourteen years old.⁷⁸ A year later, four-year-old Hannah was admitted to the Almshouse, with no accompanying adults.⁷⁹ It seems very likely that Mary Banks (wife and mother) had died and widower John was trying to manage his family with limited resources. A month after Hannah entered the Almshouse, her father arrived, with Hannah's older siblings Mary and Thomas.⁸⁰ John Banks (father) left after bringing his children to the institution: the clerk wrote simply "gone away." Very likely, John went in search of work to support his family and perhaps retrieve them from the Almshouse. But his family disintegrated. Thomas Banks was bound out from the Almshouse on July 1, 1761.⁸¹ Mary also was bound out, though the Almshouse clerk failed to record the date of her binding or the name of her master, and no indenture exists to document her placement.⁸² Hannah remained in the Almshouse until her death, at six years of

⁷³ Thwing database, "Inhabitants and Estates of the Town of Boston, 1630-1800," RefCode 7968 (John), RefCode 4919 (Mary).

⁷⁴ Indenture of John Banks to Andrew Adams, October 3, 1759, "Indentures," 2:137.

⁷⁵ Admission of Mary Banks (child) to the Almshouse, November 18, 1760.

⁷⁶ Indenture of Thomas Banks to William Williams, July 1, 1761, "Indentures," 2:169.

⁷⁷ Hannah Banks was listed as four years of age when she was admitted to the Boston Almshouse on October 8, 1760.

⁷⁸ Indenture of John Banks.

⁷⁹ Admission of Hannah Banks to Almshouse, October 8, 1760.

⁸⁰ Admission of John Banks to Almshouse with children Mary and Thomas, November 18, 1760.

⁸¹ Indenture of Thomas Banks.

⁸² Admission of Mary Banks to the Almshouse, November 18, 1760. The entry indicates that Mary was "Bound out" but gives no further information.

age, on April 25, 1762.⁸³

John Banks was never able to support his family and he clearly saw the Almshouse as the place of resort in time of need. He remarried and had more children. In July 1767, his three-week-old baby died in the Almshouse.⁸⁴ In December 1769 his eight-month-old child died there.⁸⁵ In June 1775, John, his wife and child entered the Almshouse together, perhaps in an effort to keep this child alive.⁸⁶ In July 1776, John Banks received medicine (probably for his child) as part of "outdoor relief" supplied to poor inhabitants who remained in their own lodgings rather than entering the Almshouse.⁸⁷ The child either did not survive or was privately placed in another family. In September 1780, John Banks and his wife (unnamed) entered the Almshouse for what appears to be the last time.⁸⁸ There is no record of their discharge or deaths. (The Almshouse records contain many gaps and omissions before the 1790s.) John had sired many children, but he seemed unable to provide for them as a father.

Thomas Banks did not follow his father's path. His story stands as testimony to the possibilities of pauper apprenticeship. Thomas Banks' master, William Williams, lived in Hatfield, a rural community some one hundred miles from Boston. Williams was a well-to-do and well-educated gentleman farmer, a prominent citizen of the community. His grandfather was one of the earliest pastors of the church in Hatfield and had shepherded the congregation for 55 years, leaving numerous descendants. William Williams himself (1734-1808) was a deacon

⁸³ Admission of Hannah Banks to Almshouse, October 8, 1760.

⁸⁴ Nellis and Cecere, 637.

⁸⁵ Nellis and Cecere, 640.

⁸⁶ Nellis and Cecere, 275.

⁸⁷ Nellis and Cecere, 941.

⁸⁸ Nellis and Cecere, 305.

Herndon, "Children of Misfortune," 32 of the church, a selectman of the town, and clerk of the county court.⁸⁹ When Thomas Banks joined the household in 1761, Williams was still a young man at twenty-seven years old. The patchy Hatfield vitals contain no record of his marriage or of the first children born to Williams and his wife, but they do show that two of his children, Stalham and Ashley, were born after Thomas Banks had left the household in 1770.

During his first four years in Hatfield, Thomas Banks attended the town school "constantly," so that the master fulfilled his obligation to see that the boy learned how to read, write, and cypher. At age twelve, Thomas' schooling became less concentrated, probably because he was then expected to contribute more labor to the Williams farm, particularly during peak harvest season.⁹⁰ He was also busily earning a reputation as a quick-witted practical joker, which neighbors recalled years later. One nineteenth-century history of Hatfield included a story that began when master Williams and his wife left the house for a few days:

[They] gave Tom particular instructions for taking care of the garden, and as they drove away, Mrs. Williams called out from the carriage, "Tom, don't you leave a green thing in it." On returning they found that this last charge had been obeyed to the letter, all trace of vegetation having disappeared from the garden. Mr. Williams, who had borne a great deal from Tom, thought this was a little too much, and proceeded to tie him up preparatory to whipping him. By way of preparing Tom's mind to profit by the discipline, he said, "Now, Tom, if you had such a boy, what should you do with him?" To which Tom, with great presence of mind, quickly replied, "Mr. Williams, I should try him once more."⁹¹

Tom's rambunctious spirits and small size prompted Williams to seek a transfer of the boy's indenture. On January 23, 1770, eight years after Thomas had gone to live in Hatfield, William Williams wrote to the Boston overseers of the poor, asking for permission to reassign

⁸⁹ Daniel White Wells and Reuben Field Wells, *A History of Hatfield, Massachusetts, 1660-1910* (Springfield, MA: F.C. Gibbons, 1910), 112, 344, 481.

⁹⁰ Letter from William Williams to Royall Tyler, January 23, 1770, filed with Indenture of Thomas Banks to Mr. Belding, July 1, 1770, "Indentures," 4:15.

Herndon, "Children of Misfortune," 33 the contract. (Figure 11) Thomas had failed to mature into the strong laborer that Williams had hoped for. "He is now seventeen and three months old and about as big as an ordinary country boy of thirteen or fourteen at most," wrote Williams. He doubted that Thomas could do the labor or "endure the fatigues that are ye unavoidable lot of the husbandman." Williams had already tried to find a local artisan to teach Thomas a trade as an alternative to farming, but the boy's reputation as "a rogue in grain" had made men reluctant to take him on. Now, however, Thomas had shown a more engaging side, and Mr. Belding, a local shoemaker, had agreed to "take him and give his trade."⁹² The Boston overseers agreed to the exchange, and Thomas Banks was re-indentured to Mr. Belding to learn the trade of a "cordwainer."⁹³ He finished out his apprenticeship indenture on his twenty-first birthday, October 20, 1773, and remained in Hatfield, probably laboring alongside Mr. Belding for over a year.

Then came the American Revolution. The day after the battles of Lexington and Concord, April 20, 1775, Thomas enlisted as a soldier in the Revolutionary cause. The change of occupation and location seemed to suit him. He served a three-year tour and enlisted again in 1778 for the town of Hatfield.⁹⁴ This service seemed to cement his sense of belonging in Hatfield, not the town where he was born but certainly the town that he called home.

In 1780, after his last tour of duty in the Continental Army, Thomas Banks married Sarah Wales in a ceremony performed in Hatfield by Rev. J. Lyman. The couple apparently had no children⁹⁵; but they left a legacy among their neighbors of friendliness and good humor. One

⁹¹ *History of Hatfield*, 280.

⁹² William Williams to Royal Tyler, op cit.

⁹³ Indenture of Thomas Banks to Mr. Belding, July 1, 1771, "Indentures," 4:15.

⁹⁴ *Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors of the Revolutionary War* (Boston: Wright & Potter, 1896), 1:579. See also *History of Hatfield*, 190-92.

⁹⁵ There is no record of children born to the marriage, and in the 1790 census, only Thomas and his wife

Herndon, "Children of Misfortune," 34
Hatfield resident later reminisced that Tom was "somewhat of a character about whom many anecdotes are related," and the area where Tom and Sarah lived came to be known as "Banks Corner."⁹⁶ A pauper apprentice with few prospects when he arrived in Hatfield eventually left a trail of evidence about his training as a shoemaker, his service as a soldier, his church membership, his marriage, and—above all—his distinctive temperament and character. He had become a true inhabitant of Hatfield. In 1826 he died in Hatfield of "decay" at age 74; his widow "Sally" died in 1832 at age 82.⁹⁷

Thomas Banks' life stands in stark contrast to his father's. In this case, it seems, pauper apprenticeship really did lift a child from a miserable situation and place him in a far better one. Thomas Banks does not appear to have been exploited or abused; he seems to have been supported and humored by kind-hearted people who gave him opportunities. He learned a trade, he served in the military, he became a part of the community, he married, he was a good neighbor. It was probably just such success stories that kept overseers of the poor at their task of finding "proper" masters for poor children.

Chapter 7: Conclusion: Changing a Poor Child's Life

The conclusion addresses cultural change over the long over the long eighteenth century. New ideas about childhood, education, and disposition of wealth continuously influenced pauper apprenticeship. I discuss emerging theories about childhood as a distinct stage of life and childrearing as an occupation. I discuss changes in attitudes towards education of children, with

are listed as members of the household. *Heads of Families at the First Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1790: Massachusetts* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1908), 114.

⁹⁶ *History of Hatfield*, 280.

⁹⁷ *Hatfield Vital Records*, 156, 158.

increasing concerns about literacy. I discuss changes in attitudes towards poverty, with shifts in the linkages between poverty and vice and misfortune. I contrast pauper apprentice children with children under guardianship—children due to inherit wealth—and discuss the different legal approaches to the two groups. Finally, I explain that no “typical” poor child or life trajectory emerges. The hierarchical nature of Anglo-American society meant that race, gender, and family status mattered, even in that vast cohort of poor children, and some children of misfortune received more respect than others. Ultimately, all these children were placed where magistrates thought they “belonged,” reflecting official ideas about the “proper” constitution of households in early New England.

THIS Indenture Witnesseth, That

*Edward Butler, John Chandler, Jonathan L. Austin, Edward L. Lee, Henry Hill,
William Smith, William Phillips junr, Stephen Gorham, Oliver Brewster,
Arnold Wether junr, Bradford Webster, and Thomas Perkins Esquires.*

Overseers of the Poor of the Town of Boston, in the County of Suffolk, and Commonwealth of Massachusetts, have placed, and by these Presents do place and bind out *Ruth Newell Negro, unto - Wth Cesar Spear, a black-man of Boston in the County of Suffolk. to his Wife, and their Heirs.*

and with *them* after the Manner of an Apprentice to Dwell and Serve, from the Day of the Date of these Presents, until the *fifth day of march one Thousand Eight hundred and Seven, at which time if the said Apprentice be living she will arrive at the age of eighteen years.*

During all which said Time or Term, the said Apprentice *her*, said Master *and Mistress* well and faithfully shall serve, *their* Secrets, he shall keep close, *their* Commandments lawful and honest every where, he shall gladly obey: she shall do no Damage to *her* said Master *or Mistress* nor suffer it to be done by others, without letting or giving seasonable Notice thereof to *her* said Master *or Mistress* she shall not waste the Goods of *her* said Master *or Mistress* nor lend them unlawfully to any: At Cards, Dice, or any other unlawful Game or Games, he shall not play: Fornication, he shall not commit: Matrimony

he shall not contract: Taverns, Ale-Houses, or Places of Gaming, he shall not haunt or frequent: From the Service of *her* said Master *or Mistress* by Day nor Night, he shall not absent *her* self; but in all Things, and at all Times, he shall carry and behave *her* self towards *her* said Master *or Mistress* and all *them* as a good and faithful Apprentice ought to do *to the utmost of her ability* during all the Time or Term aforesaid.

And the said Master doth hereby Covenant and Agree, *for himself, his Wife, and their Heirs, to teach the said Apprentice, or cause her to be taught, to Read, Write, and Cypher, also to Spin, Knit, and Sew, and all other Branches of good House Wifery.*

And also shall and will, well and truly find, allow unto and provide for the said Apprentice, sufficient and wholesome Meat and Drink, with Washing, Lodging, *clothing*, and other Necessaries meet and convenient for such an Apprentice, during all the Time or Term aforesaid: And at the Expiration thereof shall *dismiss the said Apprentice, with two good suits of wearing Apparel fitting all parts of her body, one for Lords days, the other for working days, suitable to her degree.*

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, the said Parties have to these Indentures interchangeably set their Hands and Seals, the *third* Day of *February* in the Year of our Lord, One Thousand Eight Hundred, and

Signed, Sealed and Delivered
in Presence of

*Constant Freeman
Susanna Freeman*

Cesar Spear

Figure 1. Indenture of Ruth Newell to Cesar Spear, February 3, 1800, "Indentures of Poor Children Bound out as Apprentices by the Overseers of the Poor of the Town of Boston," 6:136, Boston Public Library Rare Book and Manuscript Division. The witnesses, Constant and Susanna Freeman, were in charge of the Boston Almshouse.

THIS Indenture Witnesseth, That Simon Stoddard Esq,
 Ephraim Savage, Henry Dering, William Clark, Benjamin
 Walker, Eleazar Holyoke, John Foreland, William Westford
~~James Palmer & Samuel Lyng~~ ^{Eleazar Holyoke} Overseers of the Poor
 of the Town of Boston by and with the Approbation and
 Consent of Thomas Palmer & Samuel Lyng Esqrs two of Her Maj
 Justices have placed & bound out Samuel Hamlin a poor Child, in
 John Foreland of Boston Tobaccoist & to Sarah his wife
 and with him and her ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ after the manner of an Apprentice
 to dwell and serve from the day of the date hereof until
 the first day of November next, and for and during the
 term of eight years from thence next ensuing fully
 to be compleat and ended ~ ~ ~ ~ ~
 During all which said Time, or Term, the said Apprentice his said Master & Mistress
 Well and Faithfully shall serve; ~~their~~ ^{his} Secrets he shall keep close; ~~their~~ ^{his} Commandments
 Lawful and Honest, every where he shall gladly Obey: he shall do no Damage to his said
 Master, nor ~~his~~ ^{the} nor suffer it to be done, by others, without letting or giving seasonable
 notice thereof to his said Master. ~~Neither~~ ^{Neither} he shall not waste the Goods of his
 said Master, nor lend them Unlawfully to any: At Cards, Dice, or any other Unlawful
 Game or Games, he shall not Play: Fornication he shall not Commit: Matrimony
 he shall not Contract: Taverns, Ale-
 Houses, or places of Gaming, he shall not Haunt or Frequent: From the Service of his said
 Master, ~~neither~~ ^{neither} by Day nor Night he shall not absent himself. But in all things, and at
 all times, he shall carry and behave himself towards his said Master, ~~as if~~ ^{as} all his
 as a Good and Faithful Apprentice ought to do according to his will & ability
 during all the Time or Term aforesaid. And the said Master, ~~shall~~ ^{shall} teach or cause to
 be taught and instructed the said Apprentice the Art Trade, or
 mystery of a Tobaccoist as himselfe now useth, and also shall
 teach or cause the said Apprentice to be taught to read the
 English Tongue well & to write a legable hand
 And also shall and will, well & truly find, allow unto, & provide for the said Apprentice ~
 sufficient and wholesome Meat and Drink, with Washing and Lodging, Apparell ~ and other
 Necessaries meet and convenient for ~~an~~ ^{his} Apprentice ~ during all the Time or
 Term aforesaid. And at the End and Expiration ~~of~~ ^{of} the said time or term shall
 give unto the said Apprentice two Sutes of apparell for
 all part of his body suitable for one of his degree ~ ~
 In Testimony whereof the partyes ~~doe~~ ^{have} ~~and~~ ^{to} these Indentures,
 interchangeably set their Hands and Seals, the Third ~ Day of July ~ in the
 Third ~ Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lady Anne Queen over
 England &c ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ Annoque Domini One Thousand Seven Hundred and four.
 The mark of
 John I F Foreland
 Signed, Sealed, & Delivered
 in presence of us
 Robert Calef
 Francis Throshor
 Joseph Prout
 Boston 3 July 1704
 John Foreland, Personally appeared before me one of
 the Justices of this Court and acknowledged his
 Signature to be his act & Deeds
 1704

Figure 2. Indenture of Samuel Hamlin to John Foreland, July 3, 1704, Boston Town Papers, Collection W2, Box 3, Boston Public Library Rare Book and Manuscript Division.

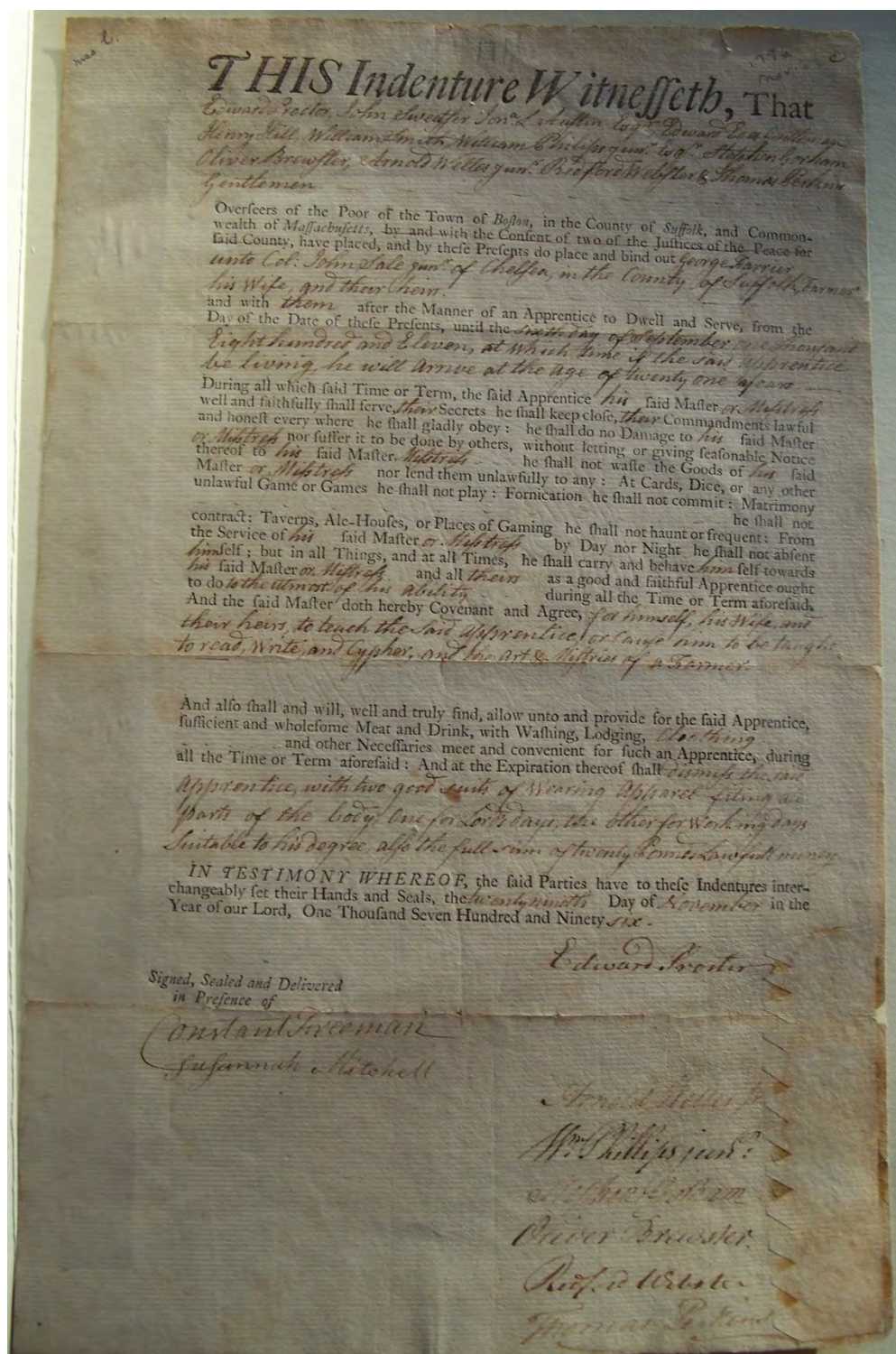


Figure 3. Indenture of George Farrier to John Sale, November 29, 1796, Massachusetts Historical Society Miscellaneous Collections, 1796 Nov 29.



Figure 4. "Ebenezer Storer" by John Singleton Copley, ca. 1767-69, Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Storer, a wealthy Boston merchant, was an overseer of the poor 1744-1760



Figure 5. "Andrew Oliver," by John Singleton Copley, ca. 1758, National Portrait Gallery

Oliver was Boston overseer of the poor 1739-58 and lieutenant governor of Massachusetts 1771-74

Co Samuel Dimonds Esq. a boy name John his father
 name Alwitanhus late of Quantisit his father & mother
 went both consenting the boy aged about 12 years
 ✓ Do him a girl named Hester her father & mother
 late of Nashaway her age ten years her brother name
 John woodsum pegin of Naticke

 1 Boy Co Thomas Danforth Esq. a boy aged about 13 years
 name John

 1 Boy Co Lieft Jonathan Danforth of Boscawen a boy
 aged twelve years son to Papamsch alias David late
 of Warrwick on Cowbit

 Co Matthew Bridge of New Bridge two boys
 2 Boys one name Jabez aged about ten years the other
 Joseph aged six years their father name Woomp
 late of packchooge as one or both these boys in
 away late by father. 8ber 17th 1676

Figure 6. Detail of Gookin's list of Indian children bound out to English masters, August 10, 1676. Courtesy Boston Public Library Rare Book and Manuscript Division.

Figure 7. Indians bound out by the English in 1676; placements made by a commission headed by Daniel Gookin.

| Name | Term | Age | Parent/Relative | Indian Place | Master | Town |
|-----------------|------|-----|-----------------|-------------------|----------------------|-------------|
| John | boy | 12 | Aswitankus | Quantisset* | Samuel Symonds | Boston |
| Hester | maid | 10 | Woosumpegin | Natick* | Samuel Symonds | Boston |
| John | boy | 13 | | | Thomas Danforth | Cambridge |
| Boy | boy | 12 | Papameck | Cowesett (RI) | Jonathan Danforth | Billerica |
| Jabez | boy | 10 | Woompkeow | Pakachoog* | Matthew Bridge | Cambridge |
| Joseph | boy | 6 | Woompkeow | Pakachoog* | Matthew Bridge | Cambridge |
| Absalom | boy | 10 | Absalom | Manchage* | Jeremiah Shepard | Rowley |
| Sarah | girl | 11 | Absalom | Manchage* | Jeremiah Shepard | Rowley |
| Jane | girl | 8 | | | Jeremiah Shepard | Rowley |
| Margaret | maid | 12 | Sukamuck | Quantisset* | Widow Mitchell | Cambridge |
| Isaac | boy | 10 | Wennaputanan | Quantisset* | Thomas Jacob | Ipswich |
| John | boy | 13 | | | Goodman Read | Cambridge |
| Boy | boy | 7 | | Quantisset* | Jacob Green | Charlestown |
| John | boy | 14 | | Cowesett (RI) | Thomas Woolson | Watertown |
| Samuel | boy | 6 | Nohanet | Chabanakongkomun* | Cyprian Stevens | Lancaster |
| Rebeckah | maid | 10 | | | Thomas Eliot | Boston |
| Peter | boy | 9 | Nannantum | Quantisset* | Jacob Green, Jr. | Charlestown |
| Tom | boy | 12 | Sanksho | Pakachoog* | Goodman Greenland | Charlestown |
| Abigail | maid | 16 | Quanshiske | Sakonnet (RI) | Edmund Batter | Salem |
| Joshua | boy | 8 | William Wunyko | Magunkaquog* | Daniel Gookin, Sr. | Cambridge |
| Girl | girl | 6 | Quanshiske | Sakonnet (RI) | Daniel Gookin, Sr. | Cambridge |
| Anne | girl | | Quanshiske | Sakonnet (RI) | Andrew Bordman | Cambridge |
| John | boy | 13 | William Wunyko | Magunkaquog* | Thomas Prentiss, Jr. | Cambridge |
| Joseph Spoonaks | boy | 6 | | Marlboro, MA | Benjamin Mills | Dedham |
| Joseph | boy | 12 | Pyambow | Magunkaquog* | Edward Jackson | Cambridge |
| Hope | maid | 9 | | Narragansett (RI) | Widow Jackson | Cambridge |
| Boy | boy | 4 | Annaweekein | Hassanamesitt* | Goodman Mills | Dedham |
| Joseph | boy | 11 | Annaweekein | Hassanamesitt* | Thomas Prentiss | Cambridge |
| Boy | boy | 8 | | Malboro, MA | John Smith | Dedham |
| Maid | maid | 15 | | Narragansett (RI) | John Flint | Concord |
| Tom | boy | 11 | William Wunyko | Manchage* | Jonathan Wade | Medford |
| Maid | maid | 10 | Jame Natonit | Pakachoog* | Nathaniel Wade | Medford |

*Praying Town



Figure 8. "Old Pat, Independent Beggar," by Samuel Waldo, c. 1819, Cleveland Museum of Art

That Jacob Wendall Wm Tyler Junr Hill Tho: Hubbard Esq: Edw: Bromfield Genl
 Isaac Walker Ebene: Storck Junr: Barn: ffoulr Esq: Junr

Malden Octobr 3 1748

Whereas Mr Jacob Lynde of Malden inclines to take
 a Boy out of y^e Almshouse, And it being necessary
 he should be approved of by y^e Select men of sd Town
 Therefore we y^e Subscribers y^e Select men of Malden do
 Certify that we look upon s^d Lynde Capable of, & we think
 will bring up a Boy as he ought to be brought up.

Joseph Lynd } Select
 Tho: Waite Junr } man for
 John Dexter } Malden

Ale-Houses, or Places of Gaming he shall not haunt or frequent. by Day nor Night he shall not absent himself; but
 said Master & by Day nor Night he shall not absent himself; but
 and at all Times, he shall carry and behave himself towards his said Master

Figure 9. Endorsement of Jacob Lynde by Malden selectmen, October 3, 1748. Jacob Lynde became the master of pauper apprentice Eliakim Perry on October 31, 1748. "Indentures," 1:160.

MEMOIR
OF
MRS. CHLOE SPEAR,
A NATIVE OF AFRICA,
WHO WAS
ENSLAVED IN CHILDHOOD,
AND DIED IN BOSTON, JANUARY 3, 1815.....AGED 65 YEARS.
BY A LADY OF BOSTON.

"To the praise of the glory of his grace."

"If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

BOSTON:~
PUBLISHED BY JAMES LORING,
132 Washington Street.

.....
1832.

Figure 10. Posthumous memoir of Chloe Spear, mistress of Ruth Newell.

Stafford Jan. 23.^o 1770—

July '61 I took one Thomas Banks, a poor Child, then about eight years and a half old, out of your Almshouse - For the first four years I schooled him constantly at the Town School here, and a considerable part of every year since, except of last. He is now sixteen years and three months old and about as big as an ordinary Country boy of thirteen or fourteen at most; I am inclined to think, scarcely able to perform the service of one of our boys of that age - I have been sensible some time that it would by no means answer for him, to bring him up to husbandry; he never will be capable to perform the Labour or to endure the fatigues that are of unavoidable sort of the Husbandman - I therefore attempted more than a year ago to get him a Trade, but the notion which then generally (and with too much foundation in truth) prevailed of his being a Rogue in Grain prevented the success of those Attempts at that Time - The boy's Inagagement together with my own Application on his behalf have more lately in some measure prevailed with one Mr. Welding of this Town who is a Shoemaker to take him and give him Trade; but then there is a difficulty now in the Way - I am by Indenture bound to give ^{him} a hundred pounds debt when