INTERPRETIVE ESSAY

Anne Marbury Hutchinson: This Great and Sore Affliction

Willard Sterne Randall and Nancy Nahra

In the following selection, Willard Sterne Randall and Nancy Nahra examine one of the major religious controversies that developed in Puritan New England. Puritans thought they knew how one got to heaven. They accepted the doctrine taught by John Calvin that all humans deserved damnation, that all came short of the glory of God, but that God in His mercy had "chosen" some for salvation. But how did one tell whom God had chosen? Was it possible that the village drunk might be going to heaven, while the most pious woman in town might be bound for hell?

Anne Hutchinson thought she could tell, and she also thought most of New England's ministers were teaching false doctrine. She began to argue, publicly, that they were preaching too much about "works," or the behavioral obligations of Christians, and not enough about grace: God's free gift of salvation to the saved, a gift they could not earn through their own efforts. And she was effective; many women—and men—came to her home to hear what she had to say. Gradually, the leaders of the colony recognized a threat to their authority and the stability of their little society. They decided to try her. The colony's governor, John Winthrop, took the role of prosecutor. As you read, think about the way the various elements of Anne Hutchinson's society dealt with her. Think also about the way they dealt with questions of sex differentiation. Do you see any contradictions? Were they basically rigid or flexible?

The last European power to enter the race for New World territories and riches was England. While Portugal and Spain expanded their imperial possessions rapidly at the close of the fifteenth century, not until Elizabeth I came to the throne in 1558 did an English monarch think at all of competing with her mainland rivals—and then she was satisfied with commissioning marauders to poach the wealth of the New World from treasure ports and fleets. James I, who came to the throne in 1603, launched the first for-profit English settlement at Jamestown and also chartered the Plymouth Plantation (half the passengers on the *Mayflower* were merchants). By the time continued religious persecution in Europe sent a large English contingent toward Massachusetts Bay in 1629, prospective English colonists had their choice of colonial destinations—and the managers of colonies had to compete with each other for settlers.

From Wallace Sterne Randall and Nancy Nahra, *Forgotten Americans: Footnote Figures Who Changed American History*, Addison-Wesley, Reading, Mass., 1998, pp. 1–15. Reprinted by permission of DaCap, a member of Perseus Books, LLC.

For nearly a decade in the early years of New England's history, women enjoyed more rights and respect, less abuse, and the promise of a progressively better way of life than in Old England, their homeland. They emigrated willingly to Boston with their husbands, brothers, and fathers, as relieved as the men to escape the tightening noose of religious persecution, until by 1637 there were two women in Massachusetts Bay colony for every three men, the highest ratio in the American colonies. . . .

The Puritan fathers at first outdid themselves pampering, as they would have seen it, female colonists, probably not seeing where it could lead. In tracts such as William Wood's *New England's Prospect*, written to promote immigration to the edge of the wild American continent, women were told that members of their sex had already taken several upward steps in the New World. In England, wife beating was commonly used to keep women in their place; in New England, it was forbidden. Furthermore, men were forbidden to treat their wives as servants. Heavy fines punished infractions of either offense. In the early years after Boston's founding in 1630, New England authorities took pains to make women happy so that they would write glowing letters back to England to lure more of their sisters.

One of the more eager recipients of this good news from America was Anne Marbury Hutchinson, the cheerful, middle-aged wife of a prosperous silk manufacturer and, with all the hard work and risk it implied, already the mother of fourteen children. Married to a man who believed in equality of the sexes, Anne Hutchinson was also a devoted follower of a charismatic Puritan divine, a religious leader who also saw women and men as equals. As it became apparent that Puritans would have to flee intensifying persecution by the English government, Anne, her husband, and their seven younger children left behind the comfortable life of English gentry to become pioneers on the edge of the American wilderness.

Greater equality for women did not seem a distant prospect or a hypothetical philosophical concept when Anne Hutchinson was born in England in 1591. A woman was on the throne of England. Elizabeth I was not just a stand-in marking time between male rulers; she was the second queen in a row to rule England, and she spent much of her forty-five-year reign contending not only with less successful male European kings but with other powerful and ambitious women, including the cousin she would put to death, Mary Queen of Scots. It was, in fact, an age of queens in Europe, from Isabella of Spain to Margaret of Austria. The specter of enduring female power alarmed may Protestant rulers, including John Knox, Scottish founder of the Presbyterian Church and spiritual father of Puritanism, who denounced government by women in his treatise, *The First Trumpet Blast Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* (1557). Elizabeth established herself as the unchallenged power of Europe by defeating the Spanish Armada three years before Anne Hutchinson's birth and remained, all through Anne's childhood, the figure of a brilliant woman towering over England.

Queen Elizabeth repeatedly jailed Anne's uncle, Sir Anthony Cope, for opposing her middle-of-the-road church policies. Cope once spent a month in the Tower of London on Elizabeth's instructions after he proposed a

change known as Cope's Bill and Book; if passed, it would have allowed the Puritans to revise the official *Book of Common Prayer*, the defining religious document of the Church of England. When Elizabeth came to the throne, it was widely assumed that she would push ahead the radical Reformation agenda of the Puritans, who wanted to "purify" the Church of England of all remaining traces of the Church of Rome, including vestments, incense, and bishops. But her Act of Settlement suppressed zealous reformers: she preferred to downplay religious contention and made it clear from time to time by exemplary execution that on the subject of religion she would tolerate neither criticism nor open opposition, whether from Puritan reformers or Catholics.

The daughter of a Church of England preacher and a Puritan mother who was descended from a noble Lincolnshire family, Anne Marbury grew up in the small market town of Alford, 114 miles northeast of London, in a house full of books, daughters, and religious disputation. Her father, Francis Marbury, was master of Alford Grammar School and preacher at 250-year-old Saint Wilfrid's Church, hub of Alford's religious, social, and political life. Francis Marbury was frequently in trouble with the bishops for loudly denouncing the lazy, uneducated clergy of the Church of England. Twice he was tried by church courts and stripped of his living for his outspoken views. His pet targets were the "self-seeking soul-murdering" bishops and the low preaching standards of the country priests. In virtual house arrest throughout much of Anne's childhood, he had plenty of time to instruct his eager daughter, often his only appreciative audience, and treated her as a son.

A born bookworm with a retentive memory, Anne, a kinswoman of playwright John Dryden on her mother's side, spent more time reading than sewing. But she learned midwifery by helping at several of her mother's deliveries and also became a skilled nurse and herbalist. All these skills made her a respected figure among other women. Inspired no doubt by a queen who had not only mastered Latin but read Plato in the original Greek and could argue in French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, and Welsh, Anne grew up at a time when female literacy in England was higher than it had ever been or would be again until the late nineteenth century. One widely read London educator, Richard Mulcaster, argued "that young maidens can learn, nature doth give them, and that they have learned, our experience doth teach us. What can more assure the world of this truth," asked Mulcaster, headmaster of Saint Paul's School, "than our diamond [Queen Elizabeth] at home?"

At times, Francis Marbury was the sole voice advocating Puritan reforms to the Church of England. On trial, he argued bravely and uncompromisingly in the face of grillings by powerful bishops. Anne could not but mark the lesson. She also must have been aware that, after Elizabeth I died and the misogynist King James I ascended the throne, more Puritan women were beginning to lecture publicly across England—and that they, too, were persecuted. When Anne was thirteen, her father was knighted and made pastor of the vast parish of Saint Martin in the Vintry, London, in the shadow of Saint Paul's.

It was in London that Anne first imbibed the ideas of Familism, a radical sect that preached direct communication between each individual, male or

female, and God. Its teachings rejected the Calvinist doctrines of predestination, which precluded individual free will, and original sin, which denounced Eve and blamed women for all sin. Young Anne began to listen closely to women's voices in the nonconformist sects sprouting in London—she was attracted at various times by Familism, Separatism, and Puritanism, to which her mother subscribed. London women took active roles in the Puritan movement. Some two hundred of them were hauled before the bishop of London in Star Chamber ecclesiastical courts. A majority of these women were tried. They suffered heavy fines and imprisonment for, among other offenses, keeping secret the locations of clandestine Puritan printing presses. London women not only supported the Puritan underground but held the equivalent of salons in their parlors to preach and lead religious discussions.

At James I's accession in 1603, he, too, was expected to unleash a Puritan reform movement, but at the Hampton Court conference of church leaders, he proclaimed that Puritanism "agrees as well with a monarchy as God and the Devil." He attacked not only Puritans but women, several times digressing from his prepared speech to disparage them. His bishops took his cue and imposed, among other strictures, a ban on infant baptism by midwives, even when no priest was available and the baby was dying. As James took every opportunity to reverse Elizabeth's policies toward women, he introduced a stiff new antiwitchcraft law and, in his best-selling book, *Demonology*, declared that of every twenty-one witches, twenty were women. James argued that all women were weak and lustful and easy prey to "the snares of the Devil as was ever well proved to be true by the Serpent's deceiving of Eve at the beginning." In his first speech to Parliament, James lashed out at women, paraphrasing Scripture: "The head of every man is Christ and the head of the woman is man." In a widely printed letter to his son, the king instructed his son, "Teach your wife that it is your office to command, hers to obey. Women must never be allowed to meddle in the government."

By the time Anne was seventeen, separatists who had given up on reforming the Church of England were trying to escape, first to Holland. Anne had her first glimpse of persecuted Englishwomen driven from their homeland as she witnessed the fleeing Pilgrims.

When Anne was twenty, her father, her soul mate and intellectual companion, died. He left his wife as the sole executrix of his will, an uncommonly liberal gesture for the time, and left each of his twelve children 200 marks, a tidy sum. One year later, Anne married William Hutchinson, aged twenty-six, a wealthy textile merchant. The first of their fifteen children was born soon after they moved back to their childhood home, Alford. Along the North Sea, in the shadow of Dutch windmills, new religious winds were blowing. Women were appearing in pulpits as preachers, a practice that had originated across the sea in Holland. Soon there were women ministers all over England, many of them preaching the reform doctrines of Familism. This sect held that the spirit was superior to the Bible, believed that women and men could return to the innocence that preceded the Fall, advocated the election of the clergy by the people, and put reason above ritual.

The rapid spread of this radical agenda by women preachers brought intensifying persecution by the established church. In January 1620, the bishop of London told all his clergy to preach vehemently against the insolence of women and to condemn their "wearing of broad-brimmed hats, pointed doublets, hair cut short or shorn" and their carrying of daggers and swords. One Londoner recorded, "Our pulpits ring continually of the insolence and impudence of women."

In rural Alford, Anne had little contact for many years with persecution until the mid-1620s, when Charles I succeeded James and stepped up persecution of dissenters even further. Anne flirted at first with separatism but then seems to have rejected the idea of leaving her father's church after she heard the preaching of a charismatic Puritan preacher, John Cotton, at Boston, on the east coast. Frequently, she and her husband journeyed to Boston, twenty-four miles away, to hear him preach his gentle version of Puritanism. Cotton had won a reputation all over England as a biblical scholar and, as the leading nonconforming minister in the Church of England, for his evangelical preaching of the "covenant of grace," which he described as a covenant between God and man whereby God drew the soul to salvation. He preached that there was nothing a man—or woman—could do to acquire this covenant. If Anne Hutchinson was predestined to salvation, God would endow her with faith and fulfill the covenant. This doctrine differed somewhat from the version that the founders of Massachusetts Bay Colony declared as orthodox when they sailed to Boston in 1630. The faithful were expected to "prepare" themselves for God's saving grace by good works, especially following the laws of the New England church state. Anne espoused John Cotton's evangelical preaching of divine omnipotence and human helplessness. She believed with him that to draw comfort from doing good works was presumptuous, that God acted alone, and that humans had no way of preparing for divine grace.

In the winter of 1629, as the persecution of Puritans worsened, John Winthrop, a Cambridge-educated London barrister, was elected governor of a company of a thousand Puritans preparing to establish a permanent settlement in New England. The company made strong overtures to women, clearly implying that the New World would have no use for Old World, women-trammeling traditions, one leader writing of "the kind usage of the English [in Massachusetts Bay] to their wives" and of households where "equals gather with equals." The 1620s had been years of severe restrictions and heavy taxes on English businessmen and of drought and famine in the English cities and towns. Reports from the New World, on the other hand, emphasized abundant game, seafood, fruit, berries, pumpkins for the taking. In the sermon John Cotton preached to the Puritans departing on the four ships commanded by Governor Winthrop, he emphasized the economic opportunities for merchants like Anne's husband:

> Nature teaches bees [that] when the hive is too full, they seek abroad for new dwellings . . . [so it is] when the hive of [England] is so full that the tradesmen cannot live one by another, but eat up one another. . . .

What may have pushed the Hutchinsons off the fence in favor of emigrating was the latest policy of King Charles I, who combined unparalleled taxation and religious persecution by exacting forced loans from Puritans. Anne's uncle, seventy-year-old Erasmus Dryden, owner of Canons Ashby, one of England's great houses, was jailed when he refused to lend the king money. William Hutchinson believed it was only a matter of time before his turn came. Anne's brother-in-law, the Puritan preacher John Wheelwright, was arrested even as she learned that John Cotton was on the run from Archbishop Laud's agents. In disguise and using an assumed name, he was living in hiding in a series of Puritan hideaways. In July 1633, the Reverend Cotton boarded the *Griffin* and escaped to New England. Two members of the Hutchinson family sailed with him to begin transferring the family business to Boston. Then, shortly after their twelfth child was born, Anne and William gave away their belongings, sold their home of twenty years, and prepared to emigrate.

Almost from the moment she stepped on board the *Griffin*, bound for Boston on Massachusetts Bay, Anne Hutchinson spoke her mind, perhaps feeling she was safely away from the inhibiting atmosphere of England's church spies. And almost immediately, she incurred the wrath of two Puritan ministers who, along with a hundred head of cattle, were crowded in among the voyagers to the New World. The Reverends Zechariah Symmes and William Bartholomew reported to Boston authorities that Anne had confided to Bartholomew "that she had never had any great thing done about her but it was revealed to her beforehand." To claim that she communicated directly with God through revelations was heretical enough for the two ministers: that a *woman* claimed direct contact with God smacked of witchcraft.

To make matters worse, Anne had quickly grown tired of the Reverend Symmes's five-hour, nonstop shipboard sermons, especially his constant belittling of women. After announcing that, as soon as she reached Boston, she would expose his claims as a tissue of errors, Hutchinson began holding women's meetings, as she had done for years unmolested in Alford, on board ship. She was surprised that some of the men aboard objected, confronting her with the verse, "And if they [women] will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home" (1 Corinthians 14:35). Anne was next shocked on her arrival at the mean, uncouth look of Boston, a flat, swampy backwater town of crowded, unpaved streets with pigs rooting in the filth, its hundred-odd houses dominated by the square, barnlike Puritan meetinghouse. Inside, she received another shock: instead of automatic admission to membership, she was subjected to an all-day hearing conducted by Governor Thomas Dudley. Her other interrogators included her old pastor, the Reverend Cotton; the pastor of her new Boston church, the Reverend John Wilson; and the Reverend Symmes, one of the shipboard clergymen she had openly criticized. Finally "satisfied that she held nothing different from us," Governor Dudley urged her admission to the church. But if Anne Hutchinson had expected freedom of expression or the right to dissent in Massachusetts, she must have been sadly disappointed.

For the next two years, Anne and William Hutchinson were busy building and furnishing a spacious, thatch-roofed wattle-and-daub house in Boston's Cornhill section. They lived right across the street from John Winthrop, who had recently been displaced as governor because many country clergy thought he had been too lenient with dissenters and had closed an eye to sharp business practices. Demoted to the colony's council, he was waiting for the next election to prove his toughness: he had received a copy of Anne's hearing record and had already put her down as someone to watch. Oblivious and hard at work, Anne was busy building her practice as one of only four midwives in all Boston, while she cared for her large family. She still found a way to organize weekly meetings in her home to discuss with other women the finer points of Mr. Cotton's sermons, a joy for her to be able to hear every week.

In these meetings, soon so popular that sixty or seventy people packed in and stood for an hour or two as Anne elaborated Cotton's teachings, she began to take Cotton's principles of divine omnipotence and human helplessness in a new direction. Her first principle was "that the person of the Holy Ghost dwells in a justified person [predestined for salvation]." This view threatened the fundamental doctrine on which the Puritans had built their church state, namely, that God's will could be fathomed only in the pages of the Bible. She further claimed that a good life—"sanctification"—offered no guarantee of being saved—"justification." This dictum undermined the whole Puritan belief that good works were necessary to "prepare" for salvation. Anne's emphasis on personal revelation minimized the role of the clergy. She also maintained that "justified" people knew by revelation from the Holy Spirit that they were already "justified" and could tell on the basis of this mystical insight whether other people were "under a covenant of grace" (saved) or "under a covenant of works" (damned because they were depending on good works instead of divine grace). By October 1636, Governor Winthrop, now reelected, began to view these beliefs as damaging to the stable and clergy-dominated society of Boston.

At about that time Hutchinson hinted to her admirers that in all of Massachusetts only two churchmen, John Cotton and her brother-in-law John Wheelwright, were under a covenant of grace and therefore fit to preach. If she had given this opinion to only a handful of listeners, she might have only been censured by her pastor. But by late 1636 her house was being jammed three times a week by up to eighty eager auditors, many of them merchants disgruntled with clergy controls on trade and profits, and even more members of other congregations all over the colony who trekked great distances to see and hear this bold woman speaking out against the black-robed, all-male power structure. As historian Edmund Morgan has put it, "more was at stake here than the welfare of the Boston church."

When Hutchinson's mentor, John Cotton, applied to become teacher of the First Church of Boston, which had the largest congregation in the colony, Winthrop could not stop him. But when John Wheelwright, whose views were no different from Cotton's or his sister-in-law's, was proposed as

a teacher at a church meeting on October 30, Winthrop saw his chance to block Anne's growing influence. Most recent among her followers was Sir Henry Vane, the new Puritan governor out from England. Winthrop opposed the appointment of Wheelwright, "whose spirit they knew not and [who] seemed to dissent in judgment," as the church's third minister. Despite the fact that Wheelwright had the support of most of the congregation, Winthrop was even more popular as the man who had led and shaped the Puritan colony over the years. And now he was putting all that influence at risk to rouse the entire colony to the threat posed by Anne Hutchinson.

By early 1637, the colony was divided into two hostile factions, the town of Boston versus the surrounding countryside. In January, the worried General Court, the colony's ruling body, declared a day of fasting and prayer, a compulsory holiday. John Cotton preached. When he finished, Wheelwright rose from his bench and criticized anyone adhering to the idea of a covenant of works: "The more holy they are, the greater enemies they are to Christ. . . . We must kill them with the word of the Lord." Speaking figuratively, Wheelwright no doubt thought that most of the clergy and magistrates were dead wood, but someone took down his words. At its next session, the General Court charged him with sedition, convicting him but deferring sentence until after the annual May election. When the General Court sat again, John Winthrop was back in power. He had moved the court and the elections out of Boston into the countryside, to remote Cambridge, where he had the support of orthodox country clergy. He therefore succeeded in ousting Governor Vane, who soon sailed back to England. To buttress his position further, Winthrop again put off sentencing Wheelwright and called a synod of ministers in late summer to examine the doctrines his informants told him were coming from Anne Hutchinson's parlor. In the meantime, to keep the dissenters' numbers from swelling further, Winthrop sponsored a General Court order forbidding anyone to entertain strangers for more than three weeks without permission of the magistrates. The order was pointed at new immigrants from England whose views accorded with Mrs. Hutchinson's. America had enacted its first immigrant-screening law, aimed at stifling religious dissent.

Indeed, the year 1637, the ninth year of the Massachusetts Bay colony, was the year in which Puritan New England lost its innocence. Massachusetts troops used the murder of a New England trader as an excuse to destroy the main stronghold of the Pequot Indians near Stonington, Connecticut; they then slaughtered the escaping remnants near New Haven.

On August 30, ministers converged from all over Massachusetts and Connecticut for twenty-four days to define orthodox Puritan doctrines and to spell out for each other the implications of some eighty-two "erroneous" doctrines that witnesses said were coming from Anne Hutchinson's parlor. Anne's old mentor, John Cotton, fell into line with the orthodox majority; only John Wheelwright dissented. When the General Court reconvened in November, Wheelwright refused to recant and was banished from the colony; he was expected to go off to Rhode Island to join Roger Williams, himself banished the year before and now starting a new colony among the

Indians. Then on November 12, the General Court, having already made up its collective mind that Anne Hutchinson must be silenced, tried the midwife and lay teacher, forty-six years old and five months pregnant, on charges of sedition and contempt.

The New Town (as Cambridge was then called) courthouse was unheated, stark, and crowded with some two hundred people when Hutchinson, dressed in black, was escorted in and told to stand facing the bench, a long table at which gowned and wigged General Court officials sat flanking Governor Winthrop. There was no jury, although this was a civil case. Only the judges had footwarmers with hot coals inside. Anne heard the charges read to her for the first time. She was accused of eighty-two "errors in conduct and belief," including "consorting with those that had been sowers of sedition." Did they mean her own brother-in-law Wheelwright? In England, all Puritans were nonconformists by definition; in New England, nonconformity had just become an indictable offense. She was also accused of breaking the fourth commandment. The Bible was the law book, and "Honor thy father and thy mother" now meant that the governors of the colony were the fathers and all women their dutiful children, who must honor and obey them. Her third offense was to claim revelation of God's word directly, and her fourth that she had misrepresented the conduct of the ministers.

Legally, the court was on slippery ground, handicapped by Anne Hutchinson's caution. She had written nothing down and had never spoken in public. Furthermore, Winthrop could accuse her only of "countenancing and encouraging" Wheelwright's seditious circulation of a petition to reform the clergy: she had not actually signed it. To hold home meetings had never been a crime in England or New England before: it was the bedrock of the persecuted underground Puritan tradition. Only the charge of traducing the authority of the ministers seemed serious.

Without a lawyer, Anne ably conducted her own defense. Standing and parrying the governor's questions for seven uninterrupted hours, with a devastating combination of nerve, logic, and expert knowledge of the Bible, she often reduced lawyer Winthrop to exasperated outbursts of pique: "We do not mean to discourse with those of your sex." Called on to justify teaching crowds in her home, she quoted the Bible to show that older women were required to teach younger women. When Winthrop would not accept two biblical sources as grounding for her meetings, she answered sarcastically, "Must I show my name written therein [in the Bible]?" One clergyman after another was brought in to testify that she had belittled and insulted the ministers. Winthrop seemed to prevail on this charge, but only after introducing notes from an off-the-record pretrial meeting with Anne.

The first day's grilling paused only when the pregnant Anne fainted after not being allowed to sit, eat, drink, or leave the courtroom for natural relief. That night, slipped notes by a supporter, she found discrepancies in the testimony of her principal accuser, her pastor, Reverend Wilson. The next day, she insisted that all witnesses be put under oath, including the clergy, nearly setting off a riot. One final witness was her old friend, John Cotton,

who rebutted the testimony of Reverend Wilson that Anne had admitted accusing the clergy of being "under a covenant of works" (unsaved). The case against Anne Hutchinson collapsed.

In her moment of unexpected triumph, Anne blurted out that she had known from a revelation at the start of her trial that she would prevail. And then she went even further: "And see this scripture fulfilled this day in mine eyes. . . . Take heed what ye go about to do unto me. . . . God will ruin you and your posterity and this whole state." This public challenge was too much for Winthrop and his all-male panel of judges and clergy. Winthrop asked Anne how she knew "that it was God that did reveal these things" and Anne, condemning herself under the colony's biblical laws against claiming immediate revelation, replied, "By the voice of His own spirit to my soul."

Deliberating only briefly, the court agreed Hutchinson's words were enough grounds for banishment. And when Anne asked to "know wherefore I am banished," Winthrop gave her only a curt, high-handed answer: "Say no more, the court knows wherefore and is satisfied."

Ordered held under house arrest in the isolated manse of a clergyman safely away from Boston all winter, Anne still refused to recant. In March 1638, she was excommunicated and ordered to leave the colony. At her sentencing, the Reverend Hugh Peter summed up her principal offense: "you have stepped out of your place, you have rather been a husband than a wife." And Reverend Wilson, her nemesis, after noting, "you have so many ways troubled the church," added, "I do cast you out and deliver you up to Satan." Immediately after Anne's November 1637 hearing, the court had stripped Captain John Underhill, hero of the Pequot War, of his militia rank and had disfranchised him for supporting Wheelwright and Hutchinson. Twelve days after sentencing Anne Hutchinson, the court ordered fifty-eight Bostonians (William Hutchinson was third on the list) disfranchised and stripped of their guns, powder, and lead—seventeen others from other towns were punished similarly. Six more women were tried and expelled in 1638.

With eighteen inches of snow still in the woods, Anne, now nine months pregnant, and her children made the sixty-five-mile journey from Boston to Aquidneck by horse, canoe, and on foot over Indian paths. It took eight days. Her husband had gone ahead with twenty of her faithful adherents to build log cabins. By March 1639, Anne was preaching again, her following growing. But as excommunications continued in Boston and John Winthrop raged that Massachusetts would soon seize Rhode Island, Anne felt she could not stay there. After her husband died in 1642, she moved to New York province with several other families. Far from the reach of John Winthrop, she built a house on Pelham Bay on the outskirts of the Dutch settlements.

Anne Hutchinson did not believe in war or firearms. Her Boston adherents had refused to fight in the Pequot Wars; now, on the frontier, she steadfastly refused to defend herself as a new war against the native tribes broke out in 1643. When she opened her gate one day to a group of young braves who asked her for cold water from her well, they rushed in and killed her and all of her daughters except one, who was taken into captivity.

Unsympathetic even at the hour of the family's tragic death, the Reverend Thomas Weld, in whose house Hutchinson had been held under arrest, gleefully reported her death back to England: "Thus the Lord heard our groans to heaven, and freed us from this great and sore affliction."

To read a transcript of Anne Hutchinson's trial, see http://www.piney.com/ColAnnHutchTrial.html.

@ ON THE WEB