

Amanda Loebelenz

December 18, 2019

Research Seminar

Christine Dee

### North Shore Industry Development from 1600s-1900s

What was the relationship between the physical environment and natural resources and the people who chose to make their lives in Essex over the course of four centuries?

The land of New England, specifically Cape Ann, and the settlers had equal and reciprocal effects on one another. The nature of the land on Cape Ann dictated the daily patterns of life that the settlers needed to adjust to. The settlers, of course, changed the dynamics of the land by using its natural resources and making new spaces to build communities and lives. The settlers at Cape Ann were at the mercy of the natural resources and completely dependent on the characteristics of the land and environment particularly during the 1600s-1700s. Those effects persisted during the 1800s-1900s and even continue today. The physical environment of the North Shore pushed the settlers from the land to a life based on the sea and industries that are spins offs of a maritime economy.

The first inhabitants of Cape Ann were the Agawam tribe of the Algonquian Native Americans. When settlers like John Winthrop began arriving in the new world, the current sagamore of the Agawam tribe was Masconomet. Him and his tribe occupied the land from approximately current day Lowell, MA to current day Essex, MA, or what they referred to as Chebacco. During the harsh winters, Masconomet and the Agawam tribe occupied the area of Lowell, and during the summers they would move to Chebacco

where they were able to survive off of the natural resources that the land provided them. In 1614 John Smith noted as he was passing Cape Ann that the Native Americans had already established fishing and trading posts along the coast and that the area's marsh grass, mulberries trees, and safe harbor makes the place excellent for habitation.<sup>1</sup> The early colonists adopted many of the Native American's practices that helped them to survive in the American Northeast environment by developing ways of coping with harsh winter weather. Thomas Wickman describes, "Seventeenth-century primary sources from throughout Wabanakia, or Dawnland, reveal complex practices of traveling, hunting, and gathering based on nuanced knowledge about snow"<sup>2</sup>. Stories from Wabanakia wintering practices indicate the rich variety of food that they included in their winter diets that include moose, porcupines, groundnuts, frostfish, and clams<sup>3</sup>. The colonists realized that it was necessary to begin adopting the hunting and fishing practices of Native American tribes as well as utilizing the natural resources of the land in order to survive in the new world. In 1882, a new heap of shells left by Native Americans was discovered preserved in Ipswich on Treadwell's Island (previously known as Perkin's Island). One end of the heap was composed almost entirely of oyster shells, while the other end was clam shells intermixed with hen clam, quahaug, mussel, cockle, and limpet shells. At the bottom of the heap were snail shells. Other items were mixed into the heaps including charcoal, bones, stones, arrowpoints, knives, and portions of implements such as handles made

---

<sup>1</sup> George Francis Dow, *Two centuries of travel in Essex County, Massachusetts: a collection of narratives and observations made by travelers, 1605-1799*, (Topsfield, MA, The Topsfield historical society, 1921), 6.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Wickman, "'Winters Embittered with Hardships': Severe Cold, Wabanaki Power, and English Adjustments, 1690-1710" *The William and Mary Quarterly* 72, no. 1 (2015): 63.

<sup>3</sup> Wickman, "Winters Embittered with Hardships," 66.

from deer antlers<sup>4</sup>. Many historians have made assumptions as to what these heaps of shells were meant for, but there is no definitive answer. However, these preserved piles do provide evidence for how the Native Americans were using the natural resources of their environment and what types of shell fish and other animals would have been introduced to the colonists through contact with the Native American tribes and practices. The settlers discovered that “the river... provided a source of food... that included flounders, cunners, eels, and tautog”<sup>5</sup> as well as mackerel, herring, alewives, and lobsters along with the abundance of shellfish. Shellfish, clams in particular, are a self-propagating crop that can be harvested during anytime of the year at low tide, and most likely contributed to a large portion of the food supply. Before clams were a major industry for food, the settlers mainly used them as a source of bait to catch fish that would supplement their attempt at an agricultural based food system.

The Native Americans and the European settlers experienced the land and sea in similar ways. The settlers had to learn, as the natives did, how to harness the resources that Cape Ann had to offer them. The features of the area include rocks, ledges, moors, marshes, and swamps that may have not provided excellent farming land, but did provide favorable conditions for the growth of a wide variety of trees, shrubs, and flowers. The land’s characteristics also support breeding grounds that include food and protection for animals such as birds and marine creatures. These conditions are due in part to the physical location and contour of Cape Ann. The winds and breezes coming off the ocean tend to moderate extreme New England temperatures in the summers and winters, and the

---

<sup>4</sup> Essex Institute, *Bulletin of the Essex Institute*, (Salem, MA, Essex Institute, 1869), 159.

<sup>5</sup> Melvin T. Copeland and Elliott C. Rogers, *Saga of Cape Ann*, (Freeport, ME, The Bond Wheelwright Co., 1960), 190.

high levels of moisture in the winds nourish the growth of vegetation among the rocks and ledges of Cape Ann.<sup>6</sup> This natural growth of vegetation offers trees that can be used to build houses and ships, shrubs that furnished medicine, and materials for tanning leather, making dyes, and coloring fabrics. The great ice age reshaped the surface of the Cape. The ice wore “away a strip of softer granite to form the bed of the Annisquam River; and it lined up the ridges and valleys, the harbor and the general trend of the cape itself in a north-south direction.”<sup>7</sup> Merchantable timber grown on Cape Ann consisted mainly of white pine, oak, and hemlock. However, a number of other tree species had other functions such as red maple, black walnut, white ash, beech, cherry, yellow and black birch, tupelo, and black mulberry that provided cordwood or other special uses.<sup>8</sup> The sturdy timbers of white oak were used by the colonists in the construction of ships, houses, barns, churches, and mills as well as barrels and clam baskets that all used the natural curves and growth rings of the tree. Acorns from white oak trees were also used commonly by Natives who boiled them in a lye made from maple wood ash to extract the oils that were used as a sauce for meat as well as a lotion that protected them from the sun.<sup>9</sup> It is unclear whether or not the English used a similar method of protection from the sun. The Europeans came to North America with one main imperial goal in mind. While in some cases the colonization led to harnessing indigenous labor, “using Native Americans for labor was not central or crucial... instead, the English above all wanted

---

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 218.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas E. Babson, *Evolution of Cape Ann roads and transportation, 1623-1955: a talk before the Cape Ann Historical Association April 11, 1955.* (S.I : s.n., n.d.), 2.

<sup>8</sup> Copeland and Rogers, *The Saga of Cape Ann*, 218.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 222.

the land, for cultivation and habitation.”<sup>10</sup> The land was not what the settlers were expecting it to be, but it did provide them with the natural resources to build lives and industries. The construction of beams, planks, and paneling in houses, ships, and furniture used the local white pine. A characteristic of hemlock is its resistance to deterioration in salt water, so the settlers used wood from hemlock trees mostly for building wharves. Its bark contains a high tannin content so it was used for tanning leather, dyeing sails and nets and medicinal purposes. The bark of a red oak tree could also be used for tanning leather and its acorns provided another source of food for the lands inhabitants. Black walnut, white ash, and hornbeam were popular for cabinet making, gun stocks, sled runners, handles for heavy tools, oars and keels for small boats.<sup>11</sup> Black locust was crucial to the production of tree nails, or trunnels, which fastened timbers and planks in ships and buildings. These were a factor in Essex’s reputation for well-built ships as black locust is resistant to rot, bugs do not eat it, and the wood will last longer in salt water than metal nails that rust and must be replaced. Other plants such as black cherry, black birch, and sassafras leaves were used for flavoring foods and drinks such as rum, beer, and tea. Native Americans and the early colonial settlers used fish as fertilizer for corn. This technique was employed later in the 1870s when John Rogers tried to use the fish skins from the fish processing plants as a fertilizer. He discovered that in humid weather the heat from the sun on the fish skin left a sticky residue which lead to his invention of fish glue.<sup>12</sup> This is just one of the many other uses outside of food that fish products on Cape Ann have been used for. Others include

---

<sup>10</sup> Wendy Warren, *New England Bound: Slavery and Colonization in Early America*, (New York, NY, Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2016), 90.

<sup>11</sup> Copeland and Rogers, *The Saga of Cape Ann*, 223.

<sup>12</sup> Object label, Maritime and Fisheries Gallery, Cape Ann Museum, Gloucester, MA.

fertilizers, nutrition supplements, paint additives, high-fashion leather goods, isinglass (for clarification of beer and wine) and biochemical for scientific research.<sup>13</sup>

Cape Ann's natural climate and soil cultivated an area well suited to the growth of berries, which provided a substantial portion of fresh and preserved fruit to the diet of the settlers and the natives. Blueberries, blackberries, beach plums, and elderberries were some of the most abundant in the area. Bayberries played a role in the work of colonial women by providing the material for making candles. The berries were boiled in order to extract the wax to make the candles. It could also be mixed with tallow to make a salve that was sold for shoe blackening and polishing substances.<sup>14</sup> Bayberries provided not only candle light, but a source of income for women on Cape Ann. Utilizing the land and its natural resources was essential to the survival and the economic development of the settlers in New England. The gentile class of people who crossed the sea to New England looking for an easy way to make money, but unwilling to work with the land or on the water starved and died.<sup>15</sup> Candle wicks could be made from the dry stalks of cattails, the leaves of which were used for making chair seats. The settlers used rockweed that grows on the rocky shores to enrich the soil because its leaves and stems are rich in nitrogen and other elements. The grass that covers the marshes along the river was important in its use for hay. They would also use a dwarf saline plant called marsh samphire and leaves of marsh marigold as additions to salad.<sup>16</sup> The wide variety of berries and nuts, shelter of trees, and geographical location attracted passenger pigeons to the area. The pigeons happened to be in high demand in the larger cities of New England, and they provided the

---

<sup>13</sup> Object label, Maritime and Fisheries Gallery, Cape Ann Museum, Gloucester, MA.

<sup>14</sup> Copeland and Rogers, *The Saga of Cape Ann*, 225.

<sup>15</sup> Warren, *New England Bound*, 19.

<sup>16</sup> Copeland and Rogers, *The Saga of Cape Ann*, 230.

inhabitants of Cape Ann with a source of food as well as income by catching the birds and selling them. The richness of natural resources in Cape Ann was invaluable to the settlers and dictated the direction that their lives and industries grew towards. They utilized what they were given by the land and environment in order to survive and fit in to the global economic world. However, the land was unable to provide enough as the populations grew exponentially, pushing the colonists even more so to the sea.

The process of settling in the new world began in the end of the 1500s and beginning of the 1600s. The English did not begin to move into the North Shore until approximately twenty to thirty years later. John Winthrop recorded some of his early encounters with the Native Americans at Agawam in 1629. Masconomet and one of his men stayed aboard John Winthrop's ship all day one day, informing the colonists that they were scared of an attack from the Tarrentines, an Eastern Native American tribe.<sup>17</sup> In March of 1633, John Winthrop, along with twelve other settlers moved to begin a plantation at Agawam, and renamed the area Ipswich.<sup>18</sup> These European founders of the area maintained the ability to give or withhold permission for anyone desiring to reside in Ipswich along with the ability to grant land to those settlers. On June 8, 1638 Masconomet signed the deed agreeing to sell "all the ground that is between the creeke comoly called Labour in Vaine creeke & the creeke called Chybacko Creeke."<sup>19</sup> And on June 28<sup>th</sup>, Masconomet acknowledged receiving John Winthrop's twenty pounds in full

---

<sup>17</sup> Joseph Felt, *History of Ipswich, Essex, and Hamilton*, (Cambridge, Charles Folsom, 1834), 3.

<sup>18</sup> John Winthrop, "History of New England," *Winthrop's Journal 1588-1649*, (New York, Barnes & Noble Inc., 1953), 99.

<sup>19</sup> Thomas Waters and Robert Winthrop, *A Sketch of the Life of John Winthrop: The Younger, Founder of Ipswich, Massachusetts in 1633*, (Ipswich, MA, Ipswich Historical Society, 1899), vii.

for the rights to the land lying and being in the Bay of Agawam. The Native Americans were looking for protection from the colonists from their Native American neighbors, so Masconomet was willing to sell his land at Chebacco and convert to Christianity, affectively ending the Agawam tribe, in order to keep his people safe as best he could. Once the town of Ipswich was underway with the security of their own land, the town's first inhabitants continued granting house-lots and land to its residents, some of whom were taking up large portions of land in Chebacco. They quickly realized the value of the resources that the land had to offer them, lumber in particular. They made efforts to conserve their natural resources before they became exhausted in a short amount of time. On March 15, 1660 the town of Ipswich wrote a petition stating that the common lands of the town are overburdened with dwelling-houses. To end this inconvenience for the future, no house erected from this point on will have any right to the common lands of the town. Additionally, no inhabitants of the house will make use of any pasture, timber, or wood without express leave of the town.<sup>20</sup> The town of Ipswich realized very early on in their settlement just how necessary and valuable the environment was to their survival, and took steps to preserve the natural resources that the environment provided to them such as farm land, lumber for building, and wood for fuel.

Another natural resource provided to the settlers by the land that they realized they must preserve and protect were clams. When small boats were sufficient in making trips to local fishing grounds, fishermen dug the clams themselves to use as bait. The more it developed as an industry in itself, men and boys who were fishing and farming would go out mainly in the spring and winter at low tide and dig. When they brought the

---

<sup>20</sup> Felt, *History of Ipswich, Essex, and Hamilton*, 16.



clams to shore they were shucked and put in barrels with salt that clam dealers would sell to fishing vessels. They were occasionally sold for export as well to be used for bait in other places.<sup>21</sup> The town of Ipswich decided in the year 1763 that they needed to regulate the clamming industry. They stated that no more clams should be taken from the flats than what is necessary for the use of the people of the town along with a limit on the supply of clams to fishing vessels as bait. The stipulation allowed one barrel of clams for each crew to the Newfoundland banks and a proportionally less quantity for boats taking shorter trips.<sup>22</sup> Long after the area of Chebacco broke away from Ipswich and became the town of Essex in 1819, the two towns decided that they needed to settle a division line to decide which clam flats belonged to which towns on October 3, 1887.<sup>23</sup> The importance of this natural resource is abundantly clear in terms of both survival and industry in the area. Settlers relied on clams for a source of food, and the fishing industries relied on clams as a source of bait. The towns in the North Shore recognized that it was a resource that had to be regulated in order to protect and preserve it for continual future use.

Ship carpenters and joiners came not long after the very first settlers as there was a large demand for boats for both travel and food supply. Thomas Burnham was one of the first settlers in the Burnham family whose knowledge and skill in shipbuilding he brought with him from Europe. His boatbuilding expertise was passed down to his grandson David Burnham, who also passed along his shipbuilding skills to his own grandson, Parker Burnham. This is a tradition that has continued in the Burnham family

---

<sup>21</sup> Copeland and Rogers, *The Saga of Cape Ann*, 191.

<sup>22</sup> Duane Hamilton Hurd, *History of Essex County, Massachusetts: With Biographical Sketches of Many of Its Pioneers and Prominent Men*, (Essex County, J. W. Lewis & Company, 1888), 1157.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 1157.

since then, and even today, there are still members of the Burnham Family building traditional wooden ships in Essex. The family is well-known locally for the legend of the very first Chebacco boat that was built in the garret of a house. This style of boat was used early starting in the 1600s for coastal fishing and trading. In the early stages of settlement, there was a demand for boats, but mainly small Chebacco boats that allowed for transportation around Cape Ann, in-shore fishing trips, and coastal trading. The settler's main objective when they arrived at New England was farming. The soil in and around Cape Ann "was sandy and not particularly fertile, and there was little marshland about for hay, but from the start the English discovered they could pasture livestock, grow corn, and plant gardens there- provided that they did not work the land too intensively...Although the land about the town was heavily wooded in parts, Francis Higginson claimed there was so 'much ground cleared by the Indians,' with grass 'very thicke, very long, and very high' that wherever farming was possible, it could begin right away."<sup>24</sup> On a small scale, farming in New England was a good stepping stone to providing food and a small economy for the colonists. However, the land could not sustain large-scale farming and the population growth from the Great Migration. Caleb Jackson Jr.'s fifty-acre family farm had commercial potential because of its proximity to Salem and Newburyport, however, the farm provided barely enough to sustain Caleb, his father, mother, brother, and sister and could not keep them all employed. Due to this, the family was forced to search beyond the boundaries of the farm to find employment in

---

<sup>24</sup> Daniel Vickers and Vince Walsh, *Young Men and the Sea: Yankee Seafarers in the Age of Sail*, (New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 2005), 26.

other ways such as picking and selling berries, making ciders, and shoemaking.<sup>25</sup> This is the same process and circumstances that began pushing more and more residents to find employment on the sea. John Smith observed and insisted that the most profitable aspect of New England lay in its ocean and its main staple is fish.<sup>26</sup> He looked to the example the Dutch set with their trade of fish to Europe, and he knew that the work put into fishing would be well worth the reward in profits. The Puritan colonists originally built coastal settlements that were dependent on the sea. Many of the towns north of Boston had ratios of seaboard to land surface that resembled islands and the habit of using the ocean was a practical necessity. As early as 1635 “a weir had already been built on the Chebacco river, to catch alewives on which the price was fixed at 5s per thousand. Fish and clams were the salvation of the early residents, for the ground even today would discourage a good yield from crops. To encourage fishing, The General Court in 1639 ordered that there should be no tax on stock and fish on vessels engaged in that industry and the fisherman were to be exempt from military duty.”<sup>27</sup> While farming was a crucial element in the first stages of development, Cape Ann was more suited to sustain the population by its waters. As the flow of people from the migration began to slow down, the flow of currency from the immigration along with exportable commodities slowed down as well. The New England colonists sought out markets overseas for their staple products of farm produce, timber, and fish. They constructed a commercial economy by trading produce from a temperate climate with colonists in tropical or semitropical

---

<sup>25</sup> Daniel Vickers, “Competency and Competition: Economic Culture in Early America,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 47, no. 1 (1990): 4-9.

<sup>26</sup> Warren, *New England Bound*, 19.

<sup>27</sup> George Loring, *A History of Maritime Activities at “Old Chebacco,”* (c1950), 4.

environments.<sup>28</sup> Salted codfish, a product that Gloucester is famous for, played a major role in trade with the islands in the West Indies. Codfish in general, played a major role in the sturdy development of the fishing industry and all the consequential industries that supported fishing.

The natural harbors on Cape Ann made it an obvious location for the development of fisheries and the proximity of large crops of codfish lead to New England's participation in the Atlantic World economy. Fishing was mainly a secondary form of employment for inhabitants of Cape Ann during the first sixty to seventy years of the settlement. However, several outside influences sparked the real development of a demand for New England fisheries. First, from 1630 to 1650 the English colonies in the West Indies and the Chesapeake had grown significantly, which created a need for northern farm and forest produce. Second, the Civil War back in Europe had crippled the fishery in the West.<sup>29</sup> Third, the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 suspended the colonial warfare that had been interfering with fishing and trade activities on Cape Ann. It made more waters become accessible and foreign trade safer for Cape Ann fishermen. And last, the launching of the first schooner in 1713 by Captain Andrew Robinson began the American ship design.<sup>30</sup> Each of these factors contributed to favorable conditions for the development of a large-scale commercial fishing industry out of the North Shore. The demand for cod in these new markets could be met by fishermen from Boston, Salem, Ipswich, Newbury, and other towns in the Bay Colony. It allowed small places such as Cape Ann to take its place in the global economy by trading with vessels from "London

---

<sup>28</sup> Vickers and Walsh *Young Men and the Sea*, 28.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>30</sup> Copeland and Rogers, *The Saga of Cape Ann*, 83.

and bound for the Iberian Peninsula, the Caribbean, and the Wine Islands.”<sup>31</sup> With fishing trips heading out to the Grand Banks off of Newfoundland, there grew a pressing need for the development of many other industries that go hand in hand with fishing. Cape Ann and its natural resources allowed for most of these industries to stay local for several centuries. The fishing banks themselves were formed by natural incidences. The melting of the ice from the great ice age dropped sand, gravel, and rocks into the sea-bottom in a chain that formed the fishing banks that Gloucestermen relied on.<sup>32</sup> The fishermen could provision themselves inexpensively because necessities such as boats, timber, nails, salt, bait, bread, cider, lines, leads, and dozens of other commodities could be found locally.<sup>33</sup> Once the supply of codfish on the Grand Banks became short, Gloucester fishermen began exploring Georges Bank where halibut started to gain momentum as a commercial fish. They were preserved by fletching, when the fish are boned, sliced, and salted and generally smoked over wood chips from the Essex shipyards that were brought on the trips for fuel. Just before halibut fishing was taken up commercially on Cape Ann, mackerel began to grow popular and Gloucester became well known for salt mackerel and salt cod.<sup>34</sup> A large demand for salt cod from Gloucester came from the West Indies due to its popularity for being cheap food for the slaves kept there. The salt cod that was not of high enough quality to be sold in the Iberian Peninsula or Wine Islands was brought to the West Indies. This thriving commerce in fish and molasses made men from Gloucester the most well-known in the port of Surinam.<sup>35</sup> The fish that they sold to the

---

<sup>31</sup> Vickers and Walsh *Young Men and the Sea*, 42.

<sup>32</sup> Babson, *Evolution of Cape Ann roads and transportation, 1623-1955*, 2.

<sup>33</sup> Vickers and Walsh *Young Men and the Sea*, 34.

<sup>34</sup> Copeland and Rogers, *The Saga of Cape Ann*, 106.

<sup>35</sup> Loring, *A History of Maritime Activities at “Old Chebacco,”* 17.

West Indies was not considered worth eating in in the local Boston markets or the European markets. The “rotting fish, however unappetizing to European stomachs, was a relative bargain for the feeding of slaves, for it cost so much less. Colonists could pocket the difference.”<sup>36</sup> This Atlantic World economy opened up a multicultural connection that lead to the role of slavery and indentured servants in New England.

Salt cod was not the only part that New England played in slavery, but it could be inferred that through this contact from trade a number of enslaved people made their way north. In this case “slavery bridged the ocean between New England and the West Indies.”<sup>37</sup> Some slaves and servants were brought over from England early in the 1600s with settlers like John Cogswell who brought his family, many belongings, and several unnamed servants with him when he crossed the ocean on the Angel Gabriel in 1635.<sup>38</sup> Many Native Americans also became enslaved to the colonists as a result of the wars. During the Pequot War Connecticut and Massachusetts leaders took as many as three hundred Pequots as servants into their households.<sup>39</sup> During this time, tensions between the Native American tribes and the European settlers were high. Native Americans who had not died or run away during this war were brought into slavery. The Pequot captives that became enslaved were offered fewer protections and benefits than English indentured servants. While some of them became chattel slaves, others became intermediaries between the English and Native Americans, and some acquired their

---

<sup>36</sup> Warren, *New England Bound*, 55.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>38</sup> Anne Stevens, “Angel Gabriel 1635,” Accessed December 21, 2019.

<https://www.packrat-pro.com/ships/gabriel.htm>

<sup>39</sup> Walter Woodward "Which Man's Land?: Conflict and Competition in Pequot Country." *Prospero's America: John Winthrop, Jr., Alchemy, and the Creation of New England Culture, 1606-1676*, (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 95.

freedom. Overall, the captive Native Americans shaped and influenced New England's material culture, foodways, technology, religious practices along with many other aspects of the English household.<sup>40</sup> Many of these enslaved Native Americans contributed to the economic growth in places like Ipswich where manual labor such as sawing lumber played a central part in the development of the industries as well as every day life.

Newspaper advertisements from the *Essex Gazette* record just a small portion of the involvement of African American slaves in the Cape Ann community. On November 30, 1773, Joseph Eveleth of Gloucester had an advertisement in the newspaper looking to employ "a healthy negro man, who is a good seaman, can perform any kind of husbandry labour, and understands tending a saw-mill."<sup>41</sup> Outside of slavery there was a strong involvement of a number of free African Americans in the maritime industries. It has been estimated that in the 1830s as many as 40 percent of African Americans living in Boston worked in maritime industries. They typically worked as cooks or stewards aboard vessels. John Henderson is recorded on the crew list for the ship *William and Henry* as the cook. Where they describe the complexion of the crew members, the list ranges from light, dark, to black.<sup>42</sup> This ship was bound for Surinam, like many others of

---

<sup>40</sup> Margaret Ellen Newell, "'Indians We Have Received into Our Houses': Pequot War Captives in New England Households." *Brethren by Nature: New England Indians, Colonists, and the Origins of American Slavery*, (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2015) 60.

<sup>41</sup> "To Be Sold, for Want of Employ," *Essex Gazette* 6, no. 280, December 30, 1773. The Cape Ann Museum has an account book for Joseph Eveleth that covers the period 1777–1804. <https://wayback.archive-it.org/11179/20181018194719/http://onlineexhibitions.capeannmuseum.org/s/unfoldinghistories/page/africanamericanhistory>

<sup>42</sup> . "Crew list for the ship *William and Henry*." *Unfolding Histories: Cape Ann before 1900*. May 20, 1833. Cape Ann Museum. <https://wayback.archive-it.org/11179/20181018195826/http://onlineexhibitions.capeannmuseum.org/s/unfoldinghistories/item/421>

that time, carrying a cargo of salt cod that would help sustain the practice of slavery in the southern hemisphere long after it had been abolished in Massachusetts. While many African Americans came and went from Cape Ann as seamen, some settled on a piece of property and raised their families in the industries on-shore.

Ralph Roberts was born in Virginia and moved to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and then later to the 5<sup>th</sup> ward in Boston, Massachusetts pointing to the likelihood that he was a runaway slave. In Boston, he met Sarah (Sally) Lemmons who he married. Their first son was named Parker Roberts and he was taken in and cared for by Sarah Lemmons brother, Parker Lemmons and his wife Rachel Lee who lived in Essex.<sup>43</sup> Ralph Roberts and Sarah Lemmons also had a second son named Ralph Roberts Jr. Rachel Lee, along with her mother who was also named Rachel Lee, was born in Manchester and moved to King's Court (modern day street name) in Essex to marry and live with Parker Lemmons. Parker Roberts' full name was Parker Roberts Lemmons Jr. because he was taken care of, most likely adopted, by his aunt and uncle in Essex. When Parker Lemmons died in 1858 he was buried with a gravestone in the Spring Street Cemetery<sup>44</sup> and left his property to his wife Rachel Lemmons (previously Rachel Lee). When Rachel Lemmons died eight year later in 1866 she left the property in her will to her nephew, Parker Roberts Lemmons, who she had raised as a son.<sup>45</sup> Parker Roberts Lemmons married a woman from the West

---

<sup>43</sup> Year: 1850; Census Place: Essex, Essex, Massachusetts; Roll: M432\_314; Page: 279B; Image: 274 - From Ancestry.com

<sup>44</sup> Ancestry.com. *U.S., Find A Grave Index, 1600s-Current* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2012.

Original data: *Find A Grave*. Find A Grave. <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi>.

<sup>45</sup> *Essex County, Massachusetts, Probate Records and Indexes 1638-1916*; Author: *Massachusetts. Probate Court (Essex County)*; Probate Place: *Essex, Massachusetts*



Indies named Mary. When they got divorced, he remarried Mary Haskell Williams and lived with her on his aunt and uncle's former property in Essex. Parker Lemmons lived close to several members of the Andrews family on King's Court and they worked as shoemakers.

On the outskirts of fishing, other industries that developed in Cape Ann were also influenced by the land's natural resources. Inhabitants of Cape Ann "raised their own grain and vegetables, sheep, hogs, oxen, cows, and horses. There was plenty of salt hay from the marshes and lumber for building, and cordwood for heat; thatch grass for roofs, sand to spread on home floors. There were clam shells to grind up and mix with salt hay and animal hairs for plaster; and some clay for mortar and pottery. From their animals they got not only meat but leather for shoes and harness which they tanned with oak or hemlock, fats for candles, soap and cooking, wool for clothing, manure for fertilizer... Their factories were their homes, barns cobblers and carpenters shops, tan pits, smithies and mills."<sup>46</sup> Due to the large supply of lumber that needed to be cut, along with a tidal river for power the first saw mill was established on Chebacco River in 1656<sup>47</sup> and a grist mill in 1693.<sup>48</sup> Due to the necessity along with the high number of settlers who were building small craft boats at their houses at this point in time, the town of Ipswich decided to grant one acre of land by the river to be used as a public shipyard in 1668.<sup>49</sup> As fishing technologies changed, other industries altered accordingly. Shipbuilding and ship design evolved significantly from the first Chebacco boats of the 1600s to the Pinkie

---

<sup>46</sup> Babson, *Evolution of Cape Ann roads and transportation, 1623-1955*, 13.

<sup>47</sup> Loring, *A History of Maritime Activities at "Old Chebacco,"* 5.

<sup>48</sup> Hurd, *History of Essex County, Massachusetts*, 1158.

<sup>49</sup> Robert Crowell, David Choate, and Edward Payson, *History of the Town of Essex: From 1634 to 1868*, (Essex, MA, Published by the town, 1868), 60.

schooner design used prominently in the 1800s. The designs evolved again once trawl fishing was introduced where they fished out of dories on the banks.

The majority of the people of Chebacco were “staunch Puritans, Congregationalists, and after the Embargo, Republicans.”<sup>50</sup> In 1782, after the Revolution, the town of Ipswich with a population of just 1,200 voted for an application to Congress to include the United States right to the fisheries in the negotiations with England. During the Federal period Gloucester became prosperous with their fishing vessels with numbers growing significantly from 1790 to 1792 both in volume and tonnage of fishing vessels in Cape Ann.<sup>51</sup> The Embargo set forth by Jefferson caused many hardships on the maritime economy of Massachusetts. The town of Ipswich voted to protest the embargo by sending a petition to their President on August 18, 1808. They requested that “the evils which they endure, in consequence of the embargo, may be removed by a suspension, in whole or in part, of the operation of the laws laying the same, by virtue of the power by law vested in the supreme executive.” Jefferson answered that he could not change his policy because “The orders of England and the decrees of France and Spain, existing at the date of these laws, are still unrepealed.”<sup>52</sup> Ipswich, along with other places in New England, was in strong opposition to the policies that led to the War of 1812. The Jeffersonian policy attributed for the most part to the Federalist and later Republican sentiment in Essex. During the war, several Chebacco built pinkie schooners had been fitted out as privateers. Not long after the war, in 1819, Chebacco Parish of Ipswich became its own town of Essex and the town prepared for the boom of shipbuilding. With this boom of

---

<sup>50</sup> Loring, *A History of Maritime Activities at “Old Chebacco,”* 13.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

shipbuilding came the acceleration of other industries such as saw mills, spar making, wheelwrights, sailmaking, and ropemaking, which had been carried on throughout the war for ship rigging and fishing lines made mostly of cotton warp or yarn more than hemp later on.<sup>53</sup>

Hemp was used more frequently prior to 1890 in standing rigging (shrouds and stays) to support the masts of fishing schooners, but the introduction of stranded steel wire changed the practice until the 1970s.<sup>54</sup> Early Chebacco-built pinkie schooner sails were also made out hemp. Due to the material, when the winds were light or moderate the pores in the sails could be closed by wetting them to catch more wind.<sup>55</sup> Sailmaking was another on-shore industry supported by over 400 fishing schooners that were carrying up to 4,000 square feet of canvas each before the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There were roughly twenty local companies in the business of making and mending sails during the height of fishing under sail. However, the introduction of the sewing machine and the evolution of the fishing fleet from sail to engine power dramatically reduced the number of sail lofts and the need for sails and sail makers.<sup>56</sup> The growth the fishing fleet in Gloucester, thanks to the shipbuilders in Essex, following the Civil War required the services of marine railways. The railways were used only for vessel maintenance and repairs, and when shipwrights had little work in the shipyards their skills could be used on the marine railways. Shipbuilding required much more time than ship repairs, so it was more commonly done on tidal land that was unsuitable for wharves and that had a

---

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>54</sup> Object label, Maritime and Fisheries Gallery, Cape Ann Museum, Gloucester, MA.

<sup>55</sup> Copeland and Rogers, *The Saga of Cape Ann*, 85.

<sup>56</sup> Object label, Maritime and Fisheries Gallery, Cape Ann Museum, Gloucester, MA.

high tide that could provide sufficient water depth for launching a schooner.<sup>57</sup> The tidal river that travels through Essex made the town a prime location for the building and launching of vessels, and the estuary provided an area for a number of shipyards along the river at one time. The mouth of the river is conveniently not far from Gloucester's natural harbors that facilitated the development of wharves for a fishing port. After the Civil War women were being called upon to join Cape Ann's workforce, not on board fishing schooners or in the unloading of the vessels catch, but in steady shore side jobs. The Gloucester Net and Twine Company that began in 1884, focused on cotton and linen netting and lines for the fisheries, provided employment for mostly young women who sought work outside of the home.<sup>58</sup> Leonard Craske's statue *They Also Serve Who Stand and Wait: Portrait of a Fisherman's Wife* is a tribute to the role women have played in the fishing industry outside of being aboard the ships. Women had a strong involvement in many industries that developed in New England. There is evidence in colonial newspapers of female blacksmiths, silversmiths, tinworkers, shoemakers, shipwrights, tanners, gunsmiths, barbers, printers, butchers, teachers, and shopkeepers.<sup>59</sup> While many women did play the stereotypical domestic housekeeper, they also had to pick up the slack from the operations of their husbands who were typically involved in many things at once. While the men were farming and running a gristmill or cutting timber and fishing, the wives that remained close to the house "were often at the communications center of these diverse operations, given responsibility for conveying directions, pacifying creditors, and perhaps even making some decisions about the disposition of

---

<sup>57</sup> Object label, Cape Ann Gallery, Cape Ann Museum, Gloucester, MA.

<sup>58</sup> Object label, Maritime and Fisheries Gallery, Cape Ann Museum, Gloucester, MA.

<sup>59</sup> Laurel Ulrich, *Goodwives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England 1650-1750*, (New York, Vintage Books, 1991), 35.

labor.”<sup>60</sup> While women were maintaining the family farm, taking care of household chores, and possibly making their own money on the side, they were also heavily involved in the operations of the other local industries. All of these aspects of life are dependent on the land and the natural resources. The land of Cape Ann has always generated a source of labor, profit, and intrigue.

The quarrying business, along with the fisheries, served as major draws to Cape Ann for those looking for work in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Due to the natural resources of the area both the fish and granite industries went through periods of sustained growth starting in the 1830s. Workers from the Canadian Maritimes, Ireland, and the Azores began arriving in the 1840s and by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century there was a close knit Portuguese community in Gloucester who dominated the fishing industry. Men from Sicily followed just after 1900 and around the same time an enclave of Finnish and Scandinavian families had emerged in Gloucester neighborhoods to work in the granite trade.<sup>61</sup> Similar to the other Cape Ann industries, granite cutting began quietly on a cottage level around the 1800s. The stone that makes up a large percentage of the Cape Ann landscape is of good texture, free from most blemishes, and high quality. Professor John H. Sears of the Peabody Essex Museum was able to slice a section of granite 1-700<sup>th</sup> of an inch thick.<sup>62</sup> Other factors that lead to the rise of the granite industry on Cape Ann and its use in public and commercial buildings and jetties was its easy accessibility paired with cheap transportation to coastal markets due to its proximity to the ocean. The granite quarries

---

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>61</sup> Wall text, Cape Ann Gallery, Cape Ann Museum, Gloucester, MA.

<sup>62</sup> John Cooley, *The Granite of Cape Ann*, (Rockport, MA, Rockport National Bank, 1974), 9.

lured artists, and when the granite industry quit, art, tourism, and outsiders seeking real estate moved in.<sup>63</sup> All were attracted by the unusual picturesque beauty of the area.

The beauty of Cape Ann, since the end of the Civil War, has spawned an art colony in almost every neighborhood that offers its own unique attributes. Some artists of the area became closely associated with certain subjects: “Fitz Henry Lane with Gloucester and its working waterfront, Ellen Day Hale and Gabrielle deVeaux Clements with the Folly Cove neighborhood, and landscape painters Aldro Hibbard and Lester Stevens with the Rockport art colony.”<sup>64</sup> Fitz Henry Lane was America’s preeminent marine artist of the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, dominating Cape Ann’s art scene. He influenced many other professional and amateur artists in the area, and with the arrival of the railroad in 1847 that linked Gloucester to Boston, he found a market for his work in the summer tourist trade. The electric railroad, which was nearly completed by 1895, connected Gloucester and Beverly through West Gloucester, Essex, Hamilton, and Montserrat opened up the North Shore to cheap, popular travel.<sup>65</sup> By this time, the end of sailing vessels in the fishing fleets brought the decline of the small town Chebacco men, and the inland location of the town and removal of the railroad services became unfavorable for the past industries. The demand for wooden, sailing vessels had fallen, and with it the industries that supported the making of wooden vessels had all fallen to the wayside as well. The tools and artifacts once used in Essex created a new era of

---

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>64</sup> Wall text, Fitz Henry Lane Gallery, Cape Ann Museum, Gloucester, MA.

<sup>65</sup> Craig Cogswell Choate, “New Life on Old Cape Ann,” *Boston Herald*, July, 16, 1895.

antique shops,<sup>66</sup> which are supported by the tourism and artists that visit the area still today.

The fishing industries of the past are still alive today, although plagued by different regulations and adjustments to the markets. The livelihood of people inhabiting Cape Ann has always been, and continues to be linked to the sea. The fishing industry has profound ties to the identity of the region from its art and literature, music, architecture, religious and secular traditions. The clamming industry is prominent in the town of Essex and heavily reliant on tourism in the area. Like many other fishing industries, there are deep roots in family traditions. On display at the Cape Ann Museum are photographs taken by Jim Hooper in 2003 documenting the men and women who work on Gloucester's waterfront today.<sup>67</sup> Many workers are members of families with long histories of working on the waterfront. This collection only goes to show how the landscape and natural resources of Cape Ann have been shaping industries and lives for almost 400 years and continues to influence the lives of its inhabitants.

---

<sup>66</sup> Loring, *A History of Maritime Activities at "Old Chebacco,"* 23.

<sup>67</sup> Object label, Maritime and Fisheries Gallery, Cape Ann Museum, Gloucester, MA.

## Bibliography

Ancestry.com

Cape Ann Museum, Gloucester, MA. Seen on: November 29, 2019.

Cape Ann Museum. "Crew list for the ship William and Henry." *Unfolding Histories:*

Cape Ann before 1900. May 20, 1833. <https://wayback.archive-it.org/11179/20181018195826/http://onlineexhibitions.capeannmuseum.org/s/unfoldinghistories/item/421>

Cape Ann Museum. "To Be Sold, for Want of Employ," *Essex Gazette* 6, no. 280, December 30, 1773. The Cape Ann Museum has an account book for Joseph Eveleth that covers the period 1777–1804.

Choate, Craig Cogswell. "New Life on Old Cape Ann." *Boston Herald* (Boston, MA), July 16, 1895.

Cooley, John. *The Granite of Cape Ann*. Rockport: Rockport National Bank, 1974.

Copeland, Melvin and Rogers, Elliott. *Saga of Cape Ann*. Freeport: The Bond Wheelwright Co., 1960.

Crowell, Robert, Choate, David, and Payson, Edward. *History of the Town of Essex: From 1634 to 1868*. Essex: Published by the town, 1868.

Dow, George Francis. *Two centuries of travel in Essex County, Massachusetts: a collection of narratives and observations made by travelers, 1605-1799*. Topsfield: Topsfield Historical Society, 1921.

Essex Institute. *Bulletin of the Essex Institute*. Salem: Essex Institute, 1869.

Felt, Joseph. *History of Ipswich, Essex, and Hamilton*. Cambridge: Charles Folsom, 1834.

Hurd, Duane Hamilton. *History of Essex County, Massachusetts: With Biographical*



- Sketches of Many of Its Pioneers and Prominent Men.* Essex County: J.W. Lewis & Company, 1888.
- Newell, Margaret Ellen. "'Indians We Have Received into Our Houses': Pequot War Captives in New England Households." In *Brethren by Nature: New England Indians, Colonists, and the Origins of American Slavery*, 60-84. Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2015.
- [www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt20fw5zj.8](http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt20fw5zj.8).
- Stevens, Anne. "The Angel Gabriel 1635." Pilgrim Ship Lists Early 1600's Over 7100 Families and 290 Ships. Accessed December 21, 2019. <https://www.packrat-pro.com/ships/gabriel.htm>
- Ulrich, Laurel. *Goodwives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England 1650-1750*. New York: Vintage Books, 1991.
- Vickers, Daniel. "Competency and Competition: Economic Culture in Early America." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 47, no. 1 (1990): 3-27.
- Vickers, Daniel and Walsh, Vince. *Young Men and the Sea: Yankee Seafarers in the Age of Sail*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005.
- Warren, Wendy. *New England Bound: Slavery and Colonization in Early America*. New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2016.
- Waters, Thomas and Winthrop, Robert. *A Sketch of the Life of John Winthrop: The Younger, Founder of Ipswich, Massachusetts in 1633*. Ipswich: Ipswich Historical Society, 1899.
- Wickman, Thomas. "'Winters Embittered with Hardships': Severe Cold, Wabanaki Power, and English Adjustments, 1690–1710." *The William and Mary*

*Quarterly* 72, no. 1 (2015): 57-98. doi:10.5309/willmaryquar.72.1.0057.

Winthrop, John, "History of New England." *Winthrop's Journal 1588-1649*. New York: Barnes & Noble Inc., 1953.

Woodward, Walter W. "Which Man's Land?: Conflict and Competition in Pequot Country." In *Prospero's America: John Winthrop, Jr., Alchemy, and the Creation of New England Culture, 1606-1676*, 93-137. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010. doi:10.5149/9780807895931\_woodward.9.