Fragments of Huguenot-Quaker Convergence in New York

Little Histories (Avignon, France, 1601–1602; Flushing, Long Island, 1657–1726)

Table Talk: Theories of Visual Perception in Avignon (1601)

In the penultimate year of the life and reign of the glorious Queen Elizabeth of England [1558–1603] (whose fame will never die), I was compelled to spend the whole winter in the city of Avignon, because the winter was very severe, with so much snow covering the mountains of [St.] Bernard that the passage into Italy was entirely blocked.

—ROBERT FLUDD, De naturae simia

So begins Robert Fludd’s hugely entertaining alchemic romance and travel narrative, written ostensibly from memory, which takes the form of a personal history of youthful geomantic experiences in France. After taking his M.A. at Oxford in 1598, Fludd’s task, like that of many other young disciples of Paracelsus before and after him, was to wander the world to learn directly from the novelties of Nature, illiterate “folk,” and the practical school of experience. Playing the well-rehearsed role of a Paracelsian seeker and traveler en route through France to northern Italy—the same path of experience taken by John Winthrop Jr. after he had witnessed the sieges of Saint-Martin-de-Ré and La Rochelle in 1627—Fludd was “compelled” by Nature to spend the winter of 1601–2 in Avignon, when snow blocked the Saint Bernard Pass, France’s
“passage” and natural “doorway” to Italy. Thus Fludd preceded Winthrop the Younger to Italy, where both journeyed on a natural philosopher’s pilgrimage in search of alchemical secrets. After finally departing Avignon in 1602, Fludd met the great Paracelsian physician and rising courtier William Harvey, his fellow countryman, in Padua. This occurred soon after another encounter in Rome with one “Grutherus,” a conveniently obscure (and perhaps fictitious) Swiss adept. Fludd claimed that it was Grutherus who had taught him the lucrative secret of the weapon salve. Reading Fludd’s “De geomantia” together with de Bry’s pictograph of the oculus, we are immediately aware that his language of obstruction and passage was borrowed from Tobit, and was common to Fludd’s geomantic allegory.

As the voice of the wandering narrator trapped in contested territory where acts of confessional violence against Protestants were a common occurrence, Fludd was suddenly forced to identify with a Protestant refugee. Like Hogarth, he assumes the liminal identity of the Huguenot artisan and natural philosopher. This represented the persona of an outsider who relies on memory of artisanal skills and “the art” to survive contact with the politically dangerous, philosophically inexperienced Jesuits and “other young men,” all of whom were “former pupils of the Jesuits.”

Fludd called his deceptively simple narrative Of the Internal Principle of Terrestrial Astrology or Geomancy. The striking simplicity of its language seems, moreover, to be grounded mostly in disarming storytelling. Where “De geomantia” parses mens, intellectus, ratio, imaginatio, and sensus, Internal Principle, like Palissy’s Recepte and Discours, collapses these technical terms together and unifies them in the soul as the universal divine messenger. When de Bry harnessed Fludd’s practical history as a preface to the highly theoretical “De geomantia” in the second volume of Fludd’s De macrocosmi historia in 1618, his strategy was to supply the author with appropriate bona fides of Paracelsian experience to buttress the secretive and obscure rhetoric to follow.

So, at age twenty-seven, Fludd found himself stranded in Avignon “with many other young men of gentle birth and of sound education.” While the education of these companions was “sound,” Fludd found that it was also suspect, for the young gentlemen were “pupils of the Jesuits.” As a result, they had been indoctrinated in the repetitive pedagogy of militant Catholic scholasticism at the Jesuit school and noviciate at Avignon.

Fludd confides that geomancy first came up in Avignon as conversation in table talk. Cleverness in polite philosophical debate was crucial for alchemists seeking patronage. To be sure, Fludd performed Internal Principle as an entertainment for noble auditors at court long before committing it to print. In the high-stakes battle for patronage, aspiring alchemist-courtiers such as Kenelm Digby, Fludd, and Harvey had to demonstrate mastery over this strategic form of charismatic “talk,” which, it seemed, was always constructed around copious amounts of alcohol. Fludd’s narrative thus cen-
ters around a debate at table over the “validity” of geomancy as an art. This was to become the main subject of an evening’s entertainment “at the house of a certain captain,” where “I received board and lodging”:

One evening, while we were drinking at table, I discussed philosophical subjects with the others and noticed their various opinions on geomantic astrology. Some of them denied its virtue altogether; others, with whom I sided, defended stoutly the validity of that art. I adduced many arguments whereby I proved myself fairly well versed in geomancy. The meal being over, I had no sooner repaired to my chamber, when one of my companions followed me there and asked me for our love’s sake to try my art (which, he said, he had seen was considerable) in the resolution of a problem of some importance which, he said, filled his mind with much anxiety. Having made many excuses, I was at last prevailed upon by his entreaties. So, instantly I projected a geomantic scheme for the question he proposed.5

Fludd convinces us that his position won the evening, as it was the most charismatic demonstration of table talk. As a result, Fludd’s companion “entreats” the geomancer to go beyond theory, and he comes to Fludd’s chamber with a “problem which . . . filled his mind with much anxiety.” The “question he proposed,” for which Fludd “projected a geomantic scheme,” drives the story and distills the complex theory of “De geomantia” into the narrator’s testimony on a single “historical” moment and its context. Titillating, given Fludd’s vow of chastity (which, nevertheless, allowed the geomancer to see the “scheme” clearly): “This question was: whether a girl with whom he had vehemently fallen in love returned his love with equal fervor, and her entire mind and body, and whether she loved him more than anyone else.”6

Fludd’s lengthy response turns on his perception in the geomantic scheme of an obscure deformity: a sort of dot “or blot” on the girl’s left eyelid: “Having drawn my geomantic scheme, I assured him that I could rather well describe the nature and bodily disposition of his beloved and, having duly described to him the nature and shape of the girl’s body, I indicated also a particular and rather noticeable mark or blot thereon, namely a certain kind of wart on her left eye-lid, which he confessed was there.”7 Once he has perceived the impurity of Tobit’s cataract in the “certain kind of wart” on the left eyelid of his companion’s lover, an answer to the question is already prophesied. To establish his credibility, first Fludd gives certain other details about the girl that only an intimate would know, then tells his companion that his beloved is indeed “inconstant and by no means steady in her love of him, and that she loved somebody else more than him. Whereupon he said that he had always very much suspected that this was the case and that he was [now] seeing it, as it were, with open eyes.”8

Through the mediation of the oculus imaginationis, Fludd’s companion himself saw “with open eyes” the meaning of the mark on his lover’s eyelid, a symbol of her im-
purity and a reflection of his own blindness. He perceived, for the first time, a hidden reality beneath the surface of fleshy matter that he had always overlooked as nothing more than an ephemeral thing. In effect, he was unable to see his own reflection in his lover’s deformity. Yet publicizing this skill at seeing made Fludd’s situation even more dangerous. His life was jeopardized when the blot on the lover’s eye remained invisible in plain sight to the gentlemen, educated in the local Jesuit school, who attended the dinner party earlier that evening:

He left my room in haste and then related to his companions with some admiration the verity and virtue of my art. Yet some of them, who knew the girl rather well, denied altogether that she had any such mark on her eye-lid as I had described, until they talked to her the following day and thus became witnesses of the correctness of that detail which I had discovered to them by the art of geomancy and which even they had never previously noticed.9

Acting the role of the angel Raphael, Fludd leads his blind and inexperienced doubters and potential adversaries to perceive what was always there but had been invisible to them. An English Protestant “refugee” among hostile French Jesuits had negotiated their perception of the significance of a hidden form, as a contingency of social interaction in the “mixed composition” of a pluralistic urban context.

As in the work of refugee Huguenot artisans in colonial New York, however, noticing the overlooked could also be strategically reversed as a function of dissimulation, to protect the vulnerable, facilitate commerce, or simply to be secretive. If messages sent via an experienced refugee’s perception of “a particular” form were revealed to one group of hostile or competitive “companions” in Avignon, the same perceptions might also be concealed from another in New York. The moral purity and alchemic skill necessary to see through the veil of “mixed composition” to essential signs meant that composite forms could also be deployed from behind, to form a perceptual shield against the perceptions of outsiders.

Revealing his esoteric skill to his importunate companion (“despite having made many excuses”) puts Fludd—now exposed as a Protestant—in great danger from the Jesuits. “Thus,” he wrote, “I became better known than I desired, so much so that rumours of this matter reached the ears of the Jesuits.”10 A conspiracy is hatched, and “two of them went secretly to the Palace and impelled by envy, reported to the [papal] Vice-Legate that there was a certain foreigner, an Englishman, who had made predictions of future events by the science of geomancy, which science had been reproved by the Catholic Church.”11

Far from becoming the subject of an official papal inquest, “a few days later,” the vice-legate “kindly invited me to a meal,” where once again, Fludd engaged in table talk with his host:
When I had duly made my reverence in the customary manner, the Vice-Legate began to discourse with me as follows:

"I hear," he said, "that you are well versed in the art of geomancy. What then is your considered opinion of that art?"

I replied experience [emphasis added] had proved to me that it was a valid science, built on occult foundations.12

The vice-legate’s reference to “that art” and Fludd’s use of the Paracelsian code word “experience” identify them to each other as secret adepts.

It is now safe for Fludd to reveal further trade secrets to his inquiring host, as one experienced practitioner to another. “How can there be any certainty’, he said, ‘in a method that operates by means of accidental dots?’” Fludd’s response to this question, using plain language, unlike in “De geomantia,” was that geomancy was never really accidental, since—as with Palissy’s glazes—the human hand was directed to perform inward artisanry by a “peaceful” and “impartial” soul. Harmonic adjectives such as these adumbrate theoretical explications that were to follow in “De geomantia.” More than that, they conform well to Palissy’s abhorrence of the unbalancing effect of confessional violence and “esmotions” on the conjunction of macrocosm and microcosm, and by extension, the spiritual work of the soul on the material art of the earth.

Recall that Palissy’s metaphor for this harmonic conjunction is the angelic chorus of the seven earth spirits singing psalms along the banks of the Charente. Recall, too, that Homo sanus is protected by the “fortress of health” (see fig. 10.7) and sings psalms that put him in harmony with God (the “temple of music,” a giant cosmological music machine, was one of Fludd’s greatest projects). Suffering man, on the other hand, with walls crumbling around his body and beset by “enemies invading the fortress of health” (see fig. 10.8), cannot connect harmonically with the divine voice. He hears only God’s admonition that “because thou hast not harkened unto my voice, I will afflict thee [Deut. 28:15–22]; . . . I will dissolve thee . . . so that thy enterprises are hindered and thy mouth stopped, that thou canst not speak [1 Macc. 9:55].” Fludd, a heretic and refugee in Catholic France, desired “peaceful” and “impartial” judgment from the strangers and religious antagonists who were his hosts:

I said the principle and origin of those dots made by the human hand was inward and very essential, since the movement emanated from the very soul. I added that errors of geomancy were by no means caused by the soul, but by a base and incongruous mutation of the human body moving against the intention of the soul. For that reason it was a general rule in this art that the soul must be in a peaceful condition, and a condition in which the body is obedient to the soul; also that there must be no perterbation of body or soul, nor any partiality concerning the question; that the soul must be a just and impartial judge.13
And, in the context of Fludd’s construction of his personal refugee history, his “plain” elucidation of the animate role of the *mens* and its astral function to perform secretly and fly unbounded and invisibly over great distances, takes on specific historical meanings. We are already familiar with these ideas in general from reading “De geomantia,” our encounter with Digby’s weapon’s salve, and John Winthrop Jr.’s physician’s chair:

[It follows] that the human body is to the soul as a servant is to his master. “The master can send his servant hither and thither with letters, whilst the servant is not in any way aware of his master’s plans. And an eminent painter may send to the king a fine picture through a servant wholly ignorant of the mixtures of the colours and of their symmetrical proportions. Likewise a king may impose taxes on his people through others, whilst the reason for his imposing them is known only to the king himself. In the same way, no doubt, can the body perform an action which the soul commands from its secret domain without the body’s perceiving in any way the principles of that action if not merely by its effects.”

Having listened to this speech, the vice-legate, in earshot of “some bishops and deans,” secretly called Fludd aside to “a table nearby where he took quill and ink, drew a geomantic figure, and discoursed about it in a most learned way, so that I saw clearly he was far more learned and skilled than I in that science for which the Jesuits had denounced me to him [emphasis added]. So, when the meal was over, I went away enjoying his favor.”

Fludd’s dialogue with the vice-legate of Avignon represents the alchemical dream of the universal soul to reform the emotions of confessional difference and the baneful effect of both political and geographical displacement into a unified vision throughout the Atlantic world through convergence of spirit and matter. This utopian vision was to be directed by “impartial,” “peaceful” adepts who were able to discern the divine motives in the relationship between material revelation and spiritual concealment. Fludd reflects on the humane political qualities and deep natural-philosophical skill of the vice-legate: “For I noticed he was a very ingenious prince, well versed in the sciences, friendly towards foreigners, and in no way given to tyranny.” By constructing an inversion of growing Bourbon absolutism—a monarchical system that depended on violence and the perpetuation of shape-shifting culture of appearances to maintain a superficial and unnatural monolithic order—Fludd creates a new prince of the natural world. The vice-legate of Avignon rules ingeniously over an harmonic order of friends and strangers alike, through the flexible “innovations” of practical experience gained by manual knowledge and insights into the “mixed composition” of mutable nature, rather than the tyranny of the received wisdom of kings written by inexperienced “artisans of glory,” to uphold the corrupt power of hereditary repetition.

Having found favor with the papal governor through shared practice of the geo-
mantic arts, it remains for Fludd to reconcile with the despised Jesuits. Again, this transpires through his interaction with another natural philosopher. “When these events had become known among the Jesuits,” Fludd recalled, “one of them, who was a praelector in philosophy, desired very much to confer with me . . . I called on the Jesuit and was gracefully received by him. After mention had been made of a number of philosophical subjects [that is to say, more code words were exchanged], he soon fell into [a discussion of] the geomantic science, believing perhaps that I might use facile arguments [read artificial rather than natural language] in my defence.”

Here, Fludd builds a metaphysical dialogue between ostensibly competing Christians, that unifies basic elements of the portable, uncontained, Neoplatonic discourse of the weapon salve, his friend William Harvey’s dedication to Charles I in 1628, the physician’s chair joined and carved for Governor Winthrop the Younger, and Dr. Ezra Stiles’s late eighteenth-century transatlantic theory of the friendship of souls after death:

“Well then,” he said, “is it or is it not possible that somebody should be able to predict by the art of geomancy danger to a man, or death threatening him on a journey to Rome? Or is there a participation and communication between the soul of that man and your own, though either soul be contained within a human body?”

I replied to him briefly thus:

“Since the soul of every body is that especial light that has dominion over everything else in the body, even as the Sun is predominant among the other stars in the heavens, yea since the soul is the very Sun of the microcosm directing the whole body by her vivifying rays, there is no doubt that it throws forth its invisible rays invisibly through the pores of the body in the same manner as that celestial Sun transmits its rays, through the sieve of the elements to the inferior [world] . . . so also without any doubt are rays emitted between the soul of one man and that of another [both] which [souls] are invisible lights. In their emission the rays are so joined together that either the soul of the seeker or the seeker19 himself be the one to whom danger is imminent, or else a friend of his; for the [soul] is very prophetical. Being immortal, it may know within itself things that are in the future and things present. Like a guardian foreseeing danger with which a body [in his charge] is threatened, it may explain the secret future of its body to another soul applying to it—a future which it had been unable to communicate to its body because of that body’s grossness. And in this way may a quiet and peaceful soul, which is in a fit condition for judging, and to which the movements of its body are well subjected, prognosticate the future to that other soul . . . [such a soul could] leave its body so as to find a place whence it could enter into communication, and converse, with the souls of . . . friends. And, without any doubt, the rays of the soul extend imperceptibly outside the body and far beyond
the range of visible rays. They . . . may pass through elementary media without any hindrance, like an influence. This is so because their form is exalted and their origin sublime."

. . . We may conclude, therefore, that this art [of geomancy] is a way of knowing that depends immediately on the soul; that its root is the soul itself; and that, therefore, it is a science more subtle than any other science man may comprehend in this corruptible world.20

To comprehend “a way of knowing that depends immediately on the soul”—metaphysical logic that supports the only real attempt Fludd ever made to construct a lucid explanation of the practice of geomancy—is to consider seriously the proposition that historians (and in particular, students of the pluralistic American middle colonies) understand Fludd’s occult treatises as a rational theory of early modern sociological practice. Was not Fludd’s a useful framework for gaining access to the ways in which cultural mixing and convergence were perceived and manipulated by both hosts and refugees relocated to multicultural centers of commerce throughout the seventeenth-century world?

Hogarth demonstrated how perceptual boundaries between urban subcultures defined the subtle mastery of space as an artifact of the experience of cultural memory, economic competition, scientific process, and social distance. Hogarth acquired his mastery of both theatrical and private space by initially engaging in a series of famously public disputes with authority. To provide his carefully constructed image of the exalted outsider’s philosophical legitimacy, Hogarth reactivated Fludd’s Paracelsian texts on geomancy and the art of memory to identify his self-image, personal history, art, and commercial success with historically innovative outsiders and outcasts: the talented Huguenot artisans and refugees who made a virtue of being forced to live and work in the shadows by implacable enemies. The arc of Palissy’s tumultuous early history of conflict with Catholic and Calvinist authority in Aunis-Saintonge, and his adaptation of Paracelsian cosmology and alchemic methods to his religious outlook and practical artisanry, intersects neatly with Hogarth’s personal history and construction of an outsider’s social self-identity. By the time Hogarth painted Noon in 1736, he shared with Palissy the eyes of the heretic and critical primitive. Hence, Hogarth mapped human dispersion, relocation, and convergence as part of a natural process of concealment and revelation of knowledge. The universal, hermaphroditic access of tiny things was shared, of course, with the snail, who generated armor inside-out to carry on his back snakes and lizards, or “the spider,” from Proverbs 30:28. All moved invisibly in or out of cracks above the subterranean spaces in Palissy’s ceramic grottoes. These were living things so utterly small, voiceless and apparently natural that they may enter surreptitiously and live “in kings’ palaces.”

Key to perceptual mastery and access to the overlooked, hidden in shadow behind
the chaotic Babel of converging strangers, was the seeker’s “participation and communication between the soul of that man and your own, though either soul be contained within a human body.” I have argued that it is possible to understand such bodily participation and communication of hidden knowledge—coded in the available language of sanctified natural materials—as ways in which natural philosophers conceptualized potential for convergence as a process of tacit social interaction, often mediated primarily by material bodies and things rather than words in the pluralistic, commercialized, and largely artisanal contexts that emerged wherever Huguenot refugees settled in the early modern transatlantic world. The logic implicit in this social system was also central to the function of the alchemic tradition Fludd knew from his reading of Neoplatonism, Paracelsian medicine, and the scientific canon of the Huguenot corpus to which arguments on occult perception in “De geomantia” and *Internal Principles* were key contributions. This context supports constant dialogues based on analogies between metaphysical and material binary oppositions, including macrocosm and microcosm, spirit and matter, or even Catholic and Protestant. Such interaction was central to the pluralist, potentially chaotic language of the street: “participation and communication . . . himself be the one to whom danger is imminent, or else a friend of his . . . like a guardian foreseeing danger with which a body is threatened.” All this makes perfect sense when juxtaposed against the Neoplatonic ideal of “a quiet and peaceful soul” that could “leave its body . . . to find a place whence it could enter into communication, and converse, with the souls of . . . friends.”

Fludd’s theory of convergence detailed a complex synthesis of cultural, social, political, economic and material, as well as religious practice. Unlike the elder Winthrop’s perception of the extension of Christ’s monolithic body to New England in “Modell of Christian Charitie,” Fludd’s alchemist and geomancer perceives “participation” in the convergence of multiple social realities, where danger and dissonance, as well as love and unity are subjects of “communication.” The differences between these Protestant positions as responses to the dual status of outsider and refugee as a result of reversals in La Rochelle and the Thirty Years’ War also elucidate tensions in the development of the younger Winthrop as he silently distanced himself from his father’s policies and grew to embrace his role as a New World Paracelsian physician.

This distance was manifested over time by the son’s experiential peregrinations from Groton to Dublin to La Rochelle to the Levant to Massachusetts Bay to Essex County to Connecticut, and finally to the hinterlands in between New England and New York on the north shore of Long Island Sound, the Mediterranean of the New World. Land hunger and the quest to uncover the Northwest Passage and the philosopher’s stone—or, failing that, mineral wealth in the form of exploitable resources—drove the industrious Winthrop south toward the fertile Hudson and Delaware valleys. That quest included the desire to live on the threshold of New York Colony. The
quietly tolerant, multilingual Winthrop, an avid collector of Fludd’s books, understood that alchemical mastery of the “mixed composition” of participation and communication was essential to mastery of space in the pluralistic middle colonies.

Practice: The Quaker Meetinghouse, Flushing, Long Island (1693–94)

Fludd’s Internal Principles reminds us of the relationship between the younger Winthrop’s natural-philosophical and geographic orientations and his pursuit of the philosopher’s stone through the Long Island Sound–Northwest Passage–middle colonial nexus. Yet this relation is powerfully reinforced by resonances that link geomantic theories of the body and animate matter with core Quaker beliefs and practices. Fludd’s argument for the existence of an “especial light that has dominion over everything else in the body” was also, of course, the central metaphysical claim of seventeenth-century Quaker cosmology. What makes these linkages even more interesting however, is the widespread acceptance of some variation of the bodily light as a common language among a whole range of New World inheritors of the Germanic pietist tradition, including both the southwestern Huguenots and Quakers. Earlier we saw how the humiliating failure of the overt, bombastic style of southeastern Huguenot prophetic discourse forced many French Prophets in London to merge with quietism and some, ultimately, with Quakerism by the 1740s. I also showed how Palissy’s introduction of strategies of natural security—including artisanal discourse—to southwestern Huguenots to function as covert communication and a supplement (or sometimes an alternative) to overt speech and writing, paralleled later Quaker patterns that were developed during the English Civil War.

It must be said that Palissy began to teach mastery of the covert natural style in Saintonge much earlier; indeed, as early as the first French civil wars of religion of the 1560s. Such cross cultural parallels are not coincidental. They lay in the common origin of both Quakerism and the Saintongeais heresy in religious civil warfare and the rustic tradition of Germanic pietism. The potter credited immigrant monastic craftsmen—presumably Lutheran or possibly even Anabaptist refugees from the Germanic regions of central Europe—with initial conversion of French settlements in the isolated marais region of coastal Saintonge during the early sixteenth century. He also showed how the Saintongeais Reformation remained predominantly in the hands of lay preachers from artisanal backgrounds because trained ministers were vulnerable and on the run. Moreover, the Paracelsian movement made rapid progress among dispersed artisans in Saintonge because it was a lay religious as well as a materialist Reformed movement, and because Paracelsus had personal, regional, and intellectual links to Germanic Reformed culture.
The historical significance of Quaker influence on Long Island lies in liminal strategies necessitated by the transatlantic sect’s position among neighboring groups. These strategic patterns should be understood in geographical and theological as well as cultural terms. Quakers settled throughout western and west central Long Island, close enough to Manhattan Island for purposes of commerce, yet still maintaining the social distance required by both the wary Dutch colonial government and the Quakers’ need to acquire arable land to ensure privacy, independence, and expansion. This heterodox territory was a geographical bridge in between the majority northern European “west end” (the western towns in Queens and Kings Counties) and the predominantly Calvinist East Anglian “east end,” with ties to the New Haven Colony (from eastern Queens County through Suffolk County to Montauk Point). The east end was settled by New Englanders from coastal Connecticut, Lynn, Massachusetts, and Plymouth Colony, who migrated south across “permeable” Long Island Sound, beginning in the 1640s. In a very real sense, the Quakers of New Amsterdam and New York had a foot in each camp.

During the period of Dutch Calvinist religious and political authority that lasted until the capitulation of the fortress at New Amsterdam to English forces in 1664, Quaker farmers and craftsmen established new towns in Jericho, Jerusalem, Newtown, and Jamaica. They also attracted followers in the culturally mixed “Dutch” port town of Flushing. Flushing was called “Vlissengen” or “Vlishing” in the seventeenth century. Its Old World namesake had strong commercial and cultural ties to coastal England, Belgium, and France, as it was located on the Wester Schelde trade routes on the far southwestern coast of the Netherlands, directly across the Dover Strait from London and just north of Antwerp and Le Havre (and hence the Seine River Valley). In eastern Queens, Quakers families intermarried and influenced the diverse “English” towns of Oyster Bay and Hempstead. These prosperous towns straddled the fertile Hampstead Plains where they bisected the border with the more homogeneous “Puritan” settlers of Suffolk County.

The largest, wealthiest, most influential, and from Peter Stuyvesant’s authoritarian perspective, most threatening Quaker enclave, was in the town of Flushing. This was also the home of several family dynasties of Quaker craftsmen, more than any other place in the middle colonies with the exception of Philadelphia and Chester County, Pennsylvania. Marriage records and letters of recommendation of good character for new members of the Flushing Meeting show that it was common for Philadelphia and Flushing Quaker artisan families to intermarry. This had the effect of sending craftsmen and their wives back and forth between New York and Pennsylvania throughout the year. The same may be said for land transactions. Quaker merchants from Flushing maintained valuable property holdings in Philadelphia and Chester County. In a late seventeenth-century notation written in his account book, John Bowne, the domi-
nant Flushing Quaker leader, recorded the sale of “my lott in filadelfa w[i]th all my lands [in] Chester County in penselvanie,” to his brother Samuel for £50.  

In 1694, as a sign of the sect’s growing population on Long Island and the place of Queens County at the center of its regional influence, the first Friends’ meetinghouse in New York Colony was built in Flushing. Its latest incarnation still fronts Northern Boulevard (fig. 16.1). In 1696, the first Yearly Meeting in New York was held there. Conventicles gathered in John Bowne’s house (ca. 1661, also still extant) before the meetinghouse was constructed. The use of private homes for secret meetings followed usual Quaker (and sectarian) practice from the English Civil War.

The original contract between the Flushing Yearly Meeting and the house carpen-
ters John Feke and Samuel Andrews (both members of the meeting) is a rare document. It recorded the specific building practices for “strong and Sufficient” ecclesiastical architecture in the plain style acceptable to New York’s Quakers under English rule during the late seventeenth century. It denoted nomenclature for framing and fenestration of the meetinghouse, as well as costs, including diverse modes of payment to the artisans:

it is by ffriends agreed that Samm[uel] Andrews & John ffeakes shall make & sett a strong and Sufficient frame every waye [suitable] and Answerable for the End & use affore s[ai]d [and] they are to have the summe of fifteene p[ounds] which Summ is to bee p[ai]d: in wheate at 4s:6d, pease at 3s:6d, Indian [corn] at 2s:6d, porke at 4s [per pound.] [T]o all w[hi]ch ye: d[ai]d John ffeakes & Sammuell [Andrews] are Contented with and promise they s[hall endeavor] to have it upp for the further fi[ishing by] ye: 30th daye of the first month: [16] 93: It is further agreed that for ye s[ai]d sum Samuel and John shall make: 8: windows [2 on] one side the house, & 2 on the other side &: 2: [in the] ends belowe all made fitte for glasse, together [with] window shutts [that is, “shutters”] & 2 windowes in the Gable ends [with] Shutts likewise they are to make 2 Doors One in one side of itt & the other in ye of[ther side]. Itt is to bee understood both these doors a[re pro]per duble doores with 2: dorment windowes & for making all these they [are] to have 5 [pounds]: mor[e which] makes ye: Sum 20 [pounds].

The building was expanded when a new meetinghouse was built near the old one in 1716 to accommodate women excluded after services from the 1694 structure, because the men took over the space to conduct the business of the meeting. This would enable them to join the men in these discussions—something that was becoming more prevalent in these years—rather than retiring to the Bowne house, as had been the practice for the first twenty-three years of the building’s existence.

Although the Flushing meetinghouse is among the few survivals close to the city of New York of regional architectural still visible above ground, it has been much altered both inside and out. So the contract provides an irreplaceable record of what the 1694 building looked like. The contract describes a fairly modest framed and clapboarded structure. The simple frame had gables at each end, but it was distinguished by the number (eight) and symmetry (two on each side) of its fenestration, which provided much light. It is tempting to link this plan of a plain, well-lit religious space to Quaker natural philosophy. There is however, no proof that extensive fenestration such as this was unique to Quakerism, or New York. Perhaps it indicated nothing more than affluence, as glass was imported and expensive. Still, this practice included the double doors on each side, which were to have frames for two dormer ("dorment") windows set into the top.

Alterations of the original structure began as early as 1704, when the building was
shingled, plastered, and “further repaired.” During most of the eighteenth century, John Farrington and various successors were paid £2 annually to maintain fires in a large medieval hearth in the center of the meeting room. In 1760, this opening was covered up and the meetinghouse heated by an efficient Franklin stove. In 1763, the building underwent its most dramatic (and disfiguring) renovation campaign. Unfortunately for historians of seventeenth-century artisanal practices, the original gallery overhead was removed and a new floor laid, making the building two stories. At the same time, the chamber was divided in two, and one of the rooms was devoted to a Quaker school. In 1776, the building was occupied by British soldiers, who found it useful as a prison, and then a barracks, field hospital, and storehouse. As a result, the New York Yearly Meeting was forced to move from Flushing to Westbury. The meetinghouse sustained enormous damage during the Revolution, when soldiers used every available piece of removable construction material as firewood. In 1783, the building underwent its final major renovation campaign before modern times, as it was rebuilt again after the war. By then little was left of the original Quaker joinery. In 1794, Flushing’s dominance finally ebbed, and the Yearly Meeting was moved to New York City.23

John Bowne’s Network of Quaker Craftsmen: John Feke and Samuel Andrews

The builders of the original meetinghouse, Samuel Andrews and John Feke, were artisans with English backgrounds. And its framed exterior was designed as a modification of vernacular styles common to the late seventeenth-century British regional tradition. In the 1690s, New York City’s and western Long Island’s vernacular woodworking traditions were undergoing a period of intense change under the influence of anglicization as elite patrons began to support “Georgian” architecture and other building practices disseminated in international design books. The meetinghouse plan, with its plain, slightly old-fashioned “English” exterior, probably showed clear symmetry in the placement of windows and doors. This was a local colonial gesture toward the conservative adaptation of the new metropolitan style, a move that made sense in both religious and secular terms.

John Feke, a house carpenter, was the father or uncle of the accomplished portrait painter of aspiring colonial elites Robert Feke (1707–52) of Oyster Bay, Long Island and later Newport, Rhode Island. In 1742, Robert married Eleanor Cozzens, thus tying two Quaker artisan families together across the Sound. John Feke was related by marriage to John Bowne, being a direct descendant of Elizabeth Feke Underhill, Bowne’s influential sister-in-law.24 The Feke (Feake, Feeke) family had its origins in Norfolk, but like many farm families from the English countryside, some members
with artisanal skills migrated to London looking for work and then moved on to the colonies in the seventeenth century.25

John Feke’s name first appears next to “Housecarpenter” in John Bowne’s damaged and nearly illegible account book in 1666, when Bowne contracted his “brother” Feke to build a Norfolk-style thatched barn:

on the 12 day of the month was agreed betwixt us John Bowne and John Feke namely that I John Feke doe undertake to beuld for my brother John Bowne a good strong suffishant barne of 40 fout long [and] 20 fout wide and 9 foot [high?] from the [ ] of the ground to the top of the [ ] all the maine postes to be [ ] full twelffe inches [square] with all the rest of the timber [answerable] a lentwo [lean to] to one side anserable to [torn] to be nine fout wide within and [torn] sides and ends and the lentwo [ ] the [ ] and tolath all the rest of the roufe fit for thatchung and to make all the dores both aloft and [a loe/ that is, “below”] and fit them all to make fast and to lay a good [ ] floure and all the worke that belongs to this building I am to doe finding my owne [timber?] onely my brother [that is, John Bowne] is to cart the timber and [gett] the clabord boult [bolts] and to cleve out [that is, to rive from the bolts] the planks for the flore and to provide help to rayse the house timber [rest torn away, except] . . . of the first mont 1665/6.26

Feke would not have done the thatching, a highly specialized task. The thatcher may have been John Shafton. Shafton was credited by Bowne in 1696, “for thatching the stable,” at a cost of £1.12s.27

John Feke was also the house carpenter Bowne hired when he expanded his original 1661 house to half its present size (fig. 16.2); the addition was to be complete by November 1680. Since Feke was a house carpenter, he was responsible for framing the exterior timbers (or skeleton) of the building, and he was to be assisted by John Clay, a carpenter who added openings to Feke’s frame for the doors, windows, and chimneys. Clay was also to prepare a lath foundation between the great timbers for subsequent carpenters and joiners to add the skin of sheathing, clapboards, and shingles necessary to finish the job and roof the building. Clay, like Feke, was a member of the Flushing Meeting. Bowne had to find a replacement when John Clay died of an unknown malady in February 1680, soon before work began on the addition. His replacement is also unknown. Bowne took charge of Clay’s final days and kept “an account of charges for John Clay In his sicknes and at funerall,” a not insubstantial total of £2.9.1½. This suggests he may have been considered part of Bowne’s household, perhaps an indentured servant, speculation supported by the fact that Bowne bought Clay a pair of shoes in 1680. Clay was constantly at work around the Bowne house and farm until his death, almost always acting as an assistant on major construction jobs.28 Unlike in the case of the barn Feke had built fifteen years earlier, the contract
for the new addition to Bowne’s house specified that Bowne was to be responsible for providing Feke with the framing timbers “[al]redy hughed.” Such heavy materials were cumbersome to transport to the building site from the woods and required the labor of at least two men to dress down (or “hew”) the fallen trees. Hence, the timber was made ready for Feke to finish, cut out, and saw the mortise and tenon joints for the frame. Suitable lumber—oak and hard pine (*Pinus taeda*) common in Long Island architecture—was available locally in Kings and Queens Counties, but it was shipped to New York City by boat from as far away as Staten Island and northern New Jersey. On September 9, 1732, for example, an Irish shipwright named John Blake, then living in the city’s Dockward, was sued for trespass by Edward Stoughton, a sawyer who supplied Blake with wood. Stoughton sued for £13.8.3 “owed to Edward for carrying and transporting plank wood timber trees sticks and other merchandize from New Jersey to New York,” as well as £19 in damages.29 *Hewn* framing timber was thus a major expense, because it represented value added to the already substantial cost of rough sawn wood and transport:

Agreement made with brother John ffekte ye 31th: of ye 11th: month 1680: at foloweth heesis
to frame ye house I intend to build I providing ye: timber redy hughed [hewed] or sawne
hee it to smooth frame and set by Joyning it Suffishantly to the house allredy built. John
of it, [finishing] all framing both for doors windows and chimnis leveing it fit for clabor-
ding and Shingling and [Cobbing?] as it shall require for which I am to pay him six pounds [h]ree in winter wheat and three in [different] good young sheepe at twel\[f\]e shillings a peece at the beginning of winter [that is, with a full coat of marketable wool].

The last appearance Feke makes in Bowne’s accounts before our final encounter with him when he framed the meetinghouse in 1693, took place in June 1684. At that time, Feke presented Bowne with a scrap of paper showing the “rest dew upon balance of acounts,” for finishing the interior of the new addition. Feke did “six days worke towarde the laying of the hous flour,” for which he was paid 18 shillings; and an additional “5 days worke about stayrs [that is, building the staircase] and other worke” (15 shillings). After finishing inside the house, Feke also charged Bowne 3 shillings for mending a spade and 5s. 6d. for “mending a Sadle a panill and making lath [bords].” These entries reveal that in addition to framing houses, Feke was able to supplement his income through joinery (the staircase, mending a panel) as well as other interior finishing work (laying the floors). His record of repair work increased his value to farmers as a jack-of-all-trades specializing in maintenance. The Bowne accounts reveal that Feke commanded 3 shillings a day, a realistic benchmark for skilled artisans in both Flushing and New York City on the eve of the Revocation. When compared with the difficulty French refugees had in gaining a competency in highly competitive European labor markets flooded with refugee labor, including Amsterdam and London, the wages commanded by Feke must have provided a compelling reason for Huguenot woodworkers to come to New York in 1685.

The record is much less forthcoming about Samuel Andrews (Andrew, Andros) than about the house carpenter John Feke. Samuel Andrews was the grandson of an Englishman of uncertain regional origin named Edward Andrews. After a sojourn in Barbados, Edward migrated to Flushing in 1663, to join the Quaker meeting. Bowne knew Edward personally, and his background, through correspondence with Friends in Barbados or Long Island, where newcomers were usually well known by one or more families in the meeting. This was true in Edward’s case. He came to settle in Flushing and join the meeting, to marry Mary Wright of Oyster Bay. He did so immediately, in a Quaker ceremony.

Although Oyster Bay was originally settled in the 1630s, the largest migration of New England sectarians joined the town in 1653. Oyster Bay’s New England connections ran deep, which helps in part to explain its opposition to Stuyvesant’s regime in New Amsterdam. Connections included the intriguing presence, as witnesses at the ceremony, of Captain John Underhill and his wife Elizabeth Feke (John Bowne’s sister-in-law), alongside many members of the Wright family. Of the subversive Underhill and his activities as an agent provocateur on Long Island in the employ of his patron John Winthrop Jr., more will be said later. Suffice it to say here, that the Un-
derhills’ presence as witnesses establishes an early and close connection between the Andrews, Feke, and Bowne families. This suggests that in addition to his famously genocidal mercenary activities against local Amerindian settlements for New England’s land-hungry magistrates and the equally grasping Dutch West India Company, Underhill was, at minimum, a Quaker sympathizer by marriage and ritual and arguably a member of the Society of Friends.

In any case, even if he was not one himself, Underhill took great risks for the Friends. At the height of the prohibition of Quaker conventicles on Long Island, Underhill held secret meetings in his house at Oyster Bay.34 Indeed, by 1663, Underhill had broken with Stuyvesant—a military and political patron—and was now associated with Winthrop (his oldest ally from New England), as well as with John Bowne and his Flushing Quakers. All were the director general’s mortal political and religious enemies. From the start, Roger Williams’s letter to Winthrop of 1660 praising “your prudent and moderate hand in the late Quaker trials amongst us” reflected equal parts Winthrop’s soulishness and his growing interests on western Long Island.35

Soon after Edward’s marriage, a son named Samuel Andrews was born in Flushing. The exact date of birth of his son, who became the meetinghouse carpenter in 1693–94, is not certain. In 1683, the footloose Samuel Andrews Sr. moved his family to New Jersey and then to Charlestown, Massachusetts, where he died a year later. His son, Samuel Andrews Jr., may have stayed behind in Flushing when his father began his travels in 1683. It is possible that he returned home after his father’s death, or he may have remained apprenticed. John Feke was once his master, so perhaps he was then a journeyman. In any event, Samuel Andrews Jr. was in Flushing by 1693, where he worked with John Feke—a member of a family of Quaker artisans with whom he was allied by marriage—to build the meetinghouse.36

Germanicus Andrews—presumably named after the Roman general Germanicus Caesar—was the son either of Samuel Andrews Jr. or another Long Island Andrews of that generation. When he was made a freeman of New York City, on October 12, 1713–14, Germanicus was listed as an “upholsterer,”37 an identification perhaps even more unusual than his classical name. Upholstery was a highly specialized craft, at the apex of the furniture trade—a long way up from house carpentry. Such upward artisanal mobility, assuming that Germanicus was indeed of Samuel Andrews Jr.’s son, would suggest that much more was going on behind the scenes in Flushing and New York than is easily coaxed from the archives.

We have already seen how upholsterers—Huguenot refugees, in particular—oper-
ated as quintessential urban artisans in Britain and colonial America. The year 1707 was most likely the first of the young Quaker’s apprenticeship. To find an upholsterer’s shop and a master, and then test the limited market for his skills in 1714, Germanicus had to abandon Long Island for Boston or New York. Germanicus moved to the city with the intention of upholstering leather chairs made locally by Saintongeais Huguenots in lucrative competition with Boston chair makers. His intention is very easy to know, because from 1707 to 1714, precisely, the leather-chair industry was thriving. It was the only upholstery work available, or known to be sufficiently productive, to draw these specialized artisans to the New York market. Germanicus Andrews thus belonged to a very select group of colonial producers of luxury goods. In the best of times, a relatively limited demand existed, and there was only enough work in town throughout the year to maintain an average of about two such specialists. Between 1701 (when Anthony Chiswell appeared in town) and 1738 (when John Schultz was named a freeman), only seven artisans (including Andrews) were called upholsterers in New York, eight if we include Jean Suire, who was called a joiner but also did upholstery work. Unfortunately, only this terse record of his occupation survives to show any sign of Germanicus Andrews’s progress toward achieving his ambitious goal. The young man died prematurely in 1718, four years after becoming a freeman.38

Sudden death and disappearance plagued this highly skilled group in New York. Of the seven upholsterers who followed the trade in New York during the early eighteenth century, only two Huguenots, Benjamin Faneuil and Richard Lott, managed to survive and maintain themselves. Both families originated in southwestern France. Survival came through a skillful and secretive process of adaptation and innovation, and above all, the war-tested strength of a successful, migrating, regional refugee craft network. The fact of their survival in New York’s limited market likely assured the disappearance (Wenman, Schultz) or diversification out of the trade (Wileman), of those competitors who did not die prematurely (Chiswell, Suire, Andrews).39

Still, given his known family and religious contacts, it is useful to speculate as to who Germanicus Andrews’s master in upholstery was, and what sort of reception he received in 1714 from New York’s existing luxury craft networks. Relationships between Flushing’s artisans and the refugee craftsmen belonging to the southwestern Huguenot community in Manhattan were key. Consider the question of Andrews’s apprenticeship. As a Quaker, he would not have been welcome in Boston to train with the Congregationalist upholsterer Thomas Fitch, owing to the long history of religious violence between the two confessions.

French Calvinists were acceptable in Boston on religious grounds, given the right circumstances. In May 1730, the mother of James Renaudet, a refugee from Saintonge who had settled in New York, wrote Fitch in Boston to inquire if he would take her son on as an apprentice. Fitch replied quickly:
relating to my taking your Son an Apprentice, I’m much oblig’d to you for your good &
charitable opinion therein expressed [and] . . . your . . . desires would be a considerable
inducement if it were consistent with my present circumstances. But . . . having my Son
with me and an apprentice that has several years to Serve It will neither consist with my
convenience nor the Service or advantage of a youth for me now to take another . . . I must
defer to taking another to some considerable time hence.40

Of the master upholsterers available to train Andrews in New York in 1707, only
Wileman, Faneuil, and Lott are known to be possibilities. But if Wileman intended
to maintain his upwardly mobile status at Trinity, it seems doubtful that he would have
risked incurring the disapproval of the anti-sectarian Church of England by taking on
a Quaker apprentice with family connections in Flushing, with its long history of tur-
bulent relations with the established churches in Manhattan. That leaves only the two
Huguenots as possible masters for Germanicus Andrews.

It would have made economic sense, too, for either Faneuil or Lott to have taken
on a new apprentice in 1707 to help manufacture leather chairs, production of which
was expanding rapidly in New York by 1708–9. As we have seen, these Huguenot up-
holstery shops, and the chair makers in their craft network who built frames in imitation of the Boston style, captured the market from Thomas Fitch and other experi-
cenced competitors in New England. When consumer demand was high, production
time was short. If Faneuil or Lott failed to supply an order, Fitch would fill the need.
Thus, in New York City in 1707, leather-chair making became a competitive and very
time-conscious enterprise, and an extra pair of hands would have been welcomed. Yet
market forces alone cannot explain why Andrews himself was selected by one of these
Huguenot upholsterers. Nor can the market tell us what sort of artisan’s world Ger-
manicus prepared to enter in 1714, when he finally went out on his own after the tra-
ditional seven-year training period. Consider that the negotiation of the young Quaker
apprentice’s selection by Faneuil or Lott transpired as part of a process of occupational
and religious diffusion and convergence of economically, spiritually, familially, and eth-
nically related craft networks, made up primarily of Quaker and Huguenot artisans,
and that Andrews’s entrance into this world was already well prepared before he gained
his majority as a freeman.41

Clues to this process of French-Quaker artisanal convergence originate in 1663,
with the marriage of Edward Andrews and Mary Wright, which reflected many reli-
gious, economic, and craft alliances. Such alliances were not simply between the two
principals. In practice, they also spun webs that involved the Feke, Bowne, and Un-
derhill families, as well as corollary relations and, if need be, patrons (such as Win-
throp) and clients. Dutch-period Quaker alliances, although over a generation old by
then, were still very much in place in 1693, when John Bowne selected Samuel An-
drews and John Feke to build the Flushing meetinghouse together. And they were also there in 1707, when the decision was taken to apprentice Germanicus Andrews to one of the two available Huguenot upholsterers. Andrews’s seventeenth-century network of Oyster Bay and Flushing Quaker craftsmen and related families thus expanded into the lucrative urban market for polite luxury goods in the early eighteenth century. The strategic logic of this expansion to Manhattan, which had restricted open Quaker practice to Long Island since Stuyvesant’s time, was to join allied Huguenot-Quaker families in an effort to maintain control of limited skilled labor for production in the trade. Because only two upholstery shops could operate profitably at the same time in New York in the early eighteenth century, control of labor effectively controlled domestic design and production in the local market.

**Commerce and Conversion: The Delaplaine French-Quaker Artisan Network in New York City**

How was the way made for these Quaker families to carry their artisanal skills to New York City from the Manhattan side of the East River during the latter part of the Dutch period? The pattern was established in the personal history of another first-generation Huguenot refugee who sojourned briefly in Holland before settling in New Netherlands: Nicolas de La Plaine (1593–1697). Many skilled descendants of Huguenots became both Quakers and successful woodworkers in New York City, forming a cosmopolitan Huguenot / Long Island Quaker artisanal network, which centered primarily on the Delaplaine family.

Nicolas de La Plaine was born in the Seigneurie de la Grand Plaine, near Bressuire, just north of La Rochelle in Poitou. He migrated indirectly to the American colonies from “Bersweer in Vranckryck,” a way station for war refugees in the Netherlands. On April 14, 1657, Nicolas was living in New Amsterdam, where he was granted the Small Burgher’s Right, and identified as a “tobacco twister” by trade. On September 1, 1658, the sixty-five-year-old tradesman married Susanna Cresson in New Amsterdam’s Dutch Reformed Church. Exactly like her husband, Cresson had followed a typical pattern for pre-1664 Huguenots; she fled initially to Ryswyk, in Holland, before emigration to New Amsterdam. Cresson’s marriage to Nicolas merged substantial assets—clearly a major inducement for the much younger Cresson—inasmuch as Susanna brought a marriage portion of 200 guilders from her father Pierre. When the long-lived Nicolas died in 1697, he was worth an estimated £3,000.42

The origin of the Delaplaine family’s conversion to Quakerism is unclear. “Nicolaes d’la Plyne” was declared a freeman of New Amsterdam on April 13, 1657, the year of the first major influx and persecution of Quakers in Manhattan Island and Long Island.43 The Quaker “Remonstrance of the Inhabitants of the Town of Flushing to
Governor Stuyvesant,” which was written to protest Stuyvesant’s very public persecution of sectarian groups in New Netherlands, appeared later that year (on December 27). It is not known whether Nicolas’s arrival in the colony was timed to coincide with that of the Quakers. We do know that he was married to Susanna Cresson in the Dutch Reformed Church of New Amsterdam in 1658, but this public display of loyalty to the only official confession in the colony may have been the price of doing business in Manhattan, rather than having to remove to the Quaker strongholds at Long Island’s west end.

This hypothesis is supported by evidence that Nicolas was also present at the standard Quaker rituals that marked rites of passage for his children. In the “6th mo., 12, 1686,” for example, when his daughter Elizabeth married Caspar Huet, a New York tailor, in a Quaker ceremony “at the house of Thomas Lloyd, New York,” Nicolas and his wife attended as first witnesses.44 Nicolas may, therefore, have been a Quaker from the start of his residence in the colony, or he may have converted later. That he married twice more during his long lifetime (to Mary “Delaplaine” and Rachel Cresson) may have influenced a later conversion. In any event, by at least 1686 (and probably as early as 1657), the French refugee Nicolas de la Plaine had strong family, religious, and occupational ties to the two important Quaker towns of Flushing and Oyster Bay on western Long Island. If he was converted by the late 1650s, as one suspects, Nicolas would surely have known John Bowne and Edward Andrews of Flushing. He may also have heard George Fox preach at Bowne’s house in 1672—early Quakers were also known as Foxians—and have been fully converted then. If one is certain of de la Plaine’s Quakerism after 1686, then he should have known the house carpenter Samuel Andrews, who built the Friends’ meetinghouse along with John Feke.

The Cresson family that intermarried with the Delaplaines were Walloons, a family that migrated to New Netherlands “from Walslant,” after finding refuge near Mannheim in the German Palatinate. The original name was shortened to two syllables from “Crucheron” (also Crocheron, Crosseron, or Cresseron) to facilitate pronunciation, or perhaps to sound like a typical southwestern French name. The Cresson family were among the first settlers of Staten Island, where the 1706 census shows that more than one-fifth (22 percent) of the 865 inhabitants were either French-speaking Waldenses from the Palatinate—a group with a long history of spiritual enthusiasm—or French Huguenot refugees from La Rochelle or Saintonge.45 French refugees went to Staten Island because of the availability of large tracts of land for flax plantations near navigable waterways. They added value to the flax using their skill in textile manufacture to make linen, an enterprise that found many followers on Long Island as well. Virtually every Huguenot with property on Staten Island grew flax and possessed hatchels and spinning wheels. Many had slaves in their possession and as a result of slave labor, some had large textile operations.46
In the 1650s, a group of Waldenses broke off from the Staten Island contingent and moved north into the Hudson Valley in search of land. Members of this secondary migration were granted lots in the Esopus Creek district in 1653. In 1662, Stuyvesant established an independent fortified town for them on Esopus Creek that he called Wiltwyck (renamed Kingston by the English in 1669).\footnote{Competition for the desirable land along the waterway brought the French refugees into direct conflict with the Esopus Indians, resulting in brutal warfare in 1659 and again in 1663. The settlement expanded first to New Village, later called Hurley,\footnote{and then, in 1677, to New Paltz (“le nouveau palatinat”), fifteen miles south of Kingston by boat on the Wallkill River, which was in due course granted a patent by the English. This was the most homogeneous Huguenot refugee community in New York outside of New Rochelle.} Most settlers at New Rochelle had strong family links with refugees from Aunis-Saintonge who worked in New York City; however, in addition to their close linguistic, religious, and occupational ties to Huguenot families in New York and Staten Island, the settlers of New Paltz also had noteworthy Germanic connections, many having originally fled from Saintonge to the Palatinate. Each town’s New World name thus reveals something of the effect migration patterns had on transatlantic Huguenot cultural allegiance.\footnote{}}

Artifactual Relationships

More revealing, perhaps, is the stylistic relationship between a distinctive group of artifacts long attributed to New York City—specifically to the Delaplaine Huguenot-Quaker craft network—and furniture produced by French craftsmen in the region of human geography that centered on the three main Esopus Creek settlements adjacent to the Hudson River.\footnote{This relationship owes much to the rapid diffusion of the land-hungry craft network, brought to light by the marriage of Nicolas de La Plaine to Susanna Cresson in 1658.} A distinctive group of oval tables ca. 1685–1730 share a variant of the same theatrically turned baroque legs with stacked elements and falling leaves that are supported by heavy lopers (or “draw bars”) drawn from under the table’s frame (figs. 16.3, 16.4a, 16.4b). These tables all have strong histories of ownership in Kingston, Hurley, or New Paltz, where they were made. They also share clear stylistic affinities with another group of tables made in New York City (fig. 16.5). The falling leaves of the New York City group differ only in that they are supported by “gates” (legs that swing from underneath), the usual method commonly found in British woodwork, a concession to...
the city’s anglophile elites. But the theatrically stacked, vessel-shaped turnings, like those on the New York leather chairs, were unmistakably drawn from similar sources in the coastal region of southwestern France.

Look closely at similarities in the stacked structure and rotund articulation of the banister turnings on four related late seventeenth-century staircases that survive on Saint-Martin-de-Ré—also a source for New York leather chairs—and compare them with the turnings on tables from both the Esopus Creek region and New York City. Of the four staircases, the one at the arsenal of the Citadel at Saint-Martin is the best documented and preserved (fig. 16.6). The arsenal was refurbished by Vauban between 1681 and 1685, so it was used in its unrefurbished state by Jean de Toiras when he defended the island against Buckingham in 1627. Still, the resemblance between the banister turnings and the New York tables from roughly the same period is striking. Consider, especially, the tripartite, vertical structure; the identical shape and breadth of the baluster with its compressed ball underneath; the use of the same large flat disc beneath the baluster and a double ring as primary elements of separation; and, though the position is reversed, the idiosyncratic truncated column at the bottom of the post. The distinctive use of lopers (or “draw bars”) in Esopus, has convincing antecedents.

Figure 16.4. (a) Detail of draw bar slide mechanism underneath the top of the table shown in figure 16.3; (b) loper, or “draw bar,” from a similar table from the same or a related shop. Courtesy Chipstone Foundation, Fox Point, Wisconsin. Photo, Gavin Ashworth.
in the French Renaissance. A “table à rallonges coulissantes” (“table with sliding leaves”) made in Paris in the late sixteenth century employed precisely the same peculiar loper system drawn from a stack of parallel tracks hidden underneath the frame (fig. 16.7), as do the Esopus tables, though on the latter they are drawn from the sides.52

Nicolas de La Plaine’s son Joshua Delaplaine made tables exactly like the one in figure 16.5, since these were among the most stylish and expensive furniture forms made in New York City during the early eighteenth century. At that time, Joshua Delaplaine was among several Huguenots who crafted hybrid Anglo-French furniture using the finest workmanship then available in the colonies. Thus Delaplaine’s approximated the best work done in London, where stylish furniture was made under the direction of refugee artisans. The high quality of workmanship and the fact that many of these tables were made of exotic imported materials, including mahogany from Latin America, meant they were purchased by the city’s elite and used in complex rituals of politeness and table talk that centered around exorbitant displays of eating or drinking.

The most opulent survival of this form is a gigantic (h. 29½”; top 71”×78½”) mahogany table, so big that four gates were needed (two on each side) to support the oversized leaves. The need for a stagelike platform of such extraordinary size, at a time
Staircase in the Arsenal of the citadel at Saint-Martin de Ré, Île de Ré, 1681–85. From Inventaire général des monuments et des richesses artistiques de la France, Commission régionale de Poitou-Charentes, Charente-Maritime, Cantons Île de Ré (Paris: Ministère de la culture, Direction du patrimoine, 1979). A typical stacked baluster from the southwest coast of France made during the Revocation era, shows one of the many turning variations available to Huguenot refugee craftsmen that relate to early New York tables.

when dining tables were usually small and light for portability, is explained by the fact that the table was owned by Sir William Johnson (1715–74), New York Colony’s influential commissioner of Indian affairs (fig. 16.8), who presided over this territory, from the portico of a well-equipped Georgian country estate in the wilds of the Mohawk Valley during the long period of imperial warfare. Imagine the financial and political resources the ennobled Johnson required to stock such a grandiose stage with consumables. These included the appropriate accoutrements for dining, slaves (African and Indian) to serve or move things around (including the unusually heavy table), and a set of at least eighteen fashionable leather chairs to surround the table’s vast circumference. Finally, Johnson required the power and prestige to command the presence of a sufficient number of clients worthy to fill them on a consistent basis.

Germanicus Andrews and Joshua Delaplaine

The British Quaker upholsterer Germanicus Andrews may not yet have been born when Nicolas de la Plaine finally died in 1697 at the age of 104. Nicolas was famously old in a city where Huguenot craftsmen mostly died young. Germanicus’s connection to the city’s French Quakers came through the large artisanal network associated with Nicolas’s son Joshua Delaplaine (working 1707, d. ca. 1771), and Edward Burling, Delaplaine’s master. Joshua was a productive joiner of luxury furniture in exotic woods, first recorded in New York in 1707, when he witnessed the will of another New York Quaker, a shopkeeper named William Bickley. Bickley is mentioned in passing in the journal of Thomas Story (1662–1742), an itinerant Quaker preacher from Cumberland in England who found truth in 1689 and eventually traveled to meetings throughout the Atlantic world spreading the gospel. Much of Story’s time was devoted to preaching in fertile territory in Flushing, as well as to the somewhat more resistant listeners in New York City. Yet he seems to have traveled the colonies ceaselessly on horseback between 1699 and 1705. Still, the Long Island Sound region became his main focal point north of Pennsylvania.

Story encountered William Bickley’s son in 1702 on his way to a Meeting in Stratford, Connecticut. “William Bickley (William Bickley’s son of New York),” Story recalled, “who (though gone from the Profession of Truth, in which he had been educated, yet retained a Respect for Friends and Professed no other Religion) came readily to us, and was very kind, and willingly let us have his house for a Meeting-place, and went himself, and also sent his servant about the Town, and invited the People.” William Bickley Jr. was typical of many of the people Story encountered in the Long Island Sound region who had never been—or were no longer—members of the society of Friends but remained in general sympathy with Quaker principles. Many, like Bickley, were former Quakers who still attended meetings from time to time. Others,
as we shall see, were members of other sects that sought a religious or philosophical
dialogue with Quakers; still others were nominally members of dominant religions,
such as Calvinism.

Calvinists in this region engaged in diverse and wide-ranging varieties of Protes-
tant practices. A number were internationalistic, heterodox, and often pietistic. Many
New York artisans were in this category, particularly those such as Andrews and De-
laplaine, who were members of the Huguenot-Quaker craft network. Those who at-
tended Quaker meetings in the Long Island Sound region should therefore be under-
stood as having occupied a very broad spectrum of religious belief. If religiosity was
deeply felt among the sects and heterodox Calvinists and Lutherans who attended
meetings, along with the many Presbyterians who were almost always present, formal
confessional connections seem to have been far less important than the quest for in-
tensity and variety of spiritual experience.

Master and Apprentice

The year 1707 was the first of Germanicus Andrew’s apprenticeship in the Faneuil or
Lott shop. Joshua Delaplaine’s apprenticeship records and his account book survive,
so we know more about Delaplaine than most contemporary artisans in New York. We
know, for example, that his own master and later the choice of his shop apprentices
reflected almost precisely the hybrid, “mixed composition” of Delaplaine’s New York
French-Quaker worldview and craft network. Inasmuch as Nicolas was a tobacco
twister, Joshua must have been apprenticed in the early eighteenth century to a joiner,
although no indenture of apprenticeship survives. However, the earliest references in
the Delaplaine accounts show him engaged in numerous shop transactions with Burl-
ing, a Quaker joiner with strong family ties to Long Island.

Two transactions in particular from the 1720s have an almost primordial quality.
They suggest the ways in which Burling, as an extension of his former role as De-
laplaine’s master, traded goods for labor with the newly freed apprentice to ease the
transition for himself and, in the process, also help set up a young artisan’s shop. The
first account, which runs from 1721 until 1727, shows Joshua Delaplaine in debt to Burl-
ing for a total of £65.5.7½ worth of the basic tools of the trade. The very first entry
recorded “a tenant saw” worth 6 shillings. Burling subsequently provided Delaplaine
with over fifty basic items, mostly tools and other equipment. These items included “a
file and firmer . . . a hammer auger and pr of compass . . . 2 lb of nails . . . a file . . .
some small nails . . . 8 chest lockes . . . 2 thous[an]d brads . . . 3 pr of chest hinges . . .
1 doz Screwers . . . 1 doz [cupboard?] locks . . . some Coffin handles . . . 6 Setts of bed
screws . . . a cask of nails [worth £11.1.4] . . . 2 doz draps [imported brass “drop” handles
for drawers] and [1] doz Scutches [imported brass “escutcheons”: engraved cutout faceplates for lock holes or backing plates for handles].

Year by year, Burling credited Delaplaine in full in exchange for joinery work on items of furniture as well as for work on three ships in port: the Samuel, Oxford, and Essex. These accounts seem almost interchangeable. For example, the credit lines read: “work and Stuf to the Ship Samuel . . . a table . . . a table . . . 1 ditto . . . work to ye Samuel . . . 3 chest drawer locks returned . . . Cash for ye 2 mehoginy boards . . . 34 candle boxes and other work . . . a table . . . acct to ye Oxford . . . 2 tables . . . [and] work to ye Essex.” Thus, Burling was able to maintain a measure of control over Delaplaine’s valuable labor by extending his former apprentice credit, as Delaplaine went into debt to set up shop on his own account. This accommodation between the two artisans continued from 1728 until 1743, a total of eleven years. During this latter period, Delaplaine owed Burling £31.7.3 for more hardware and tools. Delaplaine made “6 oak Spars [for masts] . . . a box . . . a table for John Burling [Edward’s second son, born on August 9, 1703] . . . a Chest of drawers [at an astonishing value of £11.10s., signifying both exotic woods and an enormous amount of labor] . . . [and] a tea table,” in exchange for credit.

Clearly, Burling had a financial interest in the three ships. By 1736, he was no longer identified as a joiner, but rather as a merchant and freeholder of New York City. As early as 1728, Burling had already branched out considerably. He began to advertise real estate for sale in the New York Gazette. And due to his shipping interests, this ambitious Quaker quickly diversified into the trade in enslaved Africans, active among urban artisans in the busy East and Dock Wards. In 1731, Burling posted an advertisement in the Gazette offering for sale a “Negro man and two Negro Women and a Child.” Consignments of human cargo moved quickly in New York’s heated market in enslaved Africans, with its strong connections to the West Indian trade.

On June 11, 1737, in his upwardly mobile capacity, typical of successful artisans in colonial New York, Edward Burling joined a group of petitioners to the Common Council from the East Ward, a neighborhood where “men engaged in sea-oriented pursuits frequently dwelled.” They succeeded in their petition to purchase water lots facing their properties on Van Cleeft’s Slip. This was an effort by rising artisans and merchants to accommodate new shipping on their street and to facilitate the repair and refitting of boats. Hence, Burling Slip once faced his house. Much more interesting to historians of New World artisans and material culture is the universal interchangeability of Delaplaine’s joinery skills. He moved easily between high-style domestic furniture in the luxury trades and the heavy lifting of maritime woodworking. Indeed, if Delaplaine had not been credited with the fabrication of “6 oak Spars,” one would assume he merely worked on the finish of a ship’s interior. Such flexibility and adaptation was unheard of in the guilds of La Rochelle, from which, in any event, overt
Huguenots had been expelled in 1628. Still, overlapping woodworking skills were common enough in coastal Saintonge.

For Joshua Delaplaine, if such skills were commonly adapted to domestic woodworking, then the presence in New York by the late seventeenth century of the Saintonge-dominated “French Ship Yard” (fig. 16.9) was a significant factor in both the concentration and the success of Huguenots in the city’s luxury trades. Being skilled in two related trades, in which large amounts of capital were available, and able to follow them more or less simultaneously, as Delaplaine did, provided the security of constant work and the potential for supplementation when demand for labor in either sector slacked. From the perspective of the survival of the constantly ramifying
Huguenot craft networks, “mixed” duty also allowed kinship groups living on both sides of the East River to overlap and expand. This practice helped Huguenot-Quaker networks to further consolidate control over demand for highly skilled woodworkers through intermarriage, thus greatly extending the influence of a core group of related refugee families in the city and on western Long Island.

Hybrid Joinery Techniques

Crossover phenomena among Saintongeais and related woodworkers in New York help explain the presence of hybrid local joinery techniques in some of the colony’s refined early furniture. I am thinking here especially of the widespread use in furniture made along waterways of face-grain plugs to cover countersunk nail holes. This construction method is unique to the Long Island and upper New Jersey area. Perhaps it provided a smooth surface for finishes. Yet its use is not notable in the work of craftsmen from other regions, where exposed nails are commonly painted over. One might speculate that such plugs may have been adapted on Long Island from shipwright joints. Both nail holes and pins are known to have been concealed on wooden ships—northern European *bateaux* in particular—to keep hundreds of wood joints watertight and protect wrought-iron nails from corrosion.62

Hybridization was essential to development of shipbuilding in an era of expanding international trade, when a huge premium was placed on ship speed and adaptability to changing coastal contexts. Every busy early modern Atlantic port hosted ships made by all the major maritime powers, docked alongside colonial products. Local builders were thereby provided with a manual encyclopedia of international shipbuilding techniques. Ships’ crews and carpenters were gathered from all available nationalities, and most competent shipwrights had an expansive and eclectic worldview. “The Dutch would have had no hesitancy in borrowing from the French,” one historian of American colonial shipbuilding has observed, “or the French from the Dutch, or the British from both. Boat design is most certainly a mixing process of elements taken from many varied sources, both ancient and contemporary.”63 This cosmopolitan and improvisational theory of practice—long a hallmark of southwestern Huguenot artisanry—was fundamental to the crossover shop culture of the Burling-Delaplaine craft network.

The Burling Family of Long Island and New York City

Edward Burling was born into an English Quaker family on November 4, 1674 (d. New York City, May 1749). He and two young siblings (Grace, b. October 29, 1676, and...
William, b. December 26, 1678) emigrated to Flushing with their parents, Grace and Edward Burling Sr., as a family. They joined the Meeting in 1680, establishing close networking bonds, especially with community leaders. That same year, John Bowne’s account book records that he “Reckened with Edward Burling ye 29th of ye first mont 1680: 8t and [rest] due to him six bushels Indian corn or else one barrill of Sie=der[,] which[ever] he [pleseth].” The Edward Burlings were soon joined in Flushing by other members of their clan. The wheelwrights John Burling and Elias Burling were close relations (perhaps brothers) of Edward Burling Sr. Becoming members of the Flushing meeting, they were immediately established under John Bowne’s patronage. Both newcomers were credited with wheelwright’s work done for Bowne in 1681 in exchange for “Indian corn and cyder.” By 1687, Elias Burling was also doing wheelwright’s work for other Quakers on Bowne’s account.

Meanwhile, Edward Burling Sr. had left Flushing, and he was declared a freeman of New York City on October 1, 1683, without the usual reference to occupation. This is a curious omission, but since every male Burling was in the woodworking trades, it is likely that he was too. Despite this sojourn in New York—how long he stayed is unknown—the elder Burling returned to Flushing, where he took up his last residence. He died there in August 1697. In the end, it was Edward Burling Jr. who found a way to reside permanently in the city. Transience was more or less commonplace for opportunistic Quaker craftsmen advantaged by strong artisanal networks and close proximity to waterways.

John Bowne and the Burlings

An intriguing notation was recorded as part of the transaction of 1681. Elias Burling paid John Bowne threepence for an unidentified “booke.” Bowne sold the same book to a number of other artisans that year. Although the author is uncertain, imported books were consigned to Bowne by the colonial printer and publisher William Bradford, who commissioned Bowne as his agent to sell a stock of titles on Long Island.

Bradford began his career as a Quaker but was passionately estranged from the sect in the early eighteenth century, when he published polemical pamphlets against sectarianism for the Church of England faction in New York City. In 1702, in his role as a polemicist, Bradford attacked the English Quaker preacher Samuel Bownas for heresy on Long Island. As for the uncertain identity of Bradford’s authors in 1681, George Fox (1624–91) preached at Bowne’s house in 1672, so the Quaker theologian’s books would have found a ready market in Flushing. A stronger possibility, however, is William Penn (1644–1718), Bowne’s friend and business partner. Penn’s Brief Account of the Province of Pennsylvania was published in London in 1681; his Brief Account of the Province of East-Jersey followed from the same publishing house the next year. Both
books were of enormous interest to land-hungry Quakers in Flushing. They supplied valuable “information of all such persons who are or may be inclined to settle themselves, families and servants in that country.” John Bowne himself acquired considerable property in both Philadelphia and Chester County before 1690. Doubtless he profited handsomely from commissions on land sales in Pennsylvania to resettled Long Island Quakers.

Permeable Boundaries

It is clear that by 1696, the year after John Bowne’s death, Edward Burling Jr. had done substantial joinery work for him in Flushing. In April of that year, Samuel Bowne, John’s son, settled accounts with Burling for £6. Cash was “taken out of ye stock and ped [paid] to friends [Quakers] as [I] find was dew by ye book from my father.” On June 11, 1700, Edward Burling was called a carpenter, when he married Phebe Ferris (fferris), in a Quaker ceremony. Phebe was the daughter of John Ferris (d. 1715) and Mary (West) Ferris (d. 1704). She was the granddaughter of Jeffrey Ferris (1610–66), an Englishman who immigrated to Boston from Leicestershire in 1635. Ferris was named a freeman at Watertown, Massachusetts. By 1636, he had gone in search of land to Wethersfield, Connecticut.

Land hunger is the common theme among New England Quakers who migrated to Oyster Bay (Underhill and Feke), Flushing (Bowne and Andrews), coastal Connecticut, and Westchester (Ferris). Sometime before July 1640, Jeffrey Ferris acquired land in Greenwich using Robert Feke (the artist brother of John Feke, the Flushing house carpenter) as his agent in the transaction. Given these rapid southerly migrations and this early connection to the Feke family, it is unsurprising that Ferris appeared next in New Netherlands, where in 1657, he signed an oath of submission to the Dutch in Stuyvesant’s presence. The director-general was deeply suspicious of Ferris’s regional background and ethnicity. With an inkling of his Quaker leanings, Stuyvesant also appended the proviso: “so long as we shall live in this jurisdiction”; both a threat and an invitation to leave. Perhaps Ferris found these terms too restrictive, as next year he sailed back across the Sound to Greenwich. After the death of his second wife in 1660, Jeffrey Ferris married Judith Feke and acquired more land in the Greenwich area near Westchester. This growing network of acquisitive Quaker artisans strengthened occupational, economic, and religious ties between the Ferris and Feke families of coastal Connecticut, Westchester, and Flushing. Through the Fekes, the Ferris family was allied to the powerful Bownes and the dangerous, even more land-hungry Underhill.

John Ferris was a carpenter and originally a member of the Flushing meeting. Soon after 1664 (and the removal of the Dutch), Ferris took advantage of an Anglo-French
land grab of former Dutch claims in the lower Hudson Valley. He migrated up the
Sound just west of Thomas Pell’s newly awarded patent. There, Ferris joined four other
Quakers in settling Westchester Town, acquired in 1668, in a grant of former West In-
dia Company land from Governor Richard Nicolls. By 1670, Ferris and his fellow
grantees expanded the town and set out new lots for a growing influx of settlers. Fer-
ris also profited by building houses and furniture for them. Growth only increased the
local Quaker oligarchy’s appetite for further land acquisition.

Land expansion also meant expanded Quaker influence. Ferris stayed in constant
contact with his former community, as New York Quakers traveled freely between
Westchester Town and western Long Island. Intermarriage was common between
these communities and Friends settlements in Rhode Island as well. A sense of this
extreme mobility, with Flushing—and the Bowne family—situated at the nexus of
travel, and the speed and efficiency with which Quakers could penetrate the entire per-
meable Sound region in small watercraft is clearly demonstrated by a packed itinerary
noted in the journal of Thomas Story. In 1699, having just completed a Meeting in
Oyster Bay, Story “went with Samuel Bowne and his wife to Flushing”:

where we had a glorious Meeting next day; and, the Day after, had a pretty large meeting
in Jamaica, about four miles from Thence; and that Evening, we return’d to Flushing. . . .
The next Day I went over the Sound, accompanied by several Friends, to West Chester;
and the Day following, being the First of the Week, had a large Open meeting there,
many Friends coming from Long-Island, and Abundance of People from all Quarters
round. . . . The People were very still, and many affected with the Testimony of Truth.
After the Meeting we returned over the Sound in a canoe.74

And, in 1702, after an unusually “comfortable” Meeting in hostile New York City,
Story:

then took [a] Boat back for Flushing, about 16 miles by water, and lodged with Samuel
Bowne; and on the 26th, we had a meeting at West Chester, over the Sound, and returned
to Samuel Bowne’s in the Evening; on the 27th, were at their week-day meeting at Flush-
ing . . . and then, accompanied with many Friends, we went over the Plains to Westbury,
to a Quarterly Meeting, where we had good Service . . . the next [day] being the First of
the Week, the Lord gave us a glorious Meeting in his Presence, in a new Meeting-house
fitted up on that Occasion, and many Hundreds of Friends, and abundance of Other
People were there, and generally satisfied, many things of Importance in Religion being
clearly opened by the Wisdom and Power of Truth that Day.75

Note the careful, but still fluid, distinction that Story makes between Friends and
“Other People” (or simply, “The People”). From Story’s perspective, this marked the
temporary boundary between Friends and the many others who almost always at-
tended meetings in New York. Though there were important doctrinal differences among them, the nature of the give-and-take at these meetings indicated that for Story and his audience, the Quakers and heterodox “other people” communicated across diverse confessions using common pious languages derived from perceptions of the presence of the animated soul. That is one reason why so many other sectarians attended these extraordinarily heterodox meetings. All were seekers of common ground on the basis of their shared understanding of potential for “mixing” within a universal soul.76

To supply land to accommodate this population influx, Ferris engaged in nasty boundary disputes with neighbors in Eastchester and Fordham, as the men from Westchester Town tried to extend their original grant to encompass adjacent claims. During this period, Ferris continued to nurture old alliances on Long Island, which he exploited to broker advantageous settlements. To curry favor and gain political support for expansion, he also forged alliances in the city. A leading Huguenot Leislerian, Nicolas Bayard, was asked to arbitrate disputes, and Ferris used leverage to acquire Bayard’s patronage. Edward Burling, a producer of elite goods in the city with strong ties to the pre-1685 Huguenot community through the Delaplaine craft network may have had direct influence with Bayard, whose public disgrace and trial did not occur until 1702. The Leislerians had strong economic and cultural interests in Westchester and would have been sympathetic to families with French connections. Jacob Leisler had powerful ties with New York’s Huguenot community. His father was Jacob Victorian Leisler, a French Reformed minister in Frankfurt am Main, so Jacob the Younger spoke French and German interchangeably and shared a strong internationalist religious perspective with New York’s French refugee community. Indeed, it was Jacob who organized the settlement at New Rochelle between 1687 and 1689, and made certain it was named after La Rochelle.77 But Burling knew others in the Dock Ward whose patronage would prove very useful in Westchester, as it did in Flushing.

Burling married into a clan of aggressively expansive Quaker artisans, solidified by the establishment of networks of old family ties between Europe, southern coastal New England, Westchester, New Netherlands, and western Long Island. As in the case of the Ferris-Burling alliance, marriage was a good way to solidify holdings in Westchester, western Long Island, and New York City.78 Successful establishment of this migrating network based on transatlantic ties, the universality of soulish religiosity and communication, acquisition of land, and dissemination of artisanal skill made Phebe Ferris an appropriate match for Edward Burling’s ambitions. At the same time, Burling’s family history, occupation, and geographic situation assured his ability to act as a broker between Westchester Town, Flushing, and New York. But the use of New York patronage for rural land acquisition was not the only reason for Burling to exploit his role as broker. The prospect of the expansion of an essentially rural artisanal network into the capital-rich city was equally attractive to Burling’s in-laws. Jeffrey Fer-
ris tried without success to gain a foothold in the city over a generation earlier (again, in 1657), under the suspicious eyes of the passionately antisectarian Stuyvesant. This path was ultimately laid out for Germanicus Andrews to take under English rule in the early eighteenth century.

Quaker-Huguenot Apprenticeship Ties: Extensions of Artisanal Security to New York City

Delaplaine’s indenture of apprenticeship to Edward Burling is not extant. If Delaplaine set up shop in 1718 (the date he took on his first apprentice), he started his apprenticeship anywhere from 1711 to 1714. There is a lacuna in the records for this period, but Burling’s indentures are available for the years 1694 to 1707 and again from 1718 to 1727, so records of indenture for five other apprentices in Burling’s service do survive and are instructive.

Very little is known about Thomas Sutton and Richard Berry. On June 1700 and February 1705, respectively, these two artisans with English backgrounds were the first apprentices Burling recorded in the presence of Robert Lurting, a city alderman. Sutton was eighteen years of age—old for an apprentice—and for that reason he was only expected to serve three years (rather than the usual six or seven), whereafter he was to receive “a good Sett of Carpenters Tools.” Sutton also expected that his master “shall learn him to write Read & Cypher.”79 Other than his apprenticeship record, nothing more is available for Thomas Sutton. His religious affiliation is thus unclear, but he was probably connected with the Flushing Quaker network. Much the same may be said of Richard Berry, although we do know he was declared a “joyner” and a freeman of the city on September 7, 1725. It would be interesting to learn how (and where) Berry spent the fourteen-year-long interval, after his six-year apprenticeship expired.80

The Flushing connection was made perfectly clear on 8 February 1705, when the next apprenticeship recorded: the “indenture of Benjamin Burling, aged 16 years, with the consent of his mother to his brother, Edward Burling, joyner, for four years, from February 1st.”81 Sadly, like Germanicus Andrews, his close contemporary and co-religionist, Benjamin Burling died just four years later.82 But even as the joiner Edward Burling rose in status to merchant and slave trader in New York City, while Edward’s son James (b. 1701) added the rank of attorney as well,83 Edward’s grandson Thomas Burling (active 1769–97) remained an artisan and maintained the strong Flushing craft connections of his father, grandfather, and uncles before him. Again, the Bowne family is at the hub of the record. The cabinetmaker Thomas Burling was declared a freeman of New York City in 1769. Not long afterward, Thomas produced a small mahogany table, under the top of which he placed a label: “Made and sold by Thomas B[u]rling, in Chappel Street, [New York].” This meant that the table was
probably made as venture cargo, or to be shipped out of town. Indeed, Burling sold
the table to another Flushing Quaker, a descendant of John Bowne, and it remains in
the collection at the Bowne House.84

The final two apprenticeships Edward Burling recorded are particularly interest-
ing, given what we now know about his working relationship with Joshua Delaplaine.
On October 8, 1707, Burling engaged his first Huguenot apprentice before Delaplaine’s
indenture in 1714, “John Vignoud Tillou, aged 15 years, with the consent of his mother,”
apprenticed, “to Edward Burling, Joyner, from November 6th, 1706, for five years.”
Young Tillou’s indenture follows the conventional form, except that it lacks the usual
reference to remedial education. Unlike the terms of Thomas Sutton’s indenture, this
apprentice was to be taught “to read write & Cypher English [emphasis added].” This
is an intriguing alteration. Tillou could write. He signed his full name in its French
form, Jean Vignau Tillou. The indenture implied, however, that Edward Burling (or
someone in his household) understood French well enough to teach an already liter-
ate Huguenot apprentice to read and write in English.85 Because of his mercantile in-
terest in shipping and shipbuilding, it would not be unusual for Burling to converse in
French, since many New York shipwrights, like Joshua Delaplaine, were Huguenot.

Indeed, the shipbuilding trades ran deep in the family of John Vigneau Tillou. He
was the grandson of Pierre Tillou, who had fled from persecution in the old ship-
building town of Saint-Nazaire, a short sloop trip of seventy-five miles up the Atlantic
coast from La Rochelle, in 1681 and was naturalized in England on March 21, 1682.
Pierre first appeared in New York in 1691, where he declared himself a French refugee
and asked for protection and rights of citizenship. His son Vincent joined forces with
another Huguenot family, of which little is known, when he married Elizabeth Vi-
gneau. Before 1709, possibly about the same time that his son John was apprenticed to
Burling, Vincent died, leaving another son, also Vincent, along with three daughters.86

Vincent was a favored Christian name for sons in the Tillou family. But it was also
the surname of a prominent family of New York craftsmen, indicating strong connec-
tions between the Tillous and the Vincents. Two Huguenots witnessed the appren-
ticeship of John Tillou to Edward Burling: François Vincent and Benjamin d’Harri-
ette. Both were artisans in the maritime trades with strong family ties to La Rochelle
and Soubise in Saintonge. Vincent family members were seen working as block mak-
ers, sail makers, and coopers everywhere in New York’s French shipyard. Moreover,
they were allied during the eighteenth century with the upholsterer and merchant Ben-
jamin Faneuil, their fellow émigré from La Rochelle and one of two masters available
to Germanicus Andrews in 1707. Indeed, François Vincent signed the broadside in de-
fense of Faneuil’s loyalty to New York in 1708.

One of the few times a Vincent was recorded in a transaction outside the maritime
trades was in making upholstery materials. John Vincent Jr. of New York City, was
called a “leather dresser.” Vincent père was a cooper. In addition to shoe and saddle leather, John Vincent also dressed leather for upholstery. Faneuil and Lott were principal customers in this limited market. More typically in this family, when declared a freeman of New York on August 9, 1698, “Francis” Vincent was called a “saylemaker.”

Vincent died in 1732, but his inventory was not probated until 1734, owing to the demands of his creditors. When the estate was settled, it was worth a substantial £1,700.

In order to settle the estate however, Vincent’s three Huguenot executors—Ann Gilbert, John Dupuy, and the silver- and coppersmith Joseph Leddell (whose work we see in figs. 17.1 and 17.3)—posted an advertisement in the weekly New York Gazette for March 13 to March 20, 1732:

All Persons that have any Demands on the Estate of Mr. Francis Vincent, late of the City of New-York, Sail-Maker, deceased, are to give notice of the same unto John Dupue or Joseph Leddell, Executors, or to Mrs. Ann Gilbert, Executrix to the said Estate, in order to receive Satisfaction. Also notice is hereby given that the Dwelling House of the said Francis Vincent, situate on the West Side of Broad-Street, near the Long-bridge, is to be sold, together with two young Negro Men, both good Sail-makers, and sundry Sorts of Household Goods. Those that incline to purchase the same, or any part thereof, may apply to the above mentioned Executors.

The success of François (or Francis) Vincent in the sail maker’s trade was manifested not only in the size of his estate and its extensive list of creditors, but also by evidence that he owned at least two African slaves trained in his craft. These two slaves were among the most valuable commodities at the vendue of Vincent’s household possessions in 1732. This corresponds with abundant evidence of large numbers of slaves skilled in the maritime trades at work on the docks in eighteenth-century Philadelphia, Richmond, and Charleston. Not only did Vincent’s slaves provide scarce skilled labor on those projects in which he had a personal stake, but they could be hired out to other New York artisans at high rates for day-to-day work on their projects during Vincent’s own time, providing added income. The shorter the term, the higher the rate of return for slaves’ labor. Most “other artisans” who hired from Vincent were usually linked to the Huguenot-Quaker network, whose members gained further competitive advantage by having available a familiar and reliable source of skilled slave labor. Certainly, Vincent could expect a similar arrangement in exchange from other members of the network if he needed to hire additional temporary help to complete a big project. The artisans’ business practice of hiring skilled slave labor at the docks was absolutely necessary for the success of the network. A group of Charleston master shipwrights, many of them French refugees, defended everyday use of skilled slave labor against fears expressed by less successful white artisans of black economic competition. The masters pointed out that “his Majesty’s ships have been repaired and
refitted only by the assistance of Our slaves, And . . . without these slaves the worst consequences might ensue.”92

The Vincents undertook ambitious civic projects for the city down at Dock Ward. Because of the capital they commanded for such work, ownership of skilled slave artisans to labor in the maritime trades and add profit from the business of hiring out was the norm. It was folly to waste valuable time and energy of skilled slaves on the heavy, unskilled labor for which such civic projects involving maritime woodworking were known. This could be handled by younger family members, unskilled white laborers, and, ideally, large gangs of unskilled slaves gathered precisely for such tasks. Slave gangs were often shipped in from plantation populations in Brooklyn, the Hudson Valley, and Staten Island.93

It was commonplace for unskilled slave laborers to ship down the Hudson River to Manhattan, a practice followed constantly by the planter Frederick Philips, one of New York colony’s most active slave traders. Philips’s boatman Diamond, one of several slaves implicated in the conspiracy of 1712, made the trip south piloting his master’s sloop at least once a week. He carried individuals back and forth from the community of forty-eight slaves at Philips’s flour mill in Tarrytown, which specialized in making hard tack for New York shipping. Most slaves ferried by Diamond went to work at Philips’s warehouse in New York. Philips profited from hiring out both skilled and unskilled slaves.94

In 1736, for example, it was necessary to gather large gangs of unskilled slave labor from a source such as Philips to do heavy work for Wynant “van Zandt,” a batavianized “Vincent Vincent.” A master turner and a maritime block maker, Wynant worked alongside several family members (represented by the city as “Messrs Van Zandt”), when he was awarded an enormous city contract worth £4,137.11. Wynant, head of the Vincent–Van Zandt clan after the death of François, was paid in cash by the Common Council: “on account of the Expense of Improvements at the Battery . . . [the] Corporation Dock . . . [and the] Warren Street Bulkhead.”95 That year, the same prosperous Wynant Van Zandt joined forces with Edward Burling, his Quaker neighbor and another ambitious, upwardly mobile woodworking artisan, in a successful petition to the Common Council to acquire those valuable water lots facing Van Cleef’s Slip. Perhaps it was Edward Burling himself who sold Francis Vincent the two enslaved sail makers.96

This suggests that when John Vigneau Tillou signed an indenture of apprenticeship to the Edward Burling in 1706, he helped establish an alternating pattern of interchangeable and overlapping trades in shipbuilding and luxury woodworking that his fellow Huguenot Joshua Delaplaine followed when he joined the Quaker Burling’s francophone shop. After Tillou’s apprenticeship ended in 1711, he maintained this pattern with his former master. On January 9, 1718, Edward Burling registered his final
and most unusual apprentice. In this instance, the witnesses were “John Tillou,” and a Danish carpenter, block maker, and turner named Simon Breeste (Bresteade). 97

This apprenticeship was unusual because it represents the only known female apprentice registered by a woodworking artisan in colonial New York City. The indenture was for Mary Mariot, another Huguenot, “aged about eleven years, with the consent of her Mother, to Edward Burling, Joyner, for seven years, from December 1st.” 98

The language of the contract, also fairly unique, was extremely generous and included furniture often associated with dowries:

the said Master during the Said Term Shall find and provide unto the Said Apprentice sufficient Meat, Drink, Apparel, Lodging and Washing fitting for an Apprentice, and at the Expiration of Said Term Shall give unto her a New Suit of Apparel both Woolen and Linen, besides her Common Wearing Apparel, and a New Cubboard worth three pounds and a Chest worth fifteen shillings and also three pounds in Money. 99

Mary Mariot was promised no joiner’s tools because, although her trade was not specified, she was not apprenticed as a woodworker. Women were not commonly associated with woodworking artisans in Europe unless they were involved with the cutting and application of textiles. Diderot shows women working alongside men in French upholstery shops, fitting covers to chair frames. Because Burling was not known to be an upholsterer but did build and repair boats, and since Mary Mariot was a French refugee accompanied by two witnesses who were shipwrights as well as furniture makers, it is logical to assume she apprenticed as a sail maker. By the time Delaplaine set up shop on his own in 1718, while continuing to work eleven years for Burling on credit, this pattern of Quaker-Huguenot artisanal communication and exchange was well established among craftsmen in the port and, based on the personnel in the Delaplaine shop, in Flushing as well.

While Burling may have indentured more than the six apprentices attributed to his shop, Joshua Delaplaine trained four known apprentices. Like Burling’s six, however, these artisans were a mixture of English and French Quakers. When Delaplaine set up shop in early 1718, his first apprentice joiner was a Quaker with British antecedents named Francis Warne, whom he indentured for a period of eight years. 100 Not much is known about Warne’s life in New York, except that he was made a freeman of the city on June 29, 1731. 101 The reason for his obscurity was Warne’s decision to leave New York to test his skill in the West Indies. Unfortunately, like many colonists in Kingstown, Jamaica, he fell ill. Warne left his wife and sons behind, and they became the subject of a remarkable letter “to Joshua Delaplaine Joyner in New York,” his former master whom he now addressed by the Quaker honorific, “Respected Friend.” “I make bold . . . by this opportunity,” Warne wrote on April 26, 1740, “to let thee hear
that through the mercy of the Lord I am in a very likely way of getting of my health at ye last”:

I have had nothing but sorrow trouble and Sickness; as for hardship I have had my Share since I left New York but through the mercy of God I now begin to get a little health, tho I can safely say, I never enjoyed 2 weeks health since I left home. I Desire thee and thy wife will please to accept a pot of tammarins [tamarind] which I send by the bearer. it is but of a small value, stil I hope smal as it is I hope thee wil accept it. I wish I was able I would send more. I have got to work and hope I shall do wel at Last. if I can but get my health as I am in hopes I shal I should be very willing to come home but am very loth to come naked. it has cost me a great deal of money for to pay charges for sickness. I desire thee to advise my wife to put my sons to a good master and let her bind them out. I shall be very willing to it and hope to be at home next spring tho I shal be no ways wanting to do my best endeavor for my wife and children. I desire thee to advise her and tel her to make her self easy a little longer. I desire thee to be remembered to thy wife and Family and al Friends. I Rest thy Loveing Friend and old apprentice, Francis Warne.¹⁰³

We do not know whether Warne survived his illness, or if he ever returned home to New York City. No evidence has been found that his sons were bound out to other joiners, or which of Warne’s “Loveing Friends”—French or English—may have been their masters. Still, it is a measure of Warne’s confidence in Delaplaine and the strength, reach, and memory of this Quaker-Huguenot network that in a time of personal danger, Warne turned to his old master to advise his wife to bind their sons out within the network. Warne’s children would follow a strategy intended to reduce risk of failure and dependency and increase the chance of competence and security as skilled artisans. Warne’s letter is poignant, both in the great regret he expresses over his decision to follow the path of artisanal transience—“to do wel,” he left the relative security of New York and ran the very real risk of tropical disease in the West Indies—but also in its implication that in his absence, his sons had become vulnerable. These boys would not leave the shop floor and manual labor to rise to the status of merchant on the firm foundation of their father’s work. Warne asked, in effect, that arrangements be made that his sons ensure his continuity (and theirs) by taking up his tools and resuming the artisan’s interrupted life at “home” with “friends.” Perhaps the next generation would achieve the lofty goals aimed at in his journey to Jamaica. Warne asked his “Loveing Friend” and Huguenot master to become surrogate father to his children. The powerful Quaker-Huguenot craft network was their best hope of an artisan’s education, and hence employment and protection from the outside world.

Not all Delaplaine’s apprentices felt as warmly about their master as Warne. The next Quaker apprentice to work at the bench Warne had formerly occupied in De-
laplaine’s shop was a contentious young man named William Jones, “the son of Margaret Jones, widow.” On March 26, 1725, shortly before going out on his own, Warne had witnessed Jones’s indenture to Delaplaine. Jones, an ephemeral and transient figure, did not stay long in one place. A clue to his personality is his litigiousness; nothing about Jones’s life is known outside of several appearances in court. By his surname and certain Quaker background, British ethnicity may be inferred. Yet Jones may also be Jansz. Guessing names is a risky business in New York. British or not, Jones is interesting for the meager record of his activities after he began his apprenticeship to Delaplaine in 1725.

His stay with Delaplaine was typically brief. Sometime before 1728, Jones entered into the service of yet another Huguenot master, Charles Jandine, who, like Delaplaine, had proven skills as a joiner and turner of elite goods. Jandine’s work as a turner and designer was highly regarded by the city’s anglicizing elites. This is made clear in the vestry minutes of Trinity Church for February 1, 1743, when the Huguenot’s design for the new pews was accepted by the vestry: “Order’d that Each of the bloks and Squares of pews in the body of the Church as all the Owners of Each block Shall Agree to be turned Comformable to the Draft made by Charles Jandine dated ye 7th day of December Last at the Charge of the Church.”

On October 1728, Charles Jandine took Jones to mayor’s court, where the illustrious William Smith represented Jandine in a suit against Jones, who was cited for “leaving the employ of Jandine as a carpenter and joiner.” By January 31, 1729, all the parties were back in court again. Jones was again identified as Jandine’s apprentice and sued for breach of contract. Charles Jandine’s confessional allegiance is unclear. If Delaplaine took Jones on as his apprentice, with Warne as witness, then Jones was a probably at least a Quaker sympathizer. It may be that Jones had a falling out with the Quakers and opted for an Anglican master, or that Jandine had some Quaker associations as well, despite the fact that he designed and turned Trinity’s pews and retained William Smith as his lawyer.

With the exception of Warne’s signature as witness, the only contacts on record for Jones involved Huguenot masters. Most ended in litigation. Indeed, our final encounter with Jones involves yet another lawsuit. This time, Jones sued the Huguenot joiner Francis Bomier, who had hired him. Jones claimed that Bomier failed to pay him as agreed “for labor as a house carpenter and joiner at 5 s[hillings]” per day. If Jones was telling the truth about his wages, then skilled journeymen woodworkers in New York City could command between 20 and 40 percent more pay than their counterparts in Flushing, who normally expected to earn between three and four shillings per day. Jones managed to get Bomier thrown in jail in the end, despite William Smith’s defense. Lacking specific evidence, it is difficult to assign responsibility for these heated interactions between artisans. Was the problem transparently economic, or
does Jones’s litigiousness show animosity that runs deeper? Whatever the specifics, however, on complex levels of family, religious, and craft history that we can only begin to parse here, networks of New York Quaker and Huguenot artisans were engaged in intensive interaction on a number of levels. Between “friends,” engagement was not always benign. There was tension as well as security in the shadows.

About a year after Warne signed on with Joshua Delaplaine in 1718, the Huguenot joiner and shipbuilder found enough work to add a second Quaker apprentice. On October 15, 1719, Benjamin Lawrence, the “son of Elizabeth Lawrence of Flushing on Nassau Island,” was indentured to Delaplaine for a term of seven years. The patron for this member of the Lawrence family was Edward Burling himself. Sometime in the 1730s, Edward Burling Jr.’s third son, also Edward (February 3, 1714–May 1749), married Mary Lawrence of Flushing (b. April 2, 1718). This marriage consolidated ties between the Burlings and the Lawrence family of artisans and merchants in both Flushing and New York City.

The Flushing–New York bilateral relationship made for similarities in the cross-river geography of occupational and religious lives. Mary Lawrence Burling was the daughter of Richard and Hannah Bowne Lawrence. Hannah was the daughter of John Bowne’s son Samuel, thus further strengthening the already strong ties between the Burlings and Bownes. Soon after, the family web drew even tighter as Edward III’s sister, Sarah Burling, married his brother-in-law Caleb Lawrence. Elizabeth Lawrence “of Flushing on Nassau Island,” the well-located mother of Delaplaine’s new apprentice, was thus a member of this family—possibly the sister-in-law of Richard Lawrence. After registering his apprenticeship, however, Benjamin Lawrence disappears completely from the record.

Other woodworkers from the Lawrence family of Flushing and New York City remained active, however. All were intertwined with the rapidly expanding Quaker-Huguenot craft network in New York and on Long Island. A certain Thomas Lawrence was declared a freeman and joiner of the City of New York on May 4, 1725. In 1725 and 1726, Thomas Lawrence signed a bond for £10 to John Bell, witnessed by a second Quaker joiner named Thomas Grigg. Bell, a carpenter of undocumented religious background, also aspired to merchant status. In addition to Bell’s carpentry, when he could attract a profitable consignment from his London agent, he sold luxury goods to catch the eye of New Yorkers who aspired to replicate metropolitan style. Hogarth’s trio of polite strollers on Hog Lane might be comfortable in some of these imports. Included was a combination of old-style native English (“Broad Cloths”) and fashionable Huguenot textiles (baises, or “bases”). There was a stock of “Ready made Cloaths,” and chinoiserie furniture; most were consumables then generally “in style,” yet slightly behind the current London fashion, a fate that befitted rustic colonial consumers. When the shipment arrived in New York, Bell took out an advertisement in
On December 9, 1734, a year before the appearance of Hogarth’s painting in London, Bell’s advertisement read:

At the House of John Bell, Carpenter over against Capt. Garret Van Horne, there is to be Sold, Broad Cloths, Kersey’s, Kersey [Plains], [Frize], Green Colloured, Dussills, Druggets, Shalloons, Miniken Blew Bases, Frize, and Plains, And some Ready made Cloaths, &c. By Wholesale or Retail at Reasonable Rates. Also, Looking Glasses, and Eight Day Clocks with Japan Cases.111

John Bell’s confessional allegiance and ethnicity were undocumented. Yet in this they may resemble Thomas Lawrence’s witness, Thomas Griggs, a Welsh Quaker joiner with early ties to western Long Island, as well as with New York’s Huguenot maritime networks clustered around Dock Ward. Thomas descended from John, son of George Griggs, who immigrated to New England from Newport in Wales, a common port of entry for refugees from the civil wars of religion. John Griggs was living in New York in 1669, having left New England to join the English Quaker settlement founded at Gravesend in Brooklyn by Deborah Moody. Although his occupation is unknown, John Griggs acquired a substantial amount of land in and around Gravesend. He owned lots on Coney, Gishert’s, and Ambrose Islands, as well as in “Gravesend Plantation,” so he was probably a planter. The Kings County Census of 1698 showed John Griggs owned four African slaves. John had one child, also John (b. 1665), and the father of Thomas Griggs the New York joiner (b. ca. 1695). Thomas had property just across New York Bay from Gravesend on Staten Island, where he met and married the Huguenot Lena du Puy, whose family emigrated to New York from Artois in 1662 and settled, with so many French refugees, on Staten Island. Children from this couple married into the du Puy, Dey, and Bodin families, all Huguenot landowning families on Staten Island and in northern New Jersey.112

Like many Quaker woodworkers from Flushing, Griggs also followed his trade (if not the open practice of his religion) in the city. So, on April 24, 1716, Thomas “Grigg” was declared a freeman joiner of New York.113 As on Long and Staten Islands, Griggs fostered close personal and working relationships with a number of pivotal New York Huguenot artisan families with ties to Quaker landowners in communities outside the city. For example, on April 29, 1719, “Thomas Griggs and Henry Gillam [Henri Guillaume, Guillam, Guillain, or Guilamme], of New York City, Joiners,” both posted bond for James McGrath, a Quaker carpenter from Flushing. McGrath died in 1726. His inventory was appraised by Adam Lawrence, a family member and close contemporary of Thomas Lawrence, the joiner and associate of Griggs.114 Henry Gillam was declared a freeman joiner of New York on the same day in 1716 as his “friend” and co-hort Thomas Griggs.115 There is good circumstantial evidence of Gillam’s Quaker sympathies, if not his formal membership in the society. Gillam’s economic relation
with Griggs and McGrath is suggestive. So was the location of Gillam’s two houses, lots and fields in the Flushing and Oyster Bay extensions, Westchester Town, and Eastchester, where there was much French–Quaker interaction. When Gillam died in 1735, a notice was published in the *New York Gazette*:

Notice is hereby given that . . . at the Court House in Westchester, there will be Exposed to Sale at Publick Vendue, the Dwelling-House and ground late of Henry Guillaim, in the Town of Westchester. Also, one lot of land in East-Chester, containing about three Quarters of an Acre, with a Dwelling-House thereon . . . and one other lot of land in East-Field of Bedford Township, containing about six acres; together with all other, the real Estate of Henry Guillaum.¹¹⁶

Ownership of these lands put Henry Gillam on the same side of the Long Island Sound as his father (or uncle), Charles Guillam (1671–1727) of Saybrook, in coastal Connecticut. Because of his ownership of French books and association with an idiosyncratic group of colonial American painted furniture made in the area of Saybrook, much research has gone into the location of Charles (and hence Henry) Guillam’s Old World origin in Jersey, one of two Channel Islands in the Gulf of Saint-Malo off Normandy that remained French linguistic domains. Furniture forms and painting patterns traditionally attributed to Charles Guillam (as yet none can be traced definitively to Henry) also have distinctive Channel Islands antecedents (see fig. 5.8).¹¹⁷

Thomas Griggs’s ties to New York’s French refugee artisans were not limited to the northern Channel Islands. To be successful in New York, a city in which Saintongeais artisans dominated the maritime and luxury trades, they had to extend to southwestern France as well. It is noteworthy that on October 1, 1747, Griggs was chosen to build the coffin of the Huguenot Samuel Boyer (Bouyer, Bouhier), which was evidently not a simple five or ten shilling pine box, since he was paid a healthy £2.4.3, making it one of the most expensive on record. The progenitor of the Boyer family in New York was Jean Bouyer, a turner and weaver from Bordeaux (d. 1698), who was probably the master of Jean Le Chevalier from Saintonge, a major supplier of leather-chair frames to Lott and Faneuil for upholstery and resale. The Boyer family thus had associations with the New York leather chair and its artisanal network.

So Benjamin Lawrence, Joshua Delaplaine’s second apprentice, entered his employ having come from a family of Flushing artisans with strong links to Delaplaine’s New York Quaker–Huguenot craft network. The strength of these links cannot be underestimated, as the Lawrence family itself, like the South Carolina branch of the family, was arguably of Huguenot origin. John Lawrence, a merchant and the first of the family in New York, was a founder of Flushing in 1645. He was also one of three commissioners from New Amsterdam sent by Stuyvesant in 1663 to negotiate with John Winthrop Jr. over English claims to Dutch territory in New Netherlands. Following
the English takeover, he was alderman, mayor, and supreme court justice of New York Colony until his death in 1699.

The name Lawrence is commonly thought to be ethnically English by New York historians.\(^\text{118}\) It is true that John Lawrence immigrated from England, but so did almost all of his French ancestors, who, like Benjamin Faneuil and countless others, used London as a sort of relay point, just as the de La Plaines migrated via Holland. Despite the fact that the New York Lawrences must have left France a full generation before the South Carolina branch, John Lawrence and his Long Island Quaker family were known as the Laurent family of merchants in La Rochelle.\(^\text{119}\) Hence, two old New Netherlands families, Delaplaine and Lawrence (Laurens, Laurent, Lorentz, or Lawrence), planted American roots early for growing Quaker-Huguenot craft networks. These ramified as craftsmen, credit and sympathetic religious sensibilities were exchanged between numerous Quaker towns in the British Midlands, west of England, and western Long Island, and Huguenot strongholds in Aunis-Saintonge, Amsterdam, London, and New York City. The transatlantic convergence of Quaker and Huguenot networks in New Amsterdam and New York, provides further evidence that for these two refugee subgroups, a combination of artisanal skill, technical innovation, and advantageous geographical placement substituted for the security of numbers they lacked.

The last indenture of apprenticeship known to be recorded for the shop of Joshua Delaplaine, identifies “Nicholas Bellanger son of Ive Belanger late of little Egg Harbour [a town on the Delaware River near Philadelphia] in West Jersey, with the consent of his mother.” He was apprenticed on May 2, 1720, “to Joshua Delaplaine, Joiner, for seven years.” Benjamin Lawrence was on hand to witness the indenture, which the apparently literate Bellanger also signed in his own hand.\(^\text{120}\)

Nicholas was the son of a weaver who arrived in Philadelphia in 1690, after coming to the colonies from Poitou. This followed the customary sojourn in England during the 1680s. Eves Bellangée (Ives Belanger, Belleng, Bellinger, de Bellinger, Ballinger, or Bellanger), the father of Nicholas, joined the maritime trades when he settled permanently in the Quaker-dominated area of Burlington County, New Jersey. There is fragmentary evidence that Nicholas had been preceded to a Quaker enclave by another family member with New York connections. On February 18, 1688, the Hempstead deed book recorded: “There was given to Michael Belleng, the Frenchman that lives on Mr. Spragg’s land, twenty acres of woodland, lyng on the west side of Mr. Spragg’s land, near the [Hempstead] plains.”\(^\text{121}\) Because he came directly to Philadelphia, it is possible that Eves Bellangée converted to Quakerism in London. Eves was surely a member of the Society by 1697, when he married Kristain de La Plaine at the Friends Meeting in Philadelphia. Kristain de La Plaine, the daughter of Nicolas de La Plaine of New York and his second wife Rachel Cresson, was Joshua
Delaplaine’s sister. This meant that young Nicholas Bellanger, another Huguenot-Quaker joiner, was Joshua Delaplaine’s nephew and the namesake of Joshua’s father. When his father Eves died, the Delaplaine family welcomed Nicholas into the security of the New York French Quaker woodworking trades under his uncle’s paternal eye. Here was another link between New York City, Flushing, and Philadelphia, suggesting that parallels in patterns of woodworking resulted from the convergence of these family networks through intermarriage and migration. Indeed, large dining tables made simultaneously in the Philadelphia and New York shops of Burling, Delaplaine, Tillou, and their contemporaries are very similar in design, construction, and materials. Many display the same stacked baluster arrangement we know from the Île de Ré. It may be that some furniture forms attributed to Pennsylvania were made in New York and vice versa.

Christain’s marriage to Eves Bellangée in 1697 shows the utility of looking further into records of fragmentary artisanal alliances, through marriage, of the children of Nicolas de La Plaine and the Cresson sisters. Indeed, such an inquiry does bear fruit for our reconstitution of the brief working life and unrealized potential of the unfortunate Flushing Quaker Germanicus Andrews. Maria Delaplaine, another daughter of Nicolas and the sister of Joshua, married the talented and well-connected Huguenot chair maker and carver Jean Le Chevalier on June 27, 1692. We know Jean and Maria Le Chevalier had their two daughters baptized in New York’s French Church, a new place of worship for the refugees, its construction full of intense meaning and emotional solace after the destruction of the temples and exile in the désert. Nevertheless, Jean Le Chevalier was thereby fully integrated into the Burling-Delaplaine craft network. That meant he had become a client “of the blood” of the most venerable of New York’s Huguenot-Quaker artisanal dynasties. As the brother-in-law of Joshua Delaplaine, Le Chevalier assumed the pivotal brokerage role that brothers-in-law played in all Huguenot patronage networks. Le Chevalier was thus the perfect artisan to make the connection with his Huguenot patrons and broker Germanicus Andrews as an apprentice upholsterer to Faneuil or Lott. Had he survived, Andrews would have succeeded his Huguenot masters as one of two primary upholsterers of leather chairs in New York, thereby linking the Flushing Quaker artisanal and mercantile community to the most profitable medium of the international Huguenot style in urban America.

This is not to say that such linkages were absent on western Long Island or that they failed there to effect the “mixed composition” of hybridization and the creation of hybrid Anglo-French forms. The cultural, religious, artifactual, and documentary record points in just the opposite direction. Pluralistic interaction was pursued avidly on western Long Island by Quakers and other related regional sectarians and pietists. An improvisational cultural style circled back and forth between Manhattan and Long
Island as Flushing Quaker artisans converged with their Huguenot allies in the city. In addition to members of the Lawrence family, other Huguenot artisans lived and worked in Flushing. These included James Clement, a French joiner and a member of John Bowne’s household, and his son Samuel Clement. The French-Quaker Clement shops were also essential to the process of cultural convergence and hybridization in Flushing.

The Meetinghouse Bracket

A successful French-Quaker craft network thus circulated between New Netherlands / New York and western Long Island. It is now possible, therefore, to pose new sets of questions. What material and spiritual evidence remains of this interactive artisan network? How can we identify the permeable and fluid process of circulation and “unities” among refugees who so industriously ramified their networks in the material culture of French-Quaker convergence to acquire land and labor through commerce and marriage? To repeat a basic question from Part I, how do artifacts from this craft network communicate the material-holiness synthesis fundamental to international artisanal pietism during the seventeenth century? Was there something in the religious culture of the network that bound these two very specific groups together in joint material and spiritual projects in New York? Why, in other words, did they come together in the ways they did?

When they signed the contract to build the Friends Meetinghouse in Flushing, Samuel Andrews and John Feke “promise[d]” their patron, John Bowne, that “they s[hall endeavor] to have it up for further f[inishing by] ye: 30th daye of the first month: [16] 93.” That meant that the basic structure was to be standing for Bowne’s glazier to finish the windows and for his carpenters and joiners in addition to Feke who specialized in interior woodwork to make the meetinghouse fit for use by the Society of Friends. Unfortunately, almost nothing of the original work from this initial building campaign survives to connect the makers with their production. What can be deduced from both the contract and surviving elements of the building suggests a variant of English “plain” architecture in the exterior form and plan. Sadly, little to signify the hand of Feke or Andrews—or subsequent artisans who finished the interiors—is available for analysis.

Only a few brackets (or corbels) that support a joint between a post and beam in the upper room of the meetinghouse are distinctive and indisputably part of the original structure (fig. 16.10a and b). Building elements in early modern house construction like this one, although obscured by banal utility and easily “overlooked,” are not without interest. Interest is compounded by the realization that a similar distinctive bracket is found nearby, in the construction of John Bowne’s house. Inasmuch as the
Norfolk man John Feke is the only housewright known to have played a major role in building at both sites (Feke also contracted with Bowne to construct the addition to his house in 1680, along with John Clay), he seems likely to have fashioned this joint. It may be that Feke also built the original section of Bowne’s house in 1661. Although the contract for this building does not survive, we know Feke built Bowne’s thatched barn in 1666. This puts Feke in Bowne’s employ as early as the 1660s, making him a likely candidate.

If Feke was indeed the maker, he probably did not learn to fashion such a corbel from Norfolk craftsmen, or from any English-trained artisan, for that matter, because they were not made in the vernacular English manner used in East Anglia. Abbott Lowell Cummings has shown that in early New England, all the surviving seventeenth-century New World English house brackets were joined to mortises in the post and beam with tenons. These thicker joints were then invariably fastened tight solely...
with long wooden pegs. If John Feke was responsible for fashioning brackets for the meetinghouse and the Bowne House, then he must have learned how to do so through encounters with continental woodwork (or woodworkers) on Long Island. The staircase in the Arsenal of the citadel at Saint-Martin-de-Ré on the Île de Ré, for example, makes excellent use of similar brackets (see fig. 16.6). Such encounters would have been part of Feke’s daily routine.

What, then, is distinctive, or even idiosyncratic about the meetinghouse bracket? To begin, this bracket is unusual in the colonies because unlike ones found in New England and the south, it is unusually attenuated in form—akin, perhaps, to beams that attached the crown post to the roof frame in early English construction—and not attached with standard English mortise and tenon joints fastened by pegs. Here, the support system was held together originally by a series of formidable iron rivets driven up through the arch of the bracket and into the post and beam. This method of construction is known in New York furniture from the period as well. The top of a late seventeenth-century draw-bar table in the Metropolitan Museum of Art is also attached with enormous iron rivets. In addition, rods were seated into the bracket with large iron washers, and then pinned by iron pins. This seventeenth-century blacksmith work is, in fact, so unusual, that it suggests an elaborate old repair. Perhaps the rods were inserted into holes vacated by rivets that had worked loose over time? Yet, the presence of an early iron strap hinge to support the post and beam above the bracket and evidence from a turned and joined table made around 1700 in New York City or western Long Island (fig. 16.11) advances the possibility that the weight-bearing ironwork may be part of the original bracket.

This portable table, with the deep vase on the baluster, has strong northern European antecedents, and it may have been made by Feke himself, or indeed by one of several Continental or Anglo–New York or Long Island woodworkers trained in the Dutch, German, or French tradition. Huguenots found refuge in all these places, and such ambiguous forms, like their makers, were infinitely adaptable, reflecting the influence of their travels. The table is, moreover, turned in the same shop tradition as a large group of turned chairs made in New York City or western Long Island ca. 1650–1720. One example (fig. 16.12) has descended, in situ, in the Bowne house. Dating from John Bowne’s time, the chair’s back balusters are turned similarly to one supporting the table.

Nothing in the form or construction of this table corresponds with known English types. If the table is disassembled, two of the component parts reveal similar modes of regional artisanal practice used on the bracket. The maple baluster of the table has a rounded tenon turned at the bottom that fits through the two sets of legs, which overlap when assembled. All three elements were secured by an iron washer of the type on the bracket, which is slipped over the rounded tenon, flush against the inside top
of the lapped legs. An iron pin (now missing) was pushed through the washered tenon, thus fastening all the pieces together. This is fundamentally the same system used in the meetinghouse. Just as this system was rare craft practice in colonial house construction, so too it is rare in American regional furniture outside New York.

The other idiosyncratic regional feature of the meetinghouse bracket are the deeply chamfered edges and ends cut with a drawknife. The chamfer was worked as a decisive ornamental element drawn along the inside edge of the bracket and termini. The
attenuated edges thus formed an architectonic arch when paired with the opposing brackets and seen from below. Deeply channeled edgework is powerfully visible on both the top and bottom of the tea table’s legs. When the table is apart, its lap joints form a similar bracket, articulated in the same forceful way.

Survival of the meetinghouse bracket in situ deepens our understanding of the historical processes that informed Long Island regional woodworking, just as it illuminates the fugitive hybridized culture of the local Quaker craft networks. Something as seemingly trivial to historians as this idiosyncratic form of chamfering may prove a signifier of cultural convergence, in particular when read together with related written and material documents of artisanal behavior and experience.

Consider the components of a joined great chair (fig. 16.13), from the middle Atlantic region, with no reliable history of ownership, but plausibly made in or around Huntington, Long Island, sometime between 1700 and 1740. The filial relation of this chair to one with an unimpeachable history of ownership in Huntington (fig. 16.14)—with turned elements under its arms formed like the blunted arrow terminus on the tea table—makes the intuitive attribution of figure 16.13 to an early Long Island maker seem reasonable. Resonance between the idiosyncratic crest in figure 16.13 and the arms in figure 16.14 is particularly convincing. Moreover, close comparison of specific elements on the chair with the meetinghouse bracket makes western Long Island its probable place of origin.128

Figure 16.12. Great chair owned by John Bowne, western Long Island, probably Flushing, or New York City, 1660–90. H (reduced by wear): 36”, W: 23”, D: 17¼”. Ash and maple. Courtesy Bowne House Historical Society, Flushing, New York. Photo, Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities. This chair has never been out of the Bowne House, where it was part of the seventeenth-century furnishings. The turnings, like those of a number of surviving chairs from related early shops on western Long Island and New York City, closely resemble the turned shaft on the tea table in figure 16.11.
This chair was the perfect artifact for a pluralistic social setting, precisely because it could have come from anywhere on the Continent, perhaps one of the Quaker counties in the English West Country or Midlands. In short, any potential buyer might have perceived something recognizable, competent, and comfortable in its artifactual language. Following Hogarth, this chair had something for virtually every perceptual grammar then known on Long Island. Above the seat, the dramatic scrolled crest and inward-turning ears were available to regional artisans in the Palatinate, the Netherlands (particularly the province of Limburg), France, the Channel Islands, Wales, and sometimes East Anglia; likewise the carved back and seat with perimeter moldings. Carved backs and perimeter seat moldings also appear on some chairs from seventeenth-century Plymouth Colony, with its early history of settlement in Holland. Hidden below the seat, however, is a molded front stretcher backed by a medial H stretcher, with no back stretcher. In the British Isles and British North America, this was uncommon (if not unheard of), and though much more common in the Netherlands and the Palatinate, this arrangement below the seat absent a back stretcher is most common in France.

So, too, is deeply chamfered edgework by joiners. This was particularly true of
chamfered legs, stretchers, and posts—although this may simply reflect a joiner without knowledge of turning, or one lacking the proper equipment (a lathe and chisels). All the regions that supplied artisans to New York also employed the deep chamfer to perform similar sorts of edgework. In Wales or the Palatinate, chamfered edges were also a significant part of the available artisanal language, though perhaps not used as often or as persistently as in Saintonge. As in certain particularly adaptable sounds in pidgin or creole dialects, the ubiquitous practice of chamfered edgework in Long Island may have helped to form the basis for a common visual grammar for artisanal discourse, innovation, and convergence; that is to say, the grammar of a hybrid regional style. The use of this idiosyncratic edgework certainly bound the language of the joined chair to the bracket, presumably made for John Bowne by the Norfolk-Flushing Quaker John Feke. Thus it was well known as a woodworking pattern by Quaker craftsmen attending the Meeting in Flushing.

Did Bowne specify this sort of work on the bracket, or was it simply considered natural in Flushing in 1693? Such specifications appear nowhere in the carefully worded contracts. Compare the deeply channeled edgework on the scrolls, legs, arms, and stretchers of the chair with the chamfered bracket (fig. 16.10a and 16.10b). The chair’s maker paid exquisite, lapidarian attention to detail when he chamfered two tiny, essentially hidden elements: the ends of the scrolls tucked invisibly behind the ears at the crest; and the ends of a molding strip behind the seat, a “backstop” to be covered later with a stuffed pillow. The private performance of drawknife work, built in to be overlooked, was secreted in the chair’s shadows as a kind of artisanal memory image. Was this simply to protect the sharp end grain from splitting, a consequence of disciplined self-mastery, or an act of convergence with diverse refugee artisans in the region who shared a common language with the maker of the meetinghouse bracket?

The Meetinghouse Forms

When John Bowne died in 1694, Samuel Bowne continued to use his father’s account book, where he noted names of local artisans responsible “for further finishing” of the meetinghouse interior. John Everad (Everett?), presumably a sawyer or cartman, passed briefly through the book’s pages in connection with construction between 1696 and 1701. Everad was paid, “for two load of bords fetching for formes [benches] for ye meetinghouse,” “nails for ye meetinghouse,” and “planks to use above ye meetinghouse.”129 The use of leveling, rustic forms for seating the meeting, rather than elaborate, hierarchical pews used by the Church of England in New York City, suggests that the main vehicle for English Quakers’ unmediated rhetorical and aesthetic style was extended to Long Island’s interior furnishings (fig. 16.15).

The Quaker vernacular style was thus analogous to a kind of anti-Babel: where the
tower of Babel was ornate, striving, high, concentric, and atomizing; the Quaker form was natural, humble, low, straight, and unifying. Here was a place where simple artisans—like the builders themselves—could rise up to testify in Palissy’s natural language (and in tongues) of the stark immediacy of their prophetic experiences and subtle encounters of the soul.

An account of one such experience was recorded by the itinerant Quaker preacher Thomas Story, who made Samuel Bowne’s house in Flushing his center of operations for conversion in the crucial Long Island Sound region. In 1691, not long before he set out to evangelize in colonial America, Story wrote of the fluid convergence of spiritual experience he had experienced in northern England:
And, when we came to the Meeting, being a little late, it was full gathered; and I went among the Throng of the People on the Forms, and sat still among them in that inward Condition and mental Retirement. . . . For, not long after I had sat down among them, that heavenly and watery cloud overshadowing my Mind, brake into a sweet abounding shower of celestial Rain, and the greatest part of the Meeting was broken together, dissolved and comforted in the same divine and holy Presence and Influence of the true, holy and heavenly Lord; which was divers Times repeated before the Meeting ended . . . our Joy was mutual and full, tho’ in the Efflux of many Tears, as in Cases of the deepest and most unfeigned Love.130

Thomas Story described his Neoplatonic convergence experience—chaste and sexual at once—in material, elemental, and spiritual language closely approximating natural-philosophical, alchemical, and artisanal discourse. Their bodies still, “the People” turned all physical motion inward toward the soulish examination of their one common heart and “Mind” in Christ. An inseminating shower of celestial rain, like the binding, replicating tincture of the philosopher’s stone, thus caused their separated bodies, now met, to be “broken together, dissolved and comforted in the same divine and holy Presence.” The truth of this experience of their plural bodies, reduced, atomized, and recombined nonviolently in a crucible of divine love, was proven because, “it was divers Times repeated before the Meeting ended.” These temporary moments of repetition of bodily dissolution and soulish purification resulted in “mutual and full” convergence, while individuals were sitting side by side and back to front.

This action figuratively collapsed benches full of separate bodies together into a single spiritual seat. At the end of the process, the product of this purified solution was, in fact, distilled, “in the Efflux of many Tears.” Such a subtle material effluvium from the body could only occur “in Cases of the deepest and most unfeigned Love.” Every Paracelsian alchemist and natural philosopher, from Palissy to Fludd, understood that the primitive purity of deepest love was transitory. It was a shadow memory of Neoplatonic transparency, lost after prelapsarian times, recovered through the unity of the soul. The Quaker experiment was another sort of geomancy. It drew God’s transparent light of truth down into their bodies—and, like Palissy’s rustic figures, the material products of their artisanry as well—making security from the danger of corruption and personal assault a quotidian matter. Sir Kenelm Digby’s thesis of soulish motion that gave the weapon salve its fabled potency comes to mind here. And in Fludd’s *Internal Principle*, the inner movement of the light of the soul “communicated” from body to body, “like a guardian foreseeing danger”:

In their emission the rays are so joined together that either the soul of the seeker or the seeker himself be the one to whom danger is imminent, or else a friend of his; for the [soul] is very prophetical. Being immortal, it may know within itself things that are in
the future and things present. Like a guardian foreseeing danger with which a body is threatened, it may explain the secret future of its body to another soul applying to it—a future which it had been unable to communicate to its body because of that body's grossness. And in this way may a quiet and peaceful soul, which is in a fit condition for judging, and to which movements of its body are well subjected, prognosticate the future to that other soul . . . [such a soul could] leave its body so as to find a place whence it could enter into communication, and converse, with the souls of friends.”

Verbal communication—what Story calls “Tongue and Lip Religion”—was superfluous—a dangerous impediment to authentic communication between natural bodies. Hence, “the Meeting being ended” when Story stood up, and “the Peace of God, which passeth all the Understanding of natural Man, and is unexpressible by any Language but itself alone, remained, as a holy Canopy, over my Mind, in a Silence out of the Reach of all Words; and no Idea, but the Word himself, can be conceived.”

For Palissy and his transatlantic Huguenot followers—and their network of Quaker artisan patrons and clients both in and around New York—passionate, Neoplatonic quietism, experienced “out of the Reach of all Words,” was the essential language of material things engendered in the subterranean “bowels” of Nature and imitated by calling on the “inward condition” of man, where the silent “peace of God” lay hidden in the soul. This condition created the “holy Canopy” of the Word, which hovered invisibly over the simple form. More important, this edifice could be constructed anywhere in the microcosm, as by Huguenots in the désert.

Many artisans performed work inside the shell of the Flushing meetinghouse. The Bowne accounts show that this was an ongoing process. In March 1696, one George Langly, a Quaker carpenter who may have been a member of Bowne’s household, commanded a total of 16 shillings “for worke done about ye meeting hous.” Two months later, Thomas Ford was paid 19 shillings, “for 6½ das worke at ye meetinghouse,” and in March 1700, he earned £1.17.1½ for thirteen days of master carpentry. Not much more can be said with confidence about these and other unknown Quaker craftsmen. Blacksmiths did not usually warrant mention in the documentary record, but one Will Fowler was paid 12 shillings “for making hinges for ye meetinghouse.” Was he even a Flushing townsman? Blacksmiths were in short supply on Long Island and were often imported from elsewhere for specific jobs. Did this quiet craftsman forge the ironwork for the meetinghouse brackets or the related wrought-iron washer and pin, hidden under the tea table’s post for stability?

One craftsman from the Bowne accounts of the construction of the meetinghouse
interior has enough history attached to his name to provide something more than a fragmentary biographical context. James Clement (ca. 1640–1725), was a Huguenot-Quaker joiner and, in an extraordinary synthesis, a scribe as well. Clement specialized in typical European notarial functions, including land transactions and similar economic documents for the Flushing Quaker community. He was also said to be “skilled in the law.”

Clement’s artisanal credentials are also readily apparent in the Bowne accounts. In December 1697, the same month that Clement received 2 shillings from Samuel Bowne for building “my Childs cofin,” death struck another local artisan. Clement was paid 12 shillings to make “g [Langleys] cofin” as well. This was for the body of carpenter George Langley, credited one year earlier “for worke done about ye meetinghouse.” Despite his lively trade in coffins—always a mainstay of any early modern carpenter’s craft—Clement still found time that winter to undertake more “work done about ye meetinghouse.” This remained a constant refrain in the accounts until September 1701, when the first campaign to finish the building’s interior finally ended, seven years after it opened for use. At one point, Clement worked side by side with Thomas Ford. Both craftsmen were probably responsible for making the forms from two loads of boards fetched to the meetinghouse by John Everad in 1696.\(^{135}\)

Clement did much of his notarial work for the Quakers. On May 3, 1696, he received 5s. 6d. shillings “for writing a bill of sale for ye me[e]ting house” in Flushing. This bill of sale may refer to construction of the meetinghouse itself, three acres of land purchased for the site for £40 in 1692, or the purchase of additional land. The bill was followed in the Bowne accounts by another credit for 5s. 3d., to “James Clement for a deed for [the New] York meetinghouse land.” This property was acquired “from Jacob Were [Ware].” The month before, Samuel Bowne had paid 5 shillings “to James Clemant for recording the dead of Seal [deed of sale]” of the transaction.\(^{136}\)

Who was James Clement of Flushing? How did he come to join the New York Quaker community in the dual capacities of craftsman and scribe? We do know that he was not the first of his line in the colonies. There were several individuals named Clement living in New Amsterdam / New York during the seventeenth century. All were clearly woodworkers, or in the building trades, and “close kin” to James and his family on Long Island.\(^{137}\) This small cell of related craftsmen included “Charles Clement ye Cooper [a.k.a. Clement the Cooper],” who appeared in New York City records for the last time in 1677. Charles Clement can be traced along collateral lines south to settlers on the Raritan River in New Jersey and as far north as Schenectady, in the Mohawk Valley. More important for our purposes however, are Bastien Clement and Jan Clement, arguably brothers, whose first appearances in New Amsterdam / New York may be traced to 1659 and 1665 respectively.\(^{138}\)
Bastien came originally from the northern French province of Tournay and, following the pattern of most of the first refugees in the “old” (or pre-1685) Huguenot colonization of New Amsterdam, he traveled the well trodden route from the northern French provinces (Picardy, Normandy, Maine, Brittany, and Tournay) to the New World Dutch colony, arriving by way of numerous temporary residences where work was available in the coastal Netherlands. Bastien, a wheelwright, made his way first to Doornick in 1657, and then to New Amsterdam in February of 1659.139 The Clements split up to find work in various towns in Holland, which were burdened by a glut of skilled refugees. Then they migrated in a staggered pattern across the Atlantic. By 1665, a certain Jan Clement, a master mason by trade, had emigrated to Kings County, where he acquired land in New Utrecht and Flatlands and married Marie Bocquet (Bokee), another French refugee.140

There were other colonists named Clement with French refugee antecedents within reach of New York in the seventeenth century. All were skilled artisans. While asserting a direct relationship to James Clement of Long Island is uncertain, there are suggestive parallels. Abbott Lowell Cummings has found that Augustine Clement was the only decorative house painter recorded in Boston before 1650. Augustin is a common French name, and he pursued a quintessentially Huguenot trade. Indeed, the next acknowledged “painter-stainer” to advertise his services in Boston was another Huguenot, John Berger (fl. 1718–32). Augustine Clement embarked from Southampton in 1635. Described in Boston as a “sometime” (impermanent) resident of Reading, in Berkshire, Augustine enjoyed great longevity and also trained his son, Samuel Clement (1635–78), to master his rarified trade. James Clement trained his son, also named Samuel, but nothing more is known of either painter.141

In 1688, Richard Clement, another artisan with occupations related to James’s, appeared in Casco Bay, Maine, a French refugee settlement established after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, whence many southwestern Huguenots dispersed to the Boston area and, after the failure of the Oxford, Massachusetts, resettlement project, to New York. In an intriguing document, written in French, Richard Clement was called a [charpanteur (roughly, “builder” or house carpenter)] and named “deputy surveyor” for the settlement. In his dual capacity, Richard Clement also assumed the role of scribe in charge of the documentation of land transactions.

That is how he was identified in a petition to Governor Andros by Pierre Baudouin, a refugee who emigrated from La Rochelle to Dublin, and thence to Casco Bay, where he acquired 100 acres of woodland. In a long “Supplication,” Baudouin appealed “humbly” for tax relief to pay “the said Clement,” who was hired “to do carpentry work, after which he had to make his report so that the patents or leases on the said property may be delivered.” Baudouin claimed the exemption for hard times following religious persecution. He claimed further, that “because of hardships suffered by those
of his religion, he had lost nearly all his assets," which he was forced to leave behind in La Rochelle. Inasmuch as the highly specialized rhetoric of this notarial document was written about Baudouin, essentially in the third person—then signed by the suppliant—one wonders if Richard Clement was the scribe. After all, Clement clearly stood to benefit if Baudouin’s petition was successful.142

Our first encounter with James Clement of Flushing occurs in Amsterdam on May 30, 1663, when “James Clement of ye Buthrop-Bridge in Durham, in ye Kingdom of England” was bound as an indentured servant to “John Bowne, inhabitant in Flushing, in ye province of New Netherland, in America.”143 That James Clement came to Amsterdam from Durham, does not mean he was born there. Indeed, the date of Clement’s indenture (1663) and the place (Amsterdam) tie his migration closely to that of Bastien and Jan Clement—perhaps James’s brothers or cousins—whose arrival in New York and New Utrecht from Tournay via Holland may be dated to 1659 and 1665 respectively. Bastien was thought to have left Tournay around 1657. It is reasonable to assume James was made a refugee at about the same time, but instead of going directly to Holland, he first made his way to the Quaker region of Durham. He found work there and perfected his mastery of the scrivener’s trade before using his contacts with Durham Friends to reach terms on a suitable colonial indenture with a Quaker master in Amsterdam. During the interim of six years in Buthrop-Bridge, he may have been apprenticed to a clerk. Befitting a servant with such useful skills, Bowne granted James Clement reasonable terms of indenture. He was to receive half the cost of his “freight or passage” to New Amsterdam, 250 pounds of tobacco, and, most unusual in standard artisans’ contracts, cash “sufficient to Clothe him with two suits of Apparell, one fit to Labor, and the other fit to use on other occasions.”144 The other occasions were notarial in nature. James needed clothing that was appropriate to a public rank much higher than rough “Apparel . . . fit to [manual] Labor.”

In 1663, John Bowne prepared his return to Flushing from Amsterdam, after successfully defending his town’s right to follow enthusiastic beliefs to the directors of the West India Company. James Clement traveled to Flushing on his new master’s triumphant voyage home. Clement’s skills were of enormous value both to Bowne himself and to the Society of Friends, because his clients were then acquiring as much land as possible. Accurate, clear, and detailed documents were necessary to the success of this process, particularly since such acquisitions were often challenged in court. As a skilled house carpenter and joiner, Clement would also be invaluable in the numerous building campaigns to come, both on Bowne’s expanding farm and other properties and as regards the new meetinghouse. Indeed, James Clement began to write deeds for land transactions in Flushing immediately upon his arrival in 1664. By 1669, he was identified as “clerk,” “town clerk,” or “clerk of the county court,” as well as a carpenter or joiner from Flushing and John Bowne’s servant. By September 1710, Clement had
risen in the local bureaucratic hierarchy to become one of the five supervisors of Queens County.\textsuperscript{145}

Clement may have been working privately on his own account as a freeman as early as 1670. Yet, like Burling and Delaplaine, he was still routinely employed by Bowne and continued to use the honorific “master,” as in a final balance recorded in Clement’s hand in Bowne’s account book:

\begin{quote}
All reconkings [reckonings] made Ballanced betwixt one James Clement & my master Jon Bowne & their is dew to him two good cowes wth cave [calf] or & calfes by their side wch I doe ingadge to deliver to him ore his order in ye begining part of may next as also twenty shillings more in marchant pay, to be pd in at Robert S[hr]eyes at New Yorke as witness my hand ye 20th October 1676.
\end{quote}

The context of this transaction is lost, but by 1675, James possessed a small farm on Little Neck Bay in Flushing (Bayside), where he raised cows. The agreement was significant enough to be witnessed by the politically influential Flushing merchant “Major” William Lawrence. A longtime patron of the Clement family, William was kin to Benjamin Lawrence, who apprenticed to Joshua Delaplaine in 1719, and whose master was John Bowne’s reliable client Edward Burling.\textsuperscript{146} Moreover, William Lawrence played host to the Quaker preacher Thomas Story if Samuel Bowne was unavailable, and because Clement was associated with the household of John and Samuel Bowne, he was known to Story as well.

By comparison with texts produced by the other two clerks we have encountered in this book—the learned Edward Howes and the polished writer of the supplication for Pierre Baudouin (perhaps Richard Clement)—James Clement’s awkwardly written account of his negotiation with John Bowne seems crude. Perhaps this shows that English was, after all, James Clement’s second language, while the other scribes wrote with facility in their native tongue. Still, the most significant aspect of this document is Clement’s failure to date it in the standard Quaker manner; that is to say, “20 d[ay] 8 m[onth] [17]19.” Despite the crudeness of the text, this must be considered a conscious decision, not a trivial oversight. Clement was probably a member of the sect in Amsterdam in 1663, or else it is doubtful Bowne would have accepted him into his household. William Wade Hinshaw, the great Quaker encyclopedist, did not share this opinion. Hinshaw believed that James Clement was an active member of the Society of Friends beginning in 1676.\textsuperscript{147}

Evidence suggests that Clement was a member much earlier, however. Francis Cooley and John Adams stood up in the Flushing Meeting in 1667 because they found “it in their hearts to speak to James Clement about his absenting himself from meetings.”\textsuperscript{148} Did Clement’s indenture to Bowne, a principal supporter of the meeting, end in 1667? James Clement’s name disappears from Meeting minutes after that date. Al-
though Clement absented himself from Meeting, he clearly remained a well-known adjunct of John Bowne’s household—if no longer a bonded servant—and arguably also in sympathy with fundamental tenets of Quaker theology. All evidence suggests that if Clement was no longer formally Quaker, he remained all his life a primitivistic, quietist Calvinist, of the sort Bernard Palissy encountered routinely in the artisans’ désert of Saintonge in the 1560s. In this posture, Clement was similar to many of the “other people” encountered by Thomas Story at meetings throughout the Long Island Sound region on his mission between 1699 and 1705. However, while Clement’s name appears with a fair degree of frequency in the economic records of the society—as well as Bowne’s accounts—in his capacity as craftsman and clerk for Quaker land transactions, the births of his children were not recorded there, and neither was his death. This was highly unusual among Friends in the New York Meeting. More anomalous still are the language and format of James Clement’s will, which employs a secular rather than the familiar religious formula preferred by most active members of the society and again eschews the usual Quaker dating system. In such a ritualistic context, this was a statement by omission of Clement’s religious independence and his desire for privacy.¹⁴⁹ 

Yet some of James Clement’s offspring became full members of the Society. Following Catherine Swindlehurst’s research on refugee artisans in seventeenth-century Spitalfields and Hillel Schwartz’s findings on the Huguenot Prophets in eighteenth-century London, the Huguenots of New York, given their background in the religious practice of Civil War Saintonge, were drawn to the pietistic quietism of Quakerism. This was amplified by the Friends’ similar emergence from the fires of religious persecution. Still, some French refugee families did not join the confession until the next generation.¹⁵⁰ Gradualism was facilitated in New York because the meetings retained an inclusive style until well into the eighteenth century. Long Island meetings were subject to fluid spiritual and social give and take, as Story shows. This gave New York Huguenots the benefits of convergence signified by the meeting, without the necessity of relinquishing their old patterns of hidden religious practice in exchange for the permanent communal devotion of adherence to formal confession. In a very real, familial sense, tension between the “two reformations” of communal devotion and personal piety was played out in nebulous cultural territory that surrounded the Long Island Sound basin. Negotiable religious space available in this ill-defined territory—the inverse of Winthrop’s Boston—was what drew the doomed Anne Hutchinson and her extended family to Long Island. Such unresolved spiritual tensions sometimes had crushing long-term consequences, however, perhaps more so for women.¹⁵¹ 

The name of James Clement’s first wife, the mother of their nine children, is unknown. The identities of the children and of his second wife Sarah Hinchman (married on 2 July 1696) are to be found in the Flushing Census of 1698, taken by the Quaker
Jonathan Wright and James Clement, respectively the town’s “Constable and Clerk,” on “this Last of August 1698.”152 Clement’s marriage to Sarah Hinchman solidified ties to the Quaker elite of Flushing, despite his stubborn resistance to open membership in the meeting.153 Still, there is also evidence that Clement’s religious practices caused “trouble or disturbance as much as in me lyes,” as Sarah wrote in her will of June 15, 1725 (proved February 28, 1727). James Clement left all their daughters out of his will of May 5, 1724 (proved March 16, 1725), presumably because of their open religious affiliation with the Flushing Meeting against his wishes. This caused a tumult in the family, something Sarah sought to avoid (or perhaps compensate for) in her will by having three witnesses to reverse her husband’s passion for secrecy and contrariness, all of them “being known Quakers [who] did declare in due form [emphasis added].”154 For these and other reasons now lost with most of the early town records of Flushing, James Clement was judged an “unusual and peculiar man.”155

The census was also taken idiosyncratically, which was the fashion of this “peculiar” Huguenot clerk. First, it listed the heads of some prominent families, where Samuel Bowne is not named, though James Clement was placed with the grandees. No reference to ethnicity is made in this list (“Col. Thomas Willetts, Justice Tho: Hukes, Major Wm Lawrence, Richard Cornell, John Esmond, Samll. Thorne and James Clement”). Yet in the lists of Dutch, French, and English inhabitants following the elite, ethnicity is noted. After these came unmarried landowners called “freemen-men.”156 The census thus contains the names of two Huguenot families—Clement and Lawrence—which James Clement felt transcended ethnic identity with social status.

One name appears unexpectedly in the category of unmarried “freemen-men,” that of “John Clement,” a servant “In the family of Coll: Thomas Willett.” This could not possibly be Jan Clement the mason, who immigrated in 1665. Instead, John was almost certainly “Jan Clement 22 Jeare,” when he took the oath of allegiance in New Utrecht, in Kings County, on September 3, 1687, two years after the Revocation.157 This Jan (or John) would have been 33 years old in 1700. He was probably sent by Jan Clement the mason of New Utrecht to join their kinsman James Clement in Flushing, where he acquired some land and a place in the household of Thomas Willett, a town leader. In this way, John’s situation paralleled James’s modest beginnings in Flushing. Also like James Clement, John Clement was not—or did not dare stay—a member of his Quaker master’s Meeting. Given James’s harsh treatment of his daughters in the will, his distance from the Meeting may have been a condition negotiated in advance of John’s arrival from New Utrecht.158

James Clement’s local reputation for peculiarity also stems from a brief but ironically open theatrical performance during the Bownas controversy of 1702. I say ironic, in that James Clement’s only recorded public utterance was a dramatic defense of the
right to act quietly—in the shadows—in which he defended the absolute value and inviolability of both corporate and personal secrecy from intrusion by the state. In the absence of other evidence, it may be possible to extrapolate from this incident Clement’s abhorrence of institutional intrusion on his material and spiritual privacy of any kind, including attendance at Meeting, where introspection can become a subject for analysis and judgment by the group.

**The Bownas Controversy**

The Bownas controversy was constructed in Quaker martyrrology as a four-part passion play, set in three major western towns on Long Island, all of which contested for converts with the colony’s authorized Church of England ministry and the flourishing (albeit officially illegitimate) sectarians. Samuel Bownas’s year-long ordeal began in Hempstead, where he was charged with heresy by two New York judges; moved to the Flushing meetinghouse, where he was arrested; and culminated at Jamaica, where a grand jury refused to concur with the judges that a trial was warranted. Finally, he was imprisoned by Lord Cornbury despite the grand jury’s findings. We also encounter James Clement in Jamaica, where he was a juror. But before turning to Clement’s revealing moment on the grand jury, it remains to trace the momentum of prior events from accounts written by Bownas himself.

In November 1702, Samuel Bownas, an English Quaker preacher, traveled to Hempstead to preach at a Meeting held in a large barn, where he was to be the principal speaker. Bownas was trailed to Hempstead by two former Friends converted to fierce evangelical and political adversaries: George Keith (“once a Quaker,” according to Bownas, “but now an Episcopal minister”), and William Bradford, John Bowne’s main supplier of William Penn’s books for resale in Flushing during the 1680s (“who had been a printer for Friends at Philadelphia, but deserting the Society, Friends took the business from him”). The barn was immediately divided into two halves by the rivals, and as Bownas preached to one group of seekers in one half, Keith (with William Bradford attending) preached to his group in the other. From Bownas’s perspective, he easily carried the day in the open competition between orthodoxy and heterodoxy in early New York. “I being very young and strong,” Bownas wrote, “my voice was plainly heard by the people who were with Keith, so that they all left his meeting and came to ours (for we had room enough for both meetings, it being a very large barn), except the Clerk and one William Bradford.”

Facing public humiliation and desertion, Keith and Bradford formulated a face-saving strategy. Both “agreed that the latter should come and try if no advantage might be taken of my doctrine: accordingly he [the printer William Bradford, acting the ancient role of inquisitor’s scribe] came to my meeting and pulled out of his pocket a
small blank-book, with pen and ink, and steadfastly stared in my face to put me out of
countenance if he could. . . . He opened his book and writ about two lines in it, then
shut it again, continuing his staring . . . but I was past his skill, for I felt both inward
and outward strength, and divine power to fill my heart, and my face was like brass to
all opposition.” When Bradford failed to disconcert Bownas, he demanded a public
dispute over doctrine. “I told him his questions being more for contention than edifi-
cation,” Bownas replied, “I did not think myself obliged to answer them. He turned
from me, and in a very angry manner said I should hear of it another way.”

Bradford had in mind to produce a formal charge of heresy akin to Anabaptism
(among other heresies) against Bownas in a deposition sworn before Edward Bur-
rroughs and Joseph Smith, justices of the court of New York, with a copy to Thomas
Cardale, sheriff of Queens County:

I, William Bradford, of New York, aged 40, depose that on the 21st of November, 1702,
going into the Quaker’s meeting, at Nathaniel Pearsall’s, deceased, in Hempstead, I heard
one Bownas, lately come out of England, preach; and the first words I heard him say, were:
“The sign of the cross; and thus, friends, having gone through the Papist baptism, let us
examine the Church of England. Well, what do they do? Why, the Bishop lays his hands
upon those who have learnt the languages, and ordains them to be ministers. Well, what
do they do? Why, they baptize the children, the young children, and sprinkle a little wa-
ter in their faces, and by this they make the child a Christian as they say, and for so doing
the parents must give the priest four pence or a groat: indeed, this is an easy way of mak-
ing Christians for a groat! And how do they do this? Their own Catechism tells us, The
priest says to the child: “What is thy name?” The child answers, Thomas, James, Mary,
&c. Well, and “who gave thee this name?” Ans.—“My godfathers and godmothers in my
baptism, whereby I was made a member of Christ.” This is brave, to be a member of
Christ. Who would not have a little water sprinkled in their faces? And “what did your
godfathers and mothers then for you?” Ans.—“They did promise and vow three things in
my name: 1. That I should renounce the Devil and all his works.” &c. Ay! did they so? This
is brave. Well, what did they promise more? “Secondly, that I should keep God’s holy will
and commandments,” &c. And yet, in contradiction to this, they plead for sin term of life,
and say they can’t keep God’s commandments in this life. Why, this is strange, that god-
fathers and mothers should promise what they believe and can’t perform. Do they thus
promise? Yes! they do. But this is strange, that their God should need a godfather and
mother. But, friends, our God is the true and living God, and hath no need of godfathers
and mothers. Well, and what do Presbyterians do? Why, they baptise their children also;
but, as I take it, they do not make use of godfathers or mothers, nor the cross. They have
thrown away that piece of popery. As to the Lord’s supper I shall be brief. The bread and
wine which they receive and call the Lord’s supper, goes in at the mouth and into the
draught, and profits nothing. They call it a sign, yea, and an empty sign it is. But by these ways and forms the hirelings deceive the people. They will turn with every wind, and every turn that will answer their priests’ ends, as we have seen largely fulfilled in our day."

On November 24, 1702, Sheriff Cardale was empowered by the court to execute a warrant issued for Bownas’s arrest. Less than one week later the scene shifted to Flushing, where Bownas traveled on November 29 to attend New York’s “half-yearly meeting, which was very large, Keith being expected there,”

when the meeting was fully set the Sheriff came with a very large company, all armed, some with guns, others with pitchforks; others, swords, halberds, clubs, &c.; as if they should meet with great opposition in taking a poor, harmless, silly sheep out of the flock. The Sheriff stepping up into the gallery, took me by the hand and told me I was his prisoner. We pro’d and con’d a little time, and. . . . The sheriff allowed me to stay with my friends until the 5th day. . . . The meeting increased, there being near 2,000 the last day; but Keith did not come."

Cardale was patient; wisely allowing Bownas to come in his own good time, doubtless fearing the incitement of such a crowd by an abrupt or violent arrest.

Apparently, the crowd did not diminish by the time the careful sheriff arrived in Jamaica with his prisoner. Threat of mob action was perceived great by the authorities. “I appeared at Jamaica before four Justices,” wrote Bownas. “A great crowd of people were deprived of an opportunity of hearing my examination, for want of a large hall, which they might have had,” he continued in a sarcastic vein, “but by reason of the cold [that is, popular resentment in the streets] the Justices would not go there. They wrote a mittimus [arrest warrant], ordering the sheriff to safely keep in the common goal of Queens Co. Samuel Bownas, charged with speaking scandalous lies of and reflections against the Church of England.” Bownas remained a prisoner in Jamaica for three months, after which “a court was held. The judges came, attended with much company, in great pomp, with trumpets and other music before them. The grand jury were called over, a very uncommon charge given them, and on retiring a bill was sent them. They had also before them sundry evidence [prepared by Bownas] to set Bradford’s evidence aside.”

When the court met on February 29, 1703, James Clement was one of twenty-two members of a grand jury that included several Quakers and woodworking artisans. But Clement was by far the most vocal and memorable, so far as Bownas was concerned. “The Jury being asked what business they had to lay before the Court, presented the bill against me indorsed Ignoramus:

The Judge was very angry. . . . On the Judge [Chief Justice Bridges] demanding their reasons for not finding a bill, James Clement, a bold man and skilled in law, answered: “We
are sworn to keep the Queen’s secrets, our fellows’ and our own.” The Judge replied:
“Now, Mr. Wiseman speaks. You are not so sworn, and I could find it in my heart to lay
you by the heels, and a fine on your brethren.” Clement retorted that neither Grand nor
Petit Jurors are to be menaced with threats of stocks or fines, but they are to act freely to
the best of their judgement on the evidence before them. Now, the Judge finding that he
had not children to deal with, began to flatter, and requested the Jury to take back the bill
and resume consideration on it. On this the Jury was in judgement divided, but at last all
consented. Next morning the Judge asked the Forman [Richard Cornell]: “How find you
the bill?” Ans.—“As yesterday.” The Judge then charged the Jury with obstructing justice.
“Why?” said Clement; “because we can’t be of the same mind as the Court! We would
have you know that we desire nothing but justice.” The Clerk called over the Jury singly
to show their reasons. Some refused to say more than: “That’s our verdict.” Others said:
“How unreasonable for the Court to try to perjure the Jury by revealing their secrets in the
face of the country!”

In the heated and sarcastic dialogue between Chief Justice Bridges and Mr. Wise-
man, it is difficult not to perceive in the habitually secretive Clement’s overt and sub-
versive role as Mr. Wiseman, the Long Island survival of Palissy’s ironic “pauvre artisan
sans lettres.” It may be that Chief Justice Bridges’s use of such figurative and rhetori-
cal speech was merely an angry response to Clement’s putative reputation as a local
know-it-all. Be that as it may, we have no evidence that Bridges was even aware of
Clement’s existence before the County Clerk called the grand jury into session. To be
sure however, it is absolutely certain that Clement’s occupation as a carpenter and
joiner was listed by the clerk, so Judge Bridges undoubtedly saw a “poor uneducated
artisan,” “boldly” standing before him in court to elucidate his reading of the common
law—hence, Mr. Wiseman. Most un-Palissian, however, was the jury’s open challenge
in finding the charge Ignoramus, to block the extension of the state’s authority to the
hinterlands. With the one exception early in his career when Palissy openly expressed
his Protestant beliefs to the local authorities in Saintes (the potter’s openness nearly
cost him his life), the “humble” Palissy tended to mask his contempt for the ignorance
of authority in the indirect, flattering, and exorbitant language of patronage. This
Clement found unnecessary in Jamaica.

The Palissian denunciation by Clement and his peers on the grand jury of the
learned ignorance of arbitrary authority, was delivered from the ancient, experiential
wisdom of the practical, natural artisan. Refugee tradesmen such as Clement kept es-
sential secrets hidden, just as did the soul of nature. This competition between local
and central authority in Jamaica, extended to the ultimate resolution of the Bownas
controversy. The grand jury’s defiance of the court’s desire that jurors return a bill in-
dicating just cause for prosecution, and the Huguenot joiner James Clement’s vigor-
ous defense (with other jurors) of the right to secrecy from the state, “angered the Judge so that he adjourned the Court for six weeks, and ordered the prisoner to be kept closer than before, on account of crimes and misdemeanors of the most dangerous consequence, as tending to subvert Church and State, and threatening to send me [Bownas] to London.”

In its desire to punish Bownas and warn his supporters, the court’s anger led to the construction of an oppressively small, isolated rustic prison, reminiscent of the one occupied by Elias Neau in France (see fig. 9.7). This parallel would not have been lost on Huguenots, Quakers, and “other people” on Long Island whose families had been the victims of religious oppression; nor would Samuel Bownas’s final refuge in artisanal production while a prisoner of the spirit have been lost on the many craftsmen living among these sectarian groups:

I was now put up in a small room made of logs, which had been protested against as an unlawful prison, and my friends denied coming to me. I appealed to the Governor [Lord Cornbury], but all in vain. Not wanting to be chargeable to my friends I applied to a Scotch churchman, Charles Williams, to let me have tools and teach me to make shoes. By night I finished one shoe, and next day the other, and made such improvement as to earn 15 shillings a week, and thus diverted body and mind, and had plenty of money.

Under painful pressure in which the body and spirit (or “body and mind”) enter a sort of crucible, Palissy the Huguenot artisan reinvented himself as a preacher and Bownas the Quaker preacher mastered artisanry. The double roles become almost interchangeable in the literature of the history and martyrlogy of artisanal sectarianism, violent oppression of heterodoxy by the state, and ultimately secret refuge in the shadows. Just as Palissy imagined his spirit to be impregnated by the Neoplatonic soul of nature that planted the seeds of unity and recreation in the fragmentation of his besieged body, thus enabling the potter to communicate silently through the material language that emerged from his obstetric craft at the moment words failed or were choked off by absolutism, so, too, Samuel Bownas, silenced and isolated in a “small room” as an arbitrary prisoner of “Church and State,” produced shoes in his enforced “confinement . . . and thus diverted body and mind.” Was Bownas’s curious pattern of making one shoe by night and the other by day a metaphor for conjunction of macrocosm and microcosm? Following material-holiness themes that animate spiritual artisanry in Palissy, Fludd, and Hogarth, had the now isolated Bownas “withdrawn from the multitude . . . [to] perform very great actions and . . . direct them toward a felicitous climax and issue”? Indeed, skill became his path to spiritual and material security; the besieged oppression of Bownas’s body and soul was transmuted and hence reborn in the purification of materials. And, in the end, he “had plenty of money.” Even (or, perhaps I should say especially) in prison, natural artisanal skill learned from God.
through Nature and the intermediary of the soul and crafted wisely in secrecy, privacy, and isolation, was transformed into redemption and cash.

In October 1703, after a year in prison, the judge offered Samuel Bownas his freedom if he paid the jailer’s fees. He refused to acquiesce despite his cash reserves—a reward for patience, work, and steadfastness in adversity that he would not turn over to his persecutors—but he was released from his Long Island prison after Friends paid the charges. Upon Bownas’s release, he returned to his Long Island ministry, and “he now visited every corner . . . and had very large open meetings.”

But tensions remained high between the Church of England and the Quakers and their sectarian collaborators. Almost as high as in the 1650s, when Stuyvesant persecuted sectarians in the name of the officially authorized Dutch Reformed Church. One can clearly see why New York City Huguenots remained vital to the Quakers’ economic and religious prospects in the colony. The Huguenots were the Quakers’ artisanal bridge to Manhattan’s rich material culture. Inroads had been made since Stuyvesant’s notorious prohibition of sects in New Netherlands. Quaker Meetings were now quietly held in private New York houses, while Lord Cornbury and his successors as governor usually looked the other way. But the controversy over Samuel Bownas poisoned the atmosphere between the Church of England and the Quakers and set up new boundaries against sectarianism in the city, which were not lifted completely until after the American Revolution.

In 1699, three years before the Bownas controversy, Thomas Story was amazed to hold a Meeting “at the House of one Thomas Roberts, a convinced man,” because it took place “in the Heart of the City.” After all, “the Testimony of Truth hath seldom any great Prevalence in that Place.” And yet there was still space available for optimism and light: “the Room,” at Thomas Roberts’ house, “was large, and all about the Doors and Windows were full of People.” By 1702, while Bownas was making shoes in prison, Story’s hope for effecting a spiritual convergence between western Long Island and New York City lessened. His spiritual light was nearly extinguished “in that hard and dark Place.” As Story wrote in 1704, “Samuel Bownas [was] still a Prisoner for the Testimony of the Truth, by the lawless arbitrary Imposition of that Government under the Administration of Edward Hyde, commonly called Lord Cornbury, an unreasonable and unjust Persecutor.” As a result, Story felt persecuted and threatened by Cornbury as well, and in advance of a Meeting that took place in New York later that year, he wrote in his journal:

I went to New-York; and the Day after had a good and comfortable Meeting there; and though I had heard, two months before I went from home, that the Lord Cornbury had threatened, that if ever I should come into his Government he would confine me, for some Words falsely alleged to have been spoken by me in my Testimony, some time be-
fore in Maryland (with which he had no business at New-York) about the National Church of England, her Sacrements, Order, and Catechism; yet I did not go one step out of my way, nor at all Shun him about it, either in my going to New York, or now in my return[ing] [to Long Island], though the common talk in these Parts was, that a Warrant was lodged in the Sheriff’s Hand against me, at whose house I was several Times, yet the LORD preserved me free.172

Samuel Clement of Flushing

Of five sons remembered in James Clement’s will, only Samuel Clement (born ca. 1686–died after June 1760), a carpenter and joiner who lived and worked all his long life in Flushing, is known to have carried on his father’s trade.173 Moreover, Samuel shared his father’s ambiguous relationship with Friends. He was arguably a Quaker sympathizer—all his kin and network of association were Friends or related to known members of the Flushing Meeting—but no records for Samuel Clement are available other than the census of 1698, and his presence on a militia roll in 1715.174 While Samuel Clement lived and worked in Flushing at least until sometime after 1760 (the year in which he appraised Samuel Lawrence’s household inventory), the secular and religious record is virtually mute concerning his activities. We cannot even be sure of his wife’s name.175

If Samuel Clement were formally a “convinced” Quaker, he would appear periodically in the Friends’ records. Like James Clement, however, Samuel was not known to be an outward member of any other church or sect. Also, like his father, we cannot assume Samuel’s resistance to oaths, or his formal absence from the Meeting’s records (though probably not the Meeting itself)—and indeed his decision not to belong to another Church—connoted lack of religiosity. The inverse may have been true for both James and Samuel Clement. Ever since the sixteenth century, artisan refugees with Clement’s Huguenot background had privileged private piety expressed in secret as material culture, and this may have held true in his spiritual and material life in Flushing. Is it possible that private individuals such as James and Samuel Clement depended on their wives to perform the public duties of communal devotion, including formal membership in the sect? Given this intermediary position, would Quaker women in a split household serve as go-betweens?

 Appropriately, the only substantive historical knowledge of Samuel Clement’s existence in the world is derived from material sources. By accident of survival—but above all because material culture sometimes reveals itself through an unexpected fragment of writing—Samuel Clement’s name and town have been harnessed to two articles of early eighteenth-century joinery that provide an index to the vocabulary of
woodworking and artisanal thought common to the French Quakers of western Long Island.

If the utterly unique inscription in dark ink announcing (to whom?): “This was made in ye Year 1726 / By me Samuel Clement of flushing / June ye[ ]” (fig. 16.16) had not been inscribed in an elegant, learned hand on the inside back board behind the lower central drawer in the base of the high chest of drawers in figure 16.17. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware. The inlay on this drawer resembles an open book, perhaps suggesting an appropriate “cover” for the author’s hidden signature?

Figure 16.16. Samuel Clement, Flushing, Long Island, June 1726. Inscription secreted behind the lower central drawer in the base of the high chest of drawers in figure 16.17. Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware. The inlay on this drawer resembles an open book, perhaps suggesting an appropriate “cover” for the author’s hidden signature?

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ing valued at £4. Clement also inventoried “1 chest Drawers,” together with a complete set of “1 Doz: Leather chairs,” as well as a tablecloth and a few napkins, all appraised at a little more than £6.176 Were these leather chairs made in New York City by Le Chevalier and upholstered by Faneuil?

The high chest (or “chest Drawers”) (fig. 16.17), accompanying dressing table, and looking glass (now lost) represented the “mixed composition” that resulted from a Hogarthian dialogue between the innovation of novel international Anglo-French styles and prominent seventeenth-century Netherlandish forms that had been used traditionally to organize and contain valuable textiles. Such traditional forms remained popular and functional as signifiers of ethnic and family continuity in “Dutch” New York, at least until the influx of cosmopolitan Huguenot artisans from Aunis-Saintonge joined forces with their predecessors from the northern provinces of France. After that, these migrating Huguenot craft networks embarked on the transformation of material culture in New York and surrounding towns, just as they had done successfully in metropolitan London.

The chest of drawers became a likely focal point of change because it was considered an innovative, “English” furniture form, particularly in the pluralistic context of seventeenth-century New York, where such seemingly subtle distinctions of style and structure took on added significance. In Boston, the earliest chests of drawers were introduced to anglicizing elites by craftsmen from London—where the new form was already in fashion—sometime between the late 1630s and the early 1660s.177 After the English takeover of New Amsterdam in 1664, the chest of drawers began to replace the Dutch kas among the rising Anglo-French elite, but for both symbolic and practical reasons, the kas (a type of large, freestanding upright cupboard with one or perhaps two exposed drawers at the bottom, found throughout Europe) (fig. 16.18), endured until the nineteenth century as an identifiable regional artifact among “Dutch” and other Continental inhabitants. However, as I argue elsewhere, virtually all the diverse European inhabitants of New Netherlands and New York owned kasten, and even inventories of British settlers list a kas or two in the household. This was invariably the case when English colonists married Netherlandish women, when the kas held the bride’s trousseau of household linens and fabric. The kas identified this property as matrilineal, and it would remain with the woman throughout her lifetime. Despite their monolithic appearance, most kasten were easily disassembled, and hence mobile. Such massive, locked “cases” (presumably only women in the maternal line possessed a key) were intended for security and to keep special belongings separate from other property brought into the marriage through the wife’s family, which might be claimed in common by the husband or male children. Women could use, transport, or bequeath the kas and its contents they pleased.178

This begs important questions about gendered material culture and its manifesta-
tions in power relations, which cannot be answered here: were chests of drawers perceived by some subgroups of New York women as threatening novelties that unnaturally extended the boundaries of the traditional male domain? Did visible drawers demystify, reduce, reclassify, reorganize, or finally appropriate separate space formerly available to contain female possessions in the household? Answers are not yet forthcoming, but because of competition from kasten, the metropolitan London chest of drawers, which performed the same practical function as the kas but relied on the
innovation of a visible system of drawers that subdivided storage to organize fabrics and other accumulated items overtly appeared more frequently in the households of New York’s Anglo-French (or Quaker-French) elite only in the 1680s. This may have reflected a lower percentage of English and Dutch intermarriage and higher aspirations to anglicization among non-British residents.

But if few early references are available for chests of drawers in New York, while many may be found for the “kas,” “kast,” or “Dutch cupboard,” it is telling that the earliest record of a chest of drawers being made in the colony was noted in John Bowne’s account book. In 1685, the year of the Revocation, Bowne hired the joiner William [Denears?; also Dener and Deneyes] to build “one Chist of draw,” arguably similar to the kaslike form from New York illustrated in figure 16.19. Bowne paid a hefty £1.13s., a substantial amount for furniture without textiles built into the cost. This artisan was not from Flushing, as Bowne paid for shipping as well. Unfortunately, William’s surname is barely legible through Bowne’s unusually dense scrawl, but it is suggestive of the Huguenot de Nyse (or Denys) family of Flatbush. This family comprised a formidable clan of carpenters and joiners originating in La Rochelle, where “Denys” is one of the most common regional surnames. The first of the de Nyses emigrated via Utrecht to New Netherlands about 1638, an unusually early date for a southwestern origin. Many family members worked as carpenters or joiners in the western half of Long Island and Staten Island during the 1680s, though no William has yet come to light.

It should come as no surprise, therefore, that the high chest of drawers and dressing table Clement made en suite in 1726 were hybrids of past and present patterns, forms peculiar to the region. The outlines of kasten thus remain visible as a palimpsest emerging from around the periphery of Samuel Clement’s high chest. Memory of the older form is asserted in the large, overhanging cornice and wide, horizontal stance. A remnant of the gigantic kas was also framed visibly in construction of the tiny dressing table. Its “carcass” was joined to show the linked endgrain pins of Clement’s distinctively sharp dovetails. Clement clearly used these joints decoratively: placing them as centripetal pendants on the object’s two front corners. This idiosyncratic construction is common to kasten with western Long Island and northern New Jersey histories, where kasten continued to be made into the late eighteenth century. This method also survives on at least one other unsigned high chest attributed to Clement.

Unmistakably of Flushing manufacture also are the heavily chamfered stretchers on the dressing table, which recall the meetinghouse bracket and the wainscot chair. Such chamfering is very unusual on dressing table stretchers. It has been identified only on artifacts attributed to the Clement family or with strong histories of ownership at the west end of Long Island. The robust turnings and flared edges of the legs on the high chest of drawers are also very characteristic of the New York French-Quaker style.
Here, the Clement artifacts harnessed the naturalistic three-dimensionality common to the Huguenot articulation of ornament on woodwork to the two-dimensional patterns of British ornamentation, which Palissy termed “artificial” and “unnatural.” This emerged from the refugee affinity for the grotesque designs of sixteenth-century Italian grottoes and architecture. No wonder the slippery refugee Huguenot artisans were despised and emulated by London’s native English craftsmen.

The cosmopolitan Samuel Lawrence must have found Clement’s perfectly drawn
baluster attenuated and its large molded disc and inverted flared vase “confortingly” (to borrow Story’s word) reminiscent of baroque elements that his Laurent mercantile ancestors had seen everywhere on the Île de Ré and La Rochelle. The pattern was established when these same French sources were used for the stacked baluster tables made by the French-Quaker network in New York City. At the same time, however, there is no denying the resonance of this southwestern regional dialect with vernacular turned work seen in baroque northern French and Flemish furniture. After all, James Clement was likely from Tournay, not Saintonge. Yet by Samuel Clement’s time, the new post-Revocation artisanal elite led by the likes of Faneuil and Lott had infiltrated and appropriated the old northern French and Flemish style—keeping some parts of it and jettisoning others—just as they had done to the old French–New Amsterdam craft networks.

The most effusive surviving example of this cosmopolitan style as it converged with Quaker life in the town of Flushing may be seen in a small stand with Samuel Clement’s characteristic baluster: the signature Clement vase, inverted and doubled top and bottom in a mirror image, a tour de force of New-World French baroque turning (fig. 16.20). The conceptual framework of the mirror image—a classic Huguenot conceit, deployed by refugees in mediums from ceramics to silver and gold—was at

the core of Palissy’s cosmological use of live cast molds, virtual impressions of the natural world. So it is possible that Hogarth may have paid homage to this practice of doubling in palindromes and shadow worlds on and behind Hog Lane. Perhaps the extravagant scrolled and chamfered legs at the base, made in the fluid context of artisanal pluralism, were products of an alchemist’s practical intuition (if not outright knowledge) of the plasticity of wood and other materials as they grew from seeds in the subterranean shadows of the natural world. Less speculative however, as we shall see, is the probability that Clement’s expansive sense of the plasticity of his raw materials was linked to his exceptional skill as a calligrapher. In Clement’s work, writing and artisanship communicated closely.

While it was possible to construct this partial inventory of Samuel Clement’s very personal bricolage of diverse transatlantic and local material languages, how did his performance in making the high chest signify social and religious communication with people in Flushing? If the mirror image astonishes as a fragmentary conceit on the stand, then what results if the impulse was expanded like a genealogy, to build and contain the force of cosmological unity on the high chest? What distinguishes Samuel Clement’s high chest from others outside the New York region is the binary subdivision of the drawers by use of light and dark inlay. This doubling effect was ramified by the superimposed pattern of hardware (shining like étincelles), a brass skeleton applied in the form of an exposed armature over the drawer fronts. The inlay gives the false appearance of separation. First, we confront the disguised double drawer, but appearances dissolve in hidden monistic unity after the drawers open to one receptacle inside. There, pulled from deep shadow, the effects of a life were contained and stored for future presentation.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the word “inlay” itself suggests the perfect material for refugee artisans in terms of both chronology and meaning. In 1598, inlay meant “concealment or preservation,” as in, “to inlay or worke in among other things.” Inlay also had strong linguistic or commemorative meanings in the seventeenth century, as in “Inscriptions and Epigraphs, cut, writ, inlaid, or engraven upon the Sepulchres.” “[F]rom the worlds Common having sever’d thee, / Inlaid thee, neither to be seen, nor see,” John Donne’s “Elegie VII” (1631) reads. However, to infer the metaphysical operations laid bare in In patientia suavitas in 1628 (see fig. 9.1) from this remarkable etymology, taken together with the formal arrangement of inlay and ornament on a chest of drawers made in Flushing in 1726, will require more work. At the very least, if that “opening up” in 1628 resulted from violence of religious war, then by 1726, an analogous process occurred daily in the domestic solitude of Samuel Lawrence’s French-Quaker home.

That is one reason why “skeleton” appropriately describes the unusual disposition of expensive brass hardware imported from London on Clement’s high chest: a total
of sixteen “drops” (handles) and backplates, and five “escutcheons” (lock plates), thirty-seven individual units of molded and stamped metal overall. In the same way that Leonardo’s Vetruvian man mapped mathematical proportions onto the cosmological human body, and, more important for our purposes here, that the figure of man “microcosmus” centers all of Fludd’s great universal cosmologies, the hardware skeleton on Samuel Clement’s high chest of drawers maps the figure, spine, and head of the human torso, emerging as a microcosm from within the shadows of the double inlay.

But, following Fludd, this embodiment of form was not merely an exercise in the mathematics of proportion. The superimposed body emerges as an inextricable part of the material of the chest itself. Indeed, the shining brass armature stands in the nexus as the intermediary between matter and spirit, as a synthesis of both. To open the body of the high chest was to reveal the soulishness of its materials and construction; that is, of its artisan and perhaps its patron as well. As Fludd counseled, to look wisely at patterns of dots is to use experience to see beyond confusion on the surface to a place where beauty, truth, and unity are stored “in a chest” for use. This sense of body-spirit interaction inside and outside the material is also present in the dressing table, absent an all-important looking glass. This space of absence is decisive in its disfigurement of the early modern reality. For in 1726, to sit at a dressing table pondering one’s image in the looking glass floating above its top was to see a vital reflection of one’s upper torso “inlaid” (that is, set “in among”) the material life of the furniture itself. The body in Clement’s high chest was thus simultaneously light and dark, bifurcated and unified, spirit and matter, invisible and visible, as were Clement and Lawrence themselves.

Spiritual Life in the Material World

Material-holiness synthesis was a familiar part of everyday life for Huguenots and Quakers, as it was for many other sectarian groups with roots deep in Germanic pietism. Palissy spoke for Saintongeais Huguenot artisans in this vernacular. But the Quaker leader George Fox also thought deeply about this subject, writing that “the outward body is not the body of death and sin; the saints’ bodies are the members of Christ and the temples of the living God.” Above all, of course, Fox stressed Quaker doctrines of bodily perfectibility in everyday life against the orthodox Calvinist emphasis on physical corruption and decline.

Having found truth in the conversion experience, “children of the light” found perfect balance, calm, and vision. “Comfort” was achieved where no essential separation between spirit and matter in the natural world was perceptible. In this sense, every Quaker had the potential to possess the third eye of the geomancers. Historians of early modern science, especially Margaret C. Jacob, have shown how “inner light doc-
trines of the Quakers bore no small resemblance to the pantheism of the freethinkers,” defined, ultimately, as a cosmology that unified matter and spirit:

the pantheistic materialism of seventeenth-century radicals owed its origin to the magical and naturalistic view of the universe which Christian churchmen and theologians had labored for centuries to defeat. At the heart of this natural philosophy lay the notion that nature is a sufficient explanation or cause for the workings of man and his physical environment. In other words, the separation of God from creation, creature from creator, of matter from spirit, so basic to Christian orthodoxy and such a powerful justification for social hierarchy and even for absolute monarchy, crumbles in the face of animistic and naturalistic explanations. God does not create ex nihilo; nature simply is and all people (and their environment) are part of this greater All.\(^{185}\)

Jacob’s enterprise argues that sectarian passion for direct, emotional communication with the prelapsarian light of the Holy Spirit had the potential for universality. So, despite the desire for exclusivity on the part of scientists such as Howes and others, natural-philosophical practice as part of everyday religion was not exclusive and can be understood as an effective way in which Quakerism engaged and converged with other spiritualist and pietistic sects in colonial New York. Calling up the memory of the light, in order to see the world “with a single Eye, in the unprejudiced Love of Truth,” was the subject of dialogues with large numbers of “other people”—sectarians as well as heterodox Calvinists—who attended meetings in the Long Island Sound region to hear Story preach.\(^{186}\) Examples are everywhere in the journal. At a Meeting in Taunton in 1704, one auditor challenged Thomas Story to reveal: “How do you know that it is not a Spirit of Delusion which you are guided by?” Story replied by analogy. “Then I asked him”:

“By what medium does thou discover the Sun in the Open Heavens? . . .” Then I continued and Said, “That as the Body of the Sun is not to be seen or known but by his own Light, and fully seen by that; neither is the Spirit of Truth, which is Divine, eternal, essential Light, known, or knowable but by himself; but is self-evident unto every Eye which he hath opened though the Children of Darkness of this world do not know Him: He who believeth hath the Witness in himself.”\(^{187}\)

How did the artisan Samuel Clement, an informal (or secret) Quaker, with his Huguenot family history, and his friend and patron Samuel Lawrence, who had a similar background but had long since acknowledged his membership in the Society of Friends, understand this complex process of cosmological synthesis and reunification of spirit and matter? How did they imagine that millennial experience was crafted into an article of material life for everyday use in the household? In other words, how do we elucidate the possibility that the dualistic pattern of inlay and brasses on the high
Thomas Story was a regular guest in the Bowne and Lawrence households between 1699 and 1705, so it is safe to assume that the Clement and Lawrence families both had an intimate knowledge of his teachings. Because both artisan and patron came of age by hearing him preach at local meetings, the very specific language of Thomas Story’s conversion to the “truth” provides an opening onto how the cosmological framework of Flushing Quakerism was constructed by craftsmen in 1726. As Story made clear by making it prominent in his journal, and since his aim was conversion of “other people” to the truth, what could be more natural than to repeat the story of his own conversion experience at every Meeting on Long Island? Indeed, when the moment came in England in 1689 and he finally witnessed the truth unified and whole, Story drew an image with words of a pictograph that he might have seen in Fludd’s great *Utriusque cosmi . . . historia*; or, for that matter, in a ceramic grotto crawling with “tiny” creatures constructed by Palissy:

> From henceforth I desired to know nothing but the Lord, and to feed on that Bread of Life which he himself alone can give, and did not fail to minister daily, and oftner than the Morning. And yet, of his own Free-Will and Goodness, he was pleased to open my Understanding, by Degrees, into all the needful Mysteries of his Kingdom, and the Truths of his Gospel; in the Process whereof he exercized my Mind in Dreams, in Visions, in Revelations, in Prophecies, in divine Openings and Demonstrations.

> Also, by his eternal and divine Light, Grace, Spirit, Power and Wisdom; by his word, he taught, instructed, and informed my Mind; and by Temptations also, and Provings, which he suffer’d Satan to minister; that I might see my own Weakness and Danger, and prove, to the utmost, the Force and Efficacy of that divine Love and Truth, by which the LORD, in his boundless Goodness and Mercy, has thus visited my Soul.

> By all Things I saw and heard in his wonderful Works of Creation; by my own Mind and Body, and the Connection and Duration of them as one for a Time; by their Separation, and the distinct Existence of each by itself in very different States and Modes, as if they had never been in Union, or composed one Man; by the differing States, Ranks, and Understandings of the Children of Men, their Superiority, Inferiority, Offenses and Aids, the Motive of every natural man to act regarding only himself.

> By the Animals, Reptiles, and Vegetables of the Earth and Sea, Their Ranks and Subservences one to another, and all of them to the Children of Men.

> By the Sun, Moon, and Stars, the innumerable host of Heaven, and infinite Worlds, and that boundless Space that they move and roll in, without interfering, or in any way annoying one another, as all depending one upon another, as Meet Helps and Coadjutors;
all connected without a Chasm, and all govern’d by the steady Laws, which the Almighty
Word and Fiat that gave them Being, and formed them, placed them under, and settled
them in.

But, as the Diadem of all, and the only true and certain Way, when it pleased the Most
High, by the Effusion of his own Goodness, to reveal in mye the Son of his Love, even
his Wisdom and Power, by whom he design’d and effected all Things, then I was taught
to fear him; then I was taught to love him; then, O! then, and not aright till then, was my
Soul instructed and informed indeed.

But these secret Operations were confin’d to my own Breast, so that no one knew any-
thing of them; only an alteration was observ’d in me, but the Cause of it was not seen . . .
I declined the public Worship.\textsuperscript{188}

Story’s reinvention of the divine knowledge of Nature “by Degrees, into all the
needful Mysteries,” as a Quaker variation of Fludd’s monistic universe created a viable
context for pluralistic cultural interaction and the simultaneous maintenance of per-
sonal, material, and spatial boundaries. His ecstatic vision of a universe teeming with
the fecundity of animated life on elemental earth, in the sea, and in the air, encircling
one another—like the concentric orbs of Flood’s cosmologies (see fig. 2.3), or Bruno’s
memory diagrams—reimagines the constellations of the “Sun, Moon, and Stars, the
innumerable host of heaven, and infinite worlds, and that boundless Space that they
move and roll in, without interfering, or any way annoying one another . . . all con-
nected without a chasm.” This seamless connection was the bond and knot of the soul,
so it was internal, not to be found in “public worship.” Thomas Story’s international
mission, therefore, was to perceive a universal community with others like himself, for
whom “these secret Operations were confin’d to my own Breast, so that no one knew
anything of them . . . the Cause of it was not seen.” To see and hear from the per-
spective of tiny creatures below the tower (beneath the chaos of Babel) was reason
enough for Quaker belief in the power of silence and the quiet, secure discourse of
craft, like Bownas and Palissy before him. Story’s was indeed a geomantic project, an
alchemist’s task: to dissolve surface confusions and see the profound and secret truths
in order to become a “Coadjutor” (or magus); spiritual and material witness to “an Al-
teration . . . observ’d in me,” in other people. To effect a convergence of everything
alive in the spirit and remake the world with this shared “Wisdom and Power.”

\textbf{Inner Writing}

The aim of Story’s mission in the Long Island Sound region was to reconstruct in New
York society “all the things I saw and heard in his wonderful Works of Creation;
by my own Mind and Body, and the Connection and Duration of Them as one for a
Figure 16.21. Page of exercises from Étienne de Bléry, Les Elemens; ou, premieres instructions de la jeunesse (Paris, 1702). Courtesy Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin. This page for teaching young children penmanship is from the section entitled: “New examples of writing of singular beauty by Estienne de Blegny Master Writer in Paris.” Compare the scroll behind the horse’s rear with Samuel Clement’s T in figure 16.16 and the scroll foot on the tea table in figure 16.22.
Time.” This was not to demolish the all-important independence of each individual creature. Individuals moved like industrious atoms, each in its own orbit, “by their Separation, and the distinct Existence of each by itself, in very different States and Modes, as if they had never been in Union, or composed one Man.” Thus, unlike the elder Winthrop’s model of the body, these flexible parts could function separately or connected to the whole, as the universal spirit moved them, all according to God’s plan. “Secret operations” of personal and communal experience converge in the form, function and material life of Samuel Clement’s high chest. Here was a pluralistic body of diverse moveable parts. Clement tells us so himself, in the ornate language of the artifact’s most secret “inlaid” element: its deftly hidden inscription. “This was made in ye Year 1726,” he wrote in that baroque scrivener’s hand, “By me Samuel Clement of Flushing” (fig. 16.16).

This fragmentary inscription carried the weight of layers of personal history and meaning for Samuel Clement, and he chose his words with care. I say personal, because the inscription was hidden. It is difficult to read a label of colonial advertising or a public warranty of workmanship here, since no patron was expected to know of its existence. Because his difficult and controlling father had died just the year before, and because this signature and inscription are unique in Clement’s oeuvre, it is difficult not to read this as a sort of declaration of independence by a subjugated son and apprentice. This was made “By me Samuel Clement.” Still, such loaded sentiments are never unambiguous; neither, to be sure, are language or motivation. The completion of this complex project was at the same time a mark of pride in his father’s training, as if to say to himself, here is proof that I have mastered the family craft and am the next Clement in line, here in Flushing. Remember, Samuel was one of the favored sons gifted in James’s will, so it is difficult to infer hard feelings on the face of things.

Much easier to see was Clement’s obvious pride in mastery of elegant and learned penmanship, the other family trade. Here, too, was a hand tool skill, passed from master to apprentice (or father to son) with the help of penmanship manuals widely available in the Atlantic world since the sixteenth century. On the basis both of its intended audience and illustrated plates, one influential manual by Étienne de Blégny (active Paris, 1666–99), *Les Elemens; ou, Premieres instructions de la jeunesse* (Paris, 1691), seems particularly suggestive, given the relationship between James and Samuel (fig. 16.21). De Blégny dedicated his book to “fathers of the family,” to help instruct their young sons in practical application of what he called the “principes des lettres.” This immensely popular manual went through numerous editions between 1691 and 1751, making *Instructions de la jeunesse* widely available throughout the Atlantic world. Did James, like so many other fathers, use this particular manual as Samuel’s writing primer? If James Clement’s single handwritten entry in the Bowne account books is indicative of his awkward skill as a scribe, then Samuel Clement far surpassed his
father in this craft. In the shadows of his work, Samuel showed his own brand of “inner writing”; that is to say, his confidence and personal mastery of the hidden unity of material life, in private, by skillfully synthesizing the arts of the scribe and the joiner.

On first glance at the inscription, what appears to be an elaborate calligraphic T doubles as a powerfully drawn French baroque scroll. This flamboyant letter may have been copied directly from the exercise illustrated in figure 16.21, with particular attention to the scroll behind the hindquarters of the capering stallion; indeed, the scroll appears to echo the rearing horse’s back leg and hoof. The deep chamfers “of flushing” reappear here; stroked heavily along the upper pair of ascending and descending marks—Hogarth’s lines of beauty—while the masterful volute at bottom, reminiscent of Palissy’s snail, was performed without risk by using Clement’s joiner’s compass. Perceived as something other than a T, this collection of scrivener’s marks also matches the “capering” foot of a tea table (fig. 16.22) made for the anglicized Dutchman Peter Schuyler in New York City or western Long Island in the same period as the high chest. Did Clement have a hand in its manufacture? Turned counterclockwise an imaginary ninety degrees (so that the bottom of the volute rests between the l in Samuel and the C in Clement), the T underwent another metamorphosis. Now it transformed into a scroll identical to those carved on the crest rail of the joined armchair (fig. 16.13), with drawknife work done in the tradition of the meetinghouse bracket. In the shadows of the work, writing and artisanry were “all connected without a Chasm.” Samuel Clement’s inscription, harnessed to a secret recess behind the “operation” of his high chest, was, like the soul of its maker, silent and eloquent at once.

Still, there is evidence that the specific language of Samuel Clement’s inscription had a transatlantic history in public as well as private life. In both the artisanal and the political sense, the message was both a pluralistic and hybridized construction. For Clement to write: “made . . . By me,” was an unusually formal method of framing a relatively common possessive sentence in English. The “me” seeming superfluous from this distance, though it might connote that “Samuel Clement” was his signature and not simply part of a declarative sentence about him. Here too, there are French antecedents. Furniture was rarely signed in eighteenth-century Aunis-Saintonge, or in the Poitou region, but if so, the artisan’s signature commonly followed “faite par moi” (made by me).

Closer to home, Samuel Clement’s inscription was the artisanal equivalent of the notarial inscription that ended the written text of the Flushing Remonstrance, the Quaker manifesto on Stuyvesant’s absolutism. This inscription read: “Written this 27 day of December, in the year 1657, by mee Edward Hart, Clericus.” James Clement would eventually succeed Edward Hart as town clerk of Flushing. So Samuel probably learned this idiosyncratic turn of phrase from his notarial father and adapted it to the inscription he hid inside his joinery: Samuel Clement’s own manifesto. Nature’s
ape had identified himself as an artisanal microcosm located at the celestial center “of flushing,” where “this was made in ye Year 1726 By me.”

Samuel Clement had thus constructed for a Quaker patron a Fluddian cosmology of his bodily and spiritual world in the material culture of a specific place and its relation to the universe as revealed with precision in a single synchronic moment. Such lucid moments of unity were also the goal of Palissy’s artisanry, mediated by his walks along the shore of the Charente River, where he heard the harmonies of Marot’s psalms.
sung by the seven earth spirits. Here, then, was the theater of memory in which Story could imagine were contained “all Things I saw and heard in his wonderful Works of Creation; by my own Mind and Body, and the Connection and Duration of Them as one for a Time.” Yet the Flushing Remonstrance codified as both social and political discourse the conceptual framework by which personal constructions of a pluralistic cosmos could take place and converge in colonial New York.

The Flushing Remonstrance (1657)

The Flushing Remonstrance is a crucial document of the multilayered history of the transatlantic struggles that pitted the interests of “orthodoxy” against vigorous response by sectarian dissent in the heterodox New Netherlands / New York colony. Official confessions—whether Dutch Reformed or Church of England—were on the defensive in the atmosphere of extensive religious privatization that prevailed throughout the Protestant world during the 1650s.190

Notions of the power of the Dutch Reformed Church to assert discipline in New Netherlands were mitigated by the social reality of life in a New World refugee culture filtered through the way stations of the Dutch Republic. Historians have estimated that while 37 percent of the population of the Dutch Republic belonged to the Calvinist Church in the 1640s, only 20 percent of New Netherlands’s colonists may have been formally Calvinist.191 The usefulness of this statistic is complicated by the diversity of personal experience, linguistic, and ethnic difference and the variety of religious practices among refugee colonists who called themselves “Calvinist.” Comparative scholarship on early modern Holland suggests that as early as the 1560s, in provincial Utrecht, 80 percent of the faithful actively and defiantly engaged in some form of heterodox lay piety, and often in Catholic backsliding.192 The Utrecht Synod inventoried slight improvement in discipline by 1606, when “the state” of eight provincial churches was evaluated. In the town of Houten, “The minister reported the dismal state of his church; few attended because of a former priest . . . who keeps watch on the inhabitants . . . and threatens them with damnation if they go to church . . . also inducing some inhabitants to stand by the church and to jeer at those who enter . . . [He] also showed certain sheep, etc., made of wax which the inhabitants even offered in church during service.” In Abcoude, the minister “complained about some assembly of Anabaptists. Also . . . the inhabitants often . . . take part in papist exercises held in certain houses.” And, in the town of Amerongen, the church “suffered from having been very badly ruined as a result of destruction inflicted by soldiers . . . the congregation also leaves the church when baptism is administered before the public prayer and general blessing; the superstitions associated with St. Cunerus’s Day are very detrimental . . . [and] the
schoolmaster teaches from books of all sorts, whatever comes to hand.” The same problem of the availability of heterodox books and their use in pedagogy by universalist minded schoolmasters plagued Montfoort, where, “though the schoolmaster is of the Reformed religion, he uses books of all sorts.”

Intense competition over the formal and spiritual boundaries of religion extended to New Netherlands. The West India Company tried hard to exert a moderating influence on those orthodox Dutch Reformed churchmen who wanted the New World to be the place where full conformity, then unattainable in the Netherlands, might finally be achieved. When Flushing was granted a town patent by Director-General Willem Kieft on October 10, 1645, the pragmatic West India Company, shepherding New Netherlands through its early development from an isolated fur trading outpost to a fledgling colonial society, was more concerned with attracting settlers than suppressing sectarianism. After all, the Netherlands itself swelled with refugees from war and religious intolerance. This signaled a culture to support the general program of colonization. As a result, both the directors and investors in the West India Company were especially concerned with the need to protect their investments by keeping the English at bay, in part by peopling the fluid frontier zone between Manhattan Island and southern coastal New England.

In ideal terms, the West India Company preferred to plant a uniform religious culture in New Netherlands. However, the need for a huge influx of settlers, not potential for sedition or subversion of authority by religious dissenters, was the primary agenda in the 1640s and 1650s. The directors understood that they were engaged in an alarmingly fragile and fluid religious situation that required flexibility on the part of their director-general. Kieft followed orders closely in the latitudinarian terms he offered in the first Flushing patent, which clearly stated that townspeople (much like burghers in some areas of the Dutch Republic) could expect a high level of freedom from interference by magistrates in New Amsterdam in the conduct of personal religious affairs. Residents, “would have and Enjoy the Liberty of Conscience, according to the Custome and manner of Holland, without molestacon or disturbance, from any Magistrate or Magistrates, or any other Ecclesiastcall Minister, that may pretend Jurisdiction over them.”

Nevertheless, “Liberty of Conscience” must not be misread as total. Officially, “free” public worship in New Netherlands meant Calvinist. The ambiguity was intentional; a strategy to privilege security of accommodation over risks of conflict. The unintended (but not necessarily unforeseen) consequence of this strategy was to encourage an increase in the defiant practice of religious interiority and privatization in New Netherlands, since “conscience” meant private “belief” extended to personal practice. By local custom and Company policy, director-generals were expected to “connive” (conniventie) or “wink at” (oogluijckinge) heterodoxy. In perceptual language that
Bernard Palissy, Robert Fludd, Samuel Bownas, Thomas Story, the Clements, and Hogarth all understood, authority agreed to see and overlook, simultaneously. Put another way, the relation of perception to authority was negotiable in New Netherlands. Problems arose when one of the conniving parties decided something seen was non-negotiable. Usually, this occurred when tacit rules were thought to be broken.

The physical existence of Kieft’s document, which came into the possession of John Bowne, would haunt Stuyvesant in the last two years of his term as director-general (1647–64). It allowed Bowne to describe himself and his Flushing “friends” as “oppressed” Christians to Company directors in Amsterdam in 1663, when he took James Clement as a bonded servant. Stuyvesant had seen the old rules that limited negotiable space, fostered by the intentional ambiguity of the Company’s use of “liberty of conscience,” expanded by sectarian practice to effectively neutralize his notion of what his masters meant by minimal orthodoxy and Church discipline. The established Church in parts of New Netherland was facing the same degree of disintegration as was then occurring deplorably in parts of Utrecht. For Stuyvesant, the Flushing Patent assumed the status of a radical disestablishmentarian manifesto, which transformed western Long Island into virtually open religious territory—or, at least, even more heterodox territory than before.

Pluralism and heterodoxy had always been present. No single political document was the instrument of change when it may simply have reflected the reality already present on the ground. Still, codification of its language of ambiguity toward personal religiosity and heterodoxy should not be underestimated as a force in the cultural development of this region and in the social self-selection of its immigrants. More than ever before, western towns were targets of opportunity for settlement and expansion by land-hungry sectarians. Pietists, dissenters, and seekers of every persuasion flooded unabated into Long Island from England and Europe, as well as diverse varieties of nonconformists from Massachusetts, Rhode Island, coastal Connecticut, and Pennsylvania.

In August 1657, already chafing at the restraint applied by the patent’s latitudinarian language, the famously choleric Stuyvesant, an orthodox Calvinist, was openly threatened by the arrival in New Amsterdam—“whither they had movings”—of five proselytizing English Quakers who had disembarked unexpectedly from an English ship called the Woodhouse, originally en route to Boston. The five English preachers were led off the boat on the East River shore by Robert Hodgson. He was followed by Richard Doudney, Sarah Gibbons, Mary Wetherhead, and Dorothy Waugh. Stuyvesant was strongly influenced by orthodox clergy in the Dutch Republic. His mentors back home had worked feverishly to fill the pews and suppress the sects and Catholicism throughout the seventeenth century, and he was already anxious over the relatively low numbers of Calvinists who attended the official Church of New Nether-
lands. Still, representatives of the group were received graciously by Stuyvesant, who appeared at first “moderate both in words and actions.” When two of the women attempted to preach in the streets of the city, however, they were arrested for disturbing the peace and imprisoned for eight days. Finally, they were paraded through the streets with their hands tied behind their backs and banished to Rhode Island. Stuyvesant responded to the challenge of heterodoxy in the city as the elder John Winthrop did in Boston. Heterodoxy and sectarianism was always dangerous to the colonial leadership. If it was tolerated by default on the near frontier, it must have been considered absolutely intolerable at the seat of government.

Thus, the remaining party of two men and one woman wisely crossed onto Long Island and traveled south and east to Gravesend, Jamaica, and Hempstead, where they knew there were “many sincere seekers after Heavenly riches, and were prepared to appreciate those Spiritual views of religion which these Gospel messengers had to declare.” Then two Friends continued east to the “Puritan” end of the island. From there they sailed north across the Sound to join the Quaker community in Rhode Island, leaving Robert Hodgson behind in Hempstead, where seekers “rejoiced in the spread of those living truths which were preached among them.”

Hempstead was the site of a well-established Calvinist congregation in 1657, so there was local antagonism toward Hodgson’s presence in town. Moreover, the justice of the peace, Henry Gildersleeve, owed his appointment to Stuyvesant. While awaiting a Friends Meeting that he had organized, Hodgson was arrested and imprisoned. Ultimately, a contingent of soldiers was sent out by Stuyvesant himself from New Amsterdam to take charge of the prisoner. Hodgson was tortured, dragged behind a cart from Hempstead to New Amsterdam, and imprisoned in the fort. After five weeks, he was freed to join his co-religionists banished to Rhode Island. This concluded the first period where violence was used to persecute Quakers in New York.

Paralleling early Reformation history of Saintonge in the civil war years, when the cream of the Genevan ministry in the region was killed, retreated to the fortress at La Rochelle, or went in to hiding, Quakers, and other Long Island sects benefited from distance from the city and the absence of ministers from established congregations in New Amsterdam’s hinterlands. Learned and lay sectarian preachers with ideas quite similar to Palissy’s, and perhaps James Clement’s, had the field to themselves. The case for conversion was undoubtedly made much stronger by calling attention to the despised practice in some of the western towns (including Hempstead) to tithe for upkeep of the established Church.

Before his imprisonment and banishment, Robert Hodgson was thought to have been responsible for the conversion of John Bowne (1627–95), who migrated to New Netherlands from New England in the early 1650s, to become the most politically influential Quaker in New York during the seventeenth century. Bowne’s house was
favored for the first Flushing Quaker conventicles. The conventicles also occurred outside in désert conditions or in other private houses until 1694, when the meetinghouse opened in Flushing. Stuyvesant challenged conventicles as subversive, secretive practices, but he was largely unsuccessful in preventing them.

This is not to say that Stuyvesant’s creatures on Long Island did not act vigorously in his name. Henry Gildersleeve always kept careful watch over Hempstead’s inhabitants. In 1658, after Hodgson’s tour of the region and capture, Gildersleeve presided over the trial of the wives of two prominent freemen of the town for heresy.

As with Ginzburg’s and Martin’s northern Italian heretics, there was circular exchange between adversaries—in effect, an adversarial convergence of information—made more potent by the fact that all the participants in this dialogue were of the same social and intellectual order. Knowledge was communicated in trial testimony and by “woeful experience.” Thus, dialogues between Quakers and inquisitors revealed that the Holy Spirit flourished in secret places outside the town, out in the “natural” world, and to “hold converse” in near proximity to these “seducing spirits” was to risk unity with them. Fear emerged from what Fludd’s Internal Principle describes in both scientific and metaphysical terms as “a way of knowing that depends immediately on the soul,” considering the soul’s capacity to “leave its body so as to find a place whence it could enter into communication, and converse, with the souls of . . . friends”:

Forasmuch as Mary, wife of Joseph Schott, and the wife of Francis Weeks, have, contrary to the laws of God and this place, not only absented themselves from public worship but profaned the Lord’s day by going to a conventicle in the woods where were two Quakers, and now justify their act by saying they know of no transgression they had done, for they went to meet the people of God, it is ordered that each party shall pay 20 guilders and costs. Whereas we find by woeful experience that of late a sect hath taken such ill effect amongst us as to seduce certain of our inhabitants who (giving heed to seducing spirits under the notion of their being inspired by the Holy Spirit of God) have profaned the Sabbath and neglected to join with us in the true worship of God as formerly they have done, now be it ordered that no person whatsoever shall give entertainment to or hold converse with the people called Quakers, or lodge them in their house but for one night only, and then they are to depart quietly and without debate next morning.200

This interdiction emanating to its hinterlands from New Amsterdam had little effect in places like Hempstead, and none in Flushing, where loss of Bowne’s Quaker patronage was more feared by inhabitants than any government edict. To “hold converse with the people called Quakers” was to map the most significant family relations on the west end of Long Island in the seventeenth century. Bowne’s sister-in-law was, moreover, the wife of the itinerant Boston mercenary and infamous Indian fighter
Captain John Underhill (1597–1672), the younger Winthrop’s old friend, comrade-in-arms, and correspondent.

If Captain Underhill’s formal religious allegiance is not absolutely certain, it is telling that his wife joined the Society of Friends a short time before, during a clandestine Meeting at the coastal town of Oyster Bay, on the north shore of Long Island. Perhaps like the Clement men, Underhill was not necessarily a formal Quaker, but he was sympathetic and well connected by marriage to the elastic Quaker economic, political, and military networks dispersed around the Sound.

It is important to know that Underhill was associated closely with the antinomian controversy in Boston in 1637 and was in sympathy with John Wheelwright (1592–1679), who was banished to Exeter, New Hampshire, by the elder Winthrop for belief in personal dominion by the Holy Spirit. Underhill himself was accused of the heresy and was banished briefly as well. The Massachusetts general court recorded that after voyaging to Boston from England in 1638, Underhill:

was questioned for some speeches uttered by him in the ship, viz: that they at Boston were zealous as the scribes and pharisees were and as Paul was before his conversion, which he denying, they were proved to his face by a sober woman whom he had seduced in the ship and drawn to his opinion; but she was afterwards better informed in the truth. Among other passages, he told her how he came by his assurance, saying that, having long lain under a spirit of bondage, and continued in a legal way [that is, as a follower of covenantal theology] near five years, he could get no assurance, till at length, as he was taking a pipe of the good creature tobacco, the spirit fell home upon his heart, an absolute promise of free grace, with such assurance and joy, as he never doubted since of his good estate, neither should he, whatsoever sin he should fall into. . . . The next day he was called again and banished. The Lord’s day after, he made a speech to the assembly, showing that as the Lord was pleased to convert Paul as he was persecuting, &c, so he might manifest himself to him as he was making moderate use of the good creature called tobacco.

Underhill’s banishment was rescinded after he made an abject and tearful public apology for these heretical statements, especially that the spirit materialized in the smoke he inhaled from the “good creature tobacco,” communicating to him “an absolute promise of free grace . . . whatsoever sin he should fall into.” An eccentric spiritual insight (or perhaps a joke) like this—while heretical in Boston—would not have seemed strange if voiced as testimony at most Quaker meetings attended by Thomas Story on Long Island.

Family relations seemed to facilitate John Bowne’s conversion to Quakerism. New members were always “introduced” to the Flushing Meeting through family connections, testifying to the candidate’s moral and economic fitness for membership. The
younger Winthrop had already received a stellar letter of introduction from his old friend and comrade-in-arms John Underhill on Bowne’s behalf, dated April 12, 1656, although this correspondence contained another sort of testimony. Underhill recommended Bowne to his powerful and expansionistic patron as a “verri jentiele young man, of gud abilliti, of a lovli fetture, and gud behaifor.”

This was not idle gossip. As a New World courtier, Winthrop wished to extend his already substantial scientific, economic, and military interests through patronage of aspiring elites of the Long Island Sound basin, including Bowne, always with a covetous eye on the ultimate prize of New Amsterdam.  

Winthrop’s ambitious political agenda included influence over the growing population of English and anglicized continental settlers in Flushing, already an affluent town of farmers, artisans, and traders. Flushing’s strategic importance was evident: it stood on the water equidistant between Manhattan Island and Brooklyn. Soon after the death of his father in 1649 freed him from Massachusetts, Winthrop began to extend his patronage web through Long Island. His network of correspondence extended west to New Amsterdam, where Winthrop used his status and multilingual skills to maintain close contact with members of the city council. This included a constant dialogue with the director-general, who maintained cordial relations with this ambitious Englishman who wrote and spoke in Dutch, if only to keep an eye on him. These actions on Long Island shed a somewhat different light on Roger Williams’s praiseful letter of 1660, about Winthrop’s moderation toward Quakers, and his “tendernes toward mens soules, especially for conscience sake to God.” They also contextualize Winthrop’s remarkable refusal to sign without qualification, the act of September 23, 1658, sponsored by the United Colonies of New England, to banish, maim, or put to death, any Quakers who entered its domain. Winthrop was the only U.C.N.E. commissioner to devalue the document by signing it “a query and not an act.”

Winthrop’s relationship with Underhill was among the longest and most illuminating of all his network contacts on Long Island. Born in Warwickshire in 1597 (not far from John Bowne’s home region of Northampton), Underhill trained as a soldier in the Netherlands. In 1630, he migrated west to follow his call to arms in the service of the insecure first generation of Massachusetts settlers. After the apocalyptic events of 1628, Underhill was employed to supervise militia training and instill military discipline in the colonists, whose leaders were fearful of French settlers to the north and the Pequot Indians in their midst.

Underhill’s military training in the Netherlands and his approach to martial discipline and warfare was experiential and practical. This reformation of martial practices was shared by his Paracelsian patron. When serving as commander of Salem’s militia, Underhill asserted a firm belief that experience and merit, not appointment as “place-
men” based on patronage or social rank, was essential to the effectiveness and prestige of the Bay colony’s officer corps:

their own appointment made them a captain, lieutenant & ensign, & after such a manner as was never heard of in any school of war, nor in no kingdom under heaven. . . . For my part, if there should not be a reformation in this disordered practice, I should not acknowledge such officers. If officers should be of no better esteem than for constables to place them, & martial discipline to proceed disorderly, I would rather lay down my command than to shame so noble a prince [of Orange] from whom we came.206

Having also served a military apprenticeship as part of his natural-philosophical training in Ireland and England—befitting the firm place of fortification in Fludd’s *De naturae simia*—and then gaining practical experience at the siege of La Rochelle in 1627–28, Winthrop followed his father to Boston, where his first official title was master of fortifications. Underhill and Winthrop worked together on security matters in the colonies from the earliest date of settlement. Initially, this concerned matters of basic survival and defense, but increasingly over time security was redefined in terms of aggressive land acquisition and cultural expansion. Defense and aggression were inseparable.

The professional closeness between these two ambitious men was made clear in 1636 by their murderous cooperation in the bloody Pequot war. Governor John Winthrop Sr. authorized his son (then governor of Saybrook) to represent Massachusetts in negotiations with the weakened Pequot. The negotiations were a thinly veiled pretense for the younger Winthrop to issue a “provoking ultimatum” to the Pequot and their allies. From the New England perspective, a war to annihilate this group was both desirable and inevitable. Under Winthrop’s strategic direction, and by John Endicott’s and Underhill’s military command, ninety heavily armed and armored volunteers set out on a punitive expedition. First, they sortied against the Indians on Block Island. Returning to the mainland, the volunteers were then to invade Pequot strongholds. Winthrop’s strategy of land-clearing violence for profit was uncharacteristically unambiguous. He loathed the Pequot as savage and dangerous; an impediment to his plans. Once the volunteers reached Block Island, he made it known that “John Underhill, was commissioned to kill the men of the tribe, enslave the women and children as booty, and take possession of the island.”207 In the event, the Amerindians of Block Island avoided their frustrated adversaries by stealth.

After the ninety Massachusetts volunteers withdrew and went home to the Bay, a flabbergasted Lieutenant Lion Gardiner (1599–1663) and twenty men were left behind at Fort Saybrook to face the Pequot alone. Like Underhill, Lion Gardiner, was military client of John Winthrop Jr.’s. Gardiner had also trained in fortification under the
prince of Orange and had acquired extensive landholdings on Long Island. In 1640, Gardiner removed there from Connecticut. He bought a coastal island on Long Island’s east end of some 3,300 acres, which the aspiring Gardiner called the Isle of Wight. In 1686, Lion’s son David achieved his father’s lordly ambitions and secured a manorial patent for the family’s island.

But before his removal to the Isle of Wight, Gardiner had to survive the nine-month siege of his contingent of defenders at Fort Saybrook, as the Pequot retaliated for the failed expedition from Massachusetts. Captain Underhill’s next expedition against Pequot forces was more successful, as success was measured in bloodshed. Indeed, Underhill’s role in the Connecticut-Mohegan attack in May 1637 against the Pequot fortified settlement on the Mystic River initiated one of the most appalling episodes in the entire history of English-Indian interaction.

This Pequot settlement controlled the strategic mouth of the Connecticut River, and its elimination had everything to do with John Winthrop Jr.’s designs on hegemony of Long Island. Both Winthrop and his New England allies were in competition with the equally aggressive Pequot to absorb the Montauk Indians of eastern Long Island, and with them, their unequalled capacity to produce and supply the wampum essential to the Indian fur trade. Were the Pequot to prevail, they would dominate the supply side of the fur trade. Moreover, a hostile force would gain control of the many Indian villages on the east end of Long Island, already a dangerous place for European settlers. The Pequot were therefore an enormous impediment for Winthrop and his imperialistic ambitions.

Using an innovative combination of stealthiness and fire to contain their Pequot enemies, English soldiers under the command of Underhill and John Mason encircled Mystic Fort with an inner ring of English armed with snaphances (flintlock muskets) and a second, outer ring manned by their Narragansett allies (fig. 16.23). The English, headed by Mason’s contingent from Connecticut, did not trust their Indian allies to attack, since the fort contained women and children, not warriors, as depicted in the famous print of the siege.

Mystic Fort was the Pequot’s La Rochelle. As with the siege of the Huguenot fortress, the fall of Mystic Fort effectively ended the Pequot War. The destruction was total. To the surprise and disgust of the Narragansetts, Mason and Underhill ordered the fort burned and every survivor killed. Just five of the five hundred defenders and their families managed to escape.

The mind of John Winthrop Jr. was behind the innovative, indirect, and ruthless strategy that allowed the English to surround the town undetected, leading to the fort’s reduction. His hand is even more evident in the famous engraving by RH. Here, the attack on the fortress was raised to cosmological proportions in a Fluddian image largely inspired by the wars of religion, and above all by the siege of La Rochelle it-
Violent “winds” of disease (see fig. 10.8) are reversed, and the winds of purification become destroyers of the Pequot. Like Palissy, Winthrop would “build with the destroyer.”

Mason and Lion Gardiner also wrote accounts of the siege, but only Underhill’s was published, along with a print depicting the attack (fig. 16.23), as part of a collec-
tion called the *Newes from America; or a new discoverie of New England* (London, 1638). It was an effective advertisement for other land-hungry patrons with designs on the colonies. After his widely publicized success of 1637–38, Underhill’s military career flourished and merged with Winthrop’s economic and natural-philosophical ambitions. With the mouth of the Connecticut River secure, these old allies turned their attention south across the Sound toward their goal of absorption of New Netherlands.

Now famous for his efficient removal of local impediments to European expansion, Underhill appeared in New Netherlands in 1643. Underhill’s military training in the Netherlands, and his consequent knowledge of rudimentary Dutch, made him Director-General Kieft’s logical choice for mercenary commander of an Anglo-Dutch militia in the ongoing Mohawk wars. Using the same stealthy strategy followed by encircling by the armored musketeers that had proved so successful at Mystic Fort, Underhill led a force of 130 men on a night attack against a large Tankiteke or Siwanoy village, which again resulted in the massacre of nearly five hundred Indians. The effectiveness and grim brutality of Underhill’s involvement facilitated the signing of a friendship treaty between the Dutch, the Mohawk, and the Mahican at Fort Orange in July 1645.212 Underhill was paid for his military service with land, including parcels in the city and on Long Island. He chose to remain in the region, where his military training in Holland, pidgin Dutch, impressive contacts among competitors in New England, ambiguous religiosity, and exploits in the Indian wars of the Hudson Valley facilitated his rapid rise in the Dutch colony’s military bureaucracy. Ultimately, he joined the director-general’s inner circle as a member of his advisory committee.

Using his new political influence, Underhill moved quickly to extend his landholdings on Long Island. In 1648, as part of this thrust into the hinterland of New Netherlands, he secured a sensitive appointment as sheriff of Flushing from Stuyvesant. Stuyvesant had tried in the past to extend political power onto the island through patronage and appointments of sheriffs and justices of the peace. In this instance, Stuyvesant felt that Underhill had been made his client at Winthrop’s expense. This was a real mistake in light of Underhill’s loyalty to Winthrop, his hidden Quaker sympathies, and network of association.

During Underhill’s sojourn in Flushing, Underhill came into close contact with Bowne. Underhill then moved Southold, Setauket, and finally Oyster Bay, in 1662, where he set up a household with Bowne’s sister-in-law, a Quaker. With that favorable marriage, Underhill further increased his value to Winthrop, having by then constructed alliances with western Long Island’s three major ethnic and cultural groups: the Dutch, English, and Quakers. This allowed him to function as an intermediary among all three (as well as the numerous other sects that “conversed” with the Quakers). These groups were also internally diverse. Like his Amerindian adversaries,
Underhill played off one against the other, exploiting internal rivalries as he brokered military skill or covert information for leverage and strategic advantage.

Winthrop and Underhill converged over expanding interests in the region. After he left Stuyvesant’s advisory committee in 1648 and began a near thirty-year residency on Long Island’s north shore (just a short sail across the Sound to Winthrop’s landholdings on Connecticut’s south shore), Underhill remained a thorn in Stuyvesant’s side. Underhill stayed a highly visible and bellicose opponent of Dutch rule until the English takeover in 1664. He also performed the role of agent provocateur for Winthrop and his allies in the Long Island Sound region. Underhill was tireless in his noisy efforts to undermine the interests of the director-general and replace Dutch with English rule.213

Subversiveness was central to Underhill’s personality. The younger Winthrop knew this well, and he understood that like most successful mercenaries who had cut their teeth in the wars of religion, Underhill was to be handled carefully, with financial rewards and blandishments to his personal prestige. Or else (as Stuyvesant discovered), an asset quickly turned into a liability. Underhill changed sides in the middle of battle if it suited his purpose, as mercenaries did as a matter of course during the religious wars in the old world. In 1638, following on the heels of the antinomian crisis, while training the Massachusetts militia, Underhill showed he was not above threat of violent rebellion against the regime of the elder Winthrop. “I profess, sir,” wrote Underhill, complaining of unjust treatment of officers, “till I know the cause, I shall not be satisfied, but I hope God will subdue me to his will; yet this I say that such handling of officers in foreign parts hath so subverted them as to cause them to turn public rebels against their state and kingdom, which God forbid should ever be found once to appear in my breast.”214

The regional goals that made Underhill useful as an agent on Long Island were harnessed to John Winthrop Jr.’s grand economic, political, and natural-philosophical program for the 40th parallel. In 1650, this led to a fragile diplomatic accommodation. Compared to his authoritarian father, the future governor of Connecticut was a natural-philosophical pluralist, but latitudinarianism did not temper his enduring desire for land, economic security, and political power. The Treaty of Hartford was negotiated between Stuyvesant’s agents and the Commissioners of the United Colonies of New England and signed in 1650, temporarily defining a dangerous, contested boundary between New Netherlands and its land-hungry neighbors in the New Haven and Connecticut Colonies.215

After the Restoration of 1660, it was also Winthrop, as a Stuart courtier, who traveled to Whitehall to obtain Connecticut’s 1662 charter from Charles II. The colonial astronomer (and new member of the Royal Society) compared the restored Stuart king
to a “new and dazzling star,” recalling Galileo’s gesture of naming a star for his Medici patron.216 The terms of the charter not only allowed Connecticut to absorb New Haven Colony but in effect delivered into Winthrop’s hands the legal keys to all of western Long Island, if only he could wrest it from the Dutch. Under the charter, the Connecticut Colony now claimed possession not only of strategic Greenwich and Westchester Town on the mainland—with Westchester’s growing population of Long Island Quakers—but the most prosperous settlements on western Long Island: Jamaica, Flushing, Gravesend, Hempstead, and Middelburg (or Newtown).

By then, Stuyvesant was politically and militarily weak, and he commanded a culturally diverse colony that had failed to consolidate behind his authority. Yet he responded in October 1663, when he appointed three commissioners from New Amsterdam: Cornelius van Ruyven; the Anglo-Huguenot John Lawrence, with his family ties to Flushing’s friends; and Oloff Stevenz van Cortlandt. In a futile enterprise, the three agents went to Hartford to seek redress from Winthrop himself.

Plainly, the Connecticut governor was planning to quietly conquer his long-coveted “Mediterranean” colony at virtually the exact moment the forces of the duke of York actually invaded in 1664. New Netherlands’s capitulation was arguably well within his grasp by negotiation and perhaps without violence, given the chaos of Stuyvesant’s government. However, it is prudent to assume that the dangerous Underhill was also prepared to lend force to the negotiations with his presence. Underhill began preparations by providing Winthrop with intelligence toward these ends from the moment of his appointment to Stuyvesant’s advisory committee in 1648. Winthrop—buoyed by the international triumph of the charter and his recent appointment to the Royal Society—was poised to begin the takeover in 1664 at Huntington on Long Island when Underhill brought the devastating news from Boston that the duke of York’s forces were nearby, on their way to “settle government and reduce the Dutch.” This message was written in Underhill’s hybrid dialect, described condescendingly as an “untutored, half-Dutch scrawl.”217 On the verge of triumph over the Venice of the American Mediterranean, Winthrop was not defeated by the Dutch, but by another, better-connected courtier from England. Winthrop had circled his wounded prey like a shark since the death of his father in 1649, but the prize was seized at the last moment by a bigger predator from the same school. The pragmatic Winthrop had no alternative in the summer of 1664 but to join in the triumphal entrance into New Netherlands of the English force led by Richard Nicolls and help negotiate the final terms of Stuyvesant’s surrender.218

This context of external strategic insecurity and internal religious and political instability helps explain why Stuyvesant often felt it was in his interest to risk sanction by his cautious masters in Amsterdam, who preferred connivance to confrontation in religious and cultural matters. The director-general finally reached the limit of his per-
sonal tolerance and moved to suppress all forms of heterodoxy in 1657—the year of the Quaker Hodgson’s arrival and arrest—but he did so only after provocation by yet another outsider from the conspiratorial Winthrop’s side of the Sound, who appeared suddenly in Flushing. William Wickenden, an itinerant “Baptist” preacher from Rhode Island, was arrested by Stuyvesant’s men and sent back.

Despite his stubbornly imperious persona, Stuyvesant was never truly autonomous, and he took a substantial personal and political risk in acting forcefully against the sects. A director-general was more powerful than the other Dutch colonial officers, but he was also, in effect, a mere functionary. The West India Company Directors could (and did) overrule decisions he might take in conjunction with his council. Officially, the vote of his council could also overrule the director-general. Stuyvesant’s vote carried the same weight—if not the same force—as that of his councilors, who, after all, were dependent on his patronage as well as that of the directors of the Company. But as Stuyvesant prepared to intervene militarily and confront an ominous threat of unknown proportions originating from suspicious or hidden sources, who worked with local collaborators to usurp established authority, events simply underscored his inability to control dissent, with or without force.

Stuyvesant’s defense of orthodoxy began in earnest when he issued a written “prohibition” against the influx of Quakers onto western Long Island and their participation in secret conventicles. This prohibition was mentioned in the trial later that year of the two Quaker women arrested for joining a conventicle in the Hempstead woods. Yet Stuyvesant clearly knew that the Quakers were only a part of a larger problem with sectarianism, which would certainly have included Huguenot spiritualists and sympathizers. Fearful of nonconformist subversion, which Calvinist magistrates associated with Anabaptism after what had happened at Münster in 1534, Stuyvesant “commanded,” by his military authority as director-general, that “beside the [Dutch] Reformed worship and service, no conventicles or meetings shall be kept in this Province.”

Stuyvesant listed a number of secret hiding places on coastal Long Island’s millennial désert where heresy occurred in the shadows, out of sight of authority, “whether it be in houses, barnes, shops, barkes, nor in the woods, nor fields.” Here, the director-general’s strategy to undercut Flushing’s ambiguously worded patent of 1645 recalled the clear language of the colony’s original principles articulated in the “articles and conditions” for government of New Netherland of 1638, with its prohibition of “forbidden assemblies or conventicles”:

without . . . it being inferred . . . that any person shall be hereby in any wise constrained or aggrieved in his conscience, but every man shall be free to live up to his own in peace and decorum, provided he avoid frequenting any forbidden assemblies or conventicles, much less collect or get up any such; and further abstain from all public scandals and
offences, which the magistrate is charged to prevent by all fitting proofs and admonitions, and if necessary, to advise the Company, from time to time, of what may occur herein, so that confusions and misunderstandings may be timely obviated and prevented.221

This command also implied—incorrectly—that the director-general had either the police power or authority from the Company to ferret out subterranean groups then beginning to appear and to cause “public scandals and offences” everywhere in this growing colony of refugees.

But the theatrical Stuyvesant was the New World’s master of bravado. His sense of owning a double identity as director-general is revealed in his only surviving portrait (1661–62), attributed to the Huguenot painter Henri Couturier (fig. 16.24). The vigilant director-general peers out from inside an oval enceinte and challenges the wary spectator to confront the evidence of his complete authority. What, exactly, is he wearing here? Is he posed in a costume that combined armor with a sort of clerical garb to symbolize the theatrical presence of a proud Reformation warrior-minister? Or is that a magistrate’s robe he wears? The ambiguity is very effective. If the former, Stuyvesant’s portrait embodied an absolutist vision of the synthesis of Church and state. The possible conflation by observers of ambiguous meanings of the clerical/magisterial robe in this context would also have served his purpose to project the presence of total authority. It would not be at all surprising if internal threats to his authority from dissenters during the late 1650s—in addition to the continuous threat of invasion by En-
lish forces under the command of the Stuyvesant’s competitor John Winthrop Jr.—inspired the portrait’s unified rhetoric of religious and military security.222

Stuyvesant must have been tempted to put on this armor on December 27, 1657, when the “inhabitants of Vlishing” (the signatories actually included a total of thirty-one freeholders from Flushing and Jamaica), chose to respond to his “prohibition” and “command” by issuing a defiant “Remonstrance” to the director-general, the language of which was simultaneously stinging, condescending, and pious. The use of the term “remonstrance” was itself an uncomfortable reminder to Stuyvesant of sedition. The most subversive recent usage of this word in the history of the Dutch Republic had been in 1610 to denote Dutch Arminian “remonstrants” who challenged orthodox notions of predestination. The Flushing Remonstrance that was served on Stuyvesant declared:

You have been pleased to send up unto us a certain prohibition or command that we should not receive or entertain any of those people called Quakers because they are supposed to be, by some, seducers of the people. For our part we cannot condemn them in this case, neither can we stretch out our hands against them, to punish, banish or persecute them, for out of Christ God is a consuming fire, and it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

We desire therefore in this case not to judge lest we be judged, neither to condemn lest we be condemned, but rather let every man stand and fall to its own Master. We are bounde by the Law to doe good unto all men, especially to those of the household of faith. And though for the present we seem to be unsensible of the law and the Law giver, yet when death and the Law assault us, if we have our advocate to seeke, who shall plead for us in this case of conscience betwixt God and our own souls; the powers of this world can neither attack us, neither excuse us, for if God justifie who can condemn and if God condemn there is none can justifie.

And for those jealousies and sus[sp]icions which some have of them, that they are destructive unto Magistracy and Ministereye, that can not bee, for the magistrate hath the sword in his hand and the minister hath the sword in his hand, as witnesse those two great examples which all magistrates and ministers are to follow, Moses and Christ, whom God raised up maintained and defended against all enemies both of flesh and spirit; and therefore that which is of God will stand, and that which is of man will come to nothing. And as the Lord hath taught Moses or the civil power to give an outward liberty in the state by the law written in his heart designed for the good of all, and can truly judge who is good, who is civil, who is true and who is false, and can pass definitive sentence of life or death against that man which rises up against the fundamental law of the States General; soe he hath made his ministers a savor of life unto life, and a savor of death unto death.

The law of love, peace and liberty in the states [of Holland] extending to Jews, Turks
and Egyptians, as they are considered the sons of Adam, which is the glory of the outward state of Holland, so love, peace and liberty, extending to all in Christ Jesus, condemns hatred, war and bondage; And because our Saviour saith it is impossible but that offenses will come, but woe unto him by whom they cometh, our desire is not to offend one of his little ones, in whatsoever form, name or title, he appears in, whether Presbyterian, Independent, Baptist or Quaker, but shall be glad to see anything of God in them, desiring to doe unto all men as wee desire all men shall do unto us, which is the true law both of Church and State; for our Saviour saith this is the law and the prophets.

Therefore if any of these said persons come in love unto us, we cannot in conscience lay violent hands upon them, but give them free egress and regresse unto our Town, and houses, as God shall persuade our consciences. And in this we are true subjects both of Church and State, for we are bounde by the law of God and man to doe good unto all men and evil to noe man. And this is according to the patent and charter of our Towne, given unto us in the name of the States General, which we are not willing to infringe, and violate, but shall houle to our patent and shall remaine, your humble subjects, the inhabitants of Vlishing. 223

After the signature “Edward Hart, Clericus” followed the names of the other thirty signatories.

Stuyvesant’s response—including the town’s reminder of Kieft’s charter of October 10, 1645 (“to have and Enjoy the Liberty of Consience, according to the Custome and manner of Holland, without molestacon or disturbance, from any Magistrate or Magistrates, or any other Ecclesiasticall Minister, that may pretend Jurisdiction over them”)—was to instruct his agents on Long Island to increase surveillance over secret activities of the sects. In 1662, after failing to staunch sectarianism in New Netherland’s hinterland, and fearful of continued inroads into the city itself, Stuyvesant finally arrested John Bowne for disobeying his edict against harboring Quakers and holding conventicles. And indeed, after the completion of Bowne’s house in 1661, many Quaker meetings were openly held there. Because Bowne was the “greatman” and the leading patron of Flushing’s Quakers, this was meant as a violent refutation of the Remonstrance and its latitudinarian text. Stuyvesant put Bowne in prison. After he refused to pay a fine that acknowledged wrongdoing and the director-general’s authority over religious practice in the colony, Bowne was banished from New Netherland.

**John Bowne’s Exile and Return**

Bowne took a copy of the Flushing town charter of 1645 with him into European exile in 1663. In the end, he used the document to win an appeal to Jacob Pergens, di-
rector of the Amsterdam Chamber of the West India Company, the bureau responsible for New Netherlands, for the reversal of Stuyvesant’s edict and Bowne’s banishment from the colony.

Bowne took copious, phonetically written notes in his tiny script that detailed his painful, ultimately triumphant experience of banishment to Europe. His account of exchanges with Jacob Pergens in Amsterdam demonstrate again the extent to which middle colonial sectarianism was a transatlantic phenomenon. Bowne spent a month in Amsterdam in his appeal to the company. He had eleven “sittings” with Pergens. In the meantime, he met with supporters, and arranged for his eventual return to Flushing with his newest servant, the joiner and scribe James Clement.

The crucial “sitting” with Pergens took place in Amsterdam on April 18, 1663, as the two men parsed confusions between company and colony over questions of liberty, privilege, governance, and law. Bowne wrote, “I was cald agen then hee [Pergens] said”:

the gentelmen here have considered of ye: things and desiers to know whether you intend to goe to feach your wife or to stay there I said nay I have no intent to feach my wife and Childern here but to laber to maintain ther as I use to do but wee thinke seaid hee you was best to stay heare and sen[d] for your wife and Childeren for wee doe not give liberty there I said liberty was promised to us in a patent given by vertue of a commision from the prince the stats generall and the westindea Companie; hee said who gave that patent governor Kifiet [Kieft] oh seaid hee that was before any or but few of your Jugement [that is, Quakers] was harde of I seaid wee are known to bee a peseable people hee seaid but if you bee pesable and will not bee subject to the Laws and plakados [placards] which are published wee cannot sufer you in oure Jurediction I seaid it is good first to consider whether that law or plackad that was published bee acording to Justis & righteousnesse or whether it be not quite contrarie to it and allso to that libertie promised to us in our patent and I desier ye Company would red it or here it red I have a copie of it by mee hee seaid if I would walke out a while the[y] would a pritie time after the[y] cald mee in a gen then hee [Pergens] standing up sett a bould face on a bad case and tould mee the[y] had read it and considerd of it and did find it verie good and like it well then[n] after some words a bout it . . . it was concluded that I should come the next sitting . . . to see there writing and to give my anser to it . . . the speker [Pergens?] called us in to another roume and gave us a bad paper in duch which I gott translated and left my anser in writing for them.224

The key document in this exchange was the copy made “by mee [John Bowne],” of Kieft’s patent.225 Bowne’s answer (translated into Dutch) to the company’s contentious “bad paper,” shows the ways in which this international sectarian group—like its Huguenot collaborators in New Netherlands—exploited useful opportunities to reactivate the primitive Christian role of universal victim. Thus, Bowne begins by reciting the remonstrance’s admonishment against asymmetrical power relationships as con-
trary to free motion of the spirit, by again invoking the golden rule and representing himself as one of those tiny creatures “oppressed” and “afflicted” by evil:

Friends, the paper drawn up for me to subscribe I have perused and weighed, and do find the same not according to that engagement to me through one of your members, viz.: That he or you would do therein by me as you would be done unto, and not otherwise. For which if you being taken by your wife and family, without just cause, would be bound from returning to them unless upon terms to act contrary to your conscience, and deny your faith and religion and this in effect do you require of me and not less. But, truly, I cannot think that you did in sober earnest ever think I would subscribe to any such thing, it being the very thing for which I rather chose freely to suffer want of the company of my dear wife and children, imprisonment of my person, the ruin of my estate in my absence here, and the loss of my goods here, than to yield or consent to such an unreasonable thing as you here by would enjoin me unto. For which I am persuaded that you will not only be judged in the sight of God, but by good and godly men, rather than to have mocked at the oppressions of the oppressed, and added afflictions to the afflicted than herein to have done to me as you in the like case would be done unto, which the royal cause of our God requires. I have with patience and moderation waited several weeks expecting justice from you, but behold an addition to my oppression in the measure I receive. Wherefore I have this now to request for you, that the Lord will not lay this to your charge, but to give eyes to see and hearts to do justice, that you may find mercy with the Lord in the day of judgement.226

The metaphorical opposition of seeing with closed eyes appeared vividly in the rhetoric of the Company’s final instructions on the matter to Stuyvesant. While Bowne asked God to provide his “oppressors” with the equivalent of geomantic eyes to enable them to see truth, the Company ordered the stubborn director-general to shut his eyes to life in the shadows, so long as it remained hidden and private. In instructions dated April 16, 1663, the directors of the Amsterdam chamber sealed Bowne’s victory in the visual language of pragmatic self-interest:

Your last letter informed us that you had banished from the Province and sent hither by ship a certain Quaker, John Bowne by name: although we heartily desire, that these and other sectarians remained away from there, yet as they do not, we doubt very much, whether we can proceed against them rigorously without diminishing the population and stopping immigration, which must be favored at a so tender stage of the country’s existence. You may therefore shut your eyes, at least not force people’s consciences, but allow every one to have his own belief, as long as he behaves quietly and legally, gives no offence to his neighbors and does not oppose the government. As the government of this city [Amsterdam] has always practiced this maxim of moderation and consequently has often
had a considerable influx of people, we do not doubt, that your Province too would be benefitted by it.227

Opposing World Views

The practice of secrecy and the negotiation of perception were thus used successfully in the center of European heterodoxy and were absolutely essential to maintaining “a considerable influx” of refugees to the colony. Privatization of the besieged spirit was natural and hence God’s will. Messages of heterodox solidarity and resistance, were encoded in the Remonstrance. Thirty farmer and artisan heads of family constructed this text as a cultural and ideological document of cosmological ideals representing the shadow world of international Protestantism. The furtive, tiny language of the soul, common to Paracelsian natural-philosophical discourse and Huguenot material culture, also suffused the alchemical library of John Winthrop Jr., as well as the libraries of his transatlantic scientific community. Had Winthrop accomplished his conquest of New Netherlands, would the laboratory practice this language entailed—the alchemical quest to unify diverse substances in the material world and, by extension, the fragmented refugee cultures of the seventeenth century—have achieved the political and social significance promised by the sponsors of the universal laboratory?

To be sure, Winthrop had demonstrated his inability to include Amerindians in the unity, except as human dross to be burned off. In contrast, the Remonstrance codified the worldview of Flushing and Jamaica, and indeed most of western Long Island. Its text reasserted the primacy of primitive Christian inclusiveness and defined the inhabitants’ heterodox sense of local culture as both private and inclusive. This was seventeenth-century “multiculturalism,” a perception of soulishness beyond the gross impurities of “mixed composition,” extending even to the Jews and Islam. Flushing prospered because society was scrupulously private and hence secure, in stark contrast to the violent exclusivity of an expanding “state” religion from which many had originally fled, and that now again was a threat to peace and prosperity. The remonstrators thus reflected a somewhat safer New World context. They aligned openly with a subterranean transatlantic tradition, one that was still active in the memory of migrating Christian societies and New Netherlands’s Huguenots in particular. Many New Netherlands families were uprooted by, or knew through oral history, the effects of the religious oppression and mimetic violence that was endemic to Reformation and Counter-Reformation warfare.228

The Remonstrance was a more fluid and open reading of the analogy of the bounded corporate body, adapted universally from St. Augustine’s venerated texts. Orthodoxy usually reinterpreted these writings exclusively to provide oppositional armatures for both the “Modell of Christian Charitie” and French Catholic absolutism.
Both systems represented heterodoxy and cultural difference internal to the body as forms of attacking illness like a virus or cancerous growth. It was necessary to excise parasitic invaders with precise surgical violence. Recall the surgeon’s removal of the dark growth that lingered on the elder Winthrop’s hand, despite his physician son’s Paracelsian chemical and folkloric argument against such aggressive external therapy.

By deploying a benign figure of peaceful domesticity instead, the Remonstrance gave form to an open “household of faith.” This mystical core metaphor reminded readers of the availability of a shared “deep structure” in hopes of inspiring Protestant culture to reconstruct memory of what John Bossy calls the communitarian ethos of primitive Christianity, in response to historical violence and separation. Reconstruction was taken literally—that is to say, materially—by artisans from all such groups that converged around basic spiritualist principles. Once again, the “going out and coming in,” a sense of the near transparent domestic permeability of the unlocked door is both a spiritual and a material constant. (It was also, to be sure, a reasonable description of the human geography of the Sound region.) So this was a community of privatized individuals. Goals here were material and spiritual: to absorb the population absolutely necessary to the economic success and security of the sectarian towns, and to construct a place of messianic unity among independent spiritualists where “Christ at his coming again would find a home.” In a household of pluralistic man, exclusive discipline and bounded confessions were unnecessary. “Wee are bounde” solely, the Flushing signatories wrote, by both the gospels and the elegant simplicity of the golden rule: “the Law to doe good unto all men.” As Story unveiled in his conversion experience, Flushing was intended to operate like a Fluddian theatre, with communal space available in the shadows for memories of all strangers in the world to mingle as friends. The permeability of the open household did not mean that the Calvinist purity of the narrow way was forgotten in Flushing—Quakers could be notoriously strict—only that spiritual exclusivity was harnessed to universal themes of individuality and soulishness and could never be defined by confessional difference alone.

The signers perceived that their personal risk of persecution for the sake of sharing the purity of the Holy Spirit was greater than before and invoked a malleable, quietistic reinterpretation of the relation between violence and the sacred. Although “death and the Law assault us,” the remonstrators refused violence. There would be no “stretch[ing] out our hands” to block the door against strangers or to “punish, banish or persecute.” Inner guidance on personal practice and comportment in refuge was defined only by spiritual laws. This information was communicated silently over the enormous distance “betwixt God and our own souls.”

The total authority and ultimate protection for these acts also derived from God alone. The text continued confidently in a primitive assault, then millennia old, on Stuyvesant’s assertion of a dual civil and ecclesiastical identity: “The powers of this
world can neither attack us, neither excuse us, for if God justif ye who can condemn and if God condemn there is none can justif ye.” Here was the authentic voice of the heretic. Soulish language confirmed the power of Christic weakness and sacrifice when enthusiasts had to confront laws “commanded” by magistrates given inquisitorial authority. Here was the primordial denial of the “righteousnesse” of the asymmetries of history that John Bowne articulated as well, as a warning to his “oppressors” in old Amsterdam and New. The weak were tiny and overlooked, and yet they were also “patient and moderate” by nature of their particular combination of spirit and matter. Bowne warned that it was dangerous to forget that patience carried the hidden and latent power of reversal. He appended this message implicitly to Director Pergens in saying that he hoped “that you may find mercy with the Lord in the day of judgement.”

Domestic Armor: The Lapidary Style

Whether communicated silently through prayer or hidden in plain sight in memory contained and accessed daily in “household” goods in colonial America, the language of Remonstrance was firmly embedded in the transatlantic artisanal networks. Its epigrammatic rhetoric echoes small and quiet voices of Huguenot artisans carved into house masonry throughout Aunis-Saintonge. In the particular artisanal (and notarial) tradition of mediation through artifacts communicated by Samuel Clement’s inscription, “made by mee,” axioms of identity, or “inscriptions lapidaires” (“stone inscriptions”), were carved into Protestant doorways. Many survive in the region; another Huguenot shadow discourse made to blend in with the natural materials of the domestic setting. Doorways may be dated by the house’s architecture. Inscriptions were also often dated. So taken together, we know that the lapidary style began to proliferate with the violence of the first civil wars of religion in the 1550s and 1560s. The last ones date from the late 1690s, most within a decade of the Revocation. Catholic neighbors, local judges, and members of the constabulary read these messages from the discursive doorways in their midst; they were meant for friend and foe alike. Thus, as in New Netherlands, regional perception of invisibility was contingent on the maintenance of tacit agreements between heretics, and their enemies and competitors. These were akin to the darkened spaces, niches, and doorways in Fludd’s memory theater and analogous structures behind the theatricality of Hogarth’s Hog Lane. Hidden places such as these obscured processes and contained information against which Stuyvesant was ordered to shut his eyes by the directors of the West India Company.

As long as heresy was contained in silence, it was necessary to allow it limited space. Every region of the refuge in the transatlantic world had its own negotiable rules of perception of the extent and limits of what would “give no offence to . . . neighbors and does not oppose the government,” in specific material contexts. Still, London’s na-
tive artisans saw the refugees appropriate their local enterprise, and so they clearly considered the government’s pragmatic acts of complicity a Faustian bargain. London’s artisans wanted strangers rooted out of their secret place in the shadows and exposed as counterfeit, rather than allowing them more headway as successful competitors.

Exodus 12:3–11 is also applicable here, with its sign made with the blood of the sacrificed Paschal lamb to protect the chosen from the angel of death. The sacrifice of the lamb to display his blood as a code, hidden in plain sight on the front door of Jewish households as a lifesaving signifier of the covenant in Exodus 12:23, was the crucial archetype for Easter and the militant lamb who opened the seven seals of destruction in Revelation, but also for Palissy’s alchemic “destroyer” as agent of sacred separation. To wit: “For the Lord will pass through to slay the Egyptians; and when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to slay you.” Instead, Jews reconstructed their lives and diasporic community elsewhere, as an effect of horrific actions undertaken by “the destroyer” on their behalf.

If French Calvinists memorized Exodus as a fundamental text for the war years and periods of “dispersion,” ministers and lay preachers alike commonly reminded auditors of Old Testament stories detailing an alchemist God who repeatedly destroyed the majority of his chosen people because of Adam’s transgression and the many covenants broken subsequently. In this way, he continued to refine a purified minority over a long period of time. Huguenot craftsmen identified with Genesis 1 in particular; here, God’s primordial work of natural creation was described as artisanal, as was Noah’s in Genesis 6:11. After the Fall, but in advance of the Flood, God effectively passed the “tools” of his refiner’s craft down. He provided Noah with a set of measurements and instructions on the practical application of appropriate materials and construction methods that are specific enough to recall ancient building contracts. Noah was commanded to use these methods and materials to “make yourself an ark of gopher wood.”

Construction of the ark was essential for Noah’s security and protection, as God had “determined to make an end to all flesh; for the earth is filled with violence through them; behold I will destroy them with the earth.” Following Adam, Noah’s master also instituted a profane syncretism between impurity of fallen earthly matter and violent fleshliness. Thus he was forced to destroy to recreate, leaving a small, yet purified human and earthly remnant, saved from the wreckage for reconstitution elsewhere. God told Noah “I will establish my covenant with you; and you shall come into the ark . . . your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives with you”; and two fertile survivors “of all flesh . . . of every sort” chosen from the natural world. The New Testament promise that “the last shall be first” made it especially meaningful to Palissy that God chose, in Genesis 6:20, to provide security for “every” tiny, nearly imperceptible,
“creeping thing of the ground.” The lowliest most vulnerable creatures were sanctified as the last included in a new, post-apocalyptic covenant.

Marot’s title page (see fig. 14.16) for his psalms of harmonic convergence in response to the violence also influenced the lapidary style in ways that paralleled Palissy’s Neoplatonic promenade by the Charente River, an act that inspired scientific and artisanal innovation, after Saintes descended into chaos under attack. The Passover and Exodus both seemed ever-present in southwestern Huguenot households at the height of the dragonnades. In 1683, “C BOVTIN” carved a defiant prayer into the lintel above the door of his windmill at Saint-Pompain, which pumped water in the lower Deux-Sevres marais. Boutin called down God’s condemnation onto the heads of liars; and then, underneath, he added the talismanic words from the Passover story: “PASE MAL / FESANT [PASS BY EVIL / DOER].”

We are reminded of the emblematic warning from Matthew about the narrow and wide paths quoted on the same famous title page of Clément Marot’s ubiquitous Psalter (see fig. 14.16), familiar to those who carried it. Not surprisingly, quotations from Marot’s verses appear over doors to Huguenot houses as early as the 1560s. Two inscriptions dating from 1566 that were found over the doorway of a certain François Perrin in Geneva suggest the sort of narrow confidence that was found on axioms carved over entrances to many “orthodox” Genevan households. Above, the uppermost inscription cites the Reformation’s ur-text on doorways (“Enter by the narrow path . . .”); and just below was inscribed a closely related passage of the invitation from John 10: “I am the door; if anyone enters my way, he will be saved.”

The “lapidary” fashion in Protestant France may have originated in Geneva and then diffused west, but this is uncertain. Surviving examples of stark textual confidence are rare among the inscriptions recovered from southwestern France, however, and on those found over doors in other contested regions. Given the different security context, it makes sense that these tend to show widespread anxiety over confessional violence. Such Huguenot doorways reveal worried signs of hope for divine protection. As such, they were personal buttresses against the pain and vulnerability that beset heretical households on the losing side of the regional fighting. Flushing, a New World refugee community across the Atlantic, demanded an open household from a growing position of strength. In southwest France, however, the front door to the domestic world was the gateway to an inner fortress against the dangers of civil warfare raging outside in the streets. When a now-forgotten Protestant built his new house on Poitiers’ rue de la Marche in 1557, he took care to have the words HOC. EST. REFVGIVM. MEVM ET IN DNO CONFIDO (“This is my place of refuge”) inscribed above the windows on the second story.

This same text formed the core of the Remonstrance’s exegetic armature as well. It is not surprising that such language, forming the “armor of God,” was common to ma-
terial life throughout the embattled southwest, as random religious violence moved almost interchangeably from battlefield to street. Such a text was found in the Deux-Sevres region, just north of La Rochelle, when, in 1566, Romans 8:31, a text about God’s authority over all civil authority, was carved in Latin over the doorway of the Robert house. The Roberts were Protestants who lived in the small coastal village of Breuil-Coiffault, located in Hanc parish. In the nearby town of La Pommeraie de Clussais, in 1662, within just five years of the publication of the Remonstrance, the same venerable text from Romans was inscribed over the door to the Bonnel house: si dieu / est / pour / nous q./ ui sera / contre [nous] (“If God be for us, who can be against us?”). Variations on these words echoed in Flushing in 1657, just as they appeared over doorways of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century houses in the small coastal towns that surround La Rochelle in Aunis. Indeed, vigilant observers can still spot this inscription over some doorways inside the old fortress itself. This text was identified with the Protestant cause, to be sure, but it was nonetheless difficult for many Catholics to openly reject such pious language. The debate turned, of course, over whose side God was “for.” Several martyrologies, including Palissy’s and Neau’s, recount scenes of Protestant torture where prisoners were asked, “Where is your God now”?

The talismanic qualities inherent in this text were useful for protection in the early Christian era, when Romans was written in response to the experience of persecution. Revived as a primitive text, it flourished for much the same reason among Huguenots during the civil wars of religion. Inscribed over doors that could be defended in no other way, this and other memorable axioms were textual fortresses of the spirit for besieged believers. This was especially true during the désert experience and on Long Island in the 1650s and 1660s, when for want of ordained ministers, Huguenots and New Netherlanders turned to texts specified and disseminated by artisan lay preachers such as Palissy.

The implications of this text for community protection were publicized when carved into a cartouche placed on the “Tour de la Borde,” a seventeenth-century tower on a ruined Huguenot fortress in Nere, a parish in Saintonge. Here, the inscription reads as both a humble prayer by the defenders for divine protection and a play on the fallibility of noblesse d’épée sûreté. The tower speaks in the first person: dieu est ma garde / et ma havlte tovr / est lobiet svr leqvel / ie massevre (“God is my protection + / and my high tower / [He] is the sapwood from which / I draw strength”). Even such a powerful talisman provided limited protection for the static, frontal inflexibility of the tower, a flaw that Palissy showed was built into every Huguenot fortress. For Palissy and his artisan followers, a combination of corporate hubris and military theatricality doomed the stone fortress to the chaotic fate of Babel. Hope lay in domesticity, the obfuscations of artisanal security, and the refugees’ mobile shadow culture.
When the refugee Boston painter-stainer Jean Berger (working ca. 1718–32), whose family emigrated from La Rochelle in 1685, published his design book in 1718, readers opened to a frontispiece that depicted a large classical door surrounding the author’s name. The door also showed the date the refugee relocated—as it were, through the door—to his new place of publication and refuge (fig. 16.25). A pierced flaming heart appears in the pitched pediment between with his initials, “J. B.” Here was an ardent sign of Berger’s aspiring soul pierced by sin and sacred violence and yet inflamed by the heat of God’s light. Berger thereby invited readers to enter the text as he did, at

![Title page from Jean Berger’s design book for Boston tradesmen (Boston, 1718). Watercolor on paper. Courtesy Historic Charleston Foundation. Photo, Gavin Ashworth. Berger’s use of a door alludes to the narrow door illustrated in figure 14.16. Here, the way is paved by a Turkish rug inscribed Dieu Est Mon Droy (God Is My Right), a play on the concept of the divine right of kings. Many of Berger’s designs are chinoiserie, and the Middle Eastern carpet revives the Renaissance trope of the New World as Cathay.](image-url)
the end of a pilgrimage. Readers (other artisans in search of stylish designs), “walked” their eyes over the naturalistic garden of a eastern “Turkey-work” carpet, marking the “narrow way” through the door and simultaneously into Berger’s new place of refuge, his craft and (literally above all), the secrets of his soulish heart. Here, the words dieu est mon droy (“God is my right”), a play on an English monarchical motto, shows the right of way guided by the universal power of the Holy Spirit. This punning double entendre on the British royal coat of arms (representing Huguenot faith in English protection) merged with a Rochelais refugee artisan’s personal faith that the light of his animate soul was directing him (and the perception of his readers) on the narrow path through the door and toward the innovation and skills revealed in this latter-day book of secrets. “The idea of the self,” Orest Ranum has written, “was . . . centered in the heart;” [which was] “invariably . . . a sign of ‘inwardness.’” Inwardness, but also hidden “passion,” and, most challenging to orthodox sensibilities that shunned secrets and innovation, the threat of “ambiguity.” A symbol common in the désert, Berger’s pierced heart may well have shared the same secret passion as both Palissy and the younger Winthrop.

Revelation prophesied that in the fullness of time, all the darkness Hogarth revealed under the cover of shadow in “Hog Lane” would be understood as temporary. Perhaps that is one reason why, in 1565, the Bergier family of La Jarrie, in Saintonge, ancestors of John Berger of La Rochelle and Boston, inscribed over their doors post tenebras lux (“After darkness, light”), a loose paraphrase of John 1:5. About these Bergiers we know nothing more, yet their sense of safety and promise in the darkness was simultaneously both metaphorical and material.

Some families employed forms as well as words in inscriptions. The Mage family built the Château de Disconches, near Saintes. Unlike the Bergiers of La Jarrie, the Mages’ place in Saintongeais reformation history is at least partially recorded. In February 1583, the château hosted a clandestine Huguenot assembly where records of the baptisms of Protestant children were made and saved. At the entrance to the château, as was the custom in noble families, the Mages displayed their coat of arms, which incorporated a play on words (Mage/Magi) that transformed the family name into the personification of alchemical metamorphosis. To the left of the escutcheon was carved: astra / dvxervnt / mageos ad / christym (“The stars guided the Magi toward Christ”), and at the right: christi / cvrx dvce / magos ad / astra (“Christ’s cross will guide the Magi toward the stars”). An alchemical inscription lapidaire such as this would surely have directed Palissy—the rustic magus of Saintes—and his artisan followers to the door of the “Magi.” The heretical potters of La Chapelle-des-Pots labored close by to coax guiding lights from earth materials with translucent glazes dotted with étincelles. These flashes of sparkling light were the first “terrestrial astrol-
ogy" of Huguenot artisans searching for the narrow path in heavenly light, by sharing in the darkness of Christ’s pain. Fludd recognized these dots as artisanal geomancy. And what of the tiny Maltese crosses punched in a nearly invisible pattern into the seventeenth-century woodwork of southern coastal Connecticut? Were these astral signs intended to “guide the Magi” as well, in their perception of the material world and its basic patterns inside the chaos of nature? Located in Reformed matter (and history) between the visible and invisible, did these tiny marks represent the carvers’ metaphysical signatures?

Palissy elucidated the ways that the silence and power of craft were keys to security for artisan refugees who were forced to live, work, and prosper in darkness. However, Palissy’s Huguenots, like the Quakers, showed that a silent mouth did not always mean passivity. Palissy fled in search of noble protection and refuge from the authorities in Saintes after he had unwisely spoken in public of his heretical allegiances. Hence this final, exorbitant expression of the material life of silence, one very appropriate to Palissy’s own context and experience.

Dated 1560, this door is from the Château d’Usson near the seminal Protestant bastion of Pons, to which Palissy fled around the time it was carved. No sensible historian would dare argue the typicality of this door. It displayed over a hundred carved inscriptions. Neither could one make the case for hidden discourse. Overtness was precisely the point. This door screamed silence in the faces of passersby. Here, the theatricality of absorption was materialized.

These inscriptions lapidaires were carved under the patronage of the powerful Rabaine d’Usson family—builders of the château between 1536 and 1548, the family did not convert to Protestantism until 1560—and all advertised the virtues of silence, presumably with talkative Huguenots in mind. Still, the Rabain d’Ussons were clearly powerful enough—and may have had plenty of reason—to launch these diatribes against the “slander” of gossipy local Catholics as well. Consider a few of the axioms available to visitors at the door: ANTE QVAM LOQRVARIS DISCE (“Before speaking, listen”) (Eccles. 18:3); PROVERBIVM 13 / QVI CVSTODIT O / S SVVM CVSTOD / IT ANI-

MAM SVAM (“He who guards his mouth guards his soul”) (Prov. 13:3); LOQVACI NE CREDAS (“Put no faith in the words of a blabbermouth”); CVTO NE CREDAS (“Don’t rush to believe”); LINGVAM COHIBE (“Hold your tongue”): AVDI MVLTVM. LOQVARE PAVCA (“Listen much, speak little”; and NE MALE DICAS (“Never slander”). Intense inscriptions such as these should be read on many levels. Certainly, at least as an internal demand by this imperious noble family for co-religionists to listen silently upon passing through the imposing door to Château d’Usson, and to guard the secrets they learned once they left the household and reentered the dangerous world of the civil wars. Yet it would be impossible to come away from this door without feeling the power
of silence in southwestern France during the civil wars and the awesome ability to
discipline and redirect this power into work commanded by the internalization of
speech.

The material culture of productive silence was adopted early among Protestant art-
isans. Yet continuity over time and across religions is suggested by the resonance be-
tween the natural-philosophical discourses of Palissy, first published in the 1560s, and
the remarkable diary of the Paris glazier Jacques-Louis Ménétra, who began to write
his *Journal de ma vie* in 1764, and who expressed much sympathy for both Protestants
and Jews oppressed in France. Palissy, of course, was a painter of stained glass and ap-
plied this early knowledge of vitrification to ceramic kilns and glazes. Ménétra wrote
a poetic coda for his journal in “Year XI, 25 Vendemiaire,” that included the following
lines:

Remember my mind always stay calm
You must see everything say nothing and no speeches . . .
And for your own peace and quiet you who pretend to be a fine mind
renounce erase and cross out what you have written.”

While Ménétra finally abandoned the security of silence—and with it the “primitive”
artisanal persona he inherited from his father and internalized daily with compagnons
(“you must see everything say nothing and no speeches”)—to take up the exposed lan-
guage of the pen, he seemed (only half-playfully) to revert to old habits in the end to
admonish “my mind,” to “renounce erase and cross out what you have written.”

Colonial administrators such as Stuyvesant learned that when silence of the spirit
was performed to exploit the hidden social, political, and artisanal meanings of soul-
ishness, it could also be manipulated strategically, sometimes with Rabain d’Usson–
like aggressiveness. The Remonstrance strongly indicates that such strategies were per-
formed by the Quakers of Flushing and their sectarian allies. This stance of aggres-
sive silence supported by the invisible power of divine protection was also indicated by
John Bowne’s parting threat to Pergens. Following the text of the Remonstrance, if
this was a personal “case of conscience betwixt God and our own souls,” then by de-
finition of the original “Articles and conditions” of 1638, it was a quiet operation, not a
“public scandal and offence.” Hence it “can not bee” a threat to Stuyvesant’s power
(“destructive unto Magistracy and Minstereye”); neither should it even enter his field
of vision, as the directors’ instructions of 1663 made plain.

The text argued that “all magistrates and ministers are to follow” the two “great “ex-
amples” of primitive communication between God and man’s soul, namely “Moses
and Christ,” “whom,” like the primitive Christians the sectarians perceived themselves
to be, “God raised up maintained and defended against all enemies both of flesh and
spirit.” Because the flesh as well as the open households of such rustic primitives were
given material form by their animate soul, magistrates and ministers were warned to temper their judgment, to sheath their “swords.” Like the ceramic pie plate that dissolves in two so that only one-half remains material (and useless) while the other reverts to chaos before the blind eyes of Hogarth’s crying boy, “that which is of God will stand, and that which is of man will come to nothing.”

The authentic law of God and man must therefore privilege the expression of interiority over outward appearance. When the flesh is tempered then the spirit circulates freely—and universally—in nature, through the elements, from macrocosm to microcosm. That was the medium by which, “the Lord hath taught Moses or the civil power to give an outward liberty in the state by the law written in his heart designed for the good of all.” This was what John Bowne meant by the “heart to do justice.” If that law was secreted in Adam’s heart by God in prelapsarian times, and then revived in the hearts of Moses and Christ in primitive times, who but God himself, and those sectarians in direct communication with God, “can truly judge who is good, who is civil, who is true and who is false, and who can pass definitive sentence of life or death.”

Ambiguity over relationships between God’s truth and the secrets of the heart was the underlying tension between orthodoxy and sectarianism in the Bownas controversy. It also informed James Clement’s shocking challenge to the court’s authority to know his mind. There is an undeniable relationship between Stuyvesant’s struggle with the sects in the 1650s and 1660s and the continuity of that struggle with the Church of England from 1664 until the revolutionary period. Long Island was contested territory in 1657 and again in 1664 and 1702, in large part because of imperial fears that the disease of boundaryless soulishness would carry disorder and chaos from the shadow of the city’s periphery to the brightness of its core. Put another way, acceptance of sectarianism on Long Island might allow the secret practice of New York City’s sects to dispel the darkness, emerge from the shadows, and challenge the established political and religious authorities.

In this sense, the relation of Flushing to New York City in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was like that of Saintonge to La Rochelle a century earlier. The famously conservative Consistory of La Rochelle was anxious to keep Palissy and other heterodox elements outside its walls to prevent precisely what happened in New York City over the course of the eighteenth century.

The upheavals of New York’s seventeenth-century history are well known. Following the Glorious Revolution, Leisler’s Rebellion, and its bitterly divisive aftermath (including Leisler’s execution and Nicolas Bayard’s trial), there emerged a complicated political, cultural and theological schism between the anti-Leislerian ministry and an aroused pro-Leisler laity in the profoundly pluralistic New York Dutch Reformed Church. Thereby a very long period ensued when Calvinist sacerdotalism came under attack and lay participation in church ritual and other forms of lay enthusiasm, in-
cluding private worship, increased dramatically. Thus decreasing church attendance may—in some instances at least—have represented an increase in religiosity.245

Contesting Mastery

After 1664, British colonial New York, as a royal colony, furthered Stuyvesant’s efforts to support establishment churchmen in the struggle to coerce dissenters into orthodoxy. As in Europe, New York’s new leaders continued to assert an authoritarian milieu within which dissent and heterodoxy traditionally flourished. This was certainly the case with New York’s large and wealthy Anglican community, which was engaged in a vicious battle with dissenters throughout the 1750s, culminating temporarily in the churchmen’s successful institution of King’s College under the aegis of the Church of England. The president of King’s College, Samuel Johnson, joined with local churchmen to call for an American Anglican bishop. This created the impression at least, so far as the Dutch Reformed and Anglican clergy were concerned, that New York’s religious establishment was prepared to support a program of intolerance similar to that which had sent Old World heterodox groups underground to pursue their activities clandestinely. In this way as in many others, New York was perhaps the most “European” of the American colonies.246

The strength of heterodoxy in New York was still perceived as a real threat by the authorities. Speaking of growing sectarian piety in the city, one influential Lutheran cleric observed bitterly that by 1730, the sects thought it “a pious thing to honor disorder as an idol.” Also in 1730, another minister lamented that sectarians had grown so successful in their quest to assure unmediated and unrestricted personal religious experience in the colony, that, in effect, “here [in New York] the church is like a vineyard without a hedge, like a city without walls, like a house without a door and lock.”247

The world of the fortress had been inverted. The sectarian domestic metaphor of the New World town as an open household for refugees of all confessions, posited as the social ideal by the Remonstrance on Long Island in 1657, was lamented as the infiltration of chaos from outsiders by New York City’s churchmen in 1730.

Yet by 1730, the pietistic Lutheran Henry Melchior Muhlenberg explained how his concept of holy materiality linked the various sects—from Quakers to Ranters—despite differences between them. Thus, material life was harnessed to Muhlenberg’s Palissy-like notion of the anti-rhetorical simplicity of holy speech. “High-flown words, artistic expressions, outward forms, and seemingly holy gestures,” he wrote, following the Paracelsian tradition, “none of these effects anything whatsoever unless edification by the Word of God begins in the bottom of the heart.”248 Like the heart of the body, the armature of the world of forms was interior and hidden. Fludd’s Interior Principle predicted the conflict to local readers, including the younger Winthrop.
Where New York’s enthusiastic sectarians perceived unity through the third eye of the animated soul, inexperienced prophets of authority were blinded by the confusion and disorder of Babel. That is why the remonstrators reminded Stuyvesant that the colony of New Netherlands, like the Dutch Republic, was historically (and by nature), an open state, where refugees fled to escape the violence of religious “hatred, war and bondage.” Anti-Semitism was in truth rampant in the Dutch Republic, but “the law of love, peace and liberty in the states,” was extended even to the most affluent and productive of infidels, the “Jews, Turks, and Egyptians, as they are considered the sonnes of Adam,” and hence postlapsarian sinners, like “all in Christ Jesus.” Then in an apocalyptic threat reminiscent of the first paragraph of the text (“for out of Christ God is a consuming fire, and it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God”), the Remonstrance warned again that “our Saviour saith it is impossible but that offenses will come, but woe unto him by whom they cometh.”

This merged exegetically with the millennial investment of the pietist artisan in animation of tiny, overlooked, invisible shadow-world bits of life. These were the mutable refugees who fled from Nature’s predators, traceable from Palissy’s metamorphic insects and amphibians cast alive into earthenware to Hogarth’s painted “species” on the human perceptual periphery. Stuyvesant and other masters of “Newtonian” sunlight were warned to fear the hidden power of God’s spiritual protection. These warnings were harnessed to “our desire . . . not to offend one of his little ones, in whatsoever form, name or title hee appears in.” Thus, “hee” was disguised to the unseeing inside the forms of the weak to balance the power of the strong. The mixed disguises, mobility, and infinite mutability of such “little” forms made it absolutely necessary that they be welcomed in love, and given “free egress and regress unto our Town, and houses, as God shall persuade our consciences.” This “egresse and regress” was to be “free” and natural, much like the movement of the universal soul as it permeated the “fit” body, or the light of nature called down by the Huguenot artisan to animate fallen matter.

Personal Readings, Universal Affinities

In its claim that the Quakers of Flushing “shall be glad to see anything of God in any of them,” the Remonstrance provided the social, cultural, and theological precondition for the operation of Thomas Story’s pluralistic ministry on Long Island. At virtually every meeting, Story engaged other sectarians—and other friends—whose autodidactic reading and experience had led to strange and idiosyncratic interpretations of natural philosophy and scriptural text. Dozens of examples line hundreds of pages of the preacher’s dense journal. Two moments of interaction and convergence suffice. Story was only mildly surprised when a Quaker “who had professed the Truth about
20 years” testified at a Meeting in Hempstead in 1699 that he “had once believed, that if the Body of a Man were Burnt to Ashes, and those Ashes sifted through a Sieve over all the Earth, Sea, and Air, yet, at the Last Day, the same Dust should come together again, and the same Body should then arise; ‘but,’ said he, ‘I now believe otherwise.’”\textsuperscript{249}

Unfortunately, this unnamed Friend did not fully explain why he “now believe[d] otherwise.” The scholarly Story considered this naturalistic and vaguely geomantic theory of bodily recomposition from the elements. He incorporated the man’s millennial testimony into his carefully constructed, noncommittal response, which was intended to disagree dispassionately, and still not repulse the man from open the household of God. “Now,” replied Story cautiously, “though we fully believe the Resurrection of the dead, both of the Just and Unjust, yet we take not upon us to determine the Mode of Existence in that State, or with what Bodies they shall Come; but leave it to the Almighty to give unto us Bodies as may best please him.”\textsuperscript{250} Story’s permeable conception allowed for infinite bodily shapes at the Last Judgment; these were to appear “in whatsoever form” as well.

From the perspective of New York’s consistories, outrageous and annoying spectacles of multiple interpretation were commonplace at meetings on Long Island. These were apparently absorbed by the Quakers as well, though undoubtedly with far less grace than Story showed in Hempstead. The Ranters, in particular, tested the open structure of the Remonstrance, because even a flexible cosmos was too formal for some sects:

On the 28th [1699] we had a meeting at Tinnering [Long Island], on the occasion of a marriage, about nine miles from thence: To this Meeting came some of the Ranters of Oyster Bay; and, during the greatest part of the time, were pretty still, save only an old Man, who sometimes hooted like an Owl, and made a ridiculous Noise, as their Manner is: And the Marriage was solemnized, he stood up, and bare his Testimony, as he called it, against our set Forms; and cried for Liberty to the oppressed Seed, which, said he, is oppressed with your Forms, meaning the Manner of Celebration, of our Marriages; generally approved by Mankind as the most decent of all.\textsuperscript{251}

The old man who “sometimes hooted like an Owl” witnessed against monogamous marriage and separate family life. For him, this was the main obstacle to victory over the corrupted flesh (Ranters represented themselves as God’s unified flesh).\textsuperscript{252} That the Ranters sought liberty from the oppressiveness of outward Quaker ritual (or “Forms”), is particularly significant in light of Story’s response. Ranters were commonly mistaken for Quakers by “other people” (they sometimes claimed to be Quakers). Forms of outward convergence around the unity of belief in a universal soul caused such confusion at times that sectarian difference could only be determined from inside the sects themselves, so boundaries were virtually invisible to outsiders:
Now, that which these Ranters would be at, is a Liberty to all that profess Truth to do what they list, without being reproved, or accountable to any Person or People: For, they say, to be accountable to Man is Bondage; and for Man to judge is vain, since those actions he may censure may be done in the Motion of the Holy Seed and Spirit of Christ; under which Pretense they would cover many lewd and vile Practices, by reason whereof we had sometimes been upbraided in Connecticut Colony; where some of them, in Times past, had appeared, in their extravagant ravings, under the Name of Quakers.253

“Lewd and vile” they may have been, but the Ranters were protected by the Remonstrance’s open code of judgment, accepting the notion that any action claimed to be made “in love,” was potentially “the Motion of the Holy Seed.”

Menocchio(s) on Long Island

Consider an extension of this logic of universalist affinity, such that John Winthrop Jr., Sir Kenelm Digby, or, for that matter, Comenius and Oldenburg might find coherent relationships between Fludd’s geomantic theories of perception, the Remonstrance’s text, and the words uttered at his trial by Carlo Ginzburg’s Friulian miller Menocchio. We know Menocchio was a nominal Italian Catholic, and like Palissy, a literate artisan and autodidact. In 1601, around the time Palissy died a prisoner in the Bastille, he was burned at the stake by the Roman Inquisition. Menocchio’s long trial and execution resulted in volumes of testimony. Like Palissy as well, these volumes reveal the extent to which the miller was a derivative cipher for the enormous body of literature and imagery of natural-philosophical and theological debate that was available to him and thousands of others throughout the early modern world during his lifetime. Included in these transcripts is a revealing exchange that blended Fludd’s geomantic process of perception, with the miller’s folkloric understanding of natural-philosophical texts he may have been reading (or, heard read). These may have included snippets of Bruno, Cellini, or even Palissy, as well as the Bible:

INQUISITOR: What is this power of God?  
MENOCCIO: To operate through skilled workers. . . .  
INQUISITOR: Is what you call God made and produced by someone else?  
MENOCCIO: He is not produced by others but receives his movement within the shifting of the chaos, and proceeds from imperfect to perfect.254

Ginzburg infers that the philosophical Menocchio’s execution was ordered in part because of certain affinities in his testimony with the profoundly heretical books of Giordano Bruno, who truly did terrify the Vatican. Outside this dangerous context, the quirky animate materialism of this talkative but insignificant miller might have
been overlooked. This linkage would help explain why, ultimately, Pope Clement VIII personally targeted Menocchio, “who had become a rotten member of Christ’s body, to demand his death.” Shortly before the miller’s execution, an Inquisition scribe recorded on April 28, 1584, Menocchio’s vigorous denunciation of “the pope, cardinals, and bishops [who] are so great and rich that everything belongs to the church and to the priests, and they oppress the poor.” He then continued, full of the self-destructive passion of a terrified but inspired autodidact, to

call for a church that would abandon its privileges and reduce itself to poverty alongside the poor . . . tied to a different religious concept, rooted in the Gospels, free of dogmatic requirements, and reduced to a core of practical precepts: “I would want us to believe in the majesty of God, to be good, and to do as Jesus Christ commanded when he replied to those Jews who questioned him about what law was to be kept: ‘Love God and your neighbor.’” For Menocchio this simplified religion didn’t call for confessional restrictions. His impassioned exaltation of the equality of all religions was based on the idea that illumination was granted to all men in equal measure—“the majesty of God has given the Holy Spirit to all, to Christians, to heretics, to Turks, and to Jews; and he considers them all dear, and they are all saved in the same manner.”

It would be a simple matter to locate numerous other examples of similar sorts of apostolic language taken from the Gospels (Matt. 26:24–25 was the common text). Such rhetoric was reactivated by almost all the sects, especially during times of tribulation, witness the events that led to the Flushing Quakers’ response to Stuyvesant in the Remonstrance of 1657. This common language was taken from the period in which the bodily pain and affliction of Jesus and the apostles was a signifier of their devotion to the enthusiastic revival of what Palissy and all the sectarians called the primitive Church: the youthful age of the Church that brought Christianity closest to a prelapsarian, Adamic ideal. What was an open household but a figure of Eden before the Fall? Thereafter, the garden was “bounded” and “locked” from mankind. The Fall was the primordial separation of macrocosm from microcosm, mankind’s punishment, half-blind perception. Hence, William Penn wrote in his famous preface to George Fox’s Journal: “These things gave them [the Quakers] a rough and disagreeable appearance with the generality, who thought them turners of the world upside down, as indeed in some sense they were: but in no other than that wherein Paul was so charged, viz. to bring things back to their primitive and right order again.”

Palissy’s rustic language, like Gerrard Winstanley’s, had a powerful Leveler or Digger component, and his sarcastic (and, given his own quest for patronage, somewhat disingenuous) attack on the parvenu ministers of Saintonge who attended rich patrons (in their châteaux) at the expense of the poor (in huts), was a source of Palissy’s troubles with the wealthy and authoritarian Consistory of La Rochelle during the period of
Calvinist consolidation. It is also useful to recall his encounter with the geode—a paradigm for his natural artisanry and for the internal condition of the earth’s “bowels”—having “a rough and disagreeable appearance with the generality.” When this world in microcosm was reversed, “to bring things back to their primitive and right order again,” it became possible to see inside, at the “bottom,” to witness the sparkling transparency of the soul of Nature distilled in crystalline rock.

Penn was able to achieve a rhetoric of religious tolerance in Pennsylvania rarely approached in colonial New York. Still, it is noteworthy that the idealized contours of his charge from Paul to effect this reversal and “bring things back to their primitive and right order again,” were delineated in the Flushing Remonstrance. Thus, the town was particularly fertile territory for Fox’s message, as well as Story’s.

Interaction with lay interpretation of Pauline language is powerfully present when reading the Remonstrance, especially if juxtaposed with transcripts from Menocchio’s trial: in the miller’s devaluation of corrupt, learned culture, supplanted by a rustic lay dominion empowered by spirit made material in Nature; the equivalence of all religious piety as “dear,” even alleged heresy, when illuminated by the light, thus ushering in a new age of universal, ecumenical piety. Pronounced in the Remonstrance as well, readers encountered the dialectical armature of refugee cultures. This emerged from the experience of subterranean worlds locked in mortal combat over the unified inclusivity of “love” and the utter fragmentation of religious “violence.” A profound relation existed between “the law of love” and violence. For the remonstrators, “the law of love” was also the code of a marginalized social order animated as a conduit for the holy spirit, and experienced in “peace and liberty.” That is to say, privately, inwardly, and hence in almost infinite outward variety. “In whatsoever form . . . [we] shall be glad to see anything of God in any of them,” they wrote, inasmuch as to see God in them was to peer into the light of love’s bodily receptacle and share the deepest recess of the soulish self: the “bottom of” the heart. In the words of Menocchio, God “receives his movement within the shifting of the chaos” of natural bodies, “and proceeds from imperfect to perfect.”

On the other hand, “violence,” as defined by Europe’s civil wars of religion, was the suppression of difference in the name of absolutism, whereby independent piety, an expression of the secret self is turned inside out and made available to carnal blockage by the dominant order. This construct was central to the heterodox worldview—as in Aunis-Saintonge—and was entwined in its history. “They rather throve,” John Bossy has written, “on persecution.”258 One reason the sects were so successful on Long Island and finally in New York City was that they were persecuted, but not officially “eliminated,” as in Bourbon France.

Persecution created the context for material culture that asserted the appearance of a “plain” (or, “primitive”?) façade that, like Palissy’s ceramic grottoes, Fludd’s “theater...
of the world,” and Hogarth’s back streets of Hog Lane, simultaneously hid, protected, encoded, and displayed the existence of interiors that contained a multitude of secret passages, entries, recesses, and messages mastered by shadowy subgroups. Menocchio knew secrets were dangerous when exposed to the authoritarian gaze of inquisitors. Yet he was invested in the power of truth as he understood it to overcome the boundaries of difference and learning, and persisted in ridiculing the Inquisition’s efforts to imagine the ineffable in overt or conventional ways.

Menocchio—who also claimed to see “with the eyes of the mind,” because “with out bodily eyes we cannot see everything”—gave primacy to inner experience for the same reason as Hogarth and Palissy, because it held out the utopian promise of novelty and innovation. “I have an artful mind,” he told his amazed inquisitors in 1584, “and I have wanted to seek out higher things about which I did not know . . . my mind was lofty and wished for a new world and way of life.” It was precisely this fear of innovation that alarmed the elder Winthrop, Stuyvesant, and Hogarth’s and New York’s Huguenot chair makers’ competitors in the marketplace. The same year the Remonstrance was written, Stuyvesant complained in frustration to the West India Company about the chaos of innovation on western Long Island in his report on the “State of the Churches in New Netherland.” Gravesend was already under the thrall of what he called “Mennonites,” and Flushing’s “Presbyterians [were] endowed with divers opinions” and had now “absented themselves from preaching.” This was fertile ground for Huguenot and Quaker artisans, but in a larger sense, Menocchio, as well as Palissy and his followers, would have felt comfortable there searching for, and constructing, “a new world and way of life.”

Like many Huguenots, Quakers migrated in family groups from borderland regions from which they often challenged authority with impunity. They were also highly artisanal. Most New York Quakers appear to have come from provincial northwest England bordering the anglophobe “Celtic fringe” of Wales and Scotland. After 1664, New York Huguenots emigrated mostly from provincial southwest France, bordering the Atlantic, and so had historical and economic ties to coastal regions of the English archipelago and the New World, while displaying tenuous, often violent relationships with landlocked and absolutist Paris. These two regional cultures also shared similar notions of anti-authoritarian personal enthusiasm and materialism, inspired by the interior presence of the luminous Holy Spirit, which emerged particularly in contexts of violence and oppression. Both groups were influenced by Continental (especially Germanic) pietism during the religious civil wars in France and England in the early modern period.
Barry Levy’s study of the “radicalism” of “frontier” (his terms) Quaker domesticity in northwest England and the Delaware Valley, and the extent to which Quaker universalism and ideas about the luminous body informed everyday life, also suggests modes of convergence between the Huguenot and Quaker artisans who extended their “spiritual tribalism” to New Amsterdam and New York. If “domesticity was an essential part of George Fox’s and Margaret Fell’s religious strategy,” the core of domestic relations was their desire “to base worship on nonverbal spiritual intimacy.” Levy concludes that British-American Quakers “wanted to make households totally spiritual and therefore morally self-sufficient,” thus creating, “the most spiritualized household relations ever seen in England.”

This is a big statement given the variety of sectarianism throughout the British Isles, but it is not my plan to dispute Levy’s conclusions for England. Yet this vision of domesticity may not have been restricted to seventeenth-century England. This Quaker sense of the domestic cosmos had strong affinities with Protestantism in southwestern France and, by extension, the refugees in England and New York Colony. These religious strategies were also firmly entrenched in Palissy’s program for the survival of the Huguenots of Saintonge as early as the 1560s. Such strategies were part of a complex web of family resemblances whereby Huguenot and Quaker artisans found significant areas of overlap in which to converge in spiritual and material life, as groups from Long Island and the city merged networks and “tribes” and positioned themselves to dominate New York’s lucrative woodworking and upholstery trades. Refugee craftsmen had occupied an enviable position as artisans in the city since the earliest days of New Amsterdam, but the stigmatized Quakers might not have obtained initial access to higher wages and the urban luxury trades without help from New World Huguenot networks.

What does it mean, in the context of seventeenth-century Flushing, to speak of a domestic cosmos that depended on “nonverbal spiritual intimacy” in Quaker households, which were “totally spiritual and therefore morally self-sufficient”? Perhaps that the material life of the household was integral to the totality of a great material-holiness synthesis for Quakers, just as for southwestern Huguenot culture. Was there not a close relationship between Palissy’s notion of spiritualized domesticity as a keystone of artisanal sûreté for Huguenot refugees—hence the household as “natural” fortress of the soul—and Quaker domesticity? Huguenots and Quakers alike shared the fundamental understanding that silence and other modes of nonverbal communication allowed society’s “tiny” creatures to see all with the “eye of truth” and remain invisible to those who controlled overt discourse. For all of his posturing and sexual braggadocio, Ménétra was arguably just a weak little man. It was from that small part of himself that occupied the very core of his being as an artisan that the glazier warned, “you must see everything,” but, “say nothing and no speeches.”
Levy does not concern himself with problems of material culture, and given his emphasis on social and family history, he pays little attention to close analysis of the theological texts that show how Quakers addressed the crucial relationship between quietist “spiritual intimacy” and domestic life. Yet this is the most logical place to begin to unravel what Braudel in another, not unrelated context, calls the pluralistic “structures within which the peoples . . . gradually found a place, collaborating . . . here and there curiously re-creating the patterns” of memory that were already shared or, “in play,” between New York Huguenot and Quaker artisans.

The folklorist Richard Bauman has elucidated Quaker construction of social and cultural identity, wherein the “symbolism of speaking and silence” was privileged. He combines analysis of seventeenth-century theological and natural-philosophical texts with methods pioneered by sociolinguists such as Dell Hymes. By a practice he calls an “ethnography of speaking,” Bauman observes ways in which “silence as a communicative phenomenon,” with “richly textured and multidimensional . . . kinds of meanings,” was a product of the mystical synthesis of religion and science. (Also, one might add, of the unity of spirit and matter.)

Thus, the function of silence was specific to the same cosmological order that enmeshed Palissy, Winthrop, Flood, and de Bry in its web of relationships, and that Thomas Story revealed in the narrative of his conversion experience in England before coming to preach on Long Island. Following Weber, Bauman concludes that Quakers experienced the “routinization of charisma” over time in repetitive performances by ministers. Levy’s location of spiritual charisma as being active in the routines of domesticity is more satisfying as social history. But the most logical space where the charisma of spiritual silence was routinized or communicated in everyday life was artisanry and the geomantic perception of material culture in the local workshop, alchemic laboratory, marketplace, and—as in Hugh Platt’s domestic adaptation of Bruno’s art of memory through the homey lens of his Huguenot mentor “Master Bernard”—in the British-American home.

This is not the place to address the full force of Bauman’s complex and subtle reading of seventeenth-century Quakers’ verbal and textual performance. For our purposes here, suffice it to say that Bauman makes two crucial connections between Quaker spiritual practice and the dialectic of speaking and silence in the sectarian tradition of the English civil wars: first, Bauman underscores the centrality of the Tower of Babel mythology in Quaker discourse and the culture of silence; and second, he posits the significance of the natural-philosophical and alchemic writings of Jakob Böhme to the formulation of the Quaker program. Fox distinguished between what he came to call the “natural” language of postlapsarian times and prelapsarian Adamic, or “spiritual,” language.

This is related to the Palissian paradigm of natural artisanry, since Palissy referred
to earth materials he had already purified by alchemy as returned to a prelapsarian or Adamic state. Nature itself wasn’t evil; only the corrupted part obscured by the dross of the Fall that concealed the fragment of pure spirit. This was what Böhme meant by “half-dead” nature. Palissy’s rustique figulines were Nature reformed, inasmuch as the corrupt deadness was burned off and the primitive spirit of purified Nature was inseminated and reborn, made translucent by fire in the potter’s kiln (as was the potter himself by the fire of sacred violence). “For the early Quakers,” Bauman writes:

speaking was basically a faculty of the natural man, of the flesh. Fox experienced early in his life the realization that ‘the people of the world,’ those who were joined to the flesh and servants of it, “have mouths full of deceit and changeable words.“ . . . It is not that languages or speaking were seen as inherently evil . . . Rather, speaking in the service of the spirit had to derive in a special way from a proper spiritual source, and “carnal talk,” talk that did not stem from that spiritual source, was inadequate to comprehend spiritual truth, the service of which was the most important business of man on earth. Fox . . . “was afraid of all carnal talk and talkers, for I could see nothing but corruptions, and the life lay under the burden of corruptions” [emphasis added]. . . . At the foundation of these principles was the powerfully resonant awareness that natural languages came into being at Babel and that only by regaining the “state to which Adam was before he fell” could one comprehend the eternal and “divine Word of wisdom.” If carnal speaking, as the faculty of natural man, is inadequate for the attainment of the desired spiritual condition, which are the proper behavioral means by which this condition may be attained? For the Quakers, one of the most fundamental means was silence. Silence was very close to the center of seventeenth-century Quaker doctrine and practice.264

For Quakers, the object of faith became to suppress carnality, allowing the light of the spirit to enter the heart and suffuse the body like a beacon, and above all, to hear the voice of God through the conduit of one’s inner spiritual voice (the verbal equivalent of Fludd’s inner oculus imaginationis). The spirit of God within was thus God’s voice (“God the speaker”), just as it extended God’s eye to the experienced.265 By the strictest comparison with the shifting, “changeable” nature of the Huguenot practice of sûreté, Fox’s insistence on not hiding behind the “mixed composition” of “deceitful” words seems provocative. Silence was clearly safer, since such rhetoric conforms more readily with the anti-Nicodemite, martyrlogical ideal of Crespin, rather than Palissy’s more usual practice of following the “medieval custom” of denying heresy “as far as possible to save one’s skin, if one had not first succeeded in escaping capture.”266

Still, in a typical contradiction, the potter hoped that Jehan Crespin would publish his account of Philibert Hamelin’s life (see chapter 3). Here again, however, smallness was operative as a key metaphor of materiality, and spiritual silence, although in practice part of a dialogue of pilgrimage, was actually “a small still voice, moving in man
Godwards toward completeness of the soulish circuit between microcosm and macrocosm. As with ambiguous symbolic plays on audience perception of the products of Huguenot artisanry, what was silence to those outside of “converse,” but an opening to the small still voice to that experienced part of the craftsman’s audience having both the memory and competence to achieve unification of perception?

Fludd’s geomantic treatises posited similarly that the blindness of Babel emerged from carnality. Willfulness and other exertions of the flesh buried God’s voice in chaos, destroying hope of prophesy: the tiny voice of the Holy Spirit “in converse” with mankind by way of the open mind and silent mouth. Hence, Palissy’s claim during the battle over Saintes that death did not frighten him. However, he did fear the chaos caused by carnal emotions that would interfere with passage of the tiny voice of the Holy Spirit at the last moment. At that moment, Palissy prayed for Stoic calm. Above all, the famous admonition “let your words be few” (Eccles. 5:2) originated with the Old Testament God. The constant refrain to the Israelites after virtually every transgression, was a reminder of their failure to listen to his word. Who could doubt that Fox quoted Ecclesiastes when he visited Flushing and preached at Bowne’s house in 1672? Would it be redundant for Huguenot pastors to actually speak these words at the Château d’Usson, where newly converted Saintongeais Huguenots—including Palissy and his followers—held clandestine meetings and recorded baptisms in the mid 1560s? After all, the Rabain d’Ussons had already communicated their warnings silently in terse inscriptions carved “invisibly” in stone round their door. Was a conventicle in Pons as quiet as Quaker meetings in Flushing or in the Hempstead woods?

Bauman argues that the Quaker practice of Adamic silence punctuated by unexpected bursts of mysterious, prophetic speech was appropriated and adapted from the “mystical tradition of the hermetic philosophers and Jacob Boehme.” Tracing affinities to the “occult line of religioscientific thought,” Fox’s Quakerism is “informed by cabalistic, Rosicrucian doctrines,” engaged by the Paracelsian tradition of “speculative cryptological, numerological, etymological, and allegorical attempts to reconstruct the language of Adam.” Bauman compares Böhme’s transforming “experience of having ‘the nature and virtues of things opened’ to him in the year 1600” (allowing him to perceive the “flash” in the dull material of a pewter pitcher) to Fox’s epiphanic “joy at attaining the Adamic insight of ‘how all things had their names given them according to their virtue.’” For Bauman, Fox’s joy was in decoding the Adamic language. This conforms well with Böhme’s idiosyncratic, very nearly incomprehensible figurative language in Aurora, an exorbitant use of metaphors that is arguably the inverse of Quaker silent performance.

Yet this metaphoric overlay was a move toward similar ends of recovering the Adamic purity of spiritual expression. Böhme’s ecstatic visions and his ineffable emotions existed in the cosmic realm of mankind’s common memory beyond the carnal
containment of words. Hence, the highly charged, sexualized discourse of Böhme’s *Aurora* was displaced and then reinvented as a Neoplatonic natural philosophy of intense material fecundity, “spoken,” in the textual equivalent of “tongues.” “This preoccupation with language,” made for what was well known in seventeenth-century British America as “a distinctive, symbolically resonant Quaker communicative style.” But, if the antecedents of “the Quaker communicative style” were Germanic (Böhme) and French (Palissy), as well as British (Fludd)—all part of the Paracelsian tradition—then Quakerism represented only the best-known of a profusion of sects, all privileging the reconstruction of the transparent language of Adam, leading to a “proliferation of sectarian speech styles . . . a prominent component of the Babelistic confusion of tongues that gave revolutionary England its characteristic din.”

Yet the silent reconstruction of certain Adamic languages in postlapsarian time was simultaneously an artisanal project, taken up in the visual, tactile, and especially spiritual language of earthy materials by such manual philosophers and alchemists as Palissy, Fludd, and Hogarth. Here, babelistic confusion was understood primarily as a perceptual problem of decoding pluralism and the conflated effects of “mixed composition” through alchemical vision. Thus, for sectarians, pietistic Huguenot artisans, as well as alchemists, the primordial “nature and virtue of things,” and the metaphysical manner in which “all things had their names given them,” were inextricably entwined by God in creating the original language of Adam. This was unified discourse, in which historical slippage between words and things was nonexistent, and the meaning of verbal and visual language was utterly transparent, inseparable. This was also the true aim of geomancy. Fludd’s *Internal Principle* showed how the active agent of visual unification in “this art [of geomancy] is a way of knowing that depends immediately [emphasis added] on the soul; that its root is the soul itself; and that, therefore, it is a science more subtle than any other science man may comprehend in this corruptible world.”

Through this alchemical operation of the soul, “structures of collaboration” join together in secrecy, combining for the sort of mutual protection and hidden security that the signatories of the Flushing Remonstrance—and Bernard Palissy, the younger Winthrop, Sir Kenelm Digby, and, over 100 years later, Dr. Ezra Stiles—would have comprehended. “Without any doubt are rays emitted between the soul of one man and that of another which are invisible lights,” Fludd wrote. “In their emission,” he continued, “the rays are so joined together that either the soul of the seeker or the seeker himself be the one to whom danger is imminent, or else a friend of his; for the [soul] is very prophetic:

Like a guardian forseeing danger with which a body is threatened, it may explain the secret future of its body to another soul applying to it—a future which it had been unable to communicate to its body because of that body’s grossness. And in this way may a quiet
and peaceful soul, which is in fit condition for judging, and to which the movements of its body are well subjugated, prognosticate the future to that other soul . . . [such a soul could] leave its body so as to find a place whence it could enter into communication, and converse, with the souls of . . . friends . . . the rays of the soul extend imperceptibly outside the body and far beyond the range of visible rays. They . . . pass through elementary media without any hindrance, like an influence.

The alchemical process works through the soul to find affinities with other purified bodies of “elementary media” through which it “may pass without hindrance, like an influence.” These conversing souls seek to “find a place” to enter into silent, interior communication with “friends,” as the many converge in unity and self-protection. But not only friends, enemies as well may enter into converse and be converted. The alchemical operation of the geomantic soul—like the philosopher’s stone—allowed for the silent transmutation of another carnal “body’s grossness” into transparent purity and friendship (what Stuyvesant and Cornbury called “seduction”). At the end of Fludd’s romance, the peripatetic alchemist had only to convince one last Jesuit adversary before being allowed on his way. Verbal arguments alone did not transform the Jesuit from enemy to friend. Fludd gives this away subtly, as two former enemies come together physically and unify symbolically, passing the silent soul from one body to the other. The Jesuit “embraced me humanely and swore an oath that henceforth he would look upon me as if I were his brother” [emphasis added]. He also asked me to visit him and his confreres as often as possible.” The two men had entered into a sort of family relationship, revealed to them silently, through inner experience. Security was achieved by hidden “influence” rather than violence. The converted Jesuit now carried the invisible rays to his confreres, so that they might act on carnal enemies domestically, hidden in plain sight, even though the alchemist was long gone.

When last we encounter Fludd’s character, he is moving on to even greater challenges. He is asked to accept the Jesuit’s fraternal offer to stay in Avignon. “I was . . . prevented from doing so by my sudden departure from that city,” Fludd wrote cryptically, “whence I went to stay with the Duc de Guise, then at Marseilles, he having sent for me that I might instruct him and his brother, a Knight of Malta, in the mathematical sciences.” Charles de Lorraine, the fourth duc de Guise, descended from the most powerful and despised of the noble Counter-Reformation families in France. The Guise family was well known to have been responsible for infamous massacres and other acts of violence committed against Huguenots during the civil wars of religion. The appearance of such a notorious name in this synthesis of alchemic myth and refugee history would have resonated powerfully with Fludd’s partner the refugee printer de Bry, and every Huguenot of the many civil war generations. The story ends with Fludd’s empathy with the oppressed Huguenots leading him to merge his char-
character’s identity with that of a refugee alchemist in France. Like Palissy in 1565, Fludd had become emblematic of a New World Huguenot who would enter the household of his greatest enemy to ply his trade and, in so doing, unify with his opposite through alchemical transmutation.

The provocative John Bossy—whose spiritual and intellectual heroes are the “authentic” early Christians, rather than their lesser Reformation emulators—has written dismissively of the seventeenth-century sectarians as “spiritual radicals” who, though “absorbing to contemplate,” were “in the end only a footnote to the history of the transformations of Christendom.”272 This was because in the end, their millenarian background inhibited them from preaching the sort of mysticism of everyday life which would accommodate the conventional wisdom that good fences make good neighbors. It seems too strong to say that they were the end of an old song, not the beginning of a new one, for they were all scripturals in their fashion and their feelings about oneness corresponded to something general in the Reformation; the Quakers are after all still with us. But on the whole they strike one as a bit old fashioned, inhabitants of a moral universe shaped by deadly sins. To the lack of staying-power characteristic of extraordinary motions of the Spirit they added the anachronism of having been born into a civilization of the word: in the long run, moreover, a civilization of the printed word. One answer to the Anabaptists was the baptismal register; another was the catechism. The spirituals could not compete in this field: imagine a Ranter catechism . . . the age of the Spirit was either gone, or not yet come.”273

If “the spirituals could not compete in this field . . . of the printed word,” they had learned to compete successfully in profitable fields that put a premium on the “silent” languages of the Hogarthian shadows: seeing, hearing, remembering, encoding, innovating, building, and rebuilding. Bossy’s uncritical use of Walter Ong’s notion of a pervasive “civilization of the printed word,” has led him, following Hogarth, to overlook sectarian or heterodox artisans working in the Palissian tradition. Huguenots, Quakers, and more than a few Ranters had succeeded in constructing the “mysticism of everyday life,” albeit more in things than in words. “Print situates words in space more relentlessly than writing ever did,” Ong observes, such that “writing moves words from the sound world to the world of visual space, but print locks words into position in this space. Control of position is everything in print.”274

Building on the work of Elizabeth Eisenstein, Marshall McLuhan, and George Steiner, Ong elucidates how conceptions of space and by extension the very materiality of meaning were transformed from primordial oral-aural patterns by early print culture, with its geometric reorganization of vision and obsessive emphasis on compartmentalization and closure. Which is precisely why Palissy and his artisan followers—and indeed most sectarians—maintained fluidity and openness in the oral tradi-
tion by turning away from “preaching” only printed text by supplementing the mute spiritual charisma of material culture. The Paracelsians, after all, put themselves in the uncomfortable position of writing books to attack the writing of books. Moreover, artisanal work was both sold and disseminated where artisans from places such as Flushing could not go “comfortably.” Just as the remonstrators of 1657 likened their town to a household open to settlement by those with “anything” of God in them, the reverse was certainly possible: a sectarian thing was given the motion to silently “leave its body so as to find a place whence it could enter into communication, and converse,” through commerce. After all, Kenelm Digby’s weapon salve cured wounds by treating the offending weapon, half a world away, if needs be, from its victim. Therefore, while Bossy may find it impossible to “imagine a Ranter catechism,” it is not so hard to imagine that Ranters—who called themselves Quakers throughout the Long Island Sound region—made the desk upon which the catechism was read, the house in which the desk was placed, or the paper it was printed on. Certainly, a sectarian may also have printed the catechism itself, if Benjamin Franklin’s well-known encounter in Philadelphia with an odd fellow printer—a “French Prophet” who spoke in tongues, “and could act their enthusiastic Agitations”—is any indication. Franklin observed that “he did not profess any particular religion, but something of all on occasion.”

Conclusion: Father Jogues Passes Through the Fortieth Parallel

Had the American economic historian Benjamin Labaree followed the younger John Winthrop’s European career in the aftermath of the siege of La Rochelle—when Winthrop traveled the Mediterranean in search of the philosopher’s stone, and ultimately migrated south from Massachusetts Bay to the Sound region to continue his quest—he would not have apologized for his insight, that “Long Island Sound can be understood, tongue in cheek, as the Mediterranean of the New World.” “It provided a magnificent waterway,” Labaree goes on, for the European settlers of New Amsterdam and Connecticut, as well as for the native Americans on both sides of the Sound. The Sound stretches fifty miles from its lower end to the race at its opening into the Atlantic, and reaches 30 miles at its widest. Its waters are protected. . . . Most small craft . . . can handle its waters without much trouble. The Sound is ideal for shipping: its waters are wide enough to make a series of tacks in a good wind. Its strong winds can also help propel boats along. To further the Mediterranean analogy, Long Island Sound was also an area of conflict. The Sound’s easily navigable waters promoted the mixing of cultures; however, peoples living in the Long Island basin experienced occasional friction, primarily because there were so many resources in the area worth fighting over.
It was, of course, in the context of “mixing of cultures” in the pluralistic Mediterranean, that Fernand Braudel first used the term “structures of collaboration.” It has been my task here to analyze the morphology—the pluralistic convergence of shared features, “bundles of relations,” or “family resemblances”—that provided an underlying unity of structure “beneath” the “mixed composition” of New York’s Huguenots and Quakers. Here were two primitivist, refugee artisanal cultures that, in effect, merged spiritual and material assets “primarily because there were so many resources in the area worth fighting over.”

The historiography of this task to map convergence in the midst of apparent cultural chaos extends at least from Braudel’s post-Nazi, Lévi-Straussian structuralism, in which the very word “collaboration” was heavily laden with meaning, to the approaches of Natalie Zemon Davis and Carlo Ginzburg—both of whom are also heavily influenced by cultural anthropology (and, in Ginzburg’s work, folkloric studies as well). Davis demonstrates how effective the “metaphor of the network of human communication” among a heterodox polyglot population may be when it is applied comparatively by historians to the task of understanding how a set of complex yet subtle ties of urban piety, as well as other common early modern vernaculars, including artisanal skills, material life, and innovative entrepreneurship, bound together the most ethnically disparate members of Lyon’s highly pluralistic Protestant minority in ways that resonate with the process in New York. Ginzburg unveils a dazzling collection of evidence of a folk cosmology that stretches the underlying unity of symbolic understanding across an array of histories and cultures, and hence “establishes affinities among a vast range of popular beliefs related, it is claimed, to the witches’ sabbat.”

I make no such claims here. It is precisely the commonplace, quotidian aspect of the process that is most compelling about the convergence of Huguenot and Quaker artisans of New York City and Long Island. The affinities of these refugee groups lay in (1) shared histories of persecution and faith in the power of sacred violence and suffering to purify the spirit and matter of the religious body and produce innovate work, “reborn” out of chaos and entropy (Palissy’s dictum: “build with the destroyer”); and hence, (2) fear of the power of absolutism to destroy local shadow worlds of private action; (3) a quest for spiritual and material security in the quotidian “open household” of “converse,” convergence, and commerce rather than the elite martial paradigm of the great walled fortress of La Rochelle; (4) beliefs about the hidden motion of the soul to retrieve the unity of fragmented and dispersed Christendom as the “bond and knot of the world”; (5) the obstetric power of material production in interior silence in the shadows; (6) the metaphysical flight of the spirit over or through walls, and between material bodies (an affinity shared with most mythologies of the witches’ sabbath); (7) the redemptive nature of primitive memory and the ability to overcome pluralistic difference through shared Adamic languages recovered through the movement.
of the spirit in the physical body and throughout the material world of Nature; (8) the charismatic spiritualism of domesticity in an “open household” of inspired laity that recovers memory through its containment in domestic furniture; (9) the power of biblical exegesis on the natural world if informed by the immediate workings of the spirit; (10) the Neoplatonic displacement of carnal sexuality into pure love of the spirit and artisanal work; and, by extension (11) security in one’s personal mastery of craft skill as a portable commodity precious to migrating refugees in particular, as stated in Paracelsus’s often quoted maxim on “experienced” travelers: “Qui omnia secum portat, non indiget alieno auxilio” (“He who carries all things with him needs not the aid of others”);(278) (12) the manual philosophy of artisans as opposed to the learned rhetoric of scholars—a common language of artisanry and earth materials unified “simple” pious workmen “sans lettres” from many diverse cultures; and, finally, (13) the belief that the tiny and overlooked—including small metamorphic creatures and seemingly trivial, everyday handcrafted things—can carry the codes to unlock primordial secrets of the unity of matter and spirit, because, like the Holy Spirit’s tiny voice, the overlooked were given the power of liminality. They alone were granted the ability to travel between the “little” and the “big” worlds of the microcosm and the macrocosm.

These “affinities” have many different sources in primitivist cosmology, but the most easily identifiable mode of convergence for Huguenots and Quakers in seventeenth-century New Amsterdam/New York was the Paracelsian tradition of natural-philosophical and alchemical discourse. This discourse merged seamlessly with that of the Protestant refuge. It was read and disseminated by figures in each group, both leading and anonymous, each through an intimate lens of private life. Paracelsism contains a “bundle of relations” in a comprehensive tradition, that ranges here from Paracelsus to Palissy, and beyond to Bruno, Platt, Böhme, Fludd, John Winthrop Jr., Thomas Story, the Clement family, and thousands of unnamed practitioners. In the end, Fludd constructed a theory of New World plural societies that fit the experience of each migrating Huguenot refugee artisan who carried “all things with him” in quest of a place in the Atlantic world to converge with other secret souls hidden in the shadows. This was the theory of the “internal principle,” or geomancy, whereby the “experienced” traveler called on the oculus imaginationis of primordial memory to see beneath the chaos of Babel and perceive the unity of spirit that connected the material universe fragmented by the chaos of transgression and war and find friendship in converse with strangers and enemies.

In the spirit of Fludd’s trip to Avignon, let me end, therefore, with the famous quotation from the narrative of Father Isaac Jogues, a Jesuit missionary to New France who was released from captivity by the Iroquois in 1643, only to be delivered by chance to the marginally less hostile territory of New Netherlands. Father Jogues’s narrative of experiences on “Manate” (Manhattan) was told to another Jesuit, Father Buteux,
who reported it to his superiors in 1645. As a result, the account usually refers to Jogues in the third person. The epigrammatic quotation reads: “The arrogance of Babel has done much harm to all men; the confusion of tongues has deprived them of great benefits.” I have chosen to end with these words to posit a historiographical reversal. The quotation has become so familiar, of course, because it has been placed at the beginning of virtually every history of New York ever written. This move has all but obviated the necessity of further historical inquiry about perception of cultural confusion. Said by Buteux to have been taken verbatim from Jogues’s appraisal of the historical failure of New Netherlands’s mixture of cultures, this sentence has been repeated like a catechism. Indeed, it remains a mantra that reverberates throughout the historiography of New Amsterdam and New York as prima facie evidence of an internal “principle” of chronic cultural entropy in the colony.

Unfortunately, this famous sentence actually appears at the end of a longer, more complicated passage, one that must be quoted fully to consider the subtle personal contexts Jogues constructed through his interlocutor. This passage does not begin, therefore, in New Amsterdam, but in Rensselaerswyck, the large Hudson Valley manorial settlement surrounding Albany. Jogues was hidden there by a colonial Dutch “sutler” (or army camp provisioner) while waiting for an opportunity to ship out of Iroquois territory. Here, Buteux rehearsed Jogues’s relation of the condition of his hiding place:

In this garret where the Father [Jogues] was, there was a recess to which his guard continually led Hiriquois savages, in order to sell some produce which he had locked up there: this recess was made of planks so slightly joined that one might easily have passed his fingers into the openings. “I am astonished,” says the Father, “that those barbarians did not hundreds of times discover me; I saw them without difficulty; and unless God had turned away their eyes, they would have perceived me a thousand times. I concealed myself behind casks, bending myself into a constrained posture which gave me gehenna and torture two, three, or four hours in succession, and that very often. To go down to the court of the dwelling, or to go to other places, was casting myself headlong; for every place was filled with those seeking my death.”

Having to choose between this life-or-death predicament and taking the next sloop down the Hudson to cast in his lot with hostile Protestants in Manhattan, Jogues sensibly chose the latter option. Once there, though treated by Kieft with the sort of kindness that Stuyvesant would never have offered a Catholic in later years, his own perception of chaos, an inability to see what lay beneath the surface of Babel, gave Jogues pause.

The Manhattanites tried to dress Jogues at least partially “in their own style,” hoping he would become like one of them—which he was, as a refugee from persecution and violence—instead of just a stranger:
This good Father was received in Manate with great tokens of affection; the captain had a black coat made for him, sufficiently light, and gave him a good cloak and a hat in their own style. The inhabitants came to see him, showing, by their looks and their words, that they felt great sympathy for him. Some asked him what recompense the Gentlemen of New France would give him, imagining that he had suffered those indignities on account of their trade. But he had given them to understand that worldly thoughts had not caused him to leave his own country; and that the publication of the Gospel was the sole good that he had in view when casting himself into the dangers into which he had fallen. A good lad, having met him in a retired place, fell at his feet, taking his hands to kiss him, and exclaiming, “Martyr, Martyr of Jesus Christ!” He questioned him, and ascertained that he was a Lutheran, whom he could not aid for want of acquaintance with his language; he was a Pole. Entering a house quite near the fort, he saw two images on the mantelpiece, one of the blessed Virgin, the other of our Blessed Louys de Gonzage. When he betokened some satisfaction at this, the master of the house told him that his wife was a Catholic. She was a Portuguese, brought into that country by I know not what chance; she appeared very bashful. The arrogance of Babel has done much harm to all men; the confusion of tongues has deprived them of great benefits.

The seventeenth-century language of spiritual perception is familiar. Father Jogues immediately identifies the Iroquois as “barbarians”—that is, the ultimate kind of stranger—devoid of spirit. Indians are carnal “savages,” who appear in the European settlement for the sole purpose of acquiring material goods. As a result, Jogues remained invisible through his confident sense of purity, and he was “astonished” that though “I saw them without difficulty; . . . unless God had turned away their eyes, they would have perceived me a thousand times.” Without the historical facility with which the Huguenots went underground (often to escape Jesuit persecution), Jogues “cast” himself awkwardly into the protection of the shadows, making the whole process of concealment strange, painful, and above all unnatural. The Jesuit refugee knew this had to be a temporary condition, because, though he had earned “my crosses,” he could not bear to suffer the hellish pain of the subterranean life for too long: “I concealed myself behind casks,” Buteux quoted him as saying, “bending myself into a constrained posture which gave me gehenna and torture.” He found it impossible to move freely through this mercantile space, “for every place was filled with those seeking my death.”

The situation was reversed once Jogues reached New Netherlands. The inhabitants received him with “great sympathy” as a refugee of religious violence. He was given local “tokens of affection” that allowed the Jesuit refugee to disguise his distinctive “black robe” and appear “in their own style.” What was communicated by this symbolic gesture of stylistic inclusion? Maybe it was a simple attempt to absorb a stranger
with the potential to access Church funds. Or perhaps the Manhattanites wanted to show they could help obscure the superficial perception of confessional differences and see Jogues, along with themselves, as a member of a community of Christ in the spirit? However, despite this good start, it was clear that Jogues and the friendly colonists had little in common from his perspective. The Jesuit informed his listeners that (presumably unlike them and the Iroquois barbarians) “worldly thoughts had not caused him to leave his own country.” Thus he assumed the pose of moral superiority he supposed had saved him from being detected by the Iroquois in Rensselaerswyck.

Then the key moment arrives, offering Jogues the opportunity to achieve the potential of convergence. Jogues was invited to enter New Netherlands’s spiritual community of the shadows. He had moved out of public view and encountered “a good lad [who] having met him in a retired place, fell at his feet . . . exclaiming ‘Martyr, Martyr of Jesus Christ.’” This man was a Pole and a Lutheran, who called the Jesuit a martyr of Christ, a double reference to his religious house and his refugee status. In so doing, the colonist offered his presence to engage in open “converse” with the spirit. But Jogues could not communicate in this way. He perceived only linguistic and confessional difference, not potential for unity beneath the confusion of Babel. Father Jogues, therefore, “could not aid” the seeker, “for want of acquaintance with his language.”

Jogues’s experience of linguistic alienation was repeated at the house of another Protestant colonist and his Portuguese Catholic wife. Here, he perceived two Catholic “images on the mantelpiece.” Yet Jogues was unable to move beyond narcissistic perception of commonality between himself and the “very bashful” woman, to extend his knowledge and absorb the deeper connections she might have made, not only with her Protestant husband, but with other Christians in New Amsterdam. Jogues perceived a familiar hierarchy of images but overlooked the possibilities of converging memories implied by the context in which they were embedded. In the end, the Jesuit could not speak her language either, so he concluded that, like himself, the Portuguese woman had been “brought into that country by I know not what chance.”

Thus we arrive at last at the famous passage. Having failed to find comfort and communicate in the language of silence, Father Jogues succeeded in constructing a legacy of multicultural New York as Babylon. At the same time, however, Jogues’s Protestant competitors found the “mixed composition” of New Netherlands / New York the perfect place to relocate a shape-shifting culture of being and appearance. In the Huguenots’ New World, everything of consequence began life in the shadows.