



Hawthorne's Eliot Inspiration



The Life of Mary Bachiler in
Puritan Maine

“The Scarlet Letter” 1850

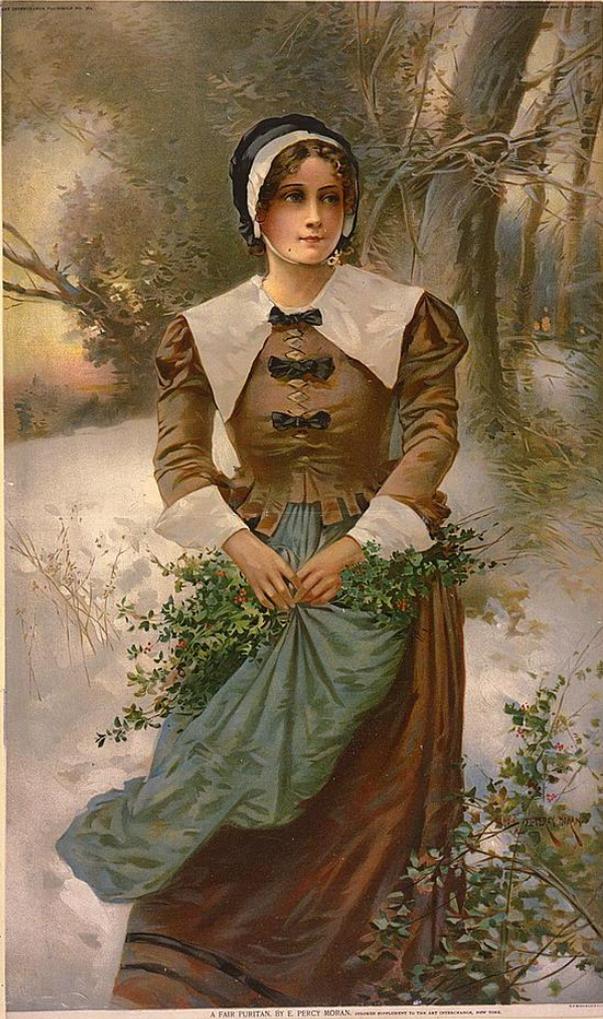
Hester Prynne (Mary Bachiler) - Married to Roger Chillingworth, affair with the Rev. Dimmesdale results in birth of Pearl, forced to wear scarlet letter ‘A’.

Arthur Dimmesdale (George Rogers/Stephen Bachiler) - young minister, burden of secret that Hester keeps slowly kills him.

Roger Chillingworth (Stephen Bachiler) - secret husband of Hester, seeks out the father of Pearl, discovers it is Dimmesdale and slowly tortures him as his doctor.

Pearl (baby Mary) - the living embodiment of the scarlet letter, born in “sin”.

Boston, 1642 (Kittery, 1652) - Hawthorne’s story takes place in Boston starting in 1642.



Mary Bailey

- born about 1620 in England.
- came to Piscataqua and married Robert Beedle a fisherman.
- Beedle given land in Kittery May 20, 1641 from Thomas Gorges, Deputy Governor.
- between George Rogers and John Simons/Simmons/Symonds
- maiden name “Bailey” conjecture

Robert & Mary Beedle Family

Robert Beedle was possibly of the Richmond Island fishing company that mutinied in 1636 along with his neighbors George Rogers and John Simmons.

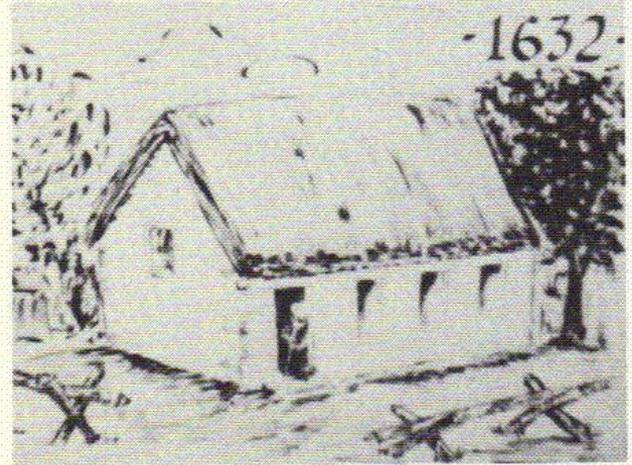
- Elizabeth born 1641 married Peter Staples in 1670
- Robert born 1642
- Christopher born 1643

Robert Beedle dies possibly at sea sometime before May 1647

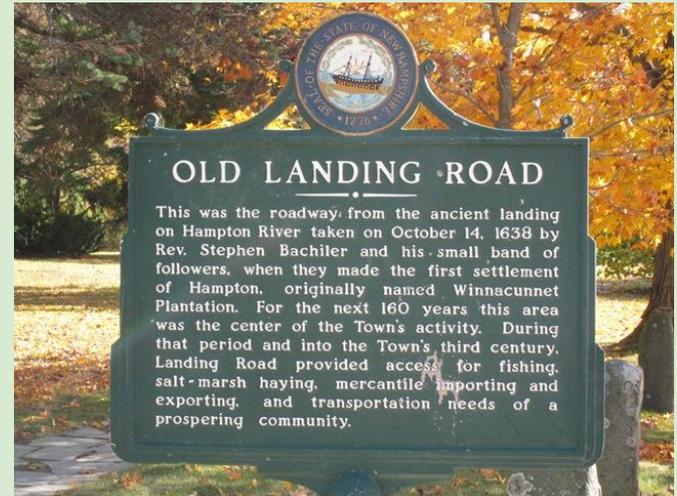


The Rev. Stephen Bachiler

- born 1561, came to Boston 1632 and settled at Lynn starting the first church in Lynn.
- by 1638 led first settlers of Hampton, NH.
- always involved in fights and controversies with Mass. Puritan leaders.
- Moved to “Strawbery Banke” by 1644 to live with his grandson Stephen Sanborn at age 83.
- Sanborn lived near Daniel Paul not far from Beedle property.



ORIGINAL MEETING HOUSE



you, that God hath taken from me my deare helper and yoke fellowe. And wheras by approbation of the whole planta[tion] of Strabury Banke they haue assigned an honest neighbour (a widowe) to haue some eye and care towards my family, for washing, baking and other such common services, it is a world of woes to think what rumors detracting spirits raise vp, that I am marryed to her, or certainly shalbe, and cast on her such asperitions without ground or proufe, as that I see not how possibly I shall subsist in the place to do them that service, from which (otherwise) they cannot endure to heare, I shall departe. The Lord direct vs and guide vs joyntly and singularly in all

The “Scandal” Begins 1647

- Bachiler writes to Gov. Winthrop in May 1647 that a widow has been helping his family with housekeeping.
- complains that the inhabitants are spreading false rumors that she is his wife or shall be his wife.
- Mary Beedle is the widow and so we know Robert died sometime before.
- Bachiler may have ministered to her after her husband died.



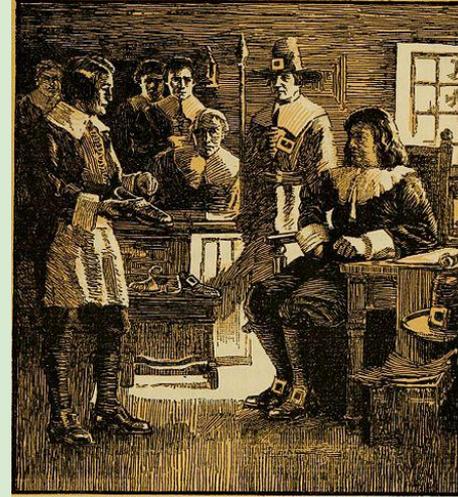
Stephen Bachiler



ARMS, SIGNATURE, AND SEAL OF REV. STEPHEN BACHILER.

Marriage to the Rev. Bachiler

- deed recorded Feb. 14, 1648 is in the name “Mrs. Batcheller”. This gave legal title of original Robert Beedle grant to his widow.
- Stephen Bachiler sued Hampton for back wages April 1650, at the same court in Salisbury he was fined for not publishing his marriage.
- also at same court ordered them to live together as husband and wife.
- grandson Stephen sold property in Aug. 1649 to Richard Cutts who then deeds it to Daniel Paul.
- Mary was 30, Stephen was 89.



Ordered that Mr. Bacherler and Mary his wife shall live together, as they publicly agreed to do, and if either desert the other, the marshal to take them to Boston to be kept until next quarter Court of Assistants, to consider a divorce. Bail to be granted if satisfactory security could be obtained. In case Mary Bacheller live out of this jurisdiction without mutual consent for a time, notice of her absence to be given the magistrates at Boston.

The “Crime” 1650-1652

George Rodgers & Mrs. Batcheller presented upon vehement suspicion of incontinency for liveing in one house together & lying in one rome.

They are to be seperated before the next court or to paye40s.

We do present George Rogers for, & Mary Batcheller the wife of Mr. Steven Bacheller minstr: for adultery.

It is ordered by the Court that George Rogers for his adultery with mis batcheller, shall forthwith have fourty stripes save one upon the bare skinne given him.

Its ordered that mis Batcheller for her adultery shall receive 40 stroakes save one at the First Towne meeting held at Kittery 6 weekes after her delivery & be branded with the letter A:

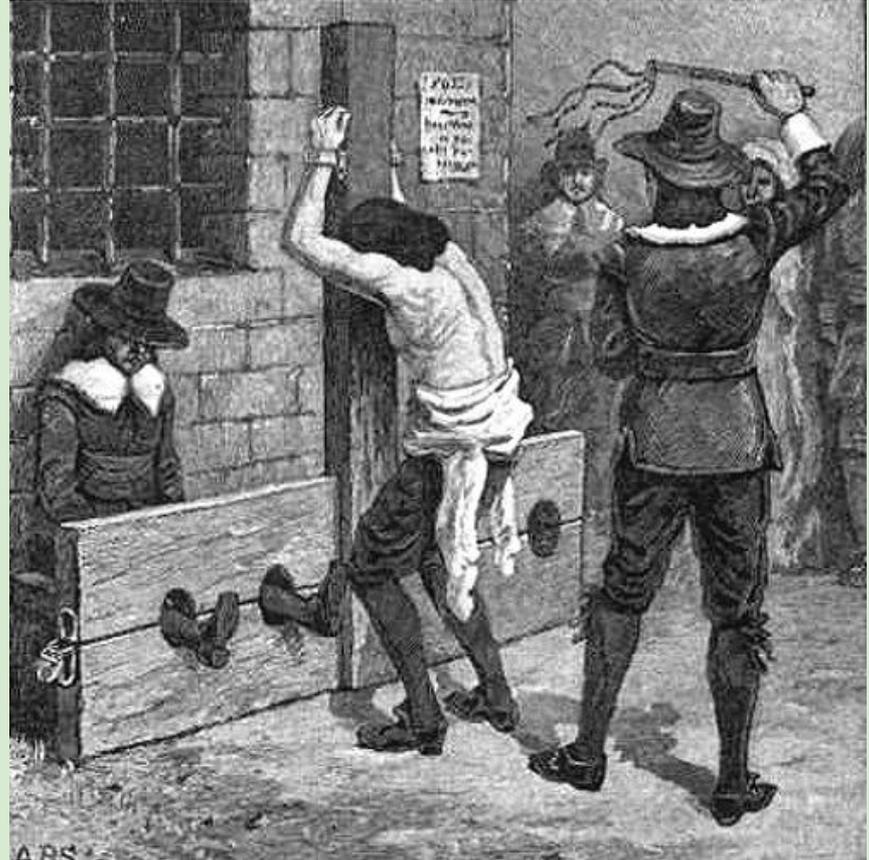
Execution done.

We present M:is Batcheller for Adultery. Mis Batcheller is to be whipped at the next town meeting & Mr. Norton is to be sent for.

- Mary falls in love with her neighbor George Rogers.
- Oct. 1650 at the same court where she is being sued by Stephen Greenham she is presented for living in one house and lying in one bed with George Rogers.
- Oct. 1651 they are found guilty of adultery as Mary is pregnant with his child.
- March 1652 punishment is carried out by Henry Norton, Provost Marshall

George Rogers Punishment

- George Rogers received “forty stripes save one” immediately.
- did not receive a branding.
- fined 60 shillings for swearing and being abusive towards constable John Symons.
- this could be John Simmons who lived on the lot south of Mary.
- Rogers ordered to give up his children: one to Daniel Paul, one to Anthony Emery, one to Mr. Shapleigh.



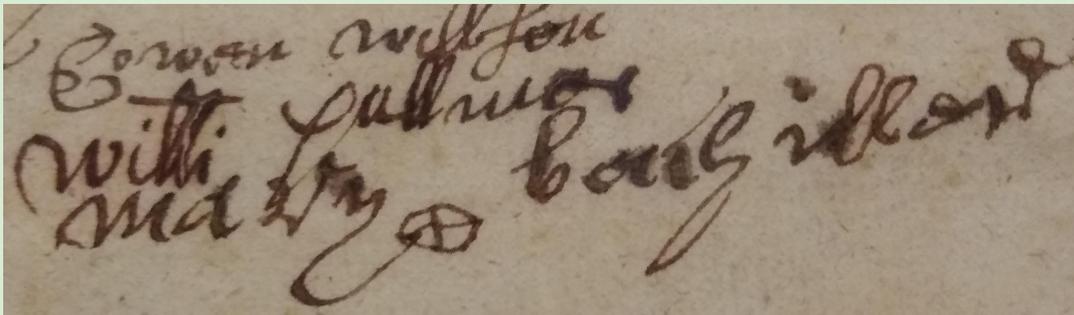
Mary's Punishment

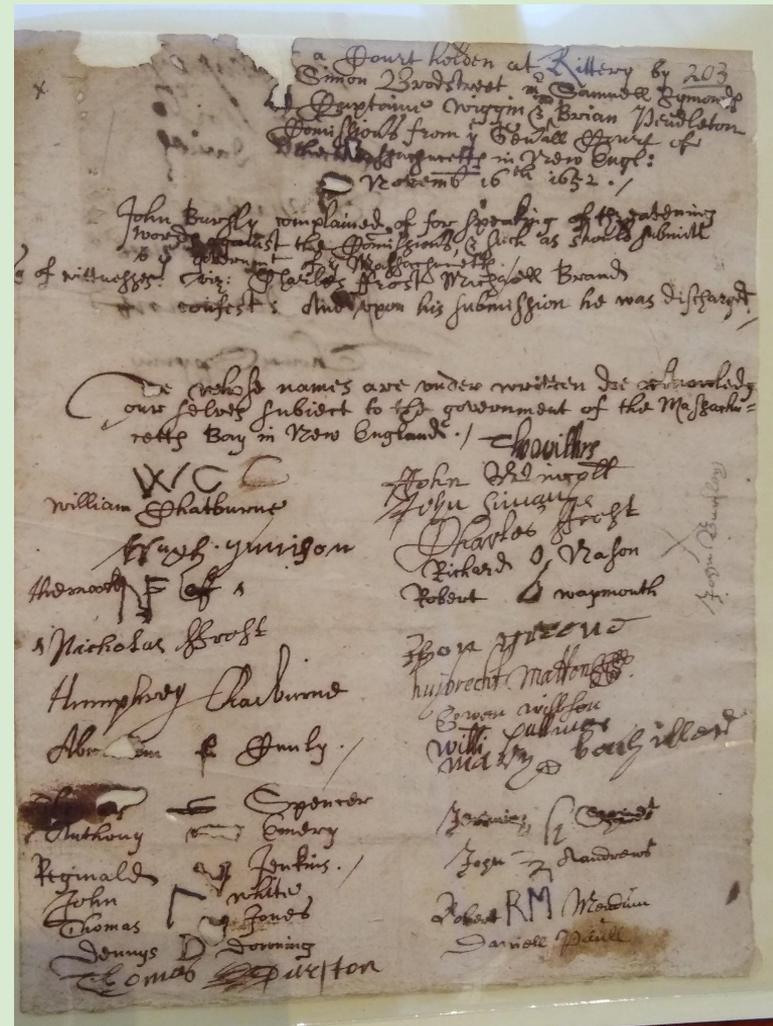


- court postponed punishment until 6 weeks after she gave birth to a daughter in early 1652.
- 40 stripes save one at the first town meeting held at Kittery 6 weeks after delivery.
- branded with the letter 'A' not forced to wear an embroidered scarlet letter.
- town meeting held in March 1652.
- the “goodwives” in “The Scarlet Letter” mention Hester Prynne should have been branded on forehead.
- death was also a common punishment.

Submission to Massachusetts

- Oct. 14, 1652 Mary presented for entertaining idle people on the Sabbath Day.
- Nov. 1652 only woman to sign her mark to Submission of Maine to rule by Mass. Bay Colony at William Everett Tavern.


 A close-up of a handwritten signature in cursive script, likely 'Mary' with a cross mark, from the submission document.


 A scan of a historical document titled "a Court holden at Kittery by 203". The text includes names like Simon Bradstreet, Samuel Symon, and others. It mentions a submission from the "County of York" to the "Mass. Bay Colony". The date is given as "November 16 1652". The document lists several names, including William Chubburne, Hugh Yungison, and others, who are identified as being under the jurisdiction of the Mass. Bay Colony. There is a signature "Mary" with a cross mark, which is the subject of the text on the left.

Abandonment & Divorce

- The Rev. Stephen Bachiler appears to return to England around this time. (1652-'54) and died there in 1656
- June 1654 Mary was ordered to not come together with Thomas Hanscom.
- Oct. 1656 petitioned the court in Boston for a divorce.

To the Honored Governor, Deputy Governor, with the Magistrates and Deputies at the General Court at Boston:

The humble petition of Mary Bachelor sheweth--Whereas your petitioner, having formerly lived with Mr. Stephen Bachelor, a minister of this Collany, as his lawfull wife, and not unknown to divers of you, as I conceive, and the said Mr. Bachelor, upon some pretended ends of his owne, hath transported himself untoould England, for many yeares since, and betaken himself to another wife, as your petitioner hath often been credibly informed, and there continueth, whereby your petitioner is left destitute, not only of a guide to her and her children, but also made uncapable thereby of disposing herselfe in the way of marriage to any other, without a lawful permission; and having now two children upon her hands, that are chargeable unto her, in regard to a disease God hath been pleased to lay upon them both, which is not easily curable, and so weakening her estate in prosecuting the means of cure, that she is not able longer to subsist, without utter ruining her estate, or exposing herself to the common charity of others; which your petitioner is loth to put herself upon, if it may be lawfully avoided, as is well known to all, or most part of her neighbors. And were she free from her engagement to Mr. Bachelor, might probably soe dispose of herselfe, as that she might obtain a meet helpe to assist her to procure such means for her livelyhood, and the recovery of her children's health, as might keep them from perishing; which your petitioner, to her great grief, is much afraid of, if not timely prevented. Your petitioner's humble request therefore is, that this Honored Court would be pleased seriously to consider her condition, for matter of her relief in her freedom from the said Mr. Bachelor, and that she may be at liberty to dispose of herselfe in respect of any engagement to him, as in your wisdomes shall seem most expedient; and your petitioner shall humbly pray.

MARY BACHELER.

Next Chapter



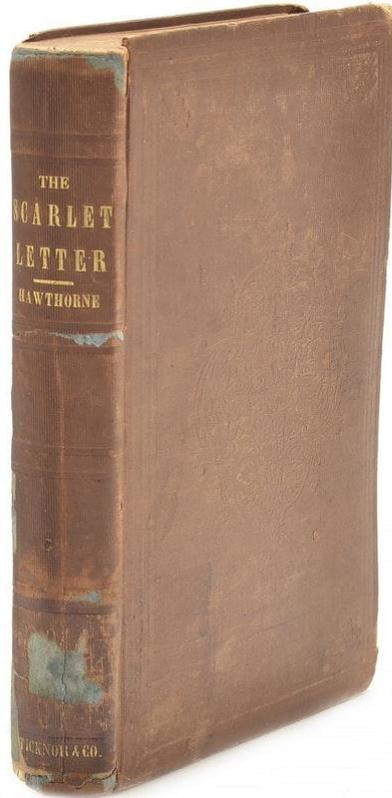
- divorce granted and Mary marries Thomas Turner in 1657
- they lived on her original lot until July 4, 1674 when they sell the whole property to Peter Staple who has married Mary's daughter Elizabeth Beedle in 1670.
- they probably continued to live on a part of the property.
- Thomas died about 1684 and Mary followed him a year later in 1685.

Legacy

- Elizabeth Beedle Staple began a long line of Staples descendents in Eliot as well as around the country.
- Mary Bachiler the daughter born of Mary and George Rogers married William Richards and lived in Portsmouth.
- Nathaniel Hawthorne?



Hawthorne's Inspiration?



- only one of many examples of adultery recorded in early New England court records.
- also many examples of Puritan ministers behaving badly.
- “A Red-hot 'A' and a Lusting Divine” by Prof. Frederick Newberry, 1987 on Hampton NH library site.
- not the only inspiration, but a strong influence on the creation of an allegorical tale of sin and hypocrisy.

Other Examples

- 1694 law mandated cloth letter 'A' for crimes of adultery
- Mary Latham executed in 1643.
- adultery discovered by pregnancy.
- other hypocritical Puritan ministers.
 - Bachiler
 - Lyford, friend of William Hilton, 1625
 - Rev. George Burdett, York, 1640, adultery with wives of two men, forced to pay a fine and run out of town

