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A Widow's Will: Examining the Challenges of Widowhood in Early Modern England and America

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While English women in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had different social and economic circumstances, many were able to gain autonomy and power in their widowhood. Widows who were able to gain autonomy faced a number of challenges as they attempted to live and function in a patriarchal society. One of the factors that affected the challenges of a widow was her social standing. In this thesis I argue that widows of all means encountered a challenges from the patriarchal society in which they resided. The number and severity of difficulties that a widow confronted depended on several factors. I will begin by examining the lives of aristocratic widows and the difficulties they confronted most often. This essay will then look at how working women dealt with the problems that arose after their husbands' deaths. Finally, I analyze how the actions of patriarchal society in England affected and influenced the treatment widows in colonial America.

The live of women in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries changed dramatically when they became widows. While each English woman had different social and economic circumstances, many were able to gain autonomy and power in their widowhood. Widows who were able to gain autonomy faced a number of obstacles as they attempted to live and function in a patriarchal society. One of the factors that affected the challenges of a widow was her social standing. In this thesis I argue that widows of all means encountered opposition from the patriarchal society in which they resided. The number and severity of difficulties that a widow confronted depended on several elements. I will begin by examining the lives of aristocratic widows and the difficulties they confronted most often. This thesis will then examine how working women dealt with the problems that arose after their husbands' deaths. Finally, I analyze how the actions of patriarchal society in England affected and influenced the treatment of widows in colonial America.

Introduction:

Several prominent images come to mind when early modern widows are considered. The popular constructed ideas are typically either a pitiful, grieving, older woman or a wealthy, dominant, landowning lady. Both of these images were negative, as widows became either a burden to the people around them or challenged social order with their domineering behavior. Widows in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries did not fit neatly into these stereotyped descriptions. Every woman widowed in early modern England and America had a different experience. While some women gained more power as they ran their estates, others were impoverished and marginalized from society. A widow's life depended heavily on her particular circumstances. This thesis examines the

various situations in which early modern widows found themselves. The treatment of widows did not change significantly during the early modern period, so rather than discussing widows chronologically, I have chose to examine them by their social status. By looking at commonalities between widows of the same means, I will attempt to argue that autonomy gained by women in their widowhood was constantly challenged by larger society.

Early modern society had only a few roles carved out for women. A girl typically moved from being a daughter to a wife and mother. While these three roles were different from one another and came with different responsibilities, they were all subject to men's authority in someway. The subjugation of daughters, wives, and mothers allowed for them to function within the society. When a woman could no longer fit into of these roles, she was met with numerous conflicts. The death of a woman's husband dramatically altered her place in society because a widow challenged the dominant ideals by living with without a father or husband's authority.

One work that examined roles available to women and the challenges of being a widow is *The Instruction of a Christen Woman* by the Spanish humanist, Juan Luis Vives. Vives' work, originally titled *De institutione feminae Christianae* was first published in 1524 and in 1529 Richard Hyrde translated it into English.[1] This extremely popular text, which appeared in more than forty editions by 1600 played a key role in defining appropriate roles for women. The work not only laid out what was acceptable behavior for women, it also expanded on how a widow should function within society. Vives, who dedicated his work to Queen Katherine of Aragon, divided the work into

[1] Juan Luis Vives. *The Instruction of a Christen Woman.* (Urbana : University of Illinois Press, 2002).

three books, which are each separated thematically. The first book details the proper way to raise a daughter, including how she should be educated. Vives took ample time in this section to discuss a suitable education for women. Lastly, the first book stresses the importance of chastity in women's lives. The second book examines how a woman should behave as wife; outlining how to be a proper wife. This particular section also dictates what exactly was expected from women as mothers.

In the last the book, Vives discusses elements of widowhood in addition to how a widow should behave. The third section begins by claiming that a widow should live as though her husband was still alive. While a woman should take care to honor her husband's memory, she should not mourn excessively, but rather have faith that he is in heaven. This last section, like the two previous, emphasized chastity for widows. Women, unless they had several young children and needed help raising them, were strongly discouraged from remarrying. The part of this section proceeds to dictate the ways in which a widow could properly run her home. Timothy Elston's dissertation argues that Queen Katherine of Aragon's last years functioned as her widowhood, despite the fact that Henry VIII was still alive. Elston suggests that because Katherine lived chaste after, she satisfied Vive's main concern about widows.[2] Vives' discussion of widows was of particular importance in the lives of early modern women, since there were very few works that even addressed widows, specifically the expectations held for them. Vives' ideas on women and their expected behavior, widows particularly, had a lasting legacy in the early modern period.

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[2] Elston, Timothy G. *Almost the Perfect Woman : Public and Private Expectations of Catherine of Aragon, 1501-1536.* 2004.

Vives' thoughts on women were not the only force that helped to shape society's expectations of women, both religious institutions and ideas about science and biology dictated women's place within the family and society. These powerful institutions not only limited what was socially acceptable for a woman, but also gave power and authority to males. Religion played an important role in the lives of early modern women; both Protestant and Catholic women were obligated to the laws of scripture. Religious texts dictated how women should live and behave within their respective roles. This religious influence is evident in a number of prominent religious works including *The Book of Common Prayer,* which was composed by a committee led by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, and pulled from several religious texts accepted by the Protestant church.[3] While this English text was composed under Henry VIII, Elizabeth I popularized the book by reissuing the text and requiring it in all parishes. Despite the fact that this religious work had been originated for the Church of England, many people across Europe and in later centuries were familiar with the ideas it propagated. The text, while including multiple prayers and addressing a number of topics, also dictates the wording for a marriage ceremony. "The Form of Solemn of Matrimony" section first addressed how and why marriage was a religious act. After the bride and groom pledge themselves to one another, the ordained minster delivering the required speech begins to read one of two psalms, *Beati omnes* or *Deus misereatur*.[4] Following the oration of the sacred psalms, the service continued and the minister and began discussing the roles of the husband and wife. In comparison to the husband's roles, the bride's roles were very

[3] Joan Klein, Ed. Daughters, *Wives, and Widows: Writings by Men about Marriage in England 1500-1640*. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992) Page 2.
[4] Klein, Page 8.

specific. The prayer not only explained the correct behavior for a wife but also discussed biblical women who should serve as examples of ideal wives, such as Rebecca from *Genesis*. In addition to "The Form of Solemn of Matrimony" a number of homilies tried to define appropriate conduct for women. "An Homily of the State of Matrimony," in the second *Book of Homilies,* was often read after a marriage ceremony and expands further on the duties of new wives. One notion clearly present in this homily is that a wife's main purpose was to work as her husband's helper. Another idea repeated throughout the homily is the idea that a woman should be both passive and silent. The homily also suggested that a man's sins were a result of a wife being unable to live up to these expectations. The expectations for women found in these religious texts were very prominent and many people embraced these beliefs. While the homily on marriage was read at wedding ceremonies, it was also reiterated again sporadically during weekly church services. This reiteration not only suggests that women were repeatedly exposed to these expectations, but it also implies that women may not have been adhering to what was expected of them.

The beliefs embedded in the English way of life about what women were capable of were often reflected in daily life. In addition to views of women being shaped by religion, English laws and statutes also played a role in how women were seen and how they ought to behave. Women, who were formally excluded from the major religious and political institutions that shaped English culture, were valued for their relation to men. After a young girl has helped her family, she married and took on her new role as wife. When a woman in early modern England married her life changed dramatically. Although most new wives were thrust into a new life with new responsibilities, the duties

and obligations differed greatly depending on a number of circumstances. The status and economic position of a woman and her husband played a large role in determining what was required from a new wife. The responsibilities of a wealthy wife were vastly different from those of a working woman. Many of the chores that lower class women had to complete on a daily basis were done by servants within an aristocratic household. Responsibilities of a wife were not the only thing that varied among English marriages, the relationships between husbands and wives also differed. Though sources written by women about their marriages are limited, there is evidence that suggests that there were many successful marriages. Most wives did not have the opportunity to record their inner thoughts concerning their marriages.[5] Many women's successful widowhoods and large inheritances imply that there were a number of content couples. There were a number of men who left their entire estates to their wives, suggesting how much they trusted their wife. Additionally, numerous widows chose to remarry, indicating that they did not have a completely negative view of marriage.

While many women experienced marriage differently all wives shared commonalities in regards to how their legal rights changed. The rights of married women were vastly different than the rights of single women. Under English common law, when a woman married, she lost numerous legal rights. This concept was known as coverture and defined as "a Husband and Wife were said to have acquired unity of person that resulted in the husband having numerous rights over the property of his wife and in the wife being deprived of her power to enter into contracts or to bring lawsuits as an

[5] Mendelson, Sara Heller. *Women in Early Modern England, 1550-1720.* (Oxford ; New York : Clarendon Press, 1998)

independent person."[6] Wives did not have the ability to sign or create any legal documents, including wills. Additionally, under the laws of coverture, married women could not bring a lawsuit to court, nor could they defend themselves against a suit. Whether a woman found herself in trouble or was being falsely accused of crimes, her husband would have to defend to her in a court of law. Restrictions that prevented women from owning land were also included in coverture. Any property that a woman brought into the marriage automatically became the property of her husband. The restrictions on a woman's legal abilities put many wives in a limited and vulnerable situation. While the majority of wives were thrust into these circumstances with limited protection, there were ways in which wealthy families could attempt to safeguard their property.

One of the English customs that directly effected a woman's position in society was the tradition of the dowry and jointure. The dowry played an important role when two families united through marriage. The dowry, typically a negotiated amount of goods or land, was given to the groom or the groom's family from the family of the bride. A jointure, also negotiated prior to the marriage, was normally a set amount of land or revenue from land that was set-aside for the bride in case of the husband's death. While husbands were legally obligated to leave their wives what was originally promised, many husbands chose give their wives more than just their jointure. Eighty-four aristocratic men out of 523 during the early Tudor monarchies awarded their wives more than what their jointure dictated.[7] While the dowry and jointure seem to protect new brides, wives did not have any legal control of the dowry once they were married. All wives in England

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[6] http://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/coverture

[7] Barbara J Harris. *English Aristocratic Women, 1450-1550 : Marriage and Family, Property and Careers.* (Oxford: New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), Page 131.

were subject to coverture until widowhood. As a widow, a woman did not have to adhere to the laws of coverture and her position within the family and society changed dramatically.

The legal position of a wife changed when she was widowed. As a widow, a woman gained more autonomy, as she was no longer under coverture. In her widowhood, a woman could create legal documents, inherit land, manage estates, and bring lawsuits to court. In addition to having more legal power many women gained more financial power as well. While the independence that women gained when they entered widowhood offered many benefits, it also came with obstacles as many widows faced a number of new challenges.

Aristocratic Widows

The benefits of widowhood are most evident with aristocratic women, who often found opportunities opening for them after their husbands' deaths. Like other wives in England, aristocratic women were subject to coverture during their marriage. While aristocratic women did not have legal rights, their position in society helped them exercise different avenues of power. While the opportunities of power and autonomy for an aristocratic wife were typically unconventional and often subtle, an aristocratic widow had the opportunity to exercise power more directly.

In early modern England both properties and titles were passed down to legitimate children, making aristocratic marriages extremely important. Most aristocratic women had arranged marriages and during their time as a wife they learned to adhere to the expectations of an aristocratic wife. A wealthy wife in the early modern period likely had a number of responsibilities, including helping to run the family estate and making sure

that the children were being cared for. Barbara Harris asserts that once a young aristocratic wife proved her capability, she would typically become responsible for the handling the family's financial accounts.[8] In addition to keeping monetary accounts, wives were also accountable for hosting and entertaining guests. As widows, aristocratic women found themselves in a new place in society as they took on a number of new responsibilities. While many women likely helped with duties traditionally assigned to men, such as collecting rents and managing tenants, a widow was not usually obligated to continue this work. By accepting the work that husbands typically completed, aristocratic widows moved to a new place within society. This new place, while filled with obligations, allowed widows to have more autonomy.

The responsibilities of an aristocratic widow began immediately after the death of her husband, as most widows became the executors of their husband's wills. Seventy-seven percent of English noblemen, in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century chose to make their wives sole executor of their will.[9] While many women were given full rights as executor, some were forced to share authority with either their sons or other male relatives. As the executor, or executrix, a widow carried the responsibility of planning and paying for her husband's funeral.[10] Since an executor was a legal position, a woman who possessed this title carried a new authority within society. In addition to the preparation of the funeral, a widow named sole executor had to see that her husband's will was being followed accordingly. Widows made sure that their husband's estates

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[8] Barbara J Harris. *English Aristocratic Women, 1450-1550 : Marriage and Family, Property and Careers.* Page 67.

[9] Barbara J Harris. *English Aristocratic Women, 1450-1550 : Marriage and Family, Property and Careers*. Page 129.

[10] Erickson, Amy Louise. *Women and Property in Early Modern England.* (London; New York: Routledge, 1993), Page 156.

were divided amongst children, relatives, and charities. If a woman did not want the responsibility that came with being an executrix she could refuse it. A widow would typically decline the offer to be an executrix if she did not want to be accountable for any of her husband's debts.[11] While many men clearly divided and distributed their estate, there were several men who simply left large estates completely in the hand of their wives. Giving a widow complete control of an estate suggests that husbands recognized their wives' capabilities.

Grace Bedingfield, a prominent aristocrat under Henry VIII, was bequeathed much of her husband's estate. Grace Marney, daughter of Henry, first barron Marney, married Edmund Bedingfield in 1533 and the couple had at least five children together.[12] Despite Edmund having sons, he did not forget his wife and also awarded her both property and livestock.[13] Edmund's decision to bestow Grace with a substantial amount of property suggests his faith in his wife's ability to manage what she was awarded.
The widows left with hefty estates became responsible for managing them. Many wealthy widows chose to bequeath their fortunes to charities. Ann Mowlson, a wealthy widow of the mid seventeenth century, gave much of her fortune to a number of different charities. Ann, previously Ann Radcliffe, married Thomas Mowlson on December 15th 1600. Thomas Mowlson, a successful merchant, had investments including owning an inn in St. Christopher's Parish, London. Thomas gave generously to charities during his lifetime

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[11] Erickson, Amy Louise. "Common Law Versus Common Practice: The use of Marriage Settlements in Early Modern England." *The Economic History Review,* New Series 43, no. 1 (1990). Page 25.
[12] "Bedingfield family (*per.* 1476–1760)," William Joseph Sheils in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eee ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, May 2009, http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.library.unl.edu/view/article/68203 (accessed January 14, 2013).
[13] Edmund Bedingfield. Will of Edmund Bedingfield. http://www.oxford-shakespeare.com/Probate/PROB_11-36_ff_142-3.pdf

and after his death, in 1638, Ann continued his kindness. Although the couple remained married for thirty-eight years, they did not have any children that lived past infancy. Upon Thomas's death, Ann received half of his estate and full authority over his will, "For so much as I have no child, after my debts be paid, all the residue of my goods &c shall be divided into two equal parts, according to the laudable use and custom of the City of London; whereof one half I do give and bequeath unto Dame Anne my loving wife for her customary and widow's part […]"[14] With Ann's new authority she continued the work of her husband, running her portion of the estate and making donations. In addition to giving to numerous Puritan causes, Ann also became a benefactor of higher education when she endowed money to a student attending Harvard University, "remaine as a p'petuall stipend for & towards the yearly maintenance of some poore scholler which shallbe admitted into the sd Collegde."[15] Ann was not only able to designate what charities to give to, she was also able to specify how the money was divided and who could receive it, "intention and desire of sd Lady Mowlson that such poor scholler there being her kinsman shallbe p'ferred & appointed the sd feofees".[16]

Another widow that was able to gain agency by charitable donations was Alice Owen. Alice Owen was born to the prominent landowning Wilkes family and her first husband was Henry Robinson. With Robinson, Alice had five daughters and six sons. With her second husband, William Elkyn who was an alderman in London, Alice had another daughter. After the death of her second husband, Alice married Thomas Owen, a well-respected judge. Thomas Owen's will dicated that his wife was the sole executrix of

[14] http://archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com/th/read/LONDON-COMPANYS/2001-01/0978695324
[15] Bequest of Lady Ann Mowlson 1661.
http://oasis.lib.harvard.edu/oasis/deliver/deepLink?_collection=oasis&uniqueId=hua33010
[16] Ibid.

his will, "And also for more better securitie and assurance thereof I do ordayne and make the said Alice my lovinge wife my full and sole Executrix for and concerninge all leases termes of yeares plate naperie howshouldstuffe goodes chattalls debts and money […]"[17] Though Owen continues on to divide some of his belongs amongst his and Alice's children he states, "And I wolde give my wief more if my habilitie were greater, but I thinke that shee hath and shall have sufficient and shall want nothinge, otherwise I would doe more."[18] Owen's will displays the confidence he had in his wife's ability to manage his estate; it also demonstrates that she was bequeathed a substantial inheritance. As a widow with a large inheritance, Alice became the benefactor for several organizations, including English universities like Cambridge and Oxford. Alice not only donated money to established foundations she also founded both schools and almshouses. In one of the schools that the Alice established in 1613, she created a number or specific rules and regulations that were to be followed. Alice specified that the widows who came to the almshouses she established were to be given both money and the other benefits, including receiving a new dress every two years. The instructions Alice prepared for the schools and almshouses to which she donated were detailed, suggesting she was actually involved with the projects and did not simply bestow them money. The ability to divvy up an inheritance empowered widows, as they were able to gain influence as they bequeath their wealth.

Planning a funeral and distributing an estate was not the only way for a widow to access power; maintaining either land or businesses also helped place widows in a

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[17] Thomas Owen. Will of Thomas Owen. http://homepages.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~engwales/judge%20owen's%20will.html
[18] Ibid.

position of power. Many aristocratic widows who inherited land now carried the responsibility of running the land as well. Due to the fact that the vast majority of aristocrats in Tudor-Stuart England made a living from the land that they owned, a widow's ability to maintain the land played an important role in a widow's lifestyle. Widows who desired to lead the same lifestyle they had prior to their husbands' deaths had to manage the lands well. The responsibilities of wealthy widows extended beyond maintaining her living quarters and included a range of duties. One of a widow's most important duties, if not the most important, was the collecting of rent from the land. Because the majority of an aristocrat's wealth stemmed from the rent they collected, it was imperative that a woman followed through and gathered what she was owed. In order for widows to keep collecting rent they needed to keep people on the land, which required negotiation and tactful behavior with both tenants and possible tenants. In addition to keeping rent coming in and managing tenants, widows also needed to keep the operations, such as dairies and mills, on her land running productively. While many widows were capable of these duties, some chose to hire men to help take care of the physical obligations while they handled the financial aspects. Keeping track of accounts and transactions became an element of life that widows had to embrace.

Although running an estate is not typically attributed to women, the success of many widows during this period suggests a familiarity with the management of estates. Elizabeth Talbot, better known as Bess of Hardwick exemplifies widows' capabilities when it came to both maintaining and even improving their life. Elizabeth was born to John and Elizabeth Hardwick in about 1527. While the Hardwick family originally lived a comfortable life among the gentry, when John Hardwick died in 1528 the family lost a

large portion of their lands to the crown.[19] The land was to be held by the crown until the young Hardwick sons came of age. Unlike her mother, who unfortunately was unable to keep the family's lands, Bess would become one of the most successful and wealthy women in early modern England.

In May of 1543, young Bess married Robert Barlow. After one short year of marriage Robert died. Bess received a humble inheritance from Barlow and in 1547 she wed William Cavendish, Treasurer of the King's Chamber. While Cavendish's standing was well above Bess, the marriage appeared to be happy as Bess had eight children with Cavendish.[20] During her second marriage, Bess not only began associating with extremely powerful aristocrats, she also began her own projects. With great encouragement from Bess, Cavendish bought a number of valuable properties including properties in Derbyshire and the estate of Chatsworth in 1547. When William Cavendish died in 1557, Bess lobbied Parliament to challenge her husband's debts to the Crown. This was an important move for Bess, since widows became responsible for the debts of their deceased husbands.[21] In addition to quickly challenging the large debt William Cavendish had acquired, Bess married again in1558. Bess wed the extremely wealthy William St. Loe. While buying new estates, Bess also maintained her old ones. Wealth was not the only benefit that Bess received when marrying St. Loe, Bess was also appointed to the queen's privy chamber, although conflict with the monarch arose from Bess's involvement with the marriage of Katherine Grey and Edward Seymour, who

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[19] "Talbot , Elizabeth [Bess of Hardwick], countess of Shrewsbury (1527?–1608)," Elizabeth Goldring in*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eee online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, Oxford: OUP, , http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.library.unl.edu/view/article/26925.

[20] "Cavendish, Sir William (1508–1557)," Sybil M. Jack in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eee ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, January 2008, http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.library.unl.edu/view/article/4943.

[21] Mendelson and Crawford, Page 53.

married without the Queen's consent in 1560.[22] When William St. Loe died in 1565, Bess inherited a majority of his wealth. Members of St. Loe's family were terribly unhappy with St. Loe's will, but Bess's good standing with numerous aristocrats forced them to abandon their cause.

Only two years after the death of her third husband, Bess married George Talbot, the sixth earl of Shrewsbury. Running their numerous estates was not the only responsibility of the powerful couple; Queen Elizabeth I asked them to keep watch over Mary Stuart, or Mary Queen of Scots, while she was in England. The relationship between Bess and the Earl unraveled and the two separated from one another. Bess, who brought an immense amount of wealth to her fourth marriage, retired to her Chatsworth estate, designated to Bess by the courts after Shrewsbury attempted to claim the land. Immediately after her separation, Bess purchased the manor where she began extensive renovations. In 1590, the earl of Shrewsbury died, leaving Bess one-third of his disposable lands, which added to her wealth.

Bess, who did not die until 1608, made exceptionally smart decisions each time she was widowed. Bess's intelligence and social ambition helped her grow her wealth and status to almost unfathomable heights. Bess's ability to keep her estates and good standing suggest that each of her decisions were thought out and intelligent. Bess not only died one of the richest people in England but also managed to arrange good marriages for her children thus continuing her legacy.

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[22] Seymour [Grey], Katherine, countess of Hertford (1540?–1568)," Susan Doran in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eee ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, January 2008, http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.library.unl.edu/view/article/25157.

While a number of wealthy widows were able to exert their new found autonomy and maintain a certain privileged lifestyle, other women faced a number challenges as they entered widowhood. Many widows had to work hard in order to receive their jointures and any other inheritances. Widows, especially childless widows, often had to fend off male relatives eager to control inheritances and estates. Since men and women typically negotiated a jointure prior to marriage, most widows were able to acquire their jointure without much struggle. While most women ended up receiving their jointures, which often included home or manor, they did have to obtain approval from the crown. While Bess of Hardwick faced challenges from some family members who attempted to alter her inheritance or her deceased husbands' wills, her position within the aristocracy, as well as her immense wealth, helped her protect herself.

Bess of Hardwick's success as a widow is unmatched by any other women in England, as many privileged widows faced opposition from male family members. Maria de Salinas encountered conflict initiated by her brother-in-law immediately after the death of her husband, William Willoughby, 11th baron of Willoughby de Eresby.[23] Maria de Salinas, a member of the Spanish aristocracy, likely arrived in England between 1501 and 1502. Maria served as one of Katherine of Aragon's ladies-in-waiting and became one of the Queen's closest confidants. Maria's relationship with Katherine was apparent as Luis Caroz de Villaragut, a Spanish ambassador suggested that Maria had too great an influence on Queen Katherine in a 1514 letter to the Spanish King.[24] Katherine's close

[23] "Willoughby , Maria, Lady Willoughby de Eresby (*d.*1539)," Retha M. Warnicke in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eee online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, Oxford: OUP, , http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.library.unl.edu/view/article/68049 (accessed January 14, 2013)

[24] Luis Caroz. *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII. Vol. 1: Part II: 1513-14*. Dec 61514. Page 1473

friendship with Maria most likely contributed to Maria's match with the prominent and wealthy William Willoughby in 1516.[25] With William, Maria had two sons, though both died in infancy, and one daughter name Katherine. When William died in 1526, Maria experienced difficulty securing lands that were promised to her daughter as William's brother, Christopher Willoughby, tried to obtain the lands designated to Katherine. Maria and her daughter worked to protect her inheritance, but not until Katherine married did the women see results. In 1534, Katherine married Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk and widower of Mary Tudor, though he had originally intended on marrying her to his son. Upon the marriage, Brandon intervened in order to help Maria and Katherine secure their inheritances. It was with Brandon's help that Maria was able obtain the estates that belonged to her and her daughter. Brandon's willingness to help the widow offered tremendous benefits for himself, as his wife, Katherine, would be the sole heir to her estates. Whatever Brandon's motives, his intervention played a major role in Maria receiving her estates. Maria spent the rest of her widowhood supporting Queen Katherine, as King Henry attempted to annul his marriage, and was by the Queen's side when she died in 1536. Maria and her daughter attended Katherine's funeral together and in May of 1539 Maria died.

Maria's relationship with her son-in-law aided her as she fought for her inheritance as she now had powerful male family member. While having male family members did not always result in a successful widowhood, many women did find themselves in need of aide. Another woman who was able to use her family relationships

[25] "Willoughby , Maria, Lady Willoughby de Eresby (*d.*1539)," Retha M. Warnicke

to her benefit in her widowhood was Elizabeth Hoby. Elizabeth's close relationship with her father helped her attain the jointure her first husband promised.

Sons, stepsons, and son-in-laws played key roles in women's widowhoods as they had they had the ability to help or harm the women around them. Anne Rede was both challenged and helped by her stepson and her son. Anne Rede, or Reade, the daughter of William Rede, lost three husbands in her lifetime. It is likely that Anne was married to Giles Grenville sometime before 1530, as there are records concerning jointure. In 1530, Anne married Adrian Fortescue and the couple remained married until 1539 when Adrian, a staunch Catholic, refused to take the Oath of Supremacy. The oath served to secure Henry VIII's position as the supreme governor of the Church of England and every person was obligated to swear it. Adrian would not swear Henry VIII's oath and was tried and convicted of treason in 1539. After Adrian's execution, much of the family's land was confiscated.

Thomas Parry became Anne's last husband in 1539 or 1540 and together the couple were able to obtain the lands and other goods, including 1,500 sheep, that were taken by the crown after her second's husband's execution.[26] When Parry died in 1560, Anne chose to manage her estates, where she handled all of the financial aspects of her estate with the help of Henry Gold. Henry Gold was a chaplain and businessman to Anne's brother; he also later served as Anne as she attempted to claim her property. Anne was in contact with Gold and depended on his advice as she sent him letters requesting his help. Anne's careful examination of her records suggested that she was not receiving

[26] "Parry, Sir Thomas (*b.* in or before 1515, *d.* 1560)," Jonathan Hughes in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eee ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, October 2005, http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.library.unl.edu/view/article/21433 (accessed February 12, 2013)

proper payment from her step-son and thus took him to court.[27] Anne's hard work was rewarded, and in 1566, she left court and lived comfortably receiving a generous annuity. Upon her death in the 1585, Anne's son erected an effigy memorializing his mother. Anne's third marriage helped her to reclaim the lands that were seized upon Fortescue's death and her relationship with Gold and her sons helped her manage her land and the trials put forth by her stepson.

Similar to Anne Reade, Elizabeth Carew also had dealt with her consequences of her husband's fall from favor. The two women were both fortunate to have male family members that supported them. While Anne Rede had her son and new husband, Elizabeth had her very prominent siblings, including a brother. Lady Elizabeth Carew was raised at court, as she was the daughter of Sir Thomas and Margaret Bryan. Both Elizabeth and her brother, Francis, achieved impressive positions at court; Elizabeth became vice-chamberlain to Catherine of Aragon and Francis served in privy chamber. When Elizabeth married Nicolas Carew of Beddington in 1514, they received lavish gifts from King Henry VIII. Both Elizabeth and Nicholas remained in the royal inner circle for a least a decade as they participated in several court events. The Carew's position within the court changed dramatically in 1538 when Nicholas was charged with treason for his involvement with Henry Courtenay, first Marquess of Exeter. Nicholas had been accused of exchanging letters with Exeter, who was accused of plotting to dispose Henry VIII. Nicholas went on trial for high treason in 1539 and was executed the very next year. After Nicholas's conviction, the crown seized much of Carew's estate including

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[27] Barbara Harris. *English Aristocratic Women, 1450-1550: Marriage and Family, Property and Careers.* Page 146.

Elizabeth's jewels. Despite Nicholas' public downfall, Lady Carew remained in good standing at court, which could be attributed to the positions that her family members held there. Elizabeth's mother, Margaret, held a unique position serving as governess to royal children. Margaret attempted to help Elizabeth retrieve her estate and wrote to Cromwell on behalf of her daughter. While Margaret's position was likely helpful to her daughter's transition to widowhood, Elizabeth also had the support of her brother. Francis Carew remained loyal to Henry VIII through his divorce to Catherine of Aragon and his marriage to Anne Boleyn. Francis' loyalty to the King cannot be understated as he served on the jury that convicted and sentenced his own brother-in-law. Francis' support of Henry in the 1530s worked to his sister's advantage since she was able to reclaim significant portion of the estates that had been taken by the crown.

Elizabeth Hoby, née Stonor, was the daughter of Walter and Anne Stonor, prominent courtiers at Henry VIII's court. At one time, Walter Stonor even worked as the King's Sergeant-at-arms while his wife was part of Queen Anne Boleyn's household. There is not much information about Elizabeth's first marriage to Sir William Compton, although she was promised a jointure. Elizabeth was still attempting to claim her jointure when she married her second husband Walter Walshe, or Walsh, in November 1529.[28] During her marriage to Walshe, who was a member of the Privy Chamber, Elizabeth attempted to secure her jointure. When Walshe died in 1538, Elizabeth and her three children moved back in with her father.[29] On behalf of his only daughter, Walter Stonor

[28] Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII. Vol. 4: Part III: 1529-30. Nov 1529.

[29] "Henry VIII, privy chamber of (*act.* 1509–1547)," Michael Riordan in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eee ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence

sent letters to Thomas Cromwell about his daughter's condition. Together Elizabeth and her father worked with Cromwell in order for Elizabeth to receive the money that she was promised.[30] Elizabeth married Philip Hoby in 1540; Hoby was a well-connected courtier and diplomat at Henry VIII's court. The couple moved to court and Elizabeth became a part of Katherine Parr's inner circle.

Elizabeth's successes as a widow could be attributed to her relationship with her father. Though Elizabeth had been well connected at court and personally wrote to Cromwell, it was imperative that her father also wrote for her. In addition to Elizabeth's relationship with her father, Elizabeth also remarried after the death of her second husband, which aided her success, as she was able to return to court. Similar to other privileged widows, Elizabeth needed the help of her male family members during her widowhood.

Widows with supportive male family members were often to able to claim all the their inheritances while women who did not have male assisting them had to work much harder. Anne Berekeley, another widow in Henry VIII's reign, had also been well connected at court and amongst the aristocracy, but she too had work very hard to secure her inheritance.

Anne, born Savage, came from the Cheshire family, a once very prominent family that helped Henry VII take the English throne. Although Anne's family was rewarded greatly under Henry VII, they were punished severely under Henry VIII for unnecessary

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Goldman, May 2012, http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.library.unl.edu/view/article/70825 (accessed January 15, 2013).

[30] Barbara J Harris. *English Aristocratic Women, 1450-1550: Marriage and Family, Property and Careers*.

violence and had the majority of their lands and titles stripped.[31] While Anne's father and brother were pushed away from their close relationship with the monarchy, Anne had been able to maintain a connection resulting in an appointment at court. At Henry VIII's court Anne supported Anne Boleyn as she rose to power in the early 1530's. Anne's support of the royal marriage benefitted her greatly, as she was one of only five people who attended the royal nuptials. In addition to being present at the King and Queen's wedding, Anne was also rewarded by being matched with Lord Thomas Berkeley in 1533. After leaving court and married only a year, Anne became a widow. Anne, who saw her family lose their place and land, was fully aware of how interactions at court worked. Only weeks after the death of Lord Berkeley, Anne went to court to spend time with the monarchs. Anne, who named her infant son after King Henry, understood that she needed to continue her connections at court now that she was a widow. Anne's visits to court paid off when she tried to secure her jointure. On May 1st, 1535, Anne sent to letter to Thomas Cromwell, earl of Essex, explaining that she couldn't get a hold of her jointure. In this same letter to Cromwell, Anne also clearly mentioned that she had not yet paid one of her fees to the Crown and would be unable to do so until she has possession of her jointure.[32] This letter to Cromwell, which is both short and to the point, accomplished its task since Anne received her jointure. The success of this letter could be attributed to a number of factors; one being that Anne had practice writing to Cromwell. Both before and after the death of her husband, Anne wrote several letters including another letter to Cromwell asking him to help her retain the lease of a particular property.

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[31] Barbara Harris "The View from My Lady's Chamber: New Perspectives on the Early Tudor Monarchy" 215-216.

[32] Anne Berkeley. State Papers.Calendar Volume Title: Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII. Vol. 8: 1535.

In addition to Anne's ability to write a convincing letter, she also had a good standing at court. Lastly, Anne had a son, and while he was a minor, having an heir at this time was important for both married and widowed women. Having a son, even if he was a minor, was particularly important for widows, as they were more likely to be accepted by their community, allowing them to receive their inheritances. Because widows who had sons will eventually pass their estates to the male heir, they are not intentionally breaking patriarchal rule.

For most widows having a son was an irreplaceable asset. Both sons and sons-in-law could offer protection from anyone who tried to alter a widow's inheritance. Sons and daughters were expected to help care for their mother after the death of their father. Widows who could not afford to the live by themselves would have moved in with one of their children. Although children typically offered refuge for widows, some children challenged their mother's inheritance.

Elizabeth Muston, who later became Elizabeth Whetehill, quarreled with her oldest son for several years over his inheritance. Elizabeth Muston, married Sir Richard Whetehill in 1491. Richard, son of the established Adrian Whetehill, became mayor of Calsis a few years after the couple wed. The prominent couple had fourteen children, although only seven are discussed in both Richard and Elizabeth's wills. In 1536, Richard Whetehill died, leaving his wife the majority of his estate but did not forget his children. Whitehill's will, revised shortly before his death, stated that his children would receive rents and his daughter's were to receive dowries as well. Robert, the couple's oldest son, objected to his father's will and attempted to gain more property at the expense of his mother's inheritance. Robert, who received help and encouragement from his new father-

in-law Richard Grenville, wanted the house and farm that his mother resided in. In one of Elizabeth's letters to Cromwell she stated that she had been a good wife and mother and should not be forced to give up her home.[33] Elizabeth wrote to Cromwell in 1537, explaining her son's actions, "Because I demanded a little farm we had in the country he insisted that he and his wife should have half and live with me. I have not received past 4*l.* 12*s.* of my husband's land since he died a year ago."[34] At first, Cromwell sided with Elizabeth noting that he,"[h]as received his Lordship's letters, written at the Nete on the 20th ult., desiring him to call such of the Council here as he thought fit to compel Robert Whethill, son of lady Elizabeth Whethill, to stand to the agreement made with the lady Elizabeth Whethill, his mother, and allow her to enjoy the farm called the Cawsey."[35] This ruling did not leave out Robert completely; though Elizabeth received the farm, Robert was awarded substantial rents. The feud between mother and son continued, as the two could not agree on who would pay the dowries of Robert's younger sisters. Though Cromwell attempted to mend this feud between mother and son, the two could not settle on other details. When Elizabeth died in 1547 she did not bequeath much to her eldest son. Robert, still believing that he was entitled to his parents' land, sued his mother's executor. Elizabeth and her son do not represent the majority of widows and sons, as most made efforts to help their mother. Helping a widowed mother typically benefitted both parties, since the oldest son would gain later on.

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[33] Arthur, Plantagenet. State Papers. Calendar Volume Title: Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII. Vol. 13: Part I: 1538

[34] Elizabeth Whettyll. Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII. Vol. 12: Part II: 1537

[35] Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII. Vol 13: Part I: 1538.

A widow became particularly vulnerable to anyone who had any type of claim to her inheritance if she only had daughters. Husbands often left large amounts of their estates to other male relatives, leaving their wives and daughters with minimal inheritance. Typically daughters would only receive sums of money or movable items that were to be used for her dowry. Beyond a dowry, daughters did not usually receive much from their fathers. Margaret Clifford spent many years attempting to claim a fair inheritance for her daughter. Margaret came from the very prominent aristocratic Russell family. Her father, Francis Russell, held the title of Second earl of Bedford and made several diplomatic trips to European courts for Queen Elizabeth I. The Russell children were very privileged and highly educated. The education given to Margaret as a child likely stimulated her interests in a number of topics including religion, alchemy, literature, and business. In 1577, Margaret married George Clifford, third earl of Cumberland, and together they had two sons and one daughter. When Margaret was pregnant with her last child, her daughter, Anne, she dreamt that a spirit came to her and claimed that Margaret was to have a daughter and she would "inherit the ancient lands of her father's ancestors."[36] Unfortunately, both of the Clifford sons died very young, leaving Anne as the only heir. The dream that Margaret had may have played a key role later when the two women attempted to claim Anne's inheritance. Similar to her mother, Anne received an encompassing education and she later wrote extensively about her life experiences.[37] In 1600, after marital turmoil, Margaret and George separated, and on October 12, 1605 George died. George excluded not only Margaret from his will but also

[36] Carole Levin, *Dreaming the English Renaissance :Politics and Desire in Court and Culture.* 1st ed. (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) Page 36.
[37] Anne Clifford. Dairy. 1616-1619
http://www.wwnorton.com/college/english/nael/17century/topic_1/diary.htm

Anne, his only living child. The majority of his estate, including castles and other properties, were bequeathed to his brother Francis.[38] Additionally, he excluded his daughter from inheriting any of his titles. Together Margaret and Anne attempted to get George's will changed. The two educated women worked diligently to claim Anne's rightful titles after the two were denied entrance into Skipton Castle. The lawsuit continued for years, as the women refused to back down. When Margaret died in 1616, the will was still not settled. It was not until Francis died, with no male heirs in 1643, that Anne received what she considered her rightful inheritance.

Gaining dowers, jointures, and other inheritances were not the only obstacle that wealthy widows faced. Widows were confronted with insulting stereotypes that could be found in numerous literary works. The characteristics associated with widows found in popular literary works are extremely negative, as they portray widows as lusty, weak, incapable, and foolish. While there were many different plots and storylines that involved widows, one common theme centered on young men who married foolish old widows in order to take advantage of their wealth. While this theme of young men marrying widows for financial gain is found in plays, broadsides, ballads, and songs it is not the reality of the time period since many widows, unless they were very young, did not remarry.[39]

One song that clearly displays this theme is "A merry new Song of a rich Widdowes wooing That married a young man to her owne vndooing".[40] This 1625 anonymous song exemplifies the stereotypes associated with widows as well as

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[38] Barbara K. Lewalski ."Re-Writing Patriarchy and Patronage: Margaret Clifford, Anne Clifford, and Aemilia Lanyer" *The Yearbook of English Studies*, Vol. 21, Politics, Patronage and Literature in England 1558-1658 Special Number (1991) pp. 87-106.

[39] Charles Carlton. "The Widow's Myth and Female Reality in 16th and 17th Century England" *A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* Volume 10 No. 2. Page 118-129, 1978.

[40] A merry new song of a rich widdowes wooing that married a young man to her owne vndooing.1627.

demonstrate the young ambitious man willing to take advantage of the older woman. This song, sung to the tune of "Stand thy ground old Harry", tells of an old woman being wooed by a young man. The thirty-two-stanza song is separated into two main parts. A haunting sarcastic chorus follows each stanza:

> Haue at thy coat old woman,
> Haue at thy coat old woman:
> Here and there, and euery where,
> Haue at thy coat old woman.[41]

The first stanza shows a desperate, lovesick, widow followed by numerous stanzas that focus on what the young man will do for the old widow. The majority of the first part of the song is filled with both sarcastic flattery and promises:

> Ile till thy pasture ground,
> and mow thy pleasant meddow:
> My mother me told,
> I must be bold
> in wooing of a Widdow.[42]

In this stanza the suitor promises that he will help her to maintain her lands if she will marry him. This section implies that the widow the young man is trying to woo is land owning and wealthy. Additionally, this stanza demonstrates that the man is fully aware of the widow's possessions and has no qualms admitting it. Lastly, it reveals that the young man does not think that his widow is capable or has any desire to keep up her own land. As the song continues, it becomes even darker as the details the intentions of the greedy man and the demise of the old widow:

> When she had liued two moneths,
> this lusty youngmans purchase,
> With kindnesse thus kild,

[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.

Her coffin he fild
with her consumed carkasse.[43]

This stanza, found toward the very end of the poem, displays how the man succeeded in his pursuit of the widow's possessions. The dark and eerie tone of this stanza exhibits an accepted hostility toward widows.

The hostility directed at widows, especially wealthy widows, emerges from anxiety over females asserting control. Not only does this song reflect anxieties that England's patriarchal society had about widows with wealth and power, it also replicates apprehensions about widows' chastity. This idea is displayed throughout the song, which is riddled with sexual innuendos. This poem highlights the angst the English had about widows and their sexual behavior. Susan Dunn-Hensley discusses how widows were perceived as being overtly sexual and lustful.[44] Dunn-Hensley suggests that many early modern people believed that because widows had already experienced sexual pleasure they were insatiable. The sexual behavior of widows caused the English anxiety as it broke the structures created by this society. The abundance of literature that focuses on this theme suggests an underlying societal tension caused by wealthy widows. Charles Carlton explores how the literature produced in early modern England about widows does not actually reflect the marriage statistics.[45] Carlton closely analyzes how the popular literature that degraded widows and their capabilities created a myth that affected the perception of widows.

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[43] Ibid.
[44] Susan Dunn-Hensley. "Whore Queens: Sexualized Female Body and the State" *High and Mighty Queens of Early Modern England: Realities and Representations*. (Pelgrave Macmillin, 2009)
[45] Carlton. Page 118-129

Whether a widow remarried or lived as a single woman depended on her particular circumstances. While popular culture implied that the widows were highly sought after, in reality, many widows stayed single. The idea that widows were viewed as eligible marriage partners is actually mocked in another early English song. "A Batchelers resolution, or, Have among you now, widowes or maydes For I come a woing as Fancie perswades. I must haue a Wife", be she Older or Younger, For I cannot, nor will not lye alone any longer, sung to the tune of The blazing torch, tells of a bachelor who is willing to marry anyone.[46] The nineteen-stanza poem portrays a man so desperate for a wife, that he would be willing to take anyone. Each stanza discusses his acceptance of an undesirable woman, such as a "whore" or "wanton". The song repeats at the end of each stanza "*Ile lye alone no longer"* suggesting that he will accept all the women he speaks of. In the second part of the song the speaker out right states that he will not have a widow as his wife:

> But ye if I [-]choice may haue
> a Mayde [-]ould b[-] my wife,
> I would not be a Widowes slaue,
> Ide rather loose my life:
> If I should wed a Widow old,
> I [-]ad better take a younger,
> For Widowes will not be contrould,
> *Yet I can stay no longer.*
>
> If she should haue a stinking breath
> I neuer should abide her,
> For tha[-] to me is worse then death,
> I had rather touch a Spider:
> But thats a fault may soone be smelt,
> s[-]e *Aiax* smels no stronger:

[46] Anon. A Batchelers resolution, or, Have among you now, widowes or maydes For I come a woing as Fancie perswades. I must haue a Wife, be she Older or Younger, For I cannot, nor will not lye alone any longer. 1629

[-]efore I e take one with such fault,
[-] lye alone yet longer [47]

These two stanzas suggest that widows were not the object of desire, but rather appalling. The speaker immediately states that he does not want to "be a Widowes slaue" which implies that he is afraid of her power. Again, he displayed his concern when he claims "Widowes will not be contrould"; this line not only exposes underlying tensions but also highlights the reality that widows are no longer under coverture. These two particular stanzas reflect the anxiety about widows' roles and abilities in early modern England. This song not only placed all other women above widows, it also takes ample time to degrade older widows. The song claims that widows have a displeasing odor as well as comparing them to a spider. These demeaning comments do not actually represent widows but rather serve as a way to humiliate widows. The attempt to embarrass widows acts to discredit any power and authority that women would gain in their widowhood.

Another lengthy poem that works to degrade widows is titled "XII. mery iests, of the wyddow Edyth this lying widow, false and craftie, late i[n] Engla[n]d, hath deceiued many ... Now newly printed, this present yeare, for such as delite, mery iests for to here". This 1573 poem claims that a widow named Eydth has taken advantage of numerous men in a variety of ways. The poem, divided into several sections, details how Eydth tricked each man specifically. The beginning of the work displays Edyth negative character by calling her a "lying widow, false and craftie" in the first line of the poem. The poem continues to create Eydth's unscrupulous character by briefly describing how she was raised. The rhyme suggests that Eydth's wicked behavior can be attributed to her mother,

[47] Anon. A Batchelers resolution, or, Have among you now, widowes or maydes For I come a woing as Fancie perswades. I must haue a Wife, be she Older or Younger, For I cannot, nor will not lye alone any longer. 1629

also a widow. The poem then moves to explain that Eydth had been an unfaithful wife, who became pregnant by another man. After establishing her personality the poem breaks off into different sections, each examining how she deceived different people. There are twelve sections in the poem; each revealing how someone was swindled by Eydth. Although section fives tells of Eydth deceiving a married couple, the rest of the poem discloses how Eydth tricked men specifically. Several sections suggest that Eydth deceived men into believing that she would marry them. In the tenth and eleventh sections, Eydth is accused of promising marriage to three different men:

> That three yong men she cast in a heat
> Which seruants were in the same place,
> And all they woed her a good pace.
> By meanes I tel you and by brocage,
> They sware they wolde be all her owne page:[48]

Alleging that Eydth promised to marry three men exemplifies the insatiable lust of the widow. The poem ends without the revealing Eydth's fate, suggesting that she continues to deceive men. The ambiguous ending of the poem serves as warning against disingenuous widows. The accusations against Eydth suggest that she is both deceptive and lusty, two characteristics associated with widows in English popular culture.

This song, which clearly mocks and degrades widows, is not a rarity in English literature; several popular songs, ballads, and plays look to challenge any authority and respect given to widows. "The Widovves lamentation for the absence of their deare children and suitors: and for divers of their deaths in these fatall civill warres : presented in the names and behalfes of the rich and wealthy widowes throughout the whole Kingdome" works to humiliate widows and belittle the problems that they face. The

[48] Ibid.

lament, composed during the English Civil War by an anonymous writer, sarcastically expresses the problems that widows encountered. The work, told from the perspective of an older widow, begins by articulating how she misses her husband. The literary work then discusses the perils of war and how it affects widows. The lament begins to delegitimize widows by focusing on their lack of suitors. The complaint presents this older widow as extremely lusty and desperate for a suitor. The widow from this grievance not only desires a suitor but rather a young suitor which adds to the misrepresentation of older widows chasing after young men. Additionally, the older widow in the poem speaks negatively towards young widows, using only sexual terms to describe them. The lamentation draws even more negative attention to widows by displaying them as ungrateful. Because the widow in the lament reminisces about her life before her husband's death and complains about her current situation, she comes off to the reader as unappreciative. Lastly, the lament insinuates that widows would be happier if they were married thus perpetuating the idea that women must be limited to certain roles.

Widows do not fit into the roles established by early English society. The poems and songs found in England's popular culture show that the majority of society is uncomfortable with widows, particularly widows who possess power in some way. Wealthy widows alter English expectations of women, as they are able to assert autonomy through acting as executers and maintaining land. Although there are notable women who were able to enter their widowhood without numerous problems, many aristocratic widows experienced challenges. The challenges that wealthy widows met were often centered on land and inheritances. The trials the women faced upon entering widowhood suggests that a powerful wealthy widow did not represent that the norm.

Additionally, the constant challenges even for wealthy widows suggest that the English society was threatened by their new place in society.

Working Widows

Aristocratic women were not the only widows saw who new problems when they became widows and received English were new autonomy. Wives of skilled craftsmen also encountered challenges when they were widowed. Similar to wealthy widows, wives of craftsmen typically gained a valuable inheritance. Many widows of artisans not only inherited their items of monetary value, but also received the power to run his business. The new autonomy given to the wives of artisans can be given through examining widows in the book industry. While widows within the book industry gained both autonomy and visibility, they also were also confronted with problems that threatened their independence.

The majority of women who were not part of the nobility worked to bring in some income. Although many women worked long hours taking care of children and managing a household, most of them also worked outside of the home to bring in supplementary income. The jobs that women could work were very limited, as many women were restricted from different trades. Though most women who worked outside the home worked sewing, knitting, and spinning, there were women who worked skilled labor occupations. Midwifery and teaching were two trades that employed mostly women. Circumstances of female educators in early modern England varied dramatically as teaching could be either formal or informal.[49] Eleanor Hubbard suggests that women

[49] Mendelson, Sara and Crawford, Patricia .Page 322.

often watched over the shops that their husbands owned.[50] Many women worked closely with their husbands as innkeepers, as they were very familiar with running the household and completing domestic chores. Hubbard's assertions imply that women were fully capable of handling work that was typically designated for men, therefore when a woman was widowed she often took over his business. Widows who maintained their husbands' trade are demonstrated by several different important vocations, including the Grocer's Company and Fishmonger's Company. This concept of a widow taking over for a tradesmen can be further reflected in the book industry, as many women worked with their husbands, as well as continued the business upon their husband's death.

The book industry was relatively flexible in that it formally allowed for widows to continue their husbands' work. While the English book industry did not develop as rapidly as it did on the continent, it truly began to flourish in the mid sixteenth century. As the book industry in England grew and became more complex the different aspects within the trade required more specialization. The specialization that emerged within the book trade created a number of different jobs including printer, binder, and bookseller, which all needed different and specific training.

In addition to each printer, seller, and binder needing specialized training, they were also recognized differently. It is difficult to determine whether the name that appears on the works' title pages is the printer, binder, or seller. Adding to the complication of identification markers, many printers were only identified by their initials. The initials present on English printed works contributes not only to the difficulty of assigning books to specific printers but also in tracking women who worked either

[50] Hubbard, Eleanor. *City Women: Money, Sex, and the Social Order in Early Modern London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012)

along side their husband or continued his work as a widow. One particular example of this is seventeenth century couple Edward and Elizabeth Allde, who are both sometimes listed as E. Allde.[51] In order to determine which of the two was actually the printer, we have to look at the date.

The majority of people who became a part of the trade were already connected to the industry, many of young men who became apprentices in the book trade worked with family members or neighbors. Similar to men, the women who became part of the book trade either came from a family or married into a family that worked in the industry. Daughters of printers, publishers, and booksellers often married men who were a part of the Stationer's Company. Robert Toy, an English printer, married his daughter Rose to Arthur Pepwell who was a member of the Stationer's Company.[52] Richard and Joan Jugge, who both worked as printers in the mid to late 1500s, also married their daughter, Katherine, to a printer named Richard Walkins.[53] There were many benefits to marrying within the industry, but the two most important were making connections and inheriting businesses. These benefits helped to keep the industry relatively small compared to other English trades. While women worked to connect businesses through marriage and inheritance, their roles within the industry extended far beyond that, as many women participated by doing printing, publishing and selling. Despite not a having formal

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[51] A. W Pollard and G. R. Redgrave. . Oxford University Press, USA; 2 edition (May 16, 1991) Page 3.

[52] "Toy, Humphrey (*b.* in or before 1537, *d.* 1577)," I. Gadd in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eee ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, January 2008, http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.library.unl.edu/view/article/27643 (accessed January 20, 2013).

[53] H. R. Tedder, "Jugge, Richard (*c.*1514–1577)," rev. Joyce Boro, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eee ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, January 2008, http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.library.unl.edu/view/article/15160 (accessed January 20, 2013).

education, there are records that show women's contribution to these trades. Women, who were not allowed to officially become apprentices, were gaining an informal education from their male family members.

Hannah Allen serves as an example of a woman who did not have formal education or apprenticeship, yet is credited as a printer after the death of her husband. Hannah's understanding of the trade began with her father. Hannah Allen, born Hannah Howse, was exposed to the book industry at a young age, as her father, Robert Howse, was a well-established bookbinder and bookseller in London. In addition to her father working within the industry Hannah's brother Samuel Howse was also involved in the trade as he apprenticed with bookseller Henry Overton in Popes Head Alley.[54] Hannah married bookseller Benjamin Allen in 1632 and when he died in 1646, Hannah's name began appearing on a number of works. Hannah's name by itself appears on twenty-seven published works and over sixty books and pamphlets with other male printers. From 1646 to 1651 Hannah ran the printing business she inherited from Benjamin in Pope's Head Alley. Although Hannah did not have any formal training, it was obvious that she was capable of running her former husband's business.

The importance of familial ties extended beyond a woman's education and introduction to the industry, women could also inherit businesses. An inheritance would typically come from a father or husband. The vast majority of women who are recorded as printers, publishers, or booksellers are labeled as widows.

Joan Jugge effectively ran her husband's business for eight years after his death. Joan Merrye married Richard Jugge in 1543 and together the couple had two sons and

[54]http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database/term_details.aspx?bioId=112590

five daughters. Richard and his partner John Cawood ran a very prosperous business, printing official documents and religious texts for Queen Elizabeth.[55] The two men had several patents on religious texts, which kept the business lucrative. When Richard died in 1577, Joan continued to print the texts her husband worked with as well maintain his apprentices. In 1585 Joan died and her son John took over the business.

Elizabeth Toy also maintained a successful business after the death of her husband. Elizabeth married Robert Toy sometime after 1546. Robert, who had been married previously already had two children, including a son named Humphrey. Robert was an established member of the Stationer's Company that published mostly religious works and when he died in 1556 he made his wife his executrix. Robert specified in his will that Elizabeth was to inherit the press until his son came of age. Elizabeth became an active member of the Stationer's Company and made significant profits with partner John Wallye.[56] Elizabeth successfully ran the press until Humphrey Toy was freed from his apprenticeship in 1558. Both Joan Jugge and Elizabeth Toy were able to conserve the businesses that they were bequeathed, demonstrating their capabilities. The inheritance that a widow received from a husband gave her significant power. Widows within the book industry were had many options. If a widow chose not to remarry, then she would have had the opportunity not only to run the business she was bequeathed, but also be recognized for her work. As a widow, a woman would have received credit for the work that came out of her shop with her name on the works. Widows of the books industry

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[55] H. R. Tedder, "Jugge, Richard (*c.*1514–1577)," rev. Joyce Boro, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eee ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, January 2008, http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.library.unl.edu/view/article/15160 (accessed January 21, 2013).

[56] Grossly Material Things.

gained businesses, equipment, and recognition for their contributions which led to them having autonomy.

Some widows followed in their husband's footsteps, like Elizabeth Allde. Elizabeth Oulton was the second wife of Edward Allde, a proficient printer who owned his own press.[57] Edward had inherited his business from his mother, who maintained the business after the death of his father.[58] When Elizabeth was widowed, she continued to print the types of works her accomplished husband produced. Edward Allde, a member of the Stationer's Company, had a respectable reputation and thriving business. Similar to her prominent husband, Elizabeth Allde played a key role in the printing and publication of the literary works. Elizabeth, who is credited with the publication of 123 works, produced ballads, broadsides, plays, images, and other popular texts.[59] Elizabeth continued to print and publish under her own name until her son from prior marriage, Richard Oulton, acquired the business.

While Elizabeth chose to print and publish works that were reminiscent of the texts her husband produced, other women did not emulate their husbands to the same degree. Elizabeth Pickering continued to print some of the same works her husband, Robert Redman, produced but strategically left out texts. As a printer, Robert Redman specialized in law books, which proved to be very lucrative as there were a number of law students in his area. Although Redman focused on law books, he also published religious texts up until his death in 1540. Elizabeth, who only published for ten months,

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[57] "Allde , Edward (1555x63–1627)," I. Gadd in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eee online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, Oxford: OUP, , http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.library.unl.edu/view/article/363 (accessed January 23, 2013).

[58] John Phillip Immroth (Compiled) *Ronald Brunlees McKerrow: a selection of his essays*. "Edward Allde as a Typical Trade Printer" (New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 1974.) Pages 94- 131.

[59] Helen Smith. "Print[ing] Your Royal Father Off": Early Modern Female Stationers and the Gendering of the British Book Trades" *Text* , Vol. 15, (2003), pp. 163-186. Page 167.

produced only law texts that had been published before by her husband.[60] Elizabeth's choice to only produce law books, which previously demonstrated profit, suggests that she was concerned with the success of the business.

While several widows modeled their business practices closely after their husbands', there were other women who embraced other specialization. Anne Vincent did not continue as a bookseller, like her husband, but worked as publisher in London. A widow's ability to decide how she directed her business suggests that she actually made important decisions on the path of her career. The material inheritances, the visibility, and the autonomy that widows of the book trade gained placed them in good position within society.

Widows in the printing industry held a unique place within society as they often inherited their husband's entire business. A widow of a master printer, publisher, or seller could offer great opportunity to men who wanted to become part of the industry. The appeal of widowed women in the book trade stemmed mainly from their inheritances and their unique relationship with the Stationer's Company, as they are typically listed as "freewoman" or "citizen stacioner of London"[61]

Joan Orwin is an example of a woman in the printing industry who married several times. Joan Orwin's first husband, John Kingston, who was a member of the Stationer's Company, brought her into the industry. When Kingston died in 1584, Joan

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[60] Barbara Kreps. "Elizabeth Pickering: The First Woman to Print Law Books in England and Relations within the Community of Tudor London's Printers and Layers". *Renaissance Quarterly Vol. 56. No. 4* (Winter 2003) University of Chicago Press 1053-1088.

[61] Helen Smith. *Grossly Material Things: Women and Book Production in Early Modern England.* (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2011)

inherited the business and maintained it until she married George Robinson.[62] Robinson had originally worked as a grocer and did not transfer to the Stationer's Company until in 1585. Robinson worked as an apprentice for John and Joan and when he died, Joan married again. Joan's last marriage was to Thomas Orwin. Like Robinson, Orwin was able to work in the Stationer's Company when he married Joan as he inherited materials and tools from Joan's prior husbands. Joan is credited with sixty-eight texts and when she died, her son, Felix Kingston, took over her work. Each of Joan's husbands published *The Arte of Rhetoric* by Thomas Wilson, suggesting that they all had the rights to produce this work. As a widow Joan was able to keep the textual rights of the works that her husbands produce, thus demonstrating the agency widows in the printing industry could maintain.

While there were obvious benefits for men who married widows who were already involved with the book trade, there were benefits for women as well. When a widow remarried, her new husband's name would replace hers on any of the works that they produced, whether or not she contributed. Though a woman's loss of visibility prevented women from the receiving rightful credit for the work that they did, it actually offered them protection. After the death of her husband Benjamin Allen in 1646, Hannah Allen continued his business for the next three years. In the years after Benjamin's death, Hannah issued at least twenty-seven books, the majority of which were religious texts.[63] Hannah not only continued to print works, but she also handled other aspects of the business, including maintaining apprentices. Hannah kept on her husband's apprentice

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[62] Helen Smith. *Grossly Material Things: Women and Book Production in Early Modern England*. Page 102.

[63] Henry Robert Plomer, *A Dictionary of the Booksellers and Printers Who were at Work in England, Scotland and Ireland from 1641 to 1667.* London,: Printed for the Bibliographical Society, by Blades, East & Blades, 1907.Page 2.

and also took on two additional apprentices. In 1650, Livewell Chapman, one of her apprentices, was freed and entered the Stationer's Company. Just a year after Chapman joined the Stationer's Company, he and Hannah were married. After 1650, Hannah's name no longer appeared on works, although there is evidence of a bookseller as identified by as "Mrs. Chapman". Although Hannah is only known typically as a printer, she also sold books. It is likely that the "Mrs. Chapman" mentioned in State papers in the year 1662 referred to Hannah.[64]

The new couple printed a number of works with Fifth Monarchist leanings; the Fifth Monarchist Movement, which was most prevalent between the years 1641 and 1661, was a millenarian movement that was influenced heavily by the Book of Daniel.[65] Hannah and Livewell's association with the works utilized by the Fifth Monarchists led to the authorities closely monitoring their business. Chapman had a few run-ins with the law, including imprisonment, due to his association with Fifth Monarchists. Chapman could not escape his association with the radical group and became targeted by the English authorities and was accused of treason. While Chapman attempted to deal with the numerous charges against him, Hannah worked to continue the press. Although Hannah's is not credited with any works after 1650, it is clear that Hannah had to maintain the business while her new husband dealt with the legal problems. In 1663, the printing of *TWO TREATISES: VIZ. 1. An Epistle General, TO THE Mystical Body of Christ on Earth, the Church Universal in BABYLON. II. THE Face of the Times: Wherein is discovered, The RICE, PROGRESSE, and ISSUE, of the ENMITY and CONTEST, between the SEED of the WOMAN and the SEED of the SERPENT, &c The Design of it*

[64] Polmer, Page 45.
[65] http://www.exlibris.org/nonconform/engdis/fifthmonarchists.html

being, To awaken up the present Generation of God's People, to a more diligent and curious Observation of the present Signs of the near Approach of the Day of the Lord by Sir Henry Vane led to an investigation of Hannah's activities. Sir Henry Vane, a Puritan politician, wrote *The Face of the Times* while in prison for aiding Oliver Cromwell and the Commonwealth. The religious work discussed what was currently occurring in England and related it to millennial beliefs.[66] Hannah was accused of overseeing the printing of this controversial text. Although she was investigated, she was never punished for Sir Henry Vane's work. Unfortunately, Livewell's interactions with the authorities took a toll on their business. Hannah outlived her second husband but there was no chance of her restoring the business. Because her name was not linked to any controversial works at a time when authorities were closely monitoring any non-approved work, Hannah was able to continue to help different causes. A lack of recognition could actually benefit a women in a time when printing or selling the wrong thing could have severe consequences.

Husbands were not the only people who affected a widow's life; many sons played a key role in their mother's later lives. In the printing industry, many widows had the responsibility of maintaining a business until their sons were freed from their apprenticeship and could adequately take care of the business. The relationships between widows and their sons in the printing industry often ran smoothly, as mother and son

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[66] Henry Vane, *TWO TREATISES: VIZ. 1. An Epistle General, TO THE Mystical Body of Christ on Earth, the Church Universal in BABYLON. II. THE Face of the Times: Wherein is discovered, The RICE, PROGRESSE, and ISSUE, of the ENMITY and CONTEST, between the SEED of the WOMAN and the SEED of the SERPENT, &c. The Design of it being, To awaken up the present Generation of God's People, to a more diligent and curious Observation of the present Signs of the near Approach of the Day of the Lord.* 1662. EEBO.

were dependent on one another. Although it is likely that many sons were anxious to take control of the establishment, the regulations of the Stationer's Company kept numerous sons from immediately seizing the family business as the company required each man to be an apprentice and work as a journeyman. These conventions kept the majority of mothers and sons from quarreling with one another for several reasons, one being that sons were grateful that mothers were able to maintain the business. The other reason that mothers and sons did not typically quarrel when a mother was widowed was that the widows were often able to continue working alongside their son, as they did their husbands.

One printer who had great success working with her son was Ann Griffin, a publisher in London. In the decades that Anne and her son worked in the industry, they were able to help create a network of book distribution throughout southern England. Anne married Edward Griffin sometime before 1620 and together they had at least one son, Edward Griffin II. Edward Griffin managed Eliot's Court Printing House until his death in 1620. As a widow, Anne worked with a number of people to keep her newly inherited business successful and retain her partnership with Eliot's Court Printing House. Anne, who worked with other women, including Elizabeth Purslowe and Ann Boler, also worked closely with her son. Edward Griffin II was freed in 1636, and together Edward and Anne produced a number of protestant texts. Printing Protestant works drew negative attention from Archbishop Laud, who attacked and threatened to destroy Anne's business in 1643. In the same year, Anne appeared as witness against the Archbishop, where she agreed to cease print Thomas Becon's *The displaying of the Popish masse vvherein thou shalt see, what a wicked idoll the masse is, and what great*

difference there is between the Lords Supper and the Popes Masse. Anne and Edward's business did not experience much trouble from this controversy. After the death of her husband in 1621, Anne continued to contribute to the book trade until her death in 1643. Anne's work within the book industry is exceptional in that she was credited for her work longer than almost every widow in the book trade at this time. Additionally, Anne actually published longer than her husband, who only printed for eight years. One of the reasons that Ann was able to maintain the business for so long was because her son began printing with her in 1636; together the mother and son continued printing using both their initials. The closely monitored regulations set by the Stationer's Company allowed for widows to display their abilities to preserve the business for handing it over to their sons.

Widows in the printing industry enjoyed agency as many of them continued to their own businesses. The Stationer's Company's rigid procedures and exclusive membership protected widows from anyone who attempted to challenge their inheritances. In addition to the regulations that limited who could participate in the different trades, there were also other attempts to help working women who lost their husbands. "The Friendly Society for Widows being a proposal for supplying the defect of Joyntures, and Securing Women from falling into Poverty and Distress at the Death of their Husbands" was an effort to help protect widows who brought wealth to the marriage.[67] This document that suggests there were some women who did not inherit money or businesses and thus were exposed to impoverished conditions, "Experience informs us that every Day, of the misery and Calamity of Women after the death of their Husbands, which chiefly falls on such women who Marry Clergymen, Shopkeeper, and

[67] "The Friendly Society for Widows being a proposal for supplying the defect of Joyntures, and Securing Women from falling into Poverty and Distress at the Death of their Husbands" 1696.

Artificers who tho may bring considerable Fortunes to their Husbands, are often times left in a very mean condition"[68]. This 1696 text attempts to protect the wives of craftsmen by having them submit their name and pay a small entrance fee and annual dues, "where every Married Women, or her Husband, for her, may Enter her Name into a Register kept for the purpose, and shall Receive a Policy or Obligation Sealed by the said Office".[69] This policy would allow women to receive a large sum of money at the death of her husband, keeping them from becoming impoverished.

While many working women were able to have a successful widowhood, widows who were not protected by the Stationer's Company or other guilds did not have the same opportunities. The majority of widows in England lived in poverty. Due to the fact that women could not officially be apprenticed for a particular trade and many trades were regulated, they had to accept almost any job that was offered. Most women in the early modern period were forced to work for low pay and unreliable hours. Additionally, many women took seasonal jobs or earned extra income selling produce from their garden. Several women in poverty attempted to work as unlicensed midwives, which was beneficial for both the woman acting as midwife and the poor women receiving care. While women were able to work a handful of jobs, their income was typically supplementary to what their husbands brought in. Men had more occupational opportunities as many of them were apprenticed at the age of seven. On top of having more opportunity, men also received higher pay. Many times, a woman would take on several of these low-income jobs to simply earns a livable income. Throughout her life, Annis Cowper worked a number of different occupations in order to make ends meet.

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[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid

Annis first worked along side her stepfather as a cap maker, but the industry was diminishing and Annis was forced to move on. She then moved in with another women and sold apples. After selling apples, Annis took another job before she became a charwoman. In her later years, and after receiving charity from an almswomen, she worked with a poulterer.[70] Despite always working, Annis could not support herself and took up residence wherever she could; her plight demonstrates the difficulties that single women were faced with. Many widows who were not previously married to a tradesman found themselves in similar situations.

Underprivileged widows did receive some relief as systems to help those living in poverty were being developed. Religious institutions were the main providers of relief, their aide manifested in several forms, including medical care. In 1553, the treasurer of London's Saint Christ's Hospital used funds to help poor a woman.[71] Widows who had young children often received the most assistance. A late seventeenth century ballad titled, *The Bedford-shire vvidow; or, The poor in distress reliev'd, being a full and true relation, of a poor widow, whose husband was dead, and she turn'd out of doors by her creditors, and forced with her three children to lye in the street, and beg for bread; and how that Queen Mary, walking in her garden, and hearing her beg came to her, and caused her children to be cloathed and put to nurse, and gave the poor widow a weekly pension, to maintain her as long as she liv'd*. displays the charity that was ideally bestowed upon widows. This ballad tells of the Queen Mary's charitable behavior toward a poor widow and her children. The song, which is to the tune of *Let Caesar live long*

[70] Mendelson, Sara and Crawford, Patricia. Page 278.
[71] Diane Wullen. Women in the Public Sphere in Early Modern England: The Case of the Urban Working Poor. *The Sixteenth Century Journal* Vol. 19, No. 4 Page 559-575.

begins by describing how Queen Mary encountered a "poor widow" while on a stroll in her garden. Queen Mary is both astonished and grieved by the widow begging on the street and asks her, "Good woman I pray you, now why do you cry?"

> My Husband in Prison was cast and is dead;
> The Stones are my Couch, & the Streets is my Bed;
> My Creditors cruel have seized of all,
> Poor I and my Children have nothing at all;
> The Lord be my comfort or else I shall dye,
> For here in much hunger, and pain I do lye.[72]

The widow within the poem implies that she is without a home and is forced to live in the streets. The poem also suggests that widow cannot repay her debts, which keeps her in this impoverished state. The line about her creditors indicates that they do have any sympathy for her. The widow's response to the Queen demonstrates the problems that very poor widows faced. The Queen in the poem immediately responded by embracing the widow and her children. Queen Mary has the family brought to her palace to live.

> Some Victuals were brought, and they heartily fed;
> VVarm Cloaths were provided, as also a bed;
> The Children, were then put to Nurse with all speed,
> The Queen a good Alms-House to th' widow decreed,
> And likewise a Pension, for her did ordain,
> And now the poor widow is happy again.[73]

The poem ends with a happy widow as she was given a pension from the Queen. While this work was likely created to emphasize and exaggerate Queen Mary's generosity, it displays the vulnerable position that widows often found themselves in. While widows were some of the first to receive assistance, their relief was dependent on their reputation. Widows that were accused of sexual misbehavior were not allowed to receive this assistance. Widows that were deemed unfit to receive any help were forced to beg.

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[72] The Bedford-shire vvidow, Ann Arbor. Michigan: University of Michigan Library.
[73] The Bedford-shire vvidow.

Poverty-stricken widows did not have the advantages that widows of the tradesmen had, they did not inherit businesses nor could they offer position within society. Unfortunately, poor widows were viewed as a burden to society and were marginalized. The alienation and discrimination of the destitute widows can be seen in the witch trials of the late 1590s and the early seventeenth century. Often the women who were charged with the crime of witchcraft were widows. The major factors that contributed to the accusations of these widowed women were that they were perceived as burdens and they did not have the protection in their patriarchal communities.

The Malleus Maleficarum, or *The Hammer of Witches,* is a 1486 work by Heinrich Kramer and Jacob Sprenger, that tells of the different ways to identify and interrogate witches.[74] The work also details why women are more likely to become involved with witchcraft. Though The Hammer of Witches was well received at the time it was written and published, it became extremely popular in England in the late 1530s. Reginald Scot's *The Discovery of Witchcraft,* another influential work on witchcraft*,* states that the women typically associated with witchcraft were, "commonly old, lame, bleare-eied, pale, fowle and full of wrinkles; poore, sullen superstitious, and papists; or such as knowne no religion…"[75] While does not explicitly connect widows and witchcraft, poor widows often embodied the characteristics that he is discussing. Poor widows in England often suffered tremendously as they attempted to a living.

While *The Discovery of Witchcraft* and *Malleus Maleficarum* played a key role in witch trials of Europe, there were other literary works that also contributed to fear of witches and witchcraft. King James VI of Scotland, later James I, also contributed to the

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[74] James Sharpe. *Witchcraft in Early Modern England*. (Great Britian: Pearson Education, 2001), Page 4.
[75] Reginald, Scot. *The Discovery of Witchcraft*. (1584).

literature on witchcraft with his publication of *Daemonologie.* James' famous work was likely influenced by *The Discovery of Witchcraft,* and other prominent texts that addressed the super natural including, Jean Bodin's *De la Demonaminie*, Johann Weyer's *De Praestigiis Daemonum*, and Neil Hemmingsen's *Admonitio de Superstitous Magicis Vitandis.*[76] While these works likely influenced James' *Daemonologie*, James also relied heavily on the Biblical works, which are referenced throughout the text.

Daemonologie was originally published in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1597 and created in order to expose the masses to perils of witchcraft and sorcery.[77] The main goal of the text was to demonstrate the evils of witches, demons, and necromancers as well as how to stop them. The text is divided by into three different books, each with their own theme. There are only two characters in the work, Philomathes and Epistemon, who discuss the different elements of the supernatural. James urged the readers to be aware of witchcraft and to help uncover witches. When James composed this work in the mid-1590's he was very concerned with the supernatural, but by the time he was named Elizabeth's heir and became the King of England in 1603, he had lost interest and claimed that witches were frauds. Though James' was no longer fascinated by witchcraft, many people continued to fear the supernatural and accusations lingered.

Although there is no doubt that there were a multitude of young women with husbands who were suspected of practicing magic, most of the women accused were past their reproductive age and were widowed. The majority of women who were accused of witchcraft were generally accused after a quarrel or argument with a community member.

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[76] Lawrence Normand and Gareth Roberts. Witchcraft in Early Modern Scotland: James VI's Demonology and the North Berwick Witches(University of Exeter Press, 2000), Page 330.
[77] Pumfrey. Page 23.

A disagreement was typically the starting point of an accusation, as many people used accusations to discredit their fellow community members. When a community member experienced something negative in their life after an argument, such as the loss of a young child or a bad harvest, and they could not explain the anomaly, they would often attribute it to witchcraft. Many of the accusations of witchcraft during these decades closely followed this pattern. Although numerous accusations were made and taken very seriously, many cases were dismissed. In some cases, some of the women would attempt to stop the rumors and slander by filing defamation suits against the people who accused them. Women of wealthier families had the opportunity to bring their grievances to the local ecclesiastical courts. Filing counter suits was rare, as the majority of women accused were not in the position to take someone to court.

One English widow that was accused of witchcraft in the mid-seventeenth century was Elizabeth Clarke. Elizabeth Clarke was a one-legged elderly widow that was charged with practicing witchcraft by Matthew Hopkins in 1645. Matthew Hopkins, who lived in the same town as Elizabeth, became concerned with the practice of witchcraft in his community and became an avid witch hunter.[78] Hopkins claimed that he heard a coven speaking with their familiars and Elizabeth Clarke's name was mentioned. Elizabeth was accused of having a relationship with the devil and keeping familiars. Many early modern people believed that witches maintained familiars, demons that took the form of a small animal and completed different deeds for the witch.[79] After being faced with these

[78] "Hopkins, Matthew (*d.* 1647)," James Sharpe in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eee online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, Oxford: OUP, , http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.library.unl.edu/view/article/13751 (accessed March 10, 2013).
[79] Scarre, Geoffrey. *Witchcraft and Magic in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Europe.* (Basingstoke : Macmillan Education, 1987) Page 23.

charges, Elizabeth was subjected to a physical examination to find her "witch mark", a mark or blemished that was believed to be the spot where a familiar fed. Three women in the community were tasked with Elizabeth's examination, and they declared that they had found three marks on her body.[80] A physical examination was not the only aspect of the trial that Elizabeth had to endure, as she was prevented from sleeping for several nights and eventually confessed to keeping familiars and having a relationship with the devil. A deposition given for Elizabeth's trial stated, "Elizabeth confessed shee had had carnall copulation with the devil six or seven yeares; and that he would appeare to her three or foure times in a weeke at her bed side, and goe to bed with her lye halfe a night together in the shape of a proper gentleman, with a laced band[…].[81] Elizabeth was found guilty of practicing witchcraft and was executed in March 1645. Elizabeth Clarke had not been the only woman that was investigated by Matthew Hopkins as there were several other women who he claimed were involved with witchcraft. Together with his associate, John Stearne, Hopkins investigated other women in their community by depriving them of sleep and having them constantly questioned. The intense examination led to several women confessing and by the fall of the 1645, nineteen women were executed for witchcraft.[82]

Elizabeth Clarke's accusation is representative of many of the English women accused of witchcraft as she embodied the part of the population that most vulnerable.

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[80] James Sharpe. *Instruments of Darkness: Witchcraft in Early Modern England*. (London, New York: Hamish Hamilton ; Penguin, 1996) Page 128.
[81] James Sharpe. *Witchcraft in Early Modern England.* (Great Britian: Pearson Education, 2001), Page 123.
[82] James Sharpe. *Instruments of Darkness: Witchcraft in Early Modern England,* Page 128.

Most of the women who were suspected in English towns, like Essex, were between of fifty and seventy years old, a trend found throughout Europe.[83]

Widowhood in early modern England depended on financial status. All widows in England faced problems, yet their problems varied depending on their place within society. The crafted images and the expectations of widows in early modern England had a lasting legacy, as many widows in colonial America encountered similar treatment.

Widows in Colonial America

As the city of London became more crowded and land in the English countryside became scarcer, people began to look to the New World. Tales and accounts of the colonies were appealing images for both men and women who dwelled in the over populated cities of England. The immigrants that headed to the colonies believed the advertisements of travellers, like John Smith and Richard Hakluyt, created ideal images of colonial life. As men, women, and entire parishes relocated to the North American colonies they not only brought over ideas of religious freedom and attainable wealth, they also carried over their perceptions of women, particularly widows.

While early life in the American colonies did not exactly look like life in cites and towns of England, the colonists who resided in this newly discovered land transported many beliefs and ideals of their homeland. David Cressy's *Coming Over: Migration and Communication between England and New England in the Seventeenth Century* examines how colonial life was an extension of English culture. Cressy argues that due to close ties that colonists maintained with England through trade, kinship, and return migration, there

[83] Scarre, Page 25.

was tremendous English influence in the colonial world.[84] While colonists in both the northern and southern regions confronted different problems in their new home, they also dealt with issues that plagued them in England. Some of the problems that transferred were to the colonies can be identified by examining widows. Widows in the colonies experienced many of the same dilemmas that they encountered in England.

The experiences of the English colonists varied on a number of factors including location, status, and gender. As European immigrants began to settle in the English colonies each of the colonies began to develop unique characteristics. The southern colonies, commonly referred to as the Chesapeake Colonies, were vastly different from the northern New England region. One of the reasons that the two regions were different from one another could be attributed to the demographics of each area. The northern colonies were mainly made up of families, as most of the immigrants who travelled to New England did not come alone. Families, couples, and sometimes entire perishes, packed what they could and left for the new world. Since entire families travelled to the northern colonies the sex ratio, in comparison to the Chesapeake region was fairly balanced, which permitted them to sustain their population. The natural population growth within Northern colonies allowed for the colonists to focus their energies on building communities. The majority of Europeans that came to the New England colonies between 1629 and 1640 were Puritans, who were attempting to build a community that reflected their religious ideals. The main goal of the newly arriving Puritans in New England was to create a model of Christian charity, which would eventually inspire

[84] David Cressy. *Coming Over: Migration and Communication between England and New England in the Seventeenth Century*. (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire] ; New York : Cambridge University Press, 1987).

reforms in England. The New England migrants were determined to follow the teaching of the Bible as closely as possible.[85]

The Puritan beliefs of the New England immigrants not only dictated how Northern colonists lived their lives but also how women were both viewed and treated. While New England women had many responsibilities, their most important task was to produce and take care of a family. When a woman in a Puritan community married she immediately inherited new responsibilities and took the role of "helpmate".[86] As a helpmate, or helpmeet, women were expected both to tend to their husband's will as well as manage the household. The expectations for wives can be found in sermons that the Puritans heard. One Puritan minster, John Cotton, discussed both marriage and a wife's role in his as in wife in his sermon titled "A meet help. or, a wedding sermon," This sermon, which was delivered at New-Castle, New England on June 19, 1694 at the marriage of Mr. John Clark and Mrs. Elizabeth Woodbridge, displays the value the Puritans placed on marriage. Additionally, by repeatedly referring to wives as "helpmeets," this oration demonstrates the belief that wives should serve their husbands. This speech also stressed how important marriage and having children was to the Puritan community, and that being unmarried is unnatural.[87] John Cotton was not the only Puritan minster to elaborate on the importance of marriage and family, Benjamin Wadsworth also discusses being married and the duties of spouses. Wadsworth's "The

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[85] Mintz, Steven and Kellogg, Susan. *Domestic Revolutions: A Social History of American Family Life.* (New York: The Free Press, 1988) Page 4.
Mintz and Kellogg, Page 4.
[86] Steven Mintz and Susan Kellogg, Page 11.
[87] John Cotton. A meet help, or, A wedding sermon preached at New-Castle in New-England, June 19th 1694, at the marriage of Mr. John Clark, and Mrs. Elizabeth Woodbridge / by Mr. John Cotton. , Boston : Printed by B. Green and J. Allen, sold by Michael Perry, 1699.

Well-Ordered Family" claims that husbands and wives need to respect one another.[88] These documents suggest that marriage played a large role in Puritan communities thus suggesting that all women were expected to marry and have children. Most New England women gave birth six times within their life.[89] Samuel Sewall, a wealthy Puritan businessman, wrote in his diary about a number of aspects of the Puritan life for several years. In his dairy entries Sewall discusses his family life, including his wife Hannah Hull. In her life, Hannah bore fourteen children during their marriage, though only five of their children survived to adulthood.[90] Samuel and Hannah's experience imply that women were supposed to have several children.

As wives and mothers, New England women had a number of responsibilities including rearing children and managing households. New England women were accountable for daily household chores including cooking, baking, sewing, churning butter, and other domestic duties. The Puritan communities relied on women to produce finished products. Wives in the northern colonies also tended to gardens and traded their excess goods. Many wives also performed as "deputy husband", where she assumed her husband's duties in his absence.

The demographic of the southern colonies did not mirror the northern colonies since the majority of individuals who left for the southern colonies were men travelling by themselves. Both the men and women that adventured to the south originally hailed

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[88] Benjamin Wadsworth. *The Well-Ordered Family.* 1712. http://archive.org/details/wellorderedfami00wadsgoog

[89] Steven Mintz and Susan Kellogg, Page 11.

[90] Judith S Graham. *Puritan Family Life : The Diary of Samuel Sewall.* (Boston : Northeastern University Press, 2000), Page 20.

from London's laboring class.[91] The vast majority of immigrants arriving in the Chesapeake region were indentured servants, who were obligated for a several years before they could gain the opportunity to work for themselves. Similar to the men who reached the south, eighty percent of the women who made the trip were indentured servants.[92] As indentured servants most migrants worked the fields, which was both dangerous and exhausting. Many of the southern colonists became victims of disease, malnutrition, and contaminated water, which led to high mortality.[93] The harsh environment of the south was intensified by the success of the cash crops that were being cultivated. Tobacco had become a very lucrative crop and the southern planters wanted to produce as much as possible, which created very poor working conditions for the men and women who arrived as indentured servants. The crop driven community created unique circumstance for the southern colonists who had to adhere to the communities desire to produce crops as well as continue to take care of domestic responsibilities.

While there were a number of commonalties between the women in the north and south, what was expected of women and how they were perceived were very different from one another. Women in the southern colonies experienced marriages and child rearing very differently from New England women. Cash crops played a tremendous role in the development of the southern colonies and therefore affected family life of the southerners. The women who moved to the south often arrived as indentured servants and were obligated to work before they could marry and mange their own household. Indentured servitude caused women in the south to delay both marriage and child rearing.

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[91] Cara Anzilotti, *In the Affairs of the World: Women, Patriarchy, and Power in Colonial South Carolina.* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2002) Page, 14.
[92] Ibid
[93] Mintz and Kellogg, page 37.

[94] In addition to servitude playing a role in women's lives, the high mortality, particularly for men, also affected women and their family lives. Most marriages in the southern colonies did not last beyond seven years, which contrasts with the northern communities where the average marriage lasted twenty-four years.[95] Many families in the south were blended families, making traditional roles more difficult to establish. The lack of nuclear families in the south left women without a specific function.

Despite not having a clear expectations for women, like the New England wives received from the Puritan doctrine, many southern women assumed a plethora of tasks and chores. Since women greatly out numbered men, women were burdened with work traditionally assigned to men, such as working the fields, as well as the domestic duties. In addition to working outside in the fields, women in the south were also responsible for producing domestic items needed for daily living. This burden of producing finished goods was exacerbated by the day-to-day chores like cooking and cleaning. The outdoor work combined with the domestic duties created a strenuous life for working women in the colonies. The tireless work for women in the south can be observed in English ballads and songs.

English ballads of the late seventeenth century often displayed conditions for women in the south, particularly Virginia. In the eyes of the English, Colonial Virginia was perceived as a difficult place to live without luxuries and amenities. Virginia became the subject of ballads as it was described as a foil to England. One English ballad describes an undesirable woman who was sold by her amiable husband and sent to Virginia. The "The woman outwitted: or, The weaver's wife cunningly catch'd in a trap,

[94] Steven Mintz and Susan Kellogg, Page 38.
[95] Steven Mintz and Susan Kellogg, Page 13.

by her husband, who sold her for ten pounds, and sent her to Virginny" begins by describing a kind and hard working weaver who is in conflict with wife.[96] The wife in this poem is portrayed as materialistic and ungrateful, as she constantly complains about a lack of luxuries:

> She said her Cloathing was too base,
> So was her homely Diet;
> Tho nothing she did want,
> as he could buy for Money,
> Which made the Man then often say,
> Ill go unto Virginny.

This stanza exhibits how the wife is unhappy and unappreciative of what she has as she complains about her daily life. When the weaver discovers that his wife is having an affair, he hastily decides to sell her to a merchant, who plans to send her to Virginia. Upon his wife learning that she is to be sold she begs to stay and her husband refuses*:* "He cry'd, farewell sweet Wife, adieu,/God send you to Virginny."[97] The song ends with a happy man, as he has rid himself of his disagreeable wife and now has money in his purse. The comedy in this song stems from its irony, since women in the southern colonies worked hard and went without many of the luxuries found in an English city. Another ballad that displays the exasperating work of women in the south is "The Trappan'd Maiden: or, The Distressed Damsel"[98] The anonymous ballad, published at the very end of the seventeenth century, also relates the tale of a woman who was sent to Virginia. In this song, a woman expresses how exhausted she was from the work that she

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[96] "The woman outwitted: or, The weaver's wife cunningly catch'd in a trap, by her husband, who sold her for ten pounds, and sent her to Virginny". http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/31038/xml.
[97] Ibid.
[98] "The Trappan'd Maiden: or, The Distressed Damsel This Girl was cunningly Trappan'd, sent to Virginny from England, Where she doth Hardship undergo, there is no Cure it must be so; But if she lives to cross the Main, she vows she'll ne'er go there again" 1689-1703? http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/21947/citation

had been forced to do while in the south. The woman in the song claims that she was betrayed and sent against her will to Virginia to work for five years. The woman, who was kept in the colonies by a master, details the difficult work that she was required to finish. The woman in the ballad was obligated to finish both domestic chores and field work, "Oh I have played my part both at plough and cart/In the land of Virginny O."[99] This line demonstrates that the woman was expected to work out in the fields. In addition to hard labor outdoors, women were also obligated to domestic chores, such as child rearing:

> And when the child doth cry I must sing bye-a-bye
> In the land of Virginny O.
> No rest that I can have while I am here a slave
> When that I am weary, weary, weary, weary O

These lines display that woman were accountable for taking care of the children in addition to their work in the field. The line, "When that I am weary, weary, weary, weary O" is repeated throughout the song, emphasizing the exhaustion that southern women would have felt.

Although wives did not have a clear role within the community, their "housewifery" skills made them extremely valuable to their communities. Men who did not marry, might partner with married men in order to have access to his wife's domestic production. In exchange for domestic chores completed by the wife of his partner, the single man would give the couple a portion of his crops.[100]

The different demographics of the northern and southern regions contributed to the differences of the two areas. Despite the different demographics and cultural

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[99] The Trappan'd Maiden
[100] Kathleen Brown. *Good wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia.* (Chapel Hill. Unveristiy of North Carolina Press. 1996) Page 84.

expectations of the regions, widows in both the northern and southern colonies often faced similar challenges. When a woman in colonial America, either north or south, became a widow her life changed dramatically.

Widows in all the colonies were expected to be virtuous, compassionate, and pious. If these expectations were not met, a widow would be perceived as a whore or wanton. Similar to England, widows in all the colonies were expected to behave in a certain manner. Another aspect of the shared experiences of widows in the northern and southern colonies was the societal pressure to the stay chaste and remain unmarried. Widows in the colonies were advised to revive the memory of the their husband.[101] The idea that women should remain chaste when they are widowed likely came from Jaun Luis Vives' discussion on acceptable behavior for widows. Although widows were advised to keep from remarrying, many of the colonial women did remarry. Not only did many widows choose to remarry but several married soon after their husbands' deaths.[102]

In 1623 Cecily Jordan of Virginia became a widow after the death of her husband Samuel Jordan. Immediately after her husband's death, Cecily received advances from Reverend Grenville Pooley and the two engaged in secret betrothal. When Grenville told people that he was betrothed to the widow, she found another suitor. Pooley attempted to take Cecily to court for breaking their promise to wed, but later withdrew and she took William Farrar as her second husband.[103] Cecily's rapid courtship and remarriage exhibits how although remarrying for widows was frowned upon, it did occur frequently. Additionally, Cecily's involvement with a reverend shows how even prominent members

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[101] Juan Luis Vives. *The Instruction of a Christen Woman.* Urbana : University of Illinois Press, 2002.
[102] Roger Thompson. *Women in Stuart in England and America: A Comparative Study. (*Routledge & Kegan Paul Books 1974), Page 36.
[103] Ibid.

of the community and spiritual leaders were participated in remarriage. The expectations and the reality for widows in the colonies regarding remarriage did not line up with one another. While widows were encouraged to stay single, they were also receiving marriage proposals, leaving them in difficult situations.

When a woman in the New England area was widowed she lost more than just her husband, she also lost her place within society. As a Puritan wife, a woman's main function was to serve as her husband's helper and when he was gone, a large part of her identity was also lost. Despite the loss that a widow experienced, she also gained autonomy within her household. As widow in the Puritan community a woman no longer had to obey the authority of her husband. Women in the south also experienced new autonomy in their widowhood.

The widowhood of a wealthy woman in colonial America functioned very similarly to the widowhood of a privileged woman in England. Although laws concerning widows varied depending on location, most of the cities and towns within the colonies attempted to protect widows financially in the same way England did. Women were supposed to receive a dower, or commonly referred to as a "widow's third" in the colonies, that had been previously arranged. A "widow's third" was typically honored by the community, even if her husband attempted to disinherit her or if other heirs challenged her share.[104] Edmund Morgan asserts that many widows received more than what the law required. While a woman was typically to obtain her share of an inheritance, there were restrictions that applied to what she inherited, including not being able to sell

[104] Carol Berkin. *First Generation: Women in Colonial America.* (New York: Hill and Wang A division of Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux. 1996) Page 15.

immovable items.[105] Another restriction that husbands could place in their wills specified that their wives' inheritance was dependent on whether or not she remarried. Women who chose to remarry could lose a portion, or all, of what they had originally been bequeathed. A man from South Carolina, John Godfrey, ordered that his wife was to be awarded his entire estate unless she remarried to which she would only be gifted her required dower.[106] Another southern man gave his wife more than her thirds, but stated that if she were to find another husband she would have to give up her servants and leave the home that she was given.[107] These specific requests all reinforced the ideas that women who are widowed should remain chaste and refrain from remarrying. These laws and individual regulations had two functions, the first was to protect the inheritance and land of the family and the second was to keep widows from becoming a burden to their communities.

Another similarity that widows in the colonies shared with English widows was the responsibilities that they inherited with the loss of their husbands. Widows in both the north and south typically served as their husbands' administrators. Comparable to widows across the Atlantic, widows who received large estates were responsible for maintaining their property and finishing any other task previously completed by her husband, which contributed to their autonomy.

One successful southern widow was Rebecca Axtell, who not only managed her husband's estate but also acquired more land. Rebecca Axtell was widow of Daniel

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[105] Elizabeth Reis. *Spellbound: Women and Witchcraft in America*. (Wilmington, Delware: A Scholarly Resources Inc. Imprint. 1998) Pages 4-6.
[106] Thatcher Ulrich, Laurel. *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England 1650-1750*. (New York: Alfred Knopf. 1982) Page 350.
[107] Ibid.

Axtell, a wealthy landowner in South Carolina.[108] Rebecca and Daniel moved to the colonies from England when Daniel was granted lands in 1680. Daniel died only one or two years after arriving in South Carolina leaving his wife and seven children. Since the couple's two oldest sons died before reaching adulthood, Rebecca inherited a large proportion of the Newington plantation. A relative of the family, also named Daniel Axtell, moved to Newington to help run the estate until 1702.[109] In her widowhood, Rebecca was able to both maintain and expand the property that she inherited, having obtained an additional 4,400 acres. As a widow, Rebecca not only ran Newington, but she also was active in the community having spent much of her time at church.[110] Rebecca's success within the community may be a result of her male relative, Daniel, who assisted in the running of the estate and although Rebecca proved to be capable both before and after he had arrived at the plantation, his presence offered her protection. Another successful widow was Elizabeth Digges, the widow of Edward Digges. The Digges were a very affluent couple in Virginia, and at one point Edward served as governor. Prior to becoming governor, Edward was respected as a plantation owner that grew tobacco and cultivated silk worms. Though couple had six sons and seven daughters together, and when Edward Digges died Elizabeth received one of the largest estates in the county.[111]

Widows in the southern colonies inherited large estates quite frequently and were rather successful in maintaining them. Due to the high death rate, widows in the south were often bequeathed their husband's estate, if not given authority to manage it until

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[108] Julia Cherry Spruill. W*omen's Life and Work in the Southern Colonies*. (New York,: Norton, 1972) Page 305-306

[109] Alexander Moore "Daniel Axtell's Account Book and the Economy of Early South Carolina*" The South Carolina Historical Magazine*, South Carolina Historical Society. Vol. 95, No. 4 (Oct., 1994), pp. 280-301 http://www.jstor.org/stable/27570030 .

[110] Anzilotti, Cara. Page 181.

[111] Spruill. Page 305.

their son came of age. Cara Anzilotti asserts that widows in South Carolina served to stabilize the community, as they were able to hold and control estates between generations.[112] The inheritances of widows in the south made them eligible bachelorettes. Widows in the south did not remain unmarried for long, as wealthy widows were preferred over daughters.[113] While a few widow women in both the northern southern colonies were able to inherit large estates with ease, there were also many widows who struggled.

Widows in the northern colonies were unable to maintain estates in the same what that southerners were. Since northern widows were a part of strict communities with established gender roles, the majority of widows who received large amounts of money or land were met with challenges. Although most women met trials as they entered their widowhood in the New England societies, some women were able to live autonomously. Two widows in Sudbury, Massachusetts who owned parts of a meadow were able to vote beside a number of men at a town meeting. The two widows were Mary Loker and Jane Goodnow, and they participated in voting on the decision to allow or prevent the emigration of a group of young men.[114] As widows, these women may have been able to vote because they were considered the head of their household. Another reason that Loker and Goodnow were allowed to contribute votes were because they owned land by themselves within town, giving them power within their communities. Although Loker and Goodnow had the opportunity to contribute to the their town by exercising their ability to vote, they were the exception as many women in the north struggled in the

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[112] Anzilotti.
[113] Edmund Morgan. *American Slavery, American Freedom.* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company Inc., 1975) Page 166.
[114] Thompson. Page 224.

widowhood. The religious based communities of the north dictated ridged gender roles that often kept widows from running estates and a number of women who defied these conventions were met with harsh consequences. Many wealthy land-owning women were met were ostracism and intimidation upon death of their husbands. People who felt that they had a claim to the estate of a wealthy widow in north often attempted to take them to court. In addition to being excluded and challenged by the community, several wealthy widows were also accused of witchcraft.

European widows were not the only women to be labeled as witches, although there were differences between the social standing of the women in the colonial north and England that were accused of witchcraft. The majority of widows in New England who were accused of being witches were wealthy, unlike widows in England, who were typically poor. The European literary works, and the ideas that they presented, on witchcraft were very accessible in the North American colonies. Like their European counterparts, the colonists, both in the north and south, believed in the supernatural. The fear of magic and witches was not only carried over by individual immigrants, but also by literary works. Many of the ideas about the supernatural and witchcraft were directly from the scholarly sources composed in Europe. Many of the colonists would have been familiar with some of the concepts that Reginald Scott and King James I discussed in their works about witchcraft. While the ideas about witches originally stemmed from European texts, it was religious leaders within the colonies that cultivated them. One Puritan minister that spent a significant amount of time examining, writing, and preaching about witchcraft was Cotton Mather. Cotton Mather came from a family of

minsters, as he was the oldest son of Increase Mather and the grandson of the John Cotton, both of whom were prominent minsters in Massachusetts.[115]

Cotton Mather was highly educated and published over three hundred different works during his lifetime. In 1688, after Mather's young wife, Martha Goodwin, argued with a neighbor she began experiencing strange symptoms. Mather believed that his wife was a victim of the witchcraft, and began to closely investigate the matter. That same year, Mather published one of his most notable works titled *Memorable providences relating to witchcrafts and possessions a faithful account of many wonderful and surprising things that have befallen several bewitched and possesed person in New-England [...]*[116]. This work describes a number of incidents that Mather considers to be proof of witchcraft and begins with, "BY the special Disposal and Provi|dence of the Almighty God, there now comes abroad into the world, a little History of several very a|stonishing *Witchcrafts and Possessions,* which partly my own *Ocular Observation,* & partly my *undoubt|ed Information,* hath enabled me to offer unto the publick Notice of my Neighbours."[117] Mather uses the Goodwin family of Boston, Massachusetts as the first example of how witchcraft has afflicted the colonies. Mather continues to discuss

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[115] "Mather, Cotton (1663–1728)," Michael G. Hall in*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eee online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, Oxford: OUP, , http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.library.unl.edu/view/article/18321 (accessed March 17, 2013).

[116] Cotton Mather. Memorable providences relating to witchcrafts and possessions a faithful account of many wonderful and surprising things that have befallen several bewitched and possesed person in New-England, particularly a narrative of the marvellous trouble and releef experienced by a pious family in Boston, very lately and sadly molested with evil spirits : whereunto is added a discourse delivered unto a congregation in Boston on the occasion of that illustrious providence : as also a discourse delivered unto the same congregation on the occasion of an horrible self-murder committed in the town : with an appendix in vindication of a chapter in a late book of remarkable providences from the calumnies of a Quaker at Pen-silvania. Printed at Boston in N. England : by R.P., 1689, sold by Joseph Brunning. 1689.

[117] Ibid.

other events and families that he believed were affected by witchcraft. This work experienced great success and was also printed in both England and Scotland.[118]

Mather's writings on the supernatural were not limited to only one work, as he also authored a text concerning the Salem witch trials, *The wonders of the invisible world: being an account of the tryals of several witches lately executed in New-England*."[119] Mather's purpose of this work was not only to detail aspects of the infamous cases and reaffirm that there was witchcraft occurring but also to justify the outcomes of the trials. This work looks at several of the women accused of witchcraft in Salem, including Bridget Bishop and Martha Carrier. Mather utilized this work to argue the devil had been present in Salem and the executions and punishments that occurred were just. Mather's words and works played a major role in the witchcraft accusations in colonial America. The ideas that Mather preached and wrote about left many people, particularly women in vulnerable situations, as anyone could bring forth an accusation. While numerous women were susceptible to charges of practicing witchcraft, widows became even more vulnerable due to a lack of male protection.

One wealthy widow, Katherine Harrison, in the New England region was ostracized by her community after the death of her husband. Katherine and John Harrison were wealthy landowners in Wethersfield Connecticut in the last half of the sixteenth century. John Harrison died in 1666, leaving Katherine to run their large estate, in addition to raising the couples' daughters. After the death of her husband, the community

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[118] "Mather, Cotton (1663–1728)," Michael G. Hall in*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eee online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, Oxford: OUP, , http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.library.unl.edu/view/article/18321 (accessed March 17, 2013).

[119] Cotton Mather. *The wonders of the invisible world: being an account of the tryals of several witches lately executed in New-England.* 1692.

in which Katherine resided began to harass the widow. Only three years after the death of John, Katherine was charged with allegations of witchcraft, these accusations against her were not new, as she had been informally accused of practicing magic once while she was still married. Despite the accusations against Katherine in 1669, Connecticut authorities did not believe that there was substantial evidence against her, though she was held in jail for several months. From July to August of 1670 there were several orders against Katherine including *"A warrant to the Constable of Westchestr to take an account of the Goods of Katherine Harrison"* and *"An Ordr for Katherine to Remove from Westchestr".*[120] Authorities of the town agreed that she could be released as long as she left the town.[121] While members of the Wethersfield community had suspicions about Katherine prior to her husband's death, it was not until he died that charges were brought against her. Katherine's situation suggests that although the town had been uncomfortable with her while her husband was alive, it was not until she became vulnerable as a widow did her community take aggressive action. As a widow, Katherine defied Puritan ideals by becoming the head of the household and unfortunately she did not have the protection that could have been provided for her by a husband.

Ann Hibbens, a Boston widow, also met new challenges when she was widowed in 1654. Ann Hibbens' was originally from England, where she was married and had three sons. Ann moved to Boston with her second husband, William Hibbens and when William died he left the majority of his estate to Ann.[122] William worked as a merchant

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[120] Ed. George Burr. Original Narratives of Early American History: Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases 1648-1706. New York: C Scribner's Sons, 1914. Page 48-52.
[121] Karlsen, Page 29.
[122] Reis, Elizabeth eEd. *Spellbound : Women and Witchcraft in America.* Wilmington, Del. : Scholarly Resources, 1998. Page 9.

and held prestigious positions within the community, including agent to England.[123] Like Katherine Harrison, Ann had been in trouble with the authorities before the death of her husband when several joiners complained to the First Church of Boston in 1640 about Ann. Ann had been unsatisfied with the of the joiners that she hired and had others come to assess their work. John Davis, the joiner who did the original work, brought Ann before the church claiming that she falsely accused him. As a result of the complaint against Ann she was tried and excommunicated. The excommunication of Ann caused a rift between her and the community and when William died, Ann was accused of practicing witchcraft .Two years after the death of her husband in 1656, Ann was convicted of witchcraft and five weeks after her trial on June 19th she was executed.

Another New England widow that was suspected of being a witch was Joan Penny of Gloucester, Massachusetts. Joan's first husband was Richard Braybrook. In 1652, Richard was convicted of fornication with Alice Ellis. Richard's affair produced a child, Mehitabel, who Joan and Richard raised together. Despite Richard's illegitimate child, he was able to become relatively successful within his community. A year after Richard's charges of fornication, Joan was called to court for wearing a silk scarf, which was deemed inappropriate for the couple's status. Mehitabel also caused problems as she was labeled unchaste and a liar, in addition to being convicted of carelessness after she was blamed for her master's house catching fire. Joan remarried Thomas Pinney sometime after 1681 and when he died in 1692 he dictated that Joan was to receive all but seven pounds of his estate, which he bequeathed to other families members. Later that same year, Joan was accused by Zebulon Hill, a distant relative, who claimed that she had

[123] Nancy Scott. *Root of Bitterness :Documents of the Social History of American Women. 1996*, Northeastern University Press,, Boston :, 2nd ed. Page 11-16

bewitched his daughter, Mary Hill. Following Joan's accusation, Thomas' grandson, Josiah Kent, tried to gain control of Joan's newly inherited estate.[124] Like Joan and Mehitabel, many of the women who were accused also saw members of their family charged as well. While Joan and Mehitabel had both faced court, it was not until Joan was widowed that the women were charged with the crime of practicing witchcraft.

Unlike Joan, Rachel Vinson did not experience any problem with the authorities prior to her charges of witchcraft. In 1692, Rachel Vinson, a widowed woman from Gloucester, Massachusetts, was accused of being a witch. Rachel was not the only woman to be accused in Gloucester in the 1690s, as she stood with eight other women, including her daughter, who were charged with practicing witchcraft. Rachel had married three times during her lifetime, but it was not until the death of her last husband, William Vinson, that was she charged with practicing witchcraft. While Rachel had daughters from her previous marriages, she and William had both a daughter and a son, though their son died young. In 1690 William died and his will specified that Rachel was to receive the majority of his estate.[125] Vinson and her daughter, Rachel Rowe, were accused of practicing witchcraft only two years after William's death. Although both women were placed in jail, they were never tried.

The Puritan communities of the north made widowhood a dangerous time for wealthy women. Puritan doctrine, which made men the head of the household and wives their helper, affected how widows were viewed. When a wife no longer had the protection of her husband and assumed the role as head of the household the community

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[124] Carol F Karlsen, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman: Witchcraft in Colonial New England* New York: Norton, 1987. Page 96-97.
[125] Karlsen, Page 104.

became uncomfortable as it defied the traditional roles set by the religious doctrine. All of the New England widows mentioned above were all accused of witchcraft, these accusation look different than the majority of women who were accused in England since the majority of English women accused were typically poor widows. Most of the widows of the northern colonies that were accused of witchcraft were landowning woman. The commonalty between the accusations in colonial American and England is that women were widows.

Although the Salem witch trials of the 1690's have become infamous, as they have been frequently represented in popular culture, they do not characterize the actual accusations and trials that men and women experienced. Though there had been sporadic charges of witchcraft in Salem prior to the 1690s, the hysteria is attributed to accusations that Abigail Williams, Ann Putman, and Elizabeth Parris made in 1692. The two girls, along with several others, claimed that different women in the town bewitched them. Elizabeth Parris, the daughter of Salem's reverend, first claimed that their servant Tituba was the witch. Soon after Tituba was charged, other women including Sarah Goode and Sarah Osborne were also named as witches. This trend continued as the summer approached with more and more women imprisoned and tried for practicing witchcraft. The women under suspicion were subject to investigations, physical examination, and lengthy trial. By the beginning of 1693, close to two hundred people in Massachusetts were accused and twenty died at the gallows. While the Salem witch-hunts demonstrate both the paranoia and deeply rooted beliefs in the supernatural, they do not represent many of the witchcraft cases. The trials that occurred in Salem, Massachusetts were

outliers in that the women indicted were young, a few were even married at the time of their accusation

While there were several accusations of witchcraft in the southern colonies, they were rare in comparison to both the northern colonies and Europe. Not only were there fewer accusations of witchcraft, the punishments were much less severe. While the southern colonists had fewer accusations, the process of determining a witch was similar, as a jury of matrons was called upon to check the accused for witch's marks.[126] Additionally, widows were not the majority of women who were accused. The majority of women in the south that were questioned for witchcraft came as a result of a quarrel, like Goodwife Wright, who was called to court after Robert Thresher and other neighbors claimed that she had practiced witchcraft. Joan Wright, who went to court in 1626, was one of the first women accused in Virginia and though several members of the community testified that she was guilty, she was acquitted. Joan's acquittal may have been due to her husband's support, "Robert Wright sworne and examined sayeth that he hath been married to his wiefe sixteen yeers, but knoweth nothinge by her touching the Crime she is accused of."[127] Joan and Robert Wright demonstrate the importance of having a husband during an accusation of witchcraft. Lack of harsh punishments for witchcraft in the south may have been a result of the fact the women accused were not widows, and therefore had the protection of their husband.

One southern woman, who had been called a witch while she was married, was again accused after the death of her husband. Grace White married James Sherwood, a

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[126] Spruill. Page 327.
[127] H.R. McIlwane, ed., Minutes of the Council and General Court of Colonial Virginia 1622-1632, 1670-1676(Richmonf: Library of Virginia, 1924), Page 111-112.

farmer in Princess Anne County, in the early 1680s.[128] The couple had three sons and lived comfortably on a large farm that came from Grace's father. In 1689, Sherwood alleged that another couple, the Gisburnes, were slandering Grace after they claimed that she had caused their pigs and a portion of their cotton to die. Additionally, Anthony and Elizabeth Barnes also asserted that Grace was practicing witchcraft. Though both couples argued Grace was a witch, the court did not agree with either side and no damages were awarded to any of the parties involved.[129] In 1701, James Sherwood died and Grace faced more accusations about her involvement with witchcraft.

As a widow, Joan sued Luke and Mary Hill for assault and battery and the couple was forced to give her twenty pounds in sterling. While Joan had won the case against the Hills in 1705, the couple caused more trouble for the widow the next year when they accused her of practicing witchcraft.[130] Joan was subject to an investigation where she was searched for a witch's teat. While the southern colonists had fewer accusations, the process of determining a witch was similar, as a jury of matrons was called upon to check the accused for witch's marks.[131] The women who examined Joan stated that they found two marks upon her body; yet, the judge did not immediately find her guilty and ordered a water test for her. The water test was believed to determine whether or not someone was witch, it was thought that if a person sank she was innocent and if they floated then they were guilty. It was believed that water was pure and would only accept the innocent, therefore a guilty person would be rejected and rise. In 1706, Joan was tossed into the

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[128] Monica Witkowski. "Grace Sherwood (ca. 1660-1740)."Encycolpedia Virginia. Ed. Caitlin New. 18 Mar. 2013. Virginia Foundation for the Humanities. 15 Aug. 2012 http://www. EncyclopediaVirginia. org/Sherwood_Grace_ca_1660-1740.
[129] Spruill. Page 329.
[130] Monica Witkowski. "Grace Sherwood (ca. 1660-1740)."Encycolpedia Virginia. Ed. Caitlin New. 18 Mar. 2013. Virginia Foundation for the Humanities. 15 Aug. 2012 http://www. EncyclopediaVirginia.
[131] Spruill, Page 327.

Lynnhaven River where she floated to the top.[132] It is not clear whether or not Joan was convicted but in 1708, she went to court to may a debt. Appearing years later in court records suggests that if Joan was convicted, she was neither executed nor jailed for very long. Joan's case demonstrates the ambivalence toward witchcraft accusations, as Joan had both the witch's mark and was rejected by the water.

The southern colonies' lack of witchcraft accusations may be attributed to the absence ridged gender roles. A widow running an estate did not intimidate the southern colonists, as numerous women were obligated to maintain households due to the South's high death rate. While southern widows were not faced with allegations of witchcraft, they were expected to work extremely hard, working both inside and outside the home.

Widows in colonies who did not inherit a large lucrative estate often had to work in order to make a living wage. A number of widows in the colonies became midwives. The majority of midwives, especially in the Northern colonies, were widows who had bore and raised children. Widowed women who served, as midwives were valued for their experience and their contribution to helping the community grow. If a woman could not become a midwife, she would typically continue the work that she did to try and support herself. Widows would continue to sew, knit, garden, and sell items from their garden though this was not typically enough to make ends meet. Women who only brought in supplementary income as a wife, which was the majority, struggled in widowhood. Some southern colonies attempted to provide relief for the people who were unable to provide for themselves. One colony that made an effort to help with the less fortunate was Virginia, which had several parishes that worked to help widows and

[132] Ibid.

orphans. One widow that was able to receive help from a local parish was Elizabeth Faulkner.[133] Elizabeth received aid from St. Peter's parish for around twenty years. Although widow Faulkner once was given one hundred pounds of tobacco, she did not directly receive the majority of relief, as the parish gave money to men who were providing for her. Later that same year, Lyonell Morriss received one thousand pounds to find Elizabeth accommodations. In 1696, Thomas Minns was given 1,040 pounds of tobacco in order to maintain the widow. Over twenty thousand pounds of tobacco was designated by the parish for the widow between 1690 and 1710. Elizabeth Faulkner's situation does not mirror the circumstances of most colonial widows but it does demonstrate the aide established for them. While there were a number of widows in both the north and south who lived in poverty, the skewed population ratio allowed many women to live comfortably, as many had their choice of husband.

Like women who lost their husbands in England, early American widows challenged the patriarchal structures of their communities that were brought over by the colonists. While gender roles in the southern colonies were more fluid than northern, gender expectations were still established and evident within both regions. The different expectations for men and women as well as laws and statutes that reflected English common law reinforced patriarchal structures within the colonies. Widows in both the north and south defied these expectations as they were no longer under coverture, giving them abilities and opportunities typically reserved for males.

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[133] Marcus Wilson Jernegan. "The Development of Poor Relief in Colonial Virginia" Social Service Review, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Mar., 1929), pp. 1-18. The University of Chicago Press. http://www.jstor.org/stable/30009283 .

Widows in England also defied the ideals established by their communities as they diverged from what was expected of women. Although widows achieved new autonomy with their release from coverture, they were also faced with new challenges. Aristocratic widows in line to receive large inheritances were confronted by male relatives who believed that they could obtain a widow's property. Wealthy widows became dependent on their relatives and connections in order to secure what was rightfully and legally theirs. While aristocratic women met challenges when they were widowed, they were not the only the women who struggled during this phase of their lives, widows of tradesmen and unskilled laborers also experienced problems. Widows of low status were vulnerable as they had fewer connections and were forced to support themselves.

Over all, widows in both early modern England and colonial America dealt with a variety of challenges, as they did not adhere to the traditional expectations of women. Widows, of any station and status were rarely able to escape the difficulties of widowhood. Although a few women were able to create a comfortable environment for themselves, the majority of widows were faced with new problems. This paper demonstrates that the type of conflict, and often its severity, depended on the widow's status. A widow in early modern England and America encountered social resistance as result of her defying beliefs and expectations for women.

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