

*Sir Edmund Andros's Hearing
before the Lords of Trade and
Plantations, April 17, 1690*

Two Unpublished Accounts

Edited with an Introduction
by THEODORE B. LEWIS

WHEN THE NEWS of the Glorious Revolution reached Massachusetts in April 1689, the populace of Boston rose in arms and imprisoned Gov. Sir Edmund Andros and a number of his officers. After spending nearly a year in confinement, while the Massachusetts rebels collected evidence against his conduct as governor of the Dominion of New England, he and his chief aides were returned to England.¹ As the result of a hearing on April 17, 1690, Andros and his associates were 'discharged and set at liberty' because the Massachusetts agents refused to sign the charges against the governor and his officers. William III approved the discharge a week later.² Two accounts of the hearing, both by agents of the colony, the

The editor wishes to thank the Massachusetts Historical Society and the Rhode Island Historical Society for permission to edit and print the Mather and Brinley manuscripts.

¹For an account of the causes and consequences of the rebellion, see Michael G. Hall, *Edward Randolph and the American Colonies, 1676-1703* (New York, 1969), Chapters I-VI.

²Report of the Lords of Trade, April 17, 1690; and Order in Council, April 24, 1690, in *The Andros Tracts*, ed. William H. Whitmore, The Prince Society, *Publications*, VI, 173-175, 176.

Reverend Increase Mather and Dr. Elisha Cooke, have been printed.³ Cooke included an account of the proceedings in a letter to Gov. Simon Bradstreet in October 1690.⁴ Mather gave his version of the affair in his 'Autobiography,' which was written in 1696.⁵

Two previously unprinted accounts of the hearing are presented below. The first consists of notes written by Mather shortly after the hearing on the back of his copy of the charges against Andros. Presumably he used these notes in writing his 'Autobiography' since the latter does not differ in substance from them.⁶ Of greater importance to historians is the second manuscript, a letter from Thomas Brinley to his father Francis of Newport, Rhode Island.⁷ This document relates the story of the hearing and its aftermath from an entirely new perspective, that of a colonist who had supported the Andros government. Brinley also gives his view of the characters of the individuals involved and makes some interesting remarks on English events.

³Mather's agency is discussed in Kenneth Murdock, *Increase Mather* (Cambridge, Mass., 1925), Chapter XV. Elisha Cooke was a Harvard graduate who practiced medicine, but soon turned to politics. While the charter government was alive he led the forces opposed to any submission to the crown. With the establishment of royal government in 1692, he continued to lead the country party against a succession of royal governors. See John Langdon Sibley, *Biographical Sketches of Harvard Graduates*, I (Cambridge, Mass., 1873), 520-525.

⁴Elisha Cooke to Simon Bradstreet, [London ?], October 16, 1690, Massachusetts Historical Society, *Proceedings*, XLV (1911-12), 644-655.

⁵Increase Mather, 'Autobiography,' ed. Michael G. Hall, American Antiquarian Society, *Proceedings*, New Ser., LXXI (1961), 274. Mather's diaries are missing for 1690.

⁶Compare the 'Autobiography,' pp. 340-341, and MS notes below.

⁷Thomas (d. 1693) was probably in London on business. His father, Francis (1632-1719), was born at Datchet, Buckinghamshire. He settled at Newport in 1651. He was a wealthy merchant who also owned several large tracts of land. He married Hannah Carr, probably the daughter of Caleb Carr of Newport. Francis and his sons, Thomas and William, were among the founders of King's Chapel. Francis was elected to the Rhode Island Council in 1672 and appointed to Andros's Council in 1686. An Anglican petition to King William listed his estate at £10,000 in 1691. See Howard M. Chapin, 'Our Rhode Island Ancestors,' Sketch No. 58, Rhode Island Historical Society clipings; James Savage, *A Genealogical Dictionary of the First Settlers of New England*, 4 vols. (Boston, 1860-1862), I, 225; Petition, Phips Papers, Gay Transcripts (Massachusetts Historical Society), I, 131-132; and Henry W. Foote, *Annals of King's Chapel*, 3 vols. (Boston, 1882), I, 90-91.

INCREASE MATHER'S NOTES

Massachusetts Historical Society

Increase Mather Papers⁸

On April 17 1690 these objections against Sr. E[dmund] A[ndros] etc. were read at the Council Board Whitehall before the Lords of the Committee for Plantations. The Marquess of Carmarthen (i.e. Sr. Thomas Osborne the Earle of Danby)⁹ being president moved that some particular persons should sign that paper and make it their owne.¹⁰ The Gentlemen who were Counsell for N[ew]-E[ngland] (viz Sr. John Somers who is Solliciter General)¹¹ and Mr. Warde¹² said that it was unreasonable for particular persons to make that which was the Countreys case to be their owne. But that in behalfe of the Countrey we were ready to prove every particular. But we were not permitted so to do, only it was said that a Report should be made to the K[ing] what one and tother did alledge. So was Andros and the rest of them set at Liberty. And the Toreys insult [us] saying the N[ew]-E[ngland] Agents put in a Libell which they darst not signe and that the things were false that Sr. E[dmund] was charged with. I forsoaw this and so

⁸ In editing both documents the expanded method has been followed. See *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Julian P. Boyd et al., I (Princeton, 1950), xxv-xxxviii.

⁹ Sir Thomas Osborne, Lord Danby and Marquis of Carmarthen (1631-1712), was a very influential politician during three reigns and treasurer, 1673-1679. He was one of the earliest supporters of the plan to replace James with William and was rewarded with the position of Lord President in 1689. S[Sidney] L[ee], 'Osborne, Sir Thomas,' *Dictionary of National Biography*, XLII (New York, 1895), 295-303.

¹⁰ This paper listed three charges against the governor. The first accused Andros of issuing a proclamation calling for defense against a possible Dutch invasion and attempting to suppress the news of the Prince of Orange's landing in England. The second, based in the premise that Andros's commission was illegal, charged him with passing laws attacking property rights and levying taxes. It also alleged that he had given the Indians aid and incited them against the English. The final charge was designed to implicate the other defendants in Andros's actions as well as to single some of them out for extortion and other crimes. See printed charges in *Andros Tracts*, VI, 176-177.

¹¹ Sir John Somers (1651-1716), later Lord Somers, acted as the agents' chief counsel. He was Lord Keeper, 1693-1697. J. M. R[igg], 'Somers or Sommers, John,' *Dictionary of National Biography*, LIII (New York, 1898), 221-229.

¹² Edward Ward (1638-1714) was a distinguished jurist who presided at the trial of Captain William Kidd. G. Le G[rys] N[orgate], 'Ward, Sir Edward,' *Dictionary of National Biography*, LIX (New York, 1899), 311-312.

urged Mr. C[ooke] and O[akes]¹³ to sign what was drawn up. But they were not free so to do except Sr. H[enry] A[shurst]¹⁴ and myself (who had not seen what proofs they had brought with them) would do it. Wee had bin children had we done it upon their saying they could prove what was asserted. The Agents of N[ew]-E[ngland] are on this account Exposed in the News Letters and Ridiculed in City and Countrey. But the only wise God has an hand [in] it and knoweth how to bring good out of it at last.

THOMAS BRINLEY TO FRANCIS BRINLEY

Rhode Island Historical Society
Miscellaneous Manuscripts

London May 28th 1690

Honoured Father

Dear Sir

Your Severall Letters by Capt. Bants¹⁵ (in whome Sir Edmond Androsse arrived safe with the rest with him) came safe to my hands and also per Capt. Martin¹⁶ which went into Bristoll, which gave me the good news of your health and my Mother's which was verry joy fully received by me and yesterday arrived a Letter from you per Epaphras Shrimpton,¹⁷ whom arrived here in a sloop which gives me the repeated

¹³Thomas Oakes (1644-1719) was commissioned by the revolutionary government with Cooke in the agency. He was also a Harvard graduate and a physician. He was elected Speaker of the House of Deputies in 1689 and would oppose royal governors in later years. Sibley, *Biographical Sketches*, II (Cambridge, Mass., 1881), 130-132.

¹⁴Sir Henry Ashurst, a wealthy Presbyterian merchant of London, was a member of the Convention Parliament. The Ashurst family had long been active in the affairs of the New England Company, the Indian missionary society. Sir Henry served as the colony's agent until 1700. Thomas Hutchinson, *History of the Colony and Province of Massachusetts-Bay*, ed. Lawrence S. Mayo, 3 vols. (Cambridge, 1936), I, 330; II, 96; and J. E. B[ailey], 'Ashurst, Henry,' *Dictionary of National Biography*, II (New York, 1883), 181.

¹⁵Gilbert Bant was a ship captain from Boston. Savage, *Genealogical Dictionary*, I, 113.

¹⁶Richard Martin of Piscataqua was captain of the ship *Blossom*. 'Cooke to Bradstreet,' p. 653.

¹⁷Epaphras Shrimpton was a son of Samuel Shrimpton, Boston's richest merchant and an Andros council member. Savage, *Genealogical Dictionary*, IV, 90-92.

satisfaction of the Continneuation of your health's in a sickley Countrey which is a great rejoyceing to me. Butt am much Concerned for the great destractions you are in at Rhoad Island and allso in all New England and am much afraid the french and Indians will take the oppertunity in the midst of them to ruin the whole Countrey if not timely prevented,¹⁸ which as yett can see no likelyhood of a settlement or assistance from hence till Ireland is Subdued which when that will be god know's. His Majesty intending next weeke to goe over in Person to head his forces their in order to the reducing of it has an armye of about 40000 men horse and foot. Wee have lately an account of the Surrender of Charlemont.¹⁹ As you will see in the Gazett, was a pritty strong fortification. King James they say has a Considerable armye their also consisting of French and Irish is variously reported some say 40 some say 50 or 60000 men well armed besides a Considerable body of Irish without armes onely sithes halfe pikes etc. Times looke verry Trouble some hear in this divided Nation. And in Scotland there is great divissions and a great body of highlanders now in armes have had severall skirmishes, butt are mostly defeated butt still gather and rally againe. Episcopacy in Scotland is quite overturned and Presbetry sett up there, and all the Church Parsons have their Liveings taken from them and are now putt to begg their bread where they can and the Same faction here in England would faine doe the Same here in Church and state and strike this Goverment into a Common Wealth if god prevent not. Shall refere you for other Publick news to the Gazetts sent herewith. As to New England affaires here is Mr. M[ather] the Parson has been all this winter with the last Parliment when sitting to Obtaine their Charter and was in great hopes to have Obtained it. Gave as to have New England named in the bill of Restoration of

¹⁸The War of the League of Augsburg, or King William's War, broke out in May 1689.

¹⁹The fortress of Charlemont, Ulster, fell to Marshall Schomberg on May 14, 1690, after a three weeks' siege.

Charters which was past thrice in the house of Commons, butt never past the house of Lords and I am verry well Informed by a Person of Quality that sitts in the house of Peers that if the Corporation bill had past New England had been left out as being in the Foreigne Plantations and so belonging more Immediately to the King, and since that Parliment has be[en] dissolved²⁰ and a new one Called which are most Church men where nothing amongst them has been moved Concerning New England onely have restored the City of London to its ancient Charter as per the act [*fol. 1, verso*] of Parliment sent with appeares. And last weeke this Parliment was adjourned till winter till his Majesty's returne from Ireland, without some urgent occasion shall call them together. And I can verry well assure that New England will never have their Charters againe what ever vaine hopes the two doctors may have, which are sent over from Boston, and they doe all they Can to hinder any settlement from England from his Majesty, and yett [*they*] know at the Same time the Countrey will be undone, yett had rather have it so if they Cannot procure their old beloved Government. Upon Sir Edmond Androsse comeing to London (which was just a day before the agents came to London) [*he*] made his application to Sum of the Lords of the Counsell, that in Obedience to his Majesty's Command he was come to offer himselfe, and the rest of the Gentlemen with him sent over [. . .] Their Lordships received him very kindly and told him they would Informe the King of his arrival, and the[m] sent with him, and told them they where at their Liberty to goe where they please, onely to attend the Counsell board when Called. Then Sir Edmond afterwards Obtained a Summons from the Counsell board for Doctor Cooke and oakes to appeare at the Counsell board and make good their charge against him and the Gentlemen with him, which when [*they*] appeared before the Lords of the Counsell, and Sir Edmond

²⁰The Convention Parliament, which awarded the Crown to William and Mary in 1689, ended January 27, 1690.

Androsse and the other Gentlemen with him their allso ready to make Defence for themselves, Cooke and oakes and (Mr. Mather and Sir Henry Ashurst, (who where joined in Commission with them) moved it might be putt of to a longertime they haveing not yett had time to prepare their businesse against them. Then Sir Edmond Androsse moved that it was verry hard that they should keep them in Prisson 10 mo. and now desire time to draw up a Charge against them, which by most of their Lordships was Counted not reasonable butt [*after*] much adoe it was granted them. This being on a Thursday they where ordered to appeare the next Thursday Following butt to draw up their Charge against them in writeing and deliver it into the Secretarys office the munday before, that Sir Edmond and those with him might have a Cobby of it to know what they where to answeare to, and to have Counsell on both sides not exceedding two of a side, which a little Surprized the agents (so Called) who did not expect to have drawne up any thing in writeing against them.²¹ The Cobby of their Objec-tions I here send you Inclosed.²² Butt on the day appointed they appeared againe, they being on one side of the Counsell board, and Sir Edmond, and the Gentlemen Concerned with him on the other side of the board and about twenty Gentle-men and merchants accompanying of him. The agents had for their Counsell the King's Solisiter Generall,²³ and Mr. Ward, and Sir Edmond Androsse etc. had for his the King's attorney Generall²⁴ and Sir Robert Sawyer.²⁵ Upon which my Lord

²¹ This section of the manuscript refers to a preliminary hearing on April 10, 1690. See Report of the Lords of Trade, April 17, 1690, *Andros Tracts*, VI, 175.

²² The enclosure appears to have been lost. Presumably it was a copy of the three charges noted above, p. 243.

²³ Sir John Somers.

²⁴ Sir George Treby (1644?-1700) was a champion of the city of London and welcomed William of Orange at its gates. After serving briefly as solicitor general, he became attorney general on May 4, 1689. J. M. R[igg], 'Treby, Sir George,' *Dictionary of National Biography*, LVII (New York, 1899), 165-166.

²⁵ Sir Robert Sawyer (1633-1692). As attorney general in 1683 he had vigorously prosecuted the case against the charter of Massachusetts. G. Le G[rys] N[orgate], 'Sawyer, Sir Robert,' *Dictionary of National Biography*, L (New York, 1897), 381-384.

President of the Counsell²⁶ ordered the Charge they had Delivered in against Sir Edmond Androsse and those with him should be read [*fol. 2, recto*] which having been read (by Mr. Blathwait, Clarke of the Counsell),²⁷ their Counsell spoke to it and said that Sir Edmond Androsse after Notice given of his present Majesty's intention of Landing in England, Putt forth a Proclamation Commanding all Persons to oppose the dessent of Such as should be authorized by him and stifled the news by Putting the first Person that Brought the declaration into Prisson.²⁸ To which Sir Robt. Sawyer replied that the proclamation which was their proclaimed was King James Proclamation against a foreigne Invasion which was Proclaimed all over England at that time and in London, and that it was sent over to New England before ever it was known that his present Majesty intended to Land in England, which they would prove, and at that time did butt his duty as being Governour their and Commander in cheife, and as to imprisoning the first man that Brought the Prince of Orange's declaration, our now Present Majesty Sir Robert Sawyer told their Lordships it was false and would Prove it so, and where ready to doe it. Then President Dudley²⁹ moved to their Lordships that they would demand their Credentials and from whome they Came and in what Capacity, and that before they proceeded any further, they would signe the Charge delivered

²⁶Sir Thomas Osborne.

²⁷William Blathwayt (1649-1717) had headed up the colonial bureaucracy since 1675. He was a consistent advocate of increased royal control over the colonies. In 1689 he became William's Secretary of War. See Gertrude Jacobson, *William Blathwayt: A Late Seventeenth Century Administrator* (New Haven, 1912).

²⁸John Winslow (b. 1669) of Boston was imprisoned by Andros in April 1689 for publishing William's *Declaration*. He had obtained a copy in Nevis. See Hutchinson, *History of Massachusetts-Bay*, I, 317.

²⁹Joseph Dudley (1647-1720). Although the son of Gov. Thomas Dudley, Joseph took the prerogative side in the dispute between Massachusetts and the Crown. He was president of a council for New England until Andros arrived in 1686. Under Andros he served as chief justice and as a councillor. He was made a New York councillor in 1690 and was one of the judges at the trial of Jacob Leisler. He returned to Massachusetts as royal governor from 1702 to 1715. Brinley also refers to him by his militia title of colonel. Sibley, *Biographical Sketches*, II, 166-188.

in against them, that they might know who they had to answer, and to have satisfaction, if they cleared themselves. Upon which my Lord President spoke to them to signe, the Objections which they declyned saying they had not delivered them in, butt in Obedience to their Lordships Commands and would not signe. Then My Lord demanded their Credentials and who they came from, which they would not show. Then my Lord President asked them if they Came from any Governor and Counsell or any General Assembly. They answered from the People. From what People Said my Lord. From the whole body of the People, and they could gett nothing else from them. Then said Sir Robt. Sawyer they come from the Rabble my Lord. Upon which my Lord President told them if they Could not show any Credentialls nor who they came from they must withdraw, for then they came from nobody. Upon which all withdrew, and Sir Edmond and the Gentlemen with him, ordered to attend next Counsell day for their discharge, which accordingly their Lordships [ma]de a report to his Majesty of their Innocency and that their was nobody would stand to accuse them, and they where accordingly discharged. Then Sir Edmond Androsse, Coll. Dudley and the rest of the Gentlemen that Came over with him being in all about 17 or 18, went to the Court at Kensington to wait on his Majesty and where introduced by the Earle of Nottingham³⁰ and kissed his hand. His Majesty asked Sir Edmond if all these Gentlemen came from New England with him. He told him they did and had served his Majesty their in severall Imployments. Coll. Dudley Prayed his Majesty would thinke of New England to settle them againe, which he most Graciously said he would take Care of them. [*fol. 2, verso*] Had the agents signed the Objections, they had had an opportunity to have cleared

³⁰Daniel Finch (1647-1730) was one of the two principal secretaries of state, 1689-1694. He brought Mary the news of William's victory at the Battle of the Boyne. T. E. K[ebbel], 'Finch, Daniel,' *Dictionary of National Biography*, XIX (New York, 1889), 1-5.

themselves and have come upon them for damages, which at present must sett still sattisfyed till things are more settled here. I was at the Councill board with them both times, and was writeing to give you an account of what passed their, that you might see how barbarously Sir Edmond has been used, and at last nothing to say against him; and are glad they can gett of so. Here is a Petition signeing by the severall Merchants and traders to New England to be delivered the king Praying him he would settle that Countrey by sending a good Governor and assembly joined with him. Where in they sett forth if not speedily done the Countrey will be ruined by their many divissions amongst them, and I believe if the king sends over a Governor, it will be Sir Edmond Androsse againe, it being the talk here that no Person at this juncture of time is so Capable of serving the king their as himselfe, he being well acquainted with those parts of the world. Sir Edmond is verry kinde to me offers to doe me any kindnesse he can is so kinde to call and see us when he comes into the Citty. I shall be mindefull at a Convenient time to speake of your disbursments. Last Councill Day Coll. Dudley delivered a Petition in behalfe of himselfe, Praying that his Majesty would order him, the money due for his Salary upon the treasury at New England he haveing Served his Majesty as judge had £150 per year and is a year behinde with it and the rest have done the Same praying they may have justice done them. I have minded your debt Layed out for the Publick. Nothing can be don yett. Shall referr you to other Letters and am

Your Dutifull Son and
Servant

THO: BRINLEY

Mr. Brenton comes over Collector³¹ for New England *herewith*.

³¹Jahleel Brenton (1655-1732) of Newport was a son of Governor William Brenton of Rhode Island. He was made collector of customs in 1690. Savage, *Genealogical Dictionary*, 1, 242.

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