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Samuel Danforth's Almanack Poems and
Chronological Tables 1647-1649

Samuel Danforth*

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ABSTRACT

Samuel Danforth's poems from the *Almanacks* for 1647-1649 are some of the earliest examples of "secular" poetry published in New England. Danforth (1626-1674) was a fellow of Harvard College and an astronomer and mathematician as well as a poet. Although these were not the first almanacs printed in America (the first was by William Peirce, printed at Cambridge in 1639), they are the earliest surviving examples. Danforth's first printed almanac, for the year 1646 (which survives only in one partial copy), contained no poetry; instead the foot of each month's page held a running essay on astronomy and the calendar. In 1647, he began to use the 8 to 10 lines at the bottom of each month's page for his original poems, ostensibly on natural and historical topics (pigeons, caterpillars, earthquakes, and hurricanes), but being a good Puritan, the religious element was never far removed; and it is especially noteworthy how many of the poems refer specifically to the history of the Massachusetts colony—at that time not quite twenty years old. Because of these references, the "chronological tables" printed on the last two pages of each of these almanacs are also included here. These tables are among the earliest published histories of the Puritan enterprise in New England and give a fascinating glimpse of the colony's self-image in its veritable infancy.

The *Almanacks* run from March through February, reflecting the seventeenth-century calendar. The page for each month shows the weeks and days, the times of sunrise and sunset, the court sessions, the fairs, the quarters of the moon, the places of the planets, the sign of the zodiac where the moon is at noon, the lunar syzygies, and the mutual aspects of the planets, calculated for $42^{\circ} 30'$ m. latitude and 315° longitude.

In 1650, Danforth handed over the preparation of the almanac to Urian Oakes and left Harvard and Cambridge to take up the post of pastor at Roxbury, where he joined John Eliot. He later published *An Astronomical Description of the Late Comet or Blazing Star* (1665), an election sermon *A Brief Recognition of New-Englands Errand into the Wilderness* (1671), and an execution sermon *The Cry of Sodom Enquired Into* (1674), as well as a catechism (1650, now lost).

For the sake of collecting all of Danforth's known poetry, two elegies for Rev. William Tompson, written in a manuscript journal and signed by him, are also included.

SAMUEL DANFORTH'S
ALMANACK POEMS
AND
CHRONOLOGICAL
TABLES
1647-1649

EDITED BY PAUL ROTSTER



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From *MDCXLVII: An Almanack for the Year of Our Lord 1647*[*March*]

A Coal-white Bird appeares this spring
 That neither cares to sigh or sing.
 This when the merry Birds espy,
 They take her for some enemy.
 Why so, when as she humbly stands
 Only to shake you by your hands?

[*April*]

That which hath neither tongue nor wings
 This month how merrily it sings:
 To see such, out for dead who lay
 To cast their winding sheets away?
 Freinds! would you live? some pils then take
 When head and stomack both doe ake.

[*May*]

White Coates! whom choose you? whom you list:
 Some Ana-tolleratorist!
 Wolves, lambs, hens, foxes to agree
 By setting all opinion-free:
 If Blew-coates doe not this prevent,
 Hobgoblins will be insolent.

[*June*]

Who dig'd this spring of Gardens here,
 Whose mudded streames at last run cleare?
 But why should we such water drink?
 Give losers what they list to think,
 Yet know, one God, one Faith profest
 To be New-Englands interest.

[*July*]

The wooden Birds are now in sight,
 Whose voices roare, whose wings are white,
 Whose mawes are fill'd with hose and shooes,
 With wine, cloth, sugar, salt and newes,
 When they have eas'd their stomacks here
 They cry, farewell untill next yeare.

[*August*]

Many this month I doe fore-see
 Together by the eares will bee:
 Indian and English in the field
 To one another will not yeild.
 Some weeks continue wil this fray,
 Till they be carted all away.

[*September*]

Four heads should meet and counsell have,
 The chickens from the kite to save,
 The idle drones away to drive,
 The little Bees to keep i'th hive.
 How hony may be brought to these
 By making fish to dance on trees.

[*October*]

If discontented Bellies shall
 Wish that the highest now might fall:
 Their wish fulfilled they shall see,
 Whenas within the woods they bee.
 Poor Tinker think'st our shrubs will sing:
 The Bramble here shall be our King.

[*November*]

None of the wisest now will crave
 To know what winter we shall have.
 It shall be milde, let such be told,
 If that it be not over cold.
 Nor over cold shall they it see,
 If very temperate it bee.

[*December*]

It maybe now some enemy-
 Not seen, but felt, will make you fly.
 Where is it best then to abide?
 I think close by the fier side.
 If you must fight it out i'th field,
 Your hearts let woollen breast-plates shield.

[*January*]

Great bridges shall be made alone
 Without ax, timber, earth or stone,
 Of chrystall metall, like to glasse;
 Such wondrous works soon come to passe,
 If you may then have such a way,
 The Ferry-man you need not pay.

[*February*]

Our Lillyes which refus'd to spin
 All winter past, shall now begin
 To feel the lash of such a Dame,
 Whom some call Idlenes by name.
 Excepting such who all this time
 Had reason good against my rime.

1647		
<i>A CHRONOLOGICALL TABLE</i>		
<i>Of some memorable things, which happened since the first planting of Massachusetts.</i>		
The Year since Christ	The Month	The Day
1630	4	12
	6	27
	7	30
	12	5
1632	6	5
	9	23
	12	21
1633	9	
	10	
1634	6	2
	7	4
1635	6	15
1636	6	25
	8	22
1637	6	30
	12	
1638	2	21
	4	1
		5
1639		
1642	4	

THE Governour and Assistants arrived at Salem, bringing with them the Patent, and therewith the Government transferred hither.

The first ordination of an Elder [*viz.* Mr. Wilson] in the Massachusetts Bay.

The first Magistrate that dyed in Massachusetts was Isaac Johnson Esquire, a right Nathaniel, a gentleman of singular piety and syncerity.

The first & most seasonable supply of provisions frō England, by Mr. William Peirce in the ship Lion.

The first visit, which the Narraganset Sachem Miantonimoh gave to the Governour at Boston.

The first Pirate frō Massachusetts was one Dixy Bull, who with 15 his consorts robbed Pemaquid, and so vanished.

The first winter hazzard of the Magistrates & Elders, was at Nantascut, where they were frozen up 2 dayes and 2 nights, ill provided of all sustenance.

The first great mortality amongst the Indians by the small pox, whereof Chickatabut Sachem of Naponset & John and James Sagamores dyed.

The first Pastor that dyed here, was Mr. Samuel Skelton, Pastor to the Church at Salem, a faithfull minister of Jesus Christ.

The first Generall Court at Cambridge.

The first plantation at Connecticut.

The first Hiracano, wherby many 1000s of trees were throwne downe, but not one house that I heare of.

The first expedition against the Block-Ilanders or Pequots under the command of Mr. Endicot.

The first Treaty and peace concluded with Miantonimoh.

The first Synod at Cambridge.

The first Military Company framed at Boston.

The first visit Osamekins gave the Governour.

The first great and generall Earth-quake.

The first visit Unkas the Mouhegin Sachem gave at Cambridge.

The first Printing at Cambridge.

The first discovery of the great mountaine (called § Chrystall Hills) to the *NW.* by Darby Feild.

1647		
Year.	M	D
1642		
1643	3	
	4	22
1644	1	8
	4	
1646		

The first Indian that held forth a clear work of conversion to christianity, was Wequash of Say-brook.

The first uniting of the 4 English Colonies.

The first time the Indian Sachems submitted themselves and their people to the English.

viz. Punham and Sacononocho, Cutchamakin, Mascanomet, Squaw-Sachem, Wossamegan, Nashawanon, Passaconoway and his sonnes.

The first year wherin § several Colonies agreed freely to contribute to the furtherance of Learning.

The first time, wherin through the tender mercy of God, the Gospell was preached to the Indians in their owne language, by Mr. *I. E.* Teacher of the church at Roxbury, whereby much illumination & sweet affection was in a short time wrought in diverse of them & a hopefull reformation begun, in abandoning idlens, filthynes and other known sinnes, and in offering up themselves and their children to the English freely and gladly, that they might be better instructed in § things of God.

The first Indian Towne given by the Generall Court to the Indians, within the bounds of Cambridge, called Nonauntum, that is to say, joy or gladnes.

The time when these Townes following began,

1628 Salem.	1631 Marble-head.	1639 Gloucester.
1629 Charls-town.	1633 Ipswich.	Salisbury.
Linne.	1634 Newbury.	Wenham.
1630 Dorchester.	Hingham.	1640 Woburne.
Water-town.	1635 Dedham.	Braintree.
Roxbury.	Concord.	Reading.
Boston.	1638 Hampton.	Manchester.
1631 Cambridge.	Sudbury.	1641 Haverill.
Weymouth	1639 Rowley.	Hull.

FINIS

From *MDCXLVIII: An Almanack for the Year of Our Lord 1648*[*March*]

Awake yee western Nymphs, arise and sing:
 And with fresh tunes salute your welcome spring,
 Behold a choyce, a rare and pleasant plant,
 Which nothing but it's parallell doth want.
 T'was but a tender slip a while agoe,
 About twice ten years or a little moe,
 But now 'tis grown unto such comely state
 That one would think 't an Olive tree or Date.

[*April*]

A skilfull Husband-man he was, who brought
 This matchles plant from far, & here hath sought
 A place to set it in: & for it's sake,
 The wildernes a pleasant land doth make,
 And with a tender care it setts and dresses,
 Digs round about it, waters, dungs & blesses,
 And, that it may fruit forth in season bring,
 Doth lop & cut & prune it every spring.

[*May*]

Bright Phœbus casts his silver sparkling ray,
 Upon this thriving plant both night & day.
 And with a pleasant aspect smiles upon
 The tender buds & blooms that hang theron.
 The lofty skyes their chrystall drops bestow;
 Which cause the plant to flourish & to grow.
 The radiant Star is in it's Horoscope:
 And there 't will raigne & rule for aye, we hope.

[*June*]

At this tree's roots Astræa sits and sings
 And waters it, whence upright JUSTICE springs,
 Which yearly shoots forth Lawes & Libertyes,
 That no mans Will or Wit may tyrannize.
 Those Birds of prey, who sometime have opprest
 And stain'd the Country with their filthy nest,
 Justice abhors; & one day hopes to finde
 A way to make all promise-breakers grinde.

[*July*]

On this tree's top hangs pleasant LIBERTY,
 Not seen in Austria, France, Spain, Italy.
 Some fling their swords at it, their caps some cast
 In Britain 't will not downe, it hangs so fast.
 A loosnes (true) it breeds (Galen ne'r saw)
 Alas! the reason is, men eat it raw.
 True Liberty's there ripe, where all confess
 They may do what they will, but wickednes.

[*August*]

PEACE is another fruit; which this tree bears,
 The cheifest garland that this Country wears,
 Which over all house-tops, townes, fields doth spread,
 And stuffes the pillow for each weary head.
 It bloom'd in Europe once, but now 'tis gon:
 And's glad to finde a desart-mansion.
 Thousands to buye it with their blood have sought
 But cannot finde it; we ha't here for nought.

[*September*]

In times of yore, (some say, it is no ly)
 There was a tree that brought forth UNITY.
 It grew a little while, a year or twain,
 But since 'twas nipt, 't hath scarce been seen again,
 Till some here sought it, & they finde it now
 With trembling for to hang on every bough.
 At this faire fruit, no wonder, if there shall
 Be cudgells flung sometimes, but 't will not fall.

[*October*]

Forsaken TRUTH, Times daughter, groweth here.
 (More pretious fruit, what tree did ever beare?)
 Whose pleasant sight aloft hath many fed,
 And what falls down knocks Error on the head.
 Blinde Novio sayes, that nothing here is True,
 Because (thinks he) no old thing can be new.
 Alas poor smoaky Times, that can't yet see,
 Where Truth doth grow, on this or on that Tree.

[*November*]

Few think, who only hear, but doe not see,
 That PLENTY groweth much upon this tree.
 That since the mighty COW her crown hath lost,
 In every place shee's made to rule the rost:
 That heaps of Wheat, Pork, Bisket, Beef & Beer,
 Masts, Pipe-staves, Fish should store both farre & neer:
 Which fetch in Wines, Cloth, Sweets & good Tobacc-
 O be contented then, you cannot lack.

[*December*]

Of late from this tree's root within the ground
 Rich MINES branch out, Iron & Lead are found,
 Better then Peru's gold or Mexico's
 Which cannot weapon us against our foes,
 Nor make us howes, nor siths, nor plough-shares mend:
 Without which tools mens honest lives would end.
 Some silver-mine, if any here doe wish,
 They it may finde i' th' bellyes of our fish.

[*January*]

But lest this Olive plant in time should wither,
 And so it's fruit & glory end together,
 The prudent Husband-men are pleas'd to spare
 No work or paines, no labour, cost or care,
 A NURSERY to plant, with tender sprigs,
 Young shoots & sprouts, small branches, slips & twigs;
 Whence timely may arise a good supply
 In room of sage & aged ones that dye.

[*February*]

The wildest SHRUBS, that forrest ever bare,
 Of late into this Olive, grafted are.
 Welcome poor Natives, from your salvage fold.
 Your hopes we prize above all Western gold.
 Your pray'rs, tears, knowledge, labours promise much,
 Wo, if you be not, as you promise, such.
 Sprout forth, poor sprigs, that all the world may sing
 How Heathen shrubs kisse Jesus for their King.

1648

*A CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE,
of some few memorable
occurrences.*

The Yeare since Christ	The Month	The Day	
1636	5		M ASTER Iohn Oldam murdered in his bark by 5 Indians of Block-Island, who were surprized in the same bark by John Gallop, brought thither at the same instant against his purpose.
1637	3		The massacre at Wethersfield by the Pequots.
	3		An expedition against 5 Pequots under Mr. Stoughton, Mr. Wilson being minister.
	3	25	Mistick Fort taken and the Pequots slain and burnt in it by the English of 5 River.
	4	20	Some passengers died, travelling in the heat at their first landing.
	5	6	Fourty Pequot captives brought to Boston.
		13	The last defeat of the Pequots at the swamp neer the Dutch.
	6		Block-Island subdued and made tributary.
		26	Mr. Stoughton and all the souldiers returned home, none being slain.
	8	17	Mrs. Dier brought forth her horned-foure-talanted monster.
	9	4	Snow a foot deep, which continued about 4 months and 19 dayes, the like never seen since.
	11	13	Thirty of Boston surprized at Spectacle Iland in a <i>N.W.</i> storm, & some lost their lives, some their fingers & toes.
			This spring the Plantation at Road-Iland began.
1638	4	1	The great and generall Earth-quake.
	6	3	A violent tempest which brake downe the winde-mil at Charlstown, & caused two floods in six houres.
			About this time the Indian was murthered in the way to Taunton by four English servants of Plimouth, for <i>wch.</i> 3 were executed soon after & 5 4 th escaped.
			This yeare arrived 20 ships and 3000 passengers from England.
	9	17	Mr. Roger Harlakenden one of our Magistrates, about 30 years of age, a man of singular piety & virtue, dyed. <i>The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance.</i>
	10	15	The great tempest of winde & snow, wherin Dinely and some others perished in & about the Bay, on land; and Anthony Dike and others with him cast away upon Cape-Cod.

1648

Year.	M	D.	
1639	1	15	Another tempest, which blew down some houses, & when it blew at South, raysed the river at Connecticut 21 foot above the medowes.
			Great drought through the country, little or no raine from the 26 of 5 second to the 10 th of 5 4 th month.
			Innumerable swarmes of strange flyes fleeting upon the fens.
1640	7		Miantonimoh's first conspiracye against the English.
1641			Mr. William Peirce, an expert marriner and Samuel Wake-man slain at Providence, newly taken by 5 Spainyard.
	7	11	A great light appeared to the South-ward between 7 and 8 in the evening.
1642	7		A generall conspiracy of Miantonimoh & many other Indians to cutt off all the English.
1643	1	3	Another Earthquake on the Lords day morning.
			Much corne spoyled this harvest by pigeons and after by mice.
			This spring Miantonimoh went forth with about 900 or 1000 Indians, to war against Uncas, who offered him single combate, which Miantonimo refused, trusting to his numbers, whom Uncas defeated in battle and took Mianton: & in the fall after put him to death.
1644			The massacre in Virginia, wherein about 300 English were slain by 5 Indians; <i>wch.</i> was soon after Mr. Tompson and Mr. Knowles (who were called by them & sent from hence by the Churches to preach to them) were discouraged & returned.
	4		The Narrowgansets began to warr upon Uncas in revenge of Miantonimoh his death.
	7	1	Mr. George Phillips, first Pastor of 5 Church at Water-towne dyed.
1646	5		Multitudes of Caterpillars destroyed some fields of corne, pass through others & eat 5 blade & toucht not the grain, and in other fields eat only 5 grasse, no corn.
	8		Mr. Eliot began to preach to 5 Indians in their owne language.
1647	4		An Epidemicall faint cough through the Country.
	5	7	Mr. Tho. Hooker Pastor of the Church at Hartford, a man eminently filled and fitted to doe much good, departed this life in peace. <i>Of whome this world was not worthy.</i>

FINIS

From *MDCXLIX: An Almanack for the Year of Our Lord 1649*[*March*]

In Englands armes, an Orphan once did sit:
 The question was, what should be done with it?
 Its Step-dame mercilesse would have it sent
 To th' wildernes; the rest all said, content.
 But when the Fathers Bowels did foresee,
 What sorrows in the wildernes should bee,
 He went with it: and when through scarcity
 It cry'd, he heard, & streight-way sent supply.

[*April*]

A four-horn'd Beast this Orphan spying here,
 Threatned forthwith in peices it to teare.
 Whose homes not able for to tosse & gore,
 This Hand shall reach, said he, the Ocean o're.
 A kennell of stout hounds awakened then,
 And scar'd this little creature to his den.
 But lest the Orphan should it alway dread,
 The hunters hand cut off his horned head.

[*May*]

No sooner was an house here built, to keep
 This Out-cast dry, where it might rest & sleep,
 But now an Airy thing above all men
 Would have roofs, walls, foundations down agen,
 (And shook them sore) that so by rents & strife
 Without all house-room, it might end its life.
 Which when the Builders saw, they drave it hence:
 Wherein appear'd a special providence.

[*June*]

But by & by, grave Monanattock rose,
 Grim Sasacus with swarms of Pequottoes,
 Who smote our hindermost, whose arrows stung,
 Who vow'd with English blood their ground to dung.
 But Mistick flames & th' English sword soon damp.
 This rampant crue; pursues them In their swamps,
 And makes them fly their land with fear & shame:
 That th' Indians dread is now the English name.

[*July*]

Just when these hounds first bit, Truth suffers scorne,
 Strange errors bark, the devil winds his horne
 And blows men almost wilde; Opinion
 Within the house would mistresse it alone.
 The poyson kills, makes light, loose, high, divides,
 And would have broke to factions, fractions, sides.
 The Thrones were therfore set, and in that day
 When Pequots fly, Opinion hasts away.

[*August*]

Great Earth-quakes frequently (as one relates)
 Forerun strange plagues, dearths, wars & change of states,
 Earths shaking fits by venemous vapours here,
 How is it that they hurt not, as elsewhere !
 Succeeding ages may interpret well,
 What those mutations are, which these foretell.
 Some think that now they hurt not any men:
 But only those who were not shaken then.

[September]

The birds consulted once, who should appear
 Against their enemies in battel heer.
 To strip us of our food was first the plot :
 Upon the Pigeons therefore fell the lot.
 Their troops were numberles, darkning the skies,
 Spoyling the fields in dreadfull companies,
 When to their losse they thus had took much prey,
 One sounds retrait, apace they haste away.

[October]

The high & mighty states conspired, how
 To cut off all the English at a blow.
 Be wise, look noble Uncas unto it:
 Thou canst scarce save thy self by Foxens wit,
 And by thy fall comes in the English wo,
 If it may be by Miantonimo.
 Brave Uncas thinks, he is too high, by th' head,
 And cuts it off; so wee delivered.

[November]

Armies of earthly Angels then arose,
 Who from her crown the Summer would depose.
 They march in mighty troops, from place to place:
 Pitcht fields fell down before their grizly face.
 It past all humane skill, how to engage
 The fowles against the caterpillers rage;
 But suddenly to-flight, they all prepare;
 No man knows how, unles it was by pray'r.

[December]

An Arrow at noon day here once did fly,
 Which wounded every man & family.
 This poyson soon the Body overspread,
 And seiz'd upon the spirits, lungs & head.
 'Tis strange, such brittle vessels did not break,
 When as the strongest scarce could help the weak.
 How most were heal'd, some doe not understand,
 'T was by a touch of one Physicians hand.

[January]

While Europe burnes & broiles & dyes in flames,
 And Englands sobs are heard from Tweed to Thames;
 While Irelands ashes up and down do fly,
 And Scotlands tears run down abundantly:
 While poor Barbados cryes; the Pestilence !
 And Virgins-land thrusts out her sons from thence;
 The worthles Orphan may sit still and blesse,
 That yet it sleeps in peace and quietnes.

[February]

A Prognostication.

The morning Kings may next ensuing year,
 With mighty Armies in the aire appear,
 By one mans means there shall be hither sent
 The Army, Citty, King and Parliament.
 Two that have travel'd round about the earth,
 Shall by their coming here prevent a dearth.
 A Child but newly born, shall then foretell
 Great changes in a Winding-sheet; Farewell.

MDCXLIX

*A CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE
of some few memorable
occurrences.*

The Yeare since Christ	The Month	The Day	
1630			T HE Governour and Assistants arrived, bringing w̄ them the Patent, which was granted to this Colonie (viz: Massachusets) by ̄ Honourable Parliament holden <i>anno</i> 1628.
	7	30	Isaac Johnson <i>Esq.</i> : one of our Magistrates, a Gentleman eminent for piety & virtue, deceased.
	11	5	Seasonable supplies of provisions from England, in the time of great scarcity.
1633	9		A great mortalitie amongst the Indians by the small pox, wherof Chickatabut Sachem of Naponset dyed, & also John & James Sagamores.
1634	6	2	Mr Samuel Skelton Pastor to the Church at Salem dyed.
1635	6	13	A great Hircane, wherin the great shipe of 400 tun was driven on shore at Mr. Haughs.
1636	5	1	Mr. John Oldham murdered in his Bark by ̄ Indians of Block-Island, who were surprized in ̄ same bark by John Gallop, brought thither against his purpose.
	8		A treaty & peace concluded with Miantonimoh.
1637	3		The massacre at Wethersfield by the Pequots. Mystick Fort taken and the Pequots slain and burnt in it by the English of ̄ River.
	6		Block-Island subdued and made tributary.
	7		The first Synod at Cambridge.
1638	1		Mrs. Hutchinson & her errors banished.
	4	1	The great and generall Earth-quake.
	6	3	A violent tempest which brake down the winde-mill at Charlestown, & caused two floods in six houres.
	7	14	John Harvard master of Arts, of Emmanuel College in Cambridge deceased: & by will gave the half ̄ estate (which amounted to about 700 pounds) for erecting of the Colledge.
	9	17	Mr. Roger Harlakenden one of our Magistrates about 30 years of age, a man of singular piety and virtue, dyed.
	11	17	Another tempest, which threw down some of our buildings, & when it blew at South, raysed ̄ river in Connecticut 21 foot above the meadows.
			Great drought throughout the country.
1640	7		Miantonimoh conspires against the English.

MDCXLIX

Year.	M	D.	
1641	7		Pascataque submitted to our Government. This winter five weeks together Charls-River was passable upon the ice.
1642	7		A generall conspiracy of the Narrowgansets & other Indians to cutt off all the English. This year several well-affected persons & Gentlemen in Virginia, sent to us for some to dispatch the Word of God to them.
	8		Mr. Tompson and Mr. Knowles were sent.
1643	1	3	Another Earthquake on the Lords day morning.
	3		The four English Colonies <i>viz</i> : Massachusets, Plimouth, Connecticut & New-haven, were united
	4	20	Pumham & Sacononoco Sachems, submitted themselves & their people to the English. This summer the Lord sent great flocks of Pigeons, which devoured much corn.
			Miantonimoh wageing warr against Uncas, was taken and put to death for his treacherie.
1644	1	8	Five Sachems, Curchamakin, Masennomet, Squaw-Sachem, Watlamegen, Nashawanon submitted themselves, their people & lands unto us.
	3		Passaconaway the chief Sachem upon Merimack, & his sons came in voluntarily and submitted to our Government.
	4		The Narrowgansets began to warr upon Uncas, in revenge of Miantonimoh his death.
	5	1	Mr. George Phillips, first Pastour of ̄ Church at Water-towne dyed.
1645	6	26	The Narrowganset Sachems, Pesicus and Mexonimo, son of Connonicus, concluded peace with the English, and gave 4 of the chief of their children for Hostages.
1646	5		The Lord sent multitudes of Caterpillars amongst us, which marched thorow our fields, like armed men, and spoyled much corn.
	8		Mr. Eliot began to preach to ̄ Indians in their owne language.
1647	4		An Epidemicall faint cough through the Country.
	5	7	Mr. Tho. Hooker, Pastour of the Church at Hartford rested from his labours.
1648	1	31	Mr. Green Pastour to the Church at Reading, dyed.

FINIS

*Two Elegies for William Tompson, Pastor of the Church in Braintree,
who died December 10, 1666*

(from Joseph Tompson's manuscript journal)

William Tompson, anagram 1: lo, now I am past ill.

Why wepe yea still for me, my Children dear?
 What Cause have ye of sorow, grief or fear?
 Lo, now all evill things are past and gone,
 Terror, black Coller & strangullion;
 My pains are Curd, no greif doth me anoy,
 My sorrows all are turned in to joy.
 No fiend of hell shall hence forth me asay,
 My fears are heald, my teares are wipt away;
 Gods reconciled face I now behould,
 He that dispersd my darkness many fold;
 In Abrams bosom now I swetely rest,
 Of perfect joy & hapiness posest.

William Tompson, Anagram 2: now I am slipt home.

Fowr years twice tould I dwelt in darkest Cell,
 In Cruell bonds of melloncholy bound.
 I surely thought I was in lowest hell;
 Much pain & grife, but no releif, I found.
 But now throw grace my weighty Chain is loosd,
 God hath returnd my long Captivity;
 My weary soul, that Comfort oft refusd,
 This day is set at perfect liberty;
 And now I dwell at home with Christ, my lord,
 With robes of righteousness most richly Clad;
 With rarest pleasures the highest heavens aford,
 Feasted, refresh:d, beyond experienc glad.

S. Danforth

Notes

- 1.3 Coal-white Bird] This is thought to refer to a book, or an Indian missionary, or a fever.
- 1.10 That which hath neither tongue nor wings] This is thought to refer to a brook.
- 1.17 White Coates! whom choose you!] May was the month of elections for the General Court.
- 2.2 The wooden Birds] This refers to the supply ships from Europe.
- 2.10 Together by the eares will bee:] August was the month of corn harvesting.
- 2.16 Four heads should meet and counsell have,] The four Puritan colonies (Massachusetts, Plymouth, Connecticut, and New Haven) had formed a union for purposes of defense.
- 3.16 Great bridges shall be made] This refers (at least on the literal level) to the freezing over of the Charles River.
- 6.8 About twice ten years or a little moe,] Suggesting that New-England is meant.
- 8.22 the mighty COW] Possibly referring to false gods, like the golden calf of Exodus.
- 10.22-23 Mrs. Dier . . . horned-foure-talanted monster] Mary Dyer (1611-1660) was a friend and follower of Anne Hutchinson. She gave birth October 17, 1637, to a grossly deformed stillborn fetus, which was buried privately. When Anne Hutchinson was tried and banished from Massachusetts in January 1637/8, Mary and her husband William Dyer left with her. Subsequently, the authorities learned of the "monstrous birth," and Governor Winthrop had it exhumed in March 1638, with a large crowd in attendance. He described it thus: "it was of ordinary bigness; it had a face, but no head, and the ears stood upon the shoulders and were like an ape's;

it had no forehead, but over the eyes four horns, hard and sharp; two of them were above one inch long, the other two shorter; the eyes standing out, and the mouth also; the nose hooked upward; all over the breast and back full of sharp pricks and scales, like a thornback [i.e., a skate or ray], the navel and all the belly, with the distinction of the sex, were where the back should be, and the back and hips before, where the belly should have been; behind, between the shoulders, it had two mouths, and in each of them a piece of red flesh sticking out; it had arms and legs as other children; but, instead of toes, it had on each foot three claws, like a young fowl, with sharp talons." (*The Journal of John Winthrop 1630–1649* [Cambridge, 1996], p. 254.) Winthrop sent descriptions to numerous correspondents, and accounts were published in England in 1642 and 1644. The deformed birth was considered evidence of the heresies and errors of Antinomianism. (Mary Dyer later moved back to England, met George Fox, became a Quaker, and returned to New England to preach. She was arrested and expelled from Massachusetts in 1658 for preaching, and also arrested and expelled from New Haven the same year. In 1659, she returned to Massachusetts to preach, was arrested again, tried and condemned to be hanged. She was reprieved on the gallows and banished again from the colony. She returned in 1660, and was arrested, condemned, and hanged.)

12.12 A four-horn'd Beast] see note 10.22–23.

12.23 an Airy thing] The "tempest" of 1638.

Note on the Texts

Danforth's poems were reprinted in *Handkerchiefs from Paul: Being Pious and Consolatory Verses of Puritan Massachusetts*, edited by Kenneth B. Murdock (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927), pages 19–20 & 99–111. The poems from the *Almanack for 1647* and the *Almanack for 1648* were reprinted in *Seventeenth-Century American Poetry*, edited by Harrison T. Meserole (New York: Doubleday, 1968). The poems from the *Almanack for 1647* were also reprinted in *Colonial American Poetry*, edited by Kenneth Silverman (New York: Hafner, 1968). The chronological tables have not been previously reprinted.

The texts of the almanac poems and chronological tables in this online edition were transcribed from microform copies of the original almanacs of 1647, 1648, and 1649, Evans series numbers 21, 23, & 27. Those of 1647 and 1648 are held at the Henry E. Huntington Library; that of 1649 is held at the New York Public Library. Three lines at the end of the chronological table for 1649—which explain some abbreviations used in the almanac—have been omitted. The following *corrigenda* to the printed texts of the *Almanacks* have been made:

<i>Page.line</i>	<i>original</i>	<i>emended to</i>
2.20	m y	may
3.7	bee	bee.
3.14	bre st-pl te	breast-plate
4.22	Jndians	Indians
9.3	Jron	Iron

The texts of the two elegies for William Tompson are from Murdock's edition, *Handkerchiefs from Paul*, pages 19–20; the orthography has been rendered in the modern style, using "j" for "j" and "v" for "u" where appropriate, and the pronoun "I" has been consistently capitalized.

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