

PUBLICK OCCURRENCES

Both FOREIGN and DOMESTICK.

Boston, Thursday Sept. 25th. 1690.

IT is designed, that the Countrey shall be furnished once a month (or if any Glut of Occurrences happen, oftener,) with an Account of such considerable things as have arrived unto our Notice.

In order hereunto, the Publisher will take what pains he can to obtain a Faithful Relation of all such things; and will particularly make himself beholden to such Persons in Boston whom he knows to have been for their own use the diligent Observers of such matters.

That which is herein proposed, is, First, That Memorable Occurrences of Divine Providence may not be neglected or forgotten, as they too often are. Secondly, That people every where may better understand the Circumstances of Publique Affairs, both abroad and at home; which may not only direct their Thoughts at all times, but at some times also to assist their Business and Negotiations.

Thirdly, That some thing may be done towards the Curing, or at least the Charming of that Spirit of Lying, which prevails amongst us, wherefore nothing shall be checked, but what we have reason to believe is true, repairing to the best fountains for our Information. And when there appears any material mistake in any thing that is collected, it shall be corrected in the next.

Moreover, the Publisher of these Occurrences is willing to engage, that whereas, there are many False Reports, maliciously made, and spread among us, if any well-minded person will be at the pains to trace any such false Report so far as to find out and Convict the First Raiser of it, he will in this Paper (unless just Advice be given to the contrary) expose the Name of such person, as A malicious Raiser of a false Report. It is supposed that none will dislike this Proposal, but such as intend to be guilty of so villanous a Crime.

THE Christianized Indians in some parts of *Plimouth*, have newly appointed a day of Thanksgiving to God for his Mercy in supplying their extrem and pinching Necessities under their late want of Corn; & for His giving them now a prospect of a very Comfortable Harvest. Their Example may be worth Mentioning.

'Tis observed by the Husbandmen, that altho' the With-draw of so great a strength

from them, as what is in the Forces lately gone for *Canada*, made them think it almost impossible for them to get well through the Affairs of their Husbandry at this time of the year, yet the Season has been so unusually favourable that they scarce find any want of the many hundreds of hands, that are gone from them; which is looked upon as a Merciful Providence.

While the barbarous *Indians* were lurking about *Chehmsford*, there were missing about the beginning of this month a couple of Children belonging to a man of that Town, one of them aged about eleven the other aged about nine years, both of them supposed to be fallen into the hands of the *Indians*.

A very Tragical Accident happened at *Water-Town*, the beginning of this Month, an Old man, that was of somewhat a Silent and Morose Temper, but one that had long Enjoyed the reputation of a Sober and a *Finne Man*, having newly buried his Wife, The Devil took advantage of the Melancholly which he thereupon fell into, his Wives discretion and industry had long been the support of his Family, and he seemed hurried with an impertinent fear that he should now come to want before he dved, though he had very careful friends to look after him who kept a strict eye upon him, lest he should do himself any harm. But one evening escaping from them into the Cow house, they there quickly followed him found him hanging by a Rope, which they had used to tie their Calves withal, he was dead with his feet near touching the Ground.

Epidemical Fevers and *Agues* grow very common, in some parts of the Country, whereof, tho' many dye hot, yet they are forely unfitted for their employments; but in some parts a more malignant Fever seems to prevail in such sort that it usually goes thro' a Family where it comes, and proves Mortal unto many.

The *Small-pox* which has been raging in *Boston*, after a manner very Extraordinary is now very much abated. It is thought that far more have been sick of it than were visited with it, when it raged so much twelve years ago, nevertheless it has not been so Mortal, The number of them that have

dyed in Boston by this last Visitation is about three hundred and twenty, which is not perhaps half so many as fell by the former. The Time of its being most General, was in the Months June, July, and August, then twas that sometimes in some one Congregation on a Lords-day there would be Bills desiring prayers for above an hundred Sick. I seized upon all sorts of people that came in the way of it, it infected even Children

of Mothers that had themselves undergone the Disease many years ago; for some such were now born full of the Distemper. 'Tis not easy to relate the Trouble and Sorrow that poor Boston has felt by this epidemical Contagion. But we hope it will be pretty nigh Extinguished, by that time twelve month when it first began to Spread. It now unhappily spreads in several other places, among which our Garrisons in the East are to be reckoned some of the greatest Sufferers.

Altho' Boston did a few weeks ago, meet with a Disaster by Fire, which consumed about twenty Houses near the Mill-Creek, yet about midnight, between the sixteenth and seventeenth of this Instant, another Fire broke forth near the South-Meeting-House, which consumed about five or six houses, and had almost carried the Meeting-house it self; one of the fairest Edifices in the Country. If God had not remarkably assisted the Endeavours of the People to put out the Fire. There were two more considerable Circumstances in the Calamities of this Fire, one was that a young man belonging to the House where the Fire began, unhappily perished in the Flames; it seems that tho' he might sooner awake than some others who did escape, yet he some way lost these Wits that should have taught him to help himself. Another was that the best furnished PRINTING-PRESS, of those few that we know of in America, was lost; a loss not pretently to be repaired.

There lately arrived at Piscataqua, one Pappoon from Penobscot, in a small Shallop, wherein he had used to attend upon the pleasure of Casteen, but took his opportunity to run away, and reports: That a Vessel of small Bulk bound from Bristol to Virginia, having been so long at Sea, till they were prest with want, put in at Penobscot instead of Piscataqua, where the Indians and French seized her, and Butchered the Master, and several of the men: but that himself who belonged unto the Ships Crew, being a Jersey-man, was more favourably used, & found at length an advantage to make his Escape;

The chief discourse of this month has been about the affairs of the Western Expedition against Canada. The Albanians, New-Yorkers, and the five Nations of Indians, in the West, had long been pressing of the Massachusetts, to make an Expedition by Sea, into Canada and still made us believe, that they stayed for us, and that while we assaulted

Quebeck, they would pass the Lake, and by Land make a Descent upon Mount Royal. Accordingly this Colony with some assistance from our kind Neighbours of Plymouth; fitted out an Army of near five and twenty hundred men, and a Navy of two and thirty Sail; which went from hence the beginning of the last August, under the Command of the Honourable Sir William Phips.

In the mean time the English Colonies & Provinces in the West raised Forces, the Numbers whereof have been reported five or six hundred. The Honourable General Winthrop was in the Head of these, and advanced within a few miles of the Lake; He there had some good Number of Magu's to joyn his Forces, but contrary to his Expectation, it was found that the Canoo's to have been ready for the Transportation of the Army over the Lake, were not prepared, and the other Nations of Indians, that should have come to this Campaign, sent their Excuses, pretending that the Small-pox was among them, and some other Trifles. The General Meeting with such vexing disappointments, called a Council of War, wherein it was agreed, That it was impossible for them to prosecute their Intended Expedition. However he dispatched away the Magu's to the French Territories, who returned with some Success, having slain several of the French, and brought home several Prisoners, whom they used in a manner too barbarous for any English to approve. The General coming back to Albany, there happened a misunderstanding, between him and the Lieutenant Governour of New-York which occasioned much discourse, but produced not those effects which were feared of it. Where say the bottom of these miscarriages is variously conjectured, if any people further West than Albany, have been Tampering with the Indians, to defeat the business of Canada, we hope time will discover it. And if Almighty God will have Canada to be subdued without the assistance of those miserable Salvages, in whom we have too much confided, we shall be glad, that there will be no Sacrifice offered up to the Devil, upon this occasion. God alone will have all the Glory.

'Tis possible, we have not so exactly related the Circumstances of this business, but this Account, is as near exactness, as any that could be had, in the midst of many various reports about it.

Another late matter of discourse, has been an unaccountable destruction befalling a body of Indians, that were our Enemies. This body of French Indians had a Fort somewhere far up the River, and a party of Magu's returning from the East Country, where they have at a great rate pursued and terrified those Indians which have been invading of our North-East Plantations, and Killed their General Hops Hood among the rest; resolved

to visit this Fort; but they found the Fort ruined, the Canoo's cut to pieces, and the people all either Burchered or Captived, This gave them no little surprize, and they give the English this account of it. That a body of *Miqua's* lately returning from the Spoil of *Canada* brought several *French Prisoners* with them; That calling at this Fort in their way, the *Indians* there seeing themselves unable to resist them did pass divers Compliments with them and partake of their Booties, That a *French* Captive after this, escaping from the *Miqua's* informed the *French* that these *Indians* had revolted unto the *Miqua's*, and hereupon the *French* or their *Indians* made a sudden Sally forth upon them, and utterly destroyed them, tho' they were in reality of their own party still.

Two *English* Captives escaped from the hands of the *Indians* and *French* at *Pescadamoquady*, came into *Portsmouth* on the sixteenth Instant & say, That when Capt. *Mason* was at *Port Real*, he cut the faces, and ript the bellies of two *Indians*, and threw a third Over board in the sight of the *French*, who informing the other *Indians* of it, they have in revenge barbarously Butcher'd forty Captives of ours that were in their hands.

These two Captives escaped in a Shallop, which our Enemies intended to have set out with all the Circumstances of a Fishing Shallop but to have indeed find it with *Indians* that should have Clap't on board any *English* Vessel that came in their way; They say that about three or four weeks ago, some *Indians* were coming this way to War, but crossing a path which they supposed to be of the *Miqua's*, they followed it until they discovered a place where some Canoo's were making, whereupon twenty *Kennbeck* *Indian* Warriors went to look further after the business, who never yet returned. Which gives hope that they may come short home but upon this the *Squaws* are sent to *Penobscow*, and the men stand on their Defence.

Portsmouth Sept 20th. Two days since arrived here a small Vessel from *Barbadoes*, in which is a Letter to Captain *H. K.* of 19th August that speaks thus.

Christophers is wholly taken from the *French* as also a small island called *Stacia*; we are very strong in Shipping, and our Ships of War are now gone for *Tobago*, a very good place to shelter from any Storms, after the suspicious months are over, they will Attack the rest of the *French* places. We have News here that *K. William* is safe arrived in *Ireland*, and is marched with one hundred and forty thousand Foot and Horse. Himself leads the Body, Duke *Scomburgh* the right Wing, and the Earl of *Oxford* the left Wing, Duke *Hendon* of *Scotland* leads the forlorn Hope with ten thousand men under him. Great victory they daily have, and much people daily come in to him, with submission: He has

200 Shipping with him of one fort or other, above one hundred Sail daily run between *Ireland* and *England*, with meat for Man and Beast; His Majesty being unwilling to trust false *Ireland* for it. *France* is in much trouble (and fear) not only with us but also with his Son, who has revolted against him lately, and has great reason, if reports be true, that the Father used to lie with the Sons Wife. He has got all the *Hugonots*, and all the dissatisfied Papists, with the great force of the D. of *Lorraine*, and are now against him, resolving to depose him of his life and Kingdom.

It's Reported the City of *Cork* in *Ireland*, has proclaimed *K. William*, and turned their *French* Landlords out of Doors; of this there wants further Confirmation.

From *Plymouth* Sept. 22. We have an Account, that on Friday the 12th Instant, in the night, our Forces Landing privately, forthwith surrounded *Pegypscow* Fort; but finding no *Indians* there, they March'd to *Amonoscoggin*. There on the Lords-day, they kill'd and took 15 or 16 of the Enemy, and recovered five *English* Captives, mostly belonging to *Oyste* River; who advised, that the men had been gone about ten days down to a River, to meet with the *French*, and the *French* *Indians*; where they expected to make up a Body of 300 men, and begin first against *Wells* or *Piscataqua*.

On Tuesday, the Army came to our Vessels at *Macquise*, but one of the Vessels touching a Ground stop't a Tide; by which means, young *Bracker*, who was a considerable distance up the River, above *Amonoscoggin* Fort, being advised by an *Indian* that ran away from *Amonoscoggin*, that an *English* Army was there attempted his Escape, and came down to the Sloop just as they came on their Sail.

On Thursday, they landed at *Saco*; a Scout of 60 men of ours discover a party of the Enemy, and had the Advantage of killing three of them, and of taking nine Canoo's, and an *English* captive named, *Thomas Baker*, who informed, that the Enemy had left a considerable Plunder at *Pegypscow* Plains, which he supposed the Enemy was gone to secure Whereupon the Army immediately embark'd, and arriving there that night, the next morning found the Bever-Plunder accordingly.

While our Vessels were at Anchor in *Cascoe-Bay*, our Auxiliary *Indians* lodging on shore, and being too careless in their Watch, the Enemy made an Attack upon them. The *English* forth with repair'd to their Relief; but were sorely galled, by an Embuscado of *Indians*, The Enemy soon quitted the Field, escaping with their Canoo's, whereof ours took several. In the Surprise, we lost 9 men, and had about 20 wounded; the blow chiefly fell on our dear Friends, the *Plymouth* Forces, 15 being kill'd and wounded of Captain *Southworth's* Company.

This the last page of Publick Occurrences was blank, probably because it had been reserved for advertisements and no advertisers called for space.

THE OLDEST PAPER IN THE UNITED STATES

Given Away With the 25th Anniversary Number of The
Boston Globe, Thursday, March 4, 1897.

Dr Samuel A. Green of the Massachusetts Historical Society Tells how he Found the only Copy extant:

The three foregoing pages of this supplement, which are given to the readers of The Boston Globe March 4, 1897, on the 25th anniversary of its establishment, form a facsimile reproduction of the earliest newspaper printed on the American continent, and is taken from the single copy extant, now preserved among the archives of the Public Record office in London. It is reproduced here in the exact size of the original sheet.

More than 40 years ago the late William Winthrop, at that time the American consul at Malta, told me of the existence of such a newspaper in some public bureau in London, and even mentioned the year of its publication, but he did not know where it was to be found, and had forgotten his authority for the statement. With this clue, after a long search among the files of various offices, I discovered the unique sheet in the Colonial state paper office, and made a copy, which was printed in the first volume (pages 228-231) of "The Historical Magazine" (Boston) for August, 1857. Before its publication here, however, I learned after my return home that the late Rev Dr Joseph B. Felt already knew of this early print, as he had mentioned it in the second edition of his "Annals of Salem" (II, 14), which was published in the year 1849.

Some time after my talk with Mr Winthrop, he sent a communication concerning the matter, signed "W. W.," to the "Notes and Queries" (London), Feb. 7, 1857, which called out an answer in the same periodical, May 23, from "Cl. Hopper," describing the sheet very fully, and telling where it could be found.

There is but little contemporary record in regard to the newspaper, but it is known that only one number was issued, as it was quickly suppressed by the colonial authorities. The Massachusetts historical society has in its library a copy of the printed order suppressing the "pamphlet," as there called, which is here given, line for line, after the original:

Judge Sewall, in his Letter-Book (I, 112), under date of Sept 25, 1690, also refers to "the first sheet of Occurrences, which comes out this day." The order of the governor and council, and these entries by Sewall, contain the only contemporary allusions to the contraband publication which have come down to the present time. Other diaries of that early period still extant, though few in number, fail to mention it, so far as I can learn. Presumably, in accordance with the order, copies of the sheet were called in after they had been printed, which will account for the extreme rarity of the newspaper.

During the generation just before the issue of this pioneer sheet, among persons accustomed to the use of the pen, it was not unusual to write long letters containing items of public interest rather than of personal news, and to send them through private hands to friends or kinsfolk living in other colonies, or in England. Such communications were called "news letters" or "letters of news," and it was expected by the writers that they would be read in a wider circle than that of the family fireside. I have seen several such letters, which in their day had been filed and indorsed "Publick Occurrences."

Among the Massachusetts archives (XXXV, 83) at the state house is a broadside entitled "The Present State of New-English Affairs," which, late in the autumn of 1689, was published "to prevent false reports." It is printed in two columns on one side only of the sheet, and gives extracts from three letters of Increase Mather, then in England, on questions of public interest and importance to the colony of the Massachusetts bay. This broadside bears the imprint, "Boston: Printed and sold by Samuel Green, 1689," and it evidently took the place of a manuscript news-letter, so common in those times. The fact is significant as showing a phase of journalistic evolution, which began with the written letter, and then developed into a sheet like the one just mentioned. It was also a forerunner of "Public Occurrences, both Foreign and Domestick," which would have been issued monthly, if the authorities had not interfered and stopped the publication.

BY THE

GOVERNOUR & COUNCIL

WHEREAS some have lately presumed to Print and Disperse a Pamphlet, Entituled, Publick Occurrences, both Foreign and Domestick Boston, Thursday, Septemb 25th 1690 Without the least Privily or Countenance of Authority

The Governour and Council having had the perusal of the said Pamphlet, and finding that therein is contained Reflections of a very high nature: As also sundry doubtful and uncertain Reports, do hereby manifest and declare their high. Repentment and Difallowance of said Pamphlet, and Order that the same be Suppressed and called in, strictly forbidding any person or persons for the future to Set forth any thing in Print without Licence first obtained from those that are or shall be appointed by the Government to grant the same.

By Order of the Governour & Council

Isaac Addington, Secy

Boston, September 29th. 1690

Chief Justice Samuel Sewall, in his Diary (I, 332-333), makes two references to the publication, and in the first entry tells the reason why it gave offense, as follows:

Sept 25 (1690). A printed sheet entituled Publick Occurrences comes out, which gives much distaste because not Licensed; and because of the passage referring to the French King and the Maquas (Mohawks).

Oct 1. Print of the Governour and Council comes out showing their disallowance of the Publick Occurrences.

Oct 2. Mr (Cotton) Mather writes a very sharp letter about it.

This act of suppression probably for some years retarded any attempt to start another newspaper, and it was not until April 24, 1704, that one was established on a permanent basis. It was known as "The Boston News-Letter," formerly considered the earliest newspaper printed on the American continent, and was continued for more than 70 years. In the issue of May 5, 1707, there is a publisher's advertisement, which refers to the paper as a "Publick Letter of Intelligence for both Foreign and Domestick Occurrences," showing the continuity of the name and the probable traditions in regard to these various methods of spreading the news among interested persons.

Samuel A. Green.