

The Worden Surname from Peter Worden of Yarmouth, to 1850

by

Gilbert S. Bahn, Ph.D.

Greatly revised version of the 1982 manuscript, Oliver Norton Worden's Family

Created with the collaboration of Patricia Warden

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Peter Worden I in England

Upon occasion, an author is faced with restating facts assembled by a particular someone else. All that can be done in the way of recognition is to acknowledge the source with appreciation for the research effort behind it. This is to say that the real contribution of the researcher has been in the assemblage of the facts, not in the literary manner of their presentation. So long as the due credit is given, it is not unseemly for someone else to further the dissemination of the facts. Such is the case as regards the origin of Peter Worden of Yarmouth. Peter was researched in England and reported in *Wordens Past* by George L Bolton. What facts follow are essentially Bolton's findings.

Peter Worden was the youngest of three brothers, and he was born c1580 (Bolton said c1576). He was surely born by 1582, when he was recorded, in very early years, as a burgess. According to Marjorie Schunke, "a burgess was a freeman renting land worth 40 shillings annually, and entitled to vote and hold office in local government." How it came about that adult males who were burgesses were entitled to register their minor sons as burgesses is not clear, but the entitlement did prevail, and was of economic advantage when the minor sons grew to adulthood. It thus appears that the right to vote was hereditary. Yeomen (small land owners) could serve on jury duty, but could not vote. Burgesses were of the gentleman class, and had the right to wear a coat of arms. They stood just below the nobility. However, because primogeniture prevailed, younger sons might end up with little except the title of burgess.

Peter's father was Robert Worden, who was born in 1534 and died in 1580 - notably, when Peter was very young. Peter's mother was Isabel Worthington. Peter was born in Clayton, Lancashire, England. Clayton is a few miles south of the city of Preston. Preston lies on the Ribble River, close to its mouth on the Irish Sea. Clayton lies on the road south to the city of Warrington, which lies on the Mersey River, close to its mouth on the Irish Sea. The road is the ancient Roman Road from London. Preston has been a trading center from ancient times, with an important agricultural market. Early industries were woolen weaving, linen weaving, and glovemaking. It was on the Guild Rolls at Preston that the Wordens were recorded as burgesses. These rolls were made at intervals of 20 years. In 1582, William Worden, who was Robert's oldest son (and chief inheritor under primogeniture), James, the middle son, and Peter were on the rolls for the first time, all under 13 years of age. They were out-burgesses, meaning that they did not reside in Preston, but were enjoying inheritance from a forebear who had earned the rank of burgess as a resident of Preston.

There is no intervening record of Peter until the Guild Rolls of 1602. Bolton has presumed that Peter was educated at Leyland Grammar School. Leyland lies very close to Clayton, to the west. The 1602 rolls showed Peter of course after William but before his older brother James, and then James with a son whose first name apparently has become illegible over time. The 1622 rolls showed William as a gentleman, with sons James, William, and Richard, and then, after a separation, Peter with son Peter (Peter I and Peter II in America; Peter Sr and Peter Jr in Bolton's terminology). Note that if Peter was born between 1576 and 1580, he was already 22 to 26 in 1602, that is, a young adult.

Sometime between February 1603 and March 1604, Peter married widow Margaret Grice Wall. Margaret was born c1570 (estimated as 1568-1572). She was the mother of five children by her first husband, Anthony Wall, who died 24 Apr 1601. Margaret had a substantial dower from her first husband, substantial enough to be involved in some sort of court action brought in 1606 (a reference important in establishing her marriage to Peter).

Thus it may be suggested that there may have been certain pragmatic aspects to the attraction between Peter and Margaret. She needed a stepfather for her children, and he needed capital wherewith to go into business, so as to make a living suitable to a gentleman. Nevertheless, this was not just a marriage of convenience. To Peter and Margaret were born three children, a daughter Elizabeth, a daughter Bridget, and Peter Jr. Margaret died early in 1612. Peter Jr was born in 1609. With the marriage occurring in 1603-4, let it roughly be estimated that Elizabeth was born c1605 and Bridget c1607. Bridget died in 1628, and that is all that is known about her; obviously, she died at an early age, perhaps in childbirth in a marriage not yet discovered.

Bolton is not positive on the point, being very responsibly careful to not take implication for fact, but it appears quite certain that when Elizabeth had an illegitimate child before marriage, this child was John Lewis, whose name comes up below. The father was an Anglican priest of quite considerable notoriety named John Lewis. Elizabeth subsequently married Hugh Swansey, bore him three sons (1630, 1632, and 1635), and died along with the third son in 1635.

If Margaret was born c1570 and then married c1590, that suggests, roughly, that the five Wall children were born c1591, c1593, c1595, c1597, and c1599, making the oldest about twenty years of age when she died in 1612. Peter apparently did not marry again after Margaret's death; it seems likely (altho not positive) that some evidence of a second marriage would have emerged from Bolton's research, had there been one. [It is only certain that Peter left no widow when he died in 1639.] One can only hypothesize on extended family composition, and the employment of domestic help, as the years went by, but in 1612 there were eight offspring of Margaret, ranging in age from about twenty down to Peter Jr at three. Peter's role as stepfather and father is the biggest gap in his record in England.

After Margaret's death, about a quarter century went by while Peter operated as a small businessman in Preston. In October 1617 he leased space in Preston's town hall (variously termed moothall and guildhall). Bolton has suggested that the few available references to Peter's business associates point toward Peter's participation in the cloth trade. This is bolstered by the fact that from 1628 to 1634 Peter served (acting in deputy capacity) as County Aulnager, that is, inspector of cloth to enforce standards of width and length.

A plague hit Preston in November 1630. Whether by swift reaction, or prior motivation, Peter escaped by having returned to Clayton for his residence. By this time, Peter Jr had reached the age of 21, and likely was assistant in his father's business. While Preston recovered from the plague, Peter Jr may have become the virtual shopkeeper there, while Peter Sr managed the business from his home in Clayton. Anyway, about 1631 Peter Sr bought and resold (apparently at a good profit) a large quantity of wine, working out of his home, and when he lost his deputy appointment as County Aulnager in 1634 he was referred to as "Peter Worden of Clayton, Gent."

It is not known when Peter Jr married, but it was in England. Nor is his wife's maiden name known, only her given name of Mary. She is estimated to have been born c1614. Bolton has placed Peter Sr and the others in England as late as 1636. Presumably, it was just about then that Peter Jr married Mary, and the decision was made to emigrate to America. Thus it appears that there was some sort of spirit of adventure involved. Bolton has suggested that knowledge of the settlement situation in Massachusetts may have come to Peter Sr from the Standish family of Duxbury, which is another suburb, so to speak, of Preston. Bolton was not able to demonstrate a connection between the Standish family of Duxbury and the famous Myles Standish.

Anyway, the motivation for migration appears surely to have been economic. There is no evidence of hard times in the business community at Preston after recovery from the plague. There is no evidence of religious motivation to emigrate, such as the Pilgrims had. The appeal of the New World must have been strong. What appears to this author as the most striking feature of the endeavor is that Peter Jr was not the leader, nor the partner. By the terms of the will of Peter Sr, it appears that all of the property was his up until his death. Peter Jr has left no evidence of importance of his own during his father's lifetime; he was his father's subordinate. Thus it was a man aged around sixty who made the decision to emigrate. Peter Jr, being the very youngest in the run of eight of his mother's children, may very easily have grown up expecting to be directed by his elders, a most complaisant companion and helper. If that picture is valid, then the focus swings to his wife Mary: she must have been born with a spirit of adventure. When Peter Sr weighed emigration, she must have been the one who said, "Wonderful; let us go."

So they came to America, probably in 1637, in a small ship whose passenger list most likely will never turn up. It has been suggested that they were first at Lynn, because others who came to Cape Cod earlier than they had been first at Lynn. More likely they landed directly at Yarmouth, and there made some sort of accommodation with the Indians, and settled in, to become subsistence farmers. That, however, does not make good sense. Peter Sr must have expected to develop a business at Yarmouth port. Whereas there is no inventory at hand for his estate, the only clue lies in his will, concerning the keeping of goats and calves. Perhaps he intended to develop a business in livestock, for provisioning ships which anchored at

Yarmouth. Perhaps he intended to refine salt. Perhaps he envisioned salting codfish for European consumption. It is not easy to picture a successful English businessman turning to the raising of saltmarsh hay and cranberries for a living. But with his early death (about a year and a half after arrival), his son was left to go on as a subsistence farmer, and it was in the next generation that Dr Samuel emulated Peter Sr's enterprise, and pulled up his own stakes and moved on for greater prosperity.

Peter Worden I in America

Cape Cod was part of the Plymouth Colony, but Peter Sr may have been unaware of this. He may have believed that there was no established claim over the lands there as such, only the crown's claim of English sovereignty. Thus he may have believed, erroneously, that he could obtain title to land simply by dealing with the Indians. Very shortly before his death the Plymouth Colony held a Court of General Assistance to deal with land titles at Yarmouth. Four persons there were "excepted against," meaning that they did not hold title from the Colony, and thus were, in a legal sense, squatters. The four were named as "Old Worden, Burnell, Wright, Wat Deville." In Wordens Past, in May 1996, George L Bolton and Peter R Worden (hereafter GLB/PRW) located the land occupied by Peter, at what is now called Yarmouth Port. Specifically, they said that the location was "between Hallet's Mill Pond and Dennis Pond, near to the Yarmouth railway station." This was based upon a chain of conditions, as follows: According to Plymouth Court Records for 14 May 1648, Captain Myles Standish had been authorized to hold hearings over title disputes at Yarmouth. One of the parcels involved had been sold by Peter Jr to Robert Dennis. This parcel was in the West Fields. The West Fields were at Yarmouth Port, and the location is definable on maps. Undoubtedly the land which Dennis bought of Peter Jr was part of the original holding of Peter Sr. Undoubtedly this holding was where Peter Sr resided when he wrote his will 9 Feb 1639 and died within the following month, and where he was buried. Insofar as the court hearing was concerned, Dennis's title was cleared, which in turn means that Peter Jr had held valid title when he sold to Dennis.

Of the other three men who were "excepted against," GLB/PRW have shown that Burnell and Wright had been previously at Lynn, along with those settlers at Yarmouth Port who did hold valid titles from the Plymouth Colony. Lack of any evidence that Peter had been first at Lynn is not compelling, but it strongly supports the presumption that he came directly to Yarmouth from England. Possibly Wat Deville came with him, but this is immaterial. If he came in 1637, he was the first settler at Yarmouth.

The people who came down from Lynn would not have been able to say to the Indians, "Get out of our way. We have title from the Colony, which has title from the King." They would have had to buy off the Indians just as Peter had to do. No wonder Peter's claim got accepted eventually, and no wonder that he could not be dislodged from where he had chosen to set down.

Consider what it means to have come directly from England. The family evidently comprised four persons, Peter Sr, Peter Jr and wife Mary, and John Lewis, grandson of Peter Sr, John being about eleven years of age. The one great advantage of the group thus was that it included no little children. A second advantage - and this must have been known to Peter Sr - was that the Indians had previously cleared the land in the immediate area for agriculture. [Recall the story of the Indians teaching the Pilgrims to grow corn.] However, from shipboard in the harbor, with no assistance from anyone ashore, Peter Sr had to make contact with the local Indians, arrange for a purchase of land, complete the purchase with offloaded goods, erect some sort of temporary shelter, unload his possessions, and after some days release the ship to go on its way. Unfortunately, for a very long time, in the absence of George Bolton's research in England, "Old Worden" led to the belief that Peter Sr was a very old man, and this belief was apparently substantiated by his early death in America. Indeed, the death occurred so soon after he was "excepted against" that he was noted as deceased when the activity of the Court of General Assistance was recorded. It now appears that Peter, far from being the decrepit old man conjured up by the term "Old Worden" and by his early death, was an organized and commanding figure as he arrived at Yarmouth.

That Peter Jr sold the original landhold and relocated most likely had to do with changed circumstances. It does not suggest that Peter Sr located poorly for whatever business operation that he had in mind. Rather, it suggests that when Peter Jr, with no apparent talent for business, turned to farming, he sought out land better suited to farming.

The reference to "Old Worden" is important in demonstrating that only Peter Sr was involved in the question of land title. If it had been a case of pure squatting, Peter Jr would have been named also, as another adult male. Thus this bolsters the supposition that Peter Sr held some sort of document of title from the Indians. Whether valid or not, it was in his name alone.

The language of Peter Sr's will is not that of a man in decline with age, but rather it is that of a commander who has recognized a mortal condition. Marjorie Schunke wrote as follows of the will: "It is the first will printed in the Plymouth Court records. The original book of Barnstable County records is at Plymouth, but

it is almost illegible. However, a copy was made to remain in Barnstable Probate Court by some person with excellent handwriting."

"The Last Will and Testament of Peter Werden, of Yarmouth, ye elder, deceased, proved at ye General Court held at Plymouth, the fifth day of March, in ye xiiijth year of ye Reign of our Soverign Lord Charles, King of England, &c., 1638, by ye oathes of Mr. Nicholas Sympkins, Hugh Tillie & Giles Hopkins - as followeth, viz. -

"Be It Known unto all men to whome this doth or may concern, that I, Peter Werden, of Yarmouth, in New England, in Plymouth Patten, being very Sick, in this year of our Lord 1638, & on ye ninth day of February, do make my last Will to testify unto all that I, Peter Werden, do give and bequeath unto Peter Werden my only sonne, and sonne & heir, and in the presence of Nicholas Sympkins, Hugh Tillie & Giles Hopkins I do make him my whole Executor, To whome I do give all my lands, leases, tenements with goods movable and unmovable in the town of Clayton, in the county of Lankester, Likewise I do give unto Peter my son all my goods which I have at this present in New England. My Will is my son is to give John Lewis one nate Goate, also my Will is to give my Grand Child such money as is due for the Keeping of Goats and Calves until this day, and that my son is with the money to buy John a Kid or dispose of it otherwise for his use, Also one bed or bolster, three blankets, also my sonn is to have the tuition of my Grand child until he be at the age of one and twenty years of age, also my Will is he shall find him with meat, drink, and cloths, and at the three last years of the twenty-one years also to have forty shillings the years after and above, for to add to his stock with the sow-pig when the sow pigs. In witness we present set our hand. Peter Werden. Nicholas Sympkins, Hugh Tilly, Giles Hopkins."

Oliver Norton Worden procured a copy of the will, and in printing it he quoted the following report sent to himself: "Mr. Nicholas Sympkins, Hugh Tilly and Giles Hopkins were all deposed in open Court to this Will the fifth day of March, 1638, xiiijth Caroli. (See Court orders page 194.) Plymouth, ss., Feb. 27, 1868. The foregoing is a true copy from Plymouth Colony Records, vol. 1, part 1, page 33. Wm. S. Danforth, Reg." ONW added that it took Mr. Danforth about eight hours to prepare the copy from "very obscure writing."

Note first of the will that the year is stated Old Style; it is actually 1639 New Style. Note second that John Lewis is short of 18 years of age, and so necessarily born after February 1621 - which, of course, would have been practically dictated anyway by the estimate of c1605 for his mother's birth. With the preceding estimate of c1626 for John's birth, John would now be about 12, to arrive at 13 later in 1639. Peter Sr had set John to a responsible task of being goatherd and cowherd as he began his teens, but Peter was also cognizant that this was a job for doing which John was earning pay. So he was to be paid, and he was to have a kid of his own. In short, John was already to be established as a junior businessman. Note that this interpretation of the language of the will is different from a belief that it was Peter to whom money was owed by someone unknown, because Peter had become a goatherd and cowherd. Nonsense! From the standpoint of human interest, it is a loss that nothing further is known of John Lewis, the first of Peter's grandchildren. However, it is not a loss here in the genealogical sense; this work of following the proliferation of the Worden surname is enormous enough in size, and could not pursue the lines of the offspring of daughters.

Whereas Peter Sr died around sixty years of age, and in full vigor mentally, and within a month of writing his will, it must be presumed that he was stricken rather suddenly with a mortal illness, such as pneumonia. Because the will is so short of details, except as regards John Lewis, it presents no evidence of development of any business activity, nor of the scope of what Peter Jr inherited. Thus one is left to wonder whether Peter Jr tried for a time to pursue his father's business plan, or abruptly decided that he was not up to the task and so began forthwith upon removal to the present East Dennis. In conclusion of the treatment of Peter Sr, the author wishes to convey the impression that he was someone for descendants to be proud of: a younger son, with minor inheritance, who rose to prosperity as a merchant, obtained recognition as a gentleman, and acquired the wherewithal and was imbued with the ambition to bring the Worden name to America, on his own terms.

Peter Worden II

As mentioned in the treatment of Peter Sr, the name of Peter Jr was entered on the Preston Guild Rolls in 1622. It is not found again in available records until the will of Peter Sr. It next appears in court action on 2 Jun 1640, as noted in Plymouth Court Records, Vol 1, page 156, that "Nicholas Sympkins, Peter Werden, and William Chase are graunted a warrant to attach and divide the goods of one Philip Woodall, left in said Nicholas Sympkin's hands, who is departed this government some tyme since, being severally indebted to them and others, and to make satisfaction so farr as the said goods will extend, themselves and to others."

An ancient sketch map of the East Dennis area was reproduced in History of Old Yarmouth, published by its author, Charles F Swift, in 1884. The map shows the location of the land possessed there by Peter Jr, and it is the date of the map, 1644, which demonstrates that Peter Jr had removed to there from Yarmouth Port by that time.

In 1643, all males aged 16-60 able to perform military duty were enrolled "to provide a place of defense against sudden assault," and Peter Werden was among the 52 members of the Yarmouth Company in Aug 1643 as shown by the official returns of an actual examination and inspection made at that time. Marjorie Schunke gave as the reference for this Pierce's Colonial Lists of Plymouth and R.I. Colony. Whereas East Dennis was still a part of Yarmouth, this does not preclude arrival of Peter at East Dennis before this date.

Plymouth Court Records for 14 May 1648 have reference to a sale by Peter of some acreage to Robert Dennis. Captain Myles Standish had been authorized to hold hearings over title disputes. George L Bolton and Peter R Worden found that the record had been misinterpreted in the past, to indicate that Peter was then "accommodated" with relation to a title, but they found that the "accommodation" applied to someone else. There was no connection between Peter Sr being "excepted against" at Yarmouth Port in 1639 and Peter Jr owning land at East Dennis around 1648.

On 3 Jun 1652 Peter was fined for not appearing to serve on a grand inquest. Plymouth Court Records show that he did serve on a grand inquest in 1657, and took the required oath of fidelity.

On 5 Mar 1667, Peter and one William Lumpkin were both fined 10 shillings for causing a disturbance at the meeting house at Yarmouth on the Lord's Day. The offence was that of talking in a low voice during a religious service.

On 5 Apr 1669, William Twining of Eastham sold to Peter Werden of Yarmouth, for £8, land between Bound Brook and Stony Brook in Yarmouth. The same day, Peter transferred it to "his son" Kenelm Winslow II, apparently as dower with his daughter Mercy.

In her manuscript, Marjorie Schunke wrote as follows: "In 1675, Gov. Winslow of Plymouth led the white train-bands against the Narragansetts, and in 1676 King Philip was slain. I have no record of the persons in those expeditions, but the War tax for 1676 was very burdensome, the following being that of father and son: Peter Worden £8 2s 3d, Samuel Worden £5 1s 6d. Peter's is one of the largest in town."

The first child of Peter and Mary was a daughter named after her mother. Her birthdate has been given as 10 Feb 1639, and while the year is generally accepted, the month and day may be wrong, being just one day after the date of the will of her grandfather. Mary Jr married John Burgess 8 Sep 1657, and they had ten children.

The second child of Peter and Mary was Mercy, born c1640 and married 23 Sep 1667 to Kenelm Winslow II. They had seven children.

The third child of Peter and Mary was Martha, born c1643. She married Joseph Severence, and they had three children.

The fourth known child was Samuel, born in 1646, thus when Peter was aged 37 and Mary c32.

The last child, born 10 Feb 1648, has been identified as Esther, who died young.

Peter Jr prospered modestly well at Yarmouth, and left lands with dwelling house valued at £500, and personal property valued at about £140.

Peter wrote his will 9 Jan 1680. It began as follows: "I Peter Worden of the Towne of Yarmouth in the Collonie of New Plymouth in New England in America about seaventy one years of age being weake in body yett in perfect memory doe make this my last Will and Testament." He appended an extensive codicil to the will in July 1680, and even that had a postscripted "Memorandum." The memory seems to have become a little less than perfect as to organizing power. However, all of the terms made sense when sorted out, and the codicil was principally concerned with directions to son Samuel for the careful maintenance of the wife and mother, Mary.

It is rather difficult to envision the standards of those days so long ago and so different from today's. Most people had to live frugally, and property loomed immensely important, both as the basis of income and as items which income need not be spent to acquire. Few people worked for wages, except the self-employed, and what happened was that people did not think in terms of income as people with jobs do today. A blacksmith's forge and tools were the property requisite to his labors, for which he received income. A farmer's land and oxen and plow, etc. were his requisite property; a fisherman required boat, sails, nets, and so it went. The estate inventories which survive accounted for everything, usually in great detail altho such a phrase as "some old iron" turns up now and then. Disposition of an estate might be like a yard sale now, whether the items were indeed sold, or divided among children. The important point is that every item had some honest value, because it had utility represented by that value, depreciated however it might be from a comparable item brand new. Especially things of metal, and furniture, would pass from generation to generation, and the comfort of a household might depend upon its holdings of everyday furnishings, or lack thereof. Thus, what was left to a widow, or what she was entitled to, would greatly influence the sort of life she might have upon her husband's decease. Obviously, the essential requirement was that there be an estate to begin with, because as everyone knows, even "most" of "almost nothing" is very little indeed.

The reason for mentioning the foregoing truism is that the letter of the law was carried out faithfully even when the pains were scarcely worth the effort. However little there was had to be scrupulously accounted for, and divided as directed. Usually, however, real property comprised the bulk of the value of any estate which had substantial value. Obviously, one is not going to find the same sort of records (deeds and probate files) for penniless families as those which serve to define the families of ancient property holders. The first Wordens in America were sufficiently well off to appear in such records, and thus descendants have their story. One simply cannot know how those less well off fared. But one can presume that they survived in poverty, unrecorded, until some later generation became prosperous enough to leave an imprint on the record. So for an untold many, what can be said about the Wordens probably surpasses the best that might be observed if one could peer back across time at the less fortunate.

The dower principle was the law. One-third of a husband's real property was allocated to his wife's use for her lifetime. She could not dispose of the property, because she did not own it. If the property were being sold, she could deed away her dower right as part of the grant, along with the actual sale of what would be fully the heir's property upon her decease. This was not very complicated in the case of specific bequests, or of an only child. The heir owned a practical two-thirds and an ultimate one-third, while the widow temporarily "owned" one-third. If the widow waived her dower right (for whatever consideration), sale could be totally completed; if she did not waive, she retained the right despite the sale. There were some cases of double dower: a designated tract to a son encumbered by his mother's dower, and then upon his own death in advance of his mother's, dower right to his widow on the same tract. The situation could become

very complicated when a man died without a will, leaving several children, with their mother's dower extending as one-third over every parcel no matter how the estate was subdivided. So a wise man of property would select and designate the dower for his wife. And of course he could give her more for her lifetime than the one-third required by law, just so it would ultimately go to his heirs at law.

A woman could hold property in her own name, but if she were married, and then inherited, her husband had an interest in the inheritance, and she could not deed it away without his consent and signature. Likewise, the wife's dower right extended over every piece of real estate owned by her husband at any time during the marriage, so that during her lifetime her signature, to relinquish her dower right, was required whenever he sold a piece of property, or gave a piece to one of his children. Occasionally one may come across a deed without a wife's signature where this seems to imply that the wife had died, in the absence of definite knowledge that she was either living or deceased on that date. However, Worden deeds have turned up where the signature of the wife appears on a deed dated later than the date of one from which it is missing. One must assume that such a case represents an oversight, carelessness, or some implication that the dower right was perhaps of no practical worth under the particular circumstances.

Anyway, women were reasonably protected by dower rights if there was a sizeable estate in land. The husband could not evade the common law by converting his holdings into cash before his death and then freezing his wife out of fair distribution of the personal property. She was to have housing, and productive land (if there were any), and in simple arithmetic, if she personally had been living upon half of their income from the land, and was now reduced to living upon one-third, she had been reduced in circumstances by only one-third (because one-third divided by one-half is equal to two-thirds). In a household with several minor children, the dower right would amount to a larger share than, doubtless, the wife had personally been actually experiencing during the marriage. Only in the case of an only child would the wife seem to suffer in comparison.

The perspective of the foregoing is that practically nobody sold land and lived (for a time) off the proceeds. For one thing, land was wealth, and there was little other substantial wealth (except, for a few, in ships). For another, land, as already said, was the means to income. And finally, the encumbrances of dower rights made it less practical for anyone to sell land for cash in order to live off the proceeds. A buyer, presumably married, would be giving liquid assets for encumbered ones. So a widow with productive land at her disposal was not being deprived, as one might view it today, when she could not sell that land for cash. She could, of course, rent it to a tenant farmer.

With this background, the will and codicil of Peter Worden Jr can be examined, rearranged for the terms to be in the most comprehensible order, and with his "memorandum" inserted where he intended it to apply:

"I make my son Samuel Worden my whole and sole executor To whom I give all my lands upon the Necke Called Equinett Necke with all the priviledges thereto belonging To him and his heires and assignes forever with eight acres of land att the south sea, To the said Necke.

"I Give to my daughter Mary the wife of John Burgis, the one halfe of my forty acres of upland att the head of the lotts to her, her heires and assignes forever.

"I give to my daughter Martha the wife of Joseph Severns a peece of Marsh about three acres be it more or lesse lying att the head of the Marsh above John Burgis his ditch, during her Naturall life and after I give it to my son Samuell Worden to whom I likewise Give all the Cattle that hee hath bine possessed of by mee excepting two oxen.

"I give to my loveing wife Mary Worden the proffitts and improvements of my housing and lands and orchyards that I Now live upon during her Naturall life, both upland and Marsh with the land I bought of Mr. Allin and all my household Goods and Cattle [Memorandum: I except one Cow and Calfe that I have in Samuells hand.] for her support during her life and my will is that what of my goods and Cattle are left after

my wifes decease shalbe equally devided betwixt my three daughters Mary, Marcye and Martha. That my wife have att her owne disposall what ever shee can raise of my land and Cattle in the Improvement of them, during her life, for her support and if there be any overpluss, dispose of it to my Children as shee shall see need.

"I give to my son Samuell Worden all my housing and land that I Now live upon after his Mothers decease both upland and Marsh and orchyard and the land I bought of Mr. Allin, with all other lands due to mee from the Towne Not yett layed out or from the Country as procured by the Late warr with the Indians.

"Whereas I have in my will Given to my son Samuell all the Cattle that he hath bin Possessed of by mee, excepting two oxen my will is that as my son Samuell hath them principally for to doe the worke of family Plowing and Carting ec. soe likewise that he keepeth three steers more of my Cattle, and when he hath brought two of them to work suitable to supply the Rome of those above said two oxen. Then I Give one of the old oxen to my wife and the other to my son Samuell, and the third steer my son Samuell shall keep to the halves, hee to have one halfe and his Mother the other half.

"and my will is that my son Samuell still breake other of my steers during my wifes life to be in Reddynes to doe the work as above said, and att my wifes decease my will is that the two oxen that be then in Improvement shall Goe to my son Samuell with the house and land that my wife liveth on.

"likewise I give to my son Samuell my Gun and all my takleing for plowing and Carting and husbandry after my wifes decease and my son Samuell is to provide his Mother with fier wood dureing her life and likewise to provide hay for my Cattle during his Mothers life that is to say To Gett the hay mowed and made and Stacked and have the oxen and Cart in Reddynes for that end the stocke of Cattle to pay for the geting of there hay excepting Cart and oxen for draught.

"I give to my daughter Martha the wife of Joseph Severens all the Cattle and Goods, she is alreddy possessed of by mee with one Cow more att my decease and after her decease my will is that what of them are left shall fall to her two daughters Now liveing.

"Whereas my son Kenelme Winslow oweth me forty shillings I give him twenty shillings of it, and whereas my son John Burge oweth me thirty shillings I give him twenty of it, and likewise I give my Indian servant to my son Samuell after my wifes decease.

"I give to my son Samuell my best bedsteed and my trundle bedsteed.

"I give to my son Samuell my Chist and my Cloake.

"I give to my Son Samuell Worden all my estate In old England both Land and other estate that Came by my wife."

There are two inconsistencies. The upland given outright to Mary Burgis and the piece of marsh given for life to Martha Severens appear to be outlying portions of the lands Peter lived upon, and they were not specifically excluded from the lands whereof Mary was to enjoy the profits and improvements. Also, the one cow more to be given to Martha at Peter's decease subtracted from "all" the cattle that Mary was to hold for her support. But surely it was clear what Peter was directing, by the time he finished. And surely his wife was well provided for, getting the best of everything except Peter's good bed, and having Samuel charged with work of family plowing, carting, and so forth.

Peter's inventory is very interesting, with its detail concerning personal property. Before examining its contents in that regard, let consideration be given to land and to cash. One item reads, "an Interest in house and land and money in old England not knowing what it may be worth," and accordingly no sum is shown.

Another reads, "an house and land both upland and middow in the Towne of Yarmouth," and to this is allocated the sum of £500. There is no mention in the inventory of the separate lands allocated directly to Samuel on the neck of land that Peter called Equinett. As to money, there were debts due to the estate of £1 4 shillings 8 pence, debts due from the estate of £7 16 shillings 8 pence, and cash on hand of less than 14 shillings 9 pence. Wearing apparel and money were inventoried together at this latter amount for some unexplained reason, and "a considerable parte of the said money is at present in severall honest mens hands which money wee judge wilbe payed." When Mary died six years after Peter, her inventory included no cash at all, the only item in money being debts due to her estate of £1 7 shillings 6 pence. It is obvious that there was not much cash around, and wealth was not in spendable cash but in property for personal use and for profitable use.

It seems more interesting to consider Mary's inventory first, ahead of Peter's, because it shows what she was able to own in her own right, apart from Peter's provision that his household goods and cattle were only in dower trust for her use. The increase of Peter's livestock amounted to £9 15 shillings in "neate cattle" and to "one mare and half a coult." The rest of Mary's inventory consisted of clothing and a few household furnishings, and was not extensive. There was a big difference between what she owned, and what she enjoyed the use of during her widowhood. She divided her wearing apparel equally between her three daughters, and bequeathed the rest of her estate, after payment of debts, to her son-in-law John Burge.

Mary's household inventory:

neate cattle	9-15-00
one mare and half a coult	1-02-00
one feather bed	2-18-04
one rug and part of a coverlid	1-03-00
three blankets	1-05-00
one payer of sheets	13-00
one bolster and 2 pillow cotes and 1 blanket	16-00
one flock bed and 1 pillow	1-06-00
one skillet and 1 chambre pot	18-06
one fullian	5-00
3# and 1/2 cotton wool, 7# and 1/2 linin yarn	18-06
one Bible and a payer [sic] boddess	11-00
wearing apparel	3-16-06
one hood and scarf and waste coate and 2 aprons and gloves	12-03
one shift and hancerchers and head linin, stockings, shoes	
and kuff pines	1-03-00
remnants of searg, linin cloth and lasses and silk	2-19-02
debtes to the estate	1-07-06
	31-06-06

Peter's inventory is presented on the next page, exclusive of debts:

2 oxen 6 pounds, 8 cows 16 pounds	22-00-00
3 4 year old heiffers	6-00-00
1 three year old heiffer	1-05-00
7 yearlings att 12s a peece	4-04-00
three 3 years old steers att 1 pound-15s a peece	5-05-00
1 yeerling att 12	12-00
1 Cow and a Calfe with Joseph Severence	2-05-00
1 Mare 1 pound - and a horse 2 year old	2-00-00
2 sheep 10s and one Calf 2s-6d	12-06
10 smale swine att 5s a peece	2-06-00
in all sorts of Come	5-00-00
3 barrells of meat and butter and tallow	10-00-00
barrell of thine meate not Marchantable	12-00
1 bed and bolster and pillowes and three blankets	
one Rugg and one Cover lidd and two paire of sheets	8-00-00
one Flocke bed and bolster and pillowes and 3 [sheets?]	1-10-00
1 bedstead 2 pounds 1 trundle bedstead	2-05-00
1 Chest 10s, one Chest 16s, 1 Chest 4s	1-00-00
4 Chaires, eight shillings, one small table 1s,	
an old chest	10-00
2 spinning wheels and 2 paire of Cards	7-00
one Iron pott and pott hookes	10-00
2 paire of Iron tramell tonges and fier shovell	14-00
1 Great Iron Pott and Cover to it	1-05-00
one Iron kettle 4s, 1 brasse kettle 12s	16-00
1 frying pan and 1 brasse skillett	3-00
in pewter 12s, a brasse mortar and pestill	14-06
2 Cheines 15s, 3 axes, 1 hoe 8s	1-03-00
1 plow Copes and smale tooles	8-00
1 box Iron and a pewter bason	4-00
1 shave and Coulter and some old Iron	5-06
2 Iron pines and 4 Iron hoopes, 1 gun	1-00-06
in Flax and woole 2 pounds, ledd and salt	2-03-00
in Indian beanes and Tobacco and Cheese	2-10-00
in linnine and woolen yerne	2-10-00
in parte of a barrell of molasses	15-00
in wearing apparell and in Mony and Iron	14-09-00
in Tubbs, trayes, Cheese potts ec.	1-00-00
butter and hoggs fatt	1-10-00
Tubbs and barrells and pailles basketts and earthen Potts	1-16-00
3 horse kind att Cape Cod dead or alive wee know not	
2 year olds, 2 heiffers, 1 steer	3-15-00
2 bibles 12s and a pair of brasse scales 5s	17-00
2 meale seives and meale sackes	7-00
old barrells and old Lumber	12-00
in linnin yeam and woolen yern and paid for warping	1-17-06
in Mault and Rye	10-11-06
an Indian servant that Cost att first	4-10-00
in plow takeling and horse Cart and wheels	11-06
in powder and bulletts	3-00
an Interest in house and land and mony in old England	
not knowing what it may be worth	
an house and land both upland and middow	
in the Towne of Yarmouth	500-00-00

The inventory is all mixed up, apparently written in the order in which the appraisers came upon things on the premises. And apparently the Indian servant managed to stay out of sight until the task was nearly done. One could study the inventory to picture the furniture, the farming implements, the cooking utensils, etc. What stands out is the list of foodstuffs; Peter and Mary were well provisioned in the winter of 1680-1. For the times, they had good lives.

Peter's will was proved 3 Mar 1681, " before the Court of his Majesty held att Plymouth the third day of March Anno. dom. 1680/1 on the oathes of Mr. John Freeman and Silas Saers." The inventory of his estate was made by John Miller, John Hall Jr, and Paul Saers [sic] 21 Jan 1681. On 21 Mar 1681 Samuel and his mother made oath as to the truth of the inventory.

Mary survived Peter by six years. Her will was dated 6 Mar 1686 and she died 25 Mar 1687. The will is to be found in Mayflower Descendants, Vol 3, page 201, and in the Barnstable County Probate Records. John Burge was executor, and witnesses were Samuel Sears, Silas Sears, and Governor Thomas Hinckley. Mary's inventory was taken by Paul Sears and John Hall, and sworn to by John Burge 31 May 1687 in Prerogative Court in Barnstable.