

American Antiquarian Society

Manuscript Collections

NAME OF COLLECTION:

Council for New England, Records, 1622-1623

LOCATION:

~~Council Room~~
Folio vols. "C"

SIZE OF COLLECTION:

1 folio volume (169 p., 100 blank)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON COLLECTION:

For further notes on this collection, see pamphlet with this volume, Clarence S. Brigham, *The Records of the Council for New England*. See also accompanying sheet for additional information.

SOURCE OF COLLECTION:

The book was discovered about 1875 in the private collection of a British family, and eventually purchased by Frederick Lewis Gay, who donated it to the AAS in 1912. (For further information, see AAS Proceedings, October 1875.)

COLLECTION DESCRIPTION:

The Council for New England, the reorganized Plymouth branch of the Virginia Company, was incorporated by a charter issued by King James I on 3 November 1620 for "the planting, ruling, and governing of New England, in America." The Council was granted all the land, from sea to sea, within the 40° and 48° N latitude and controlled the area by issuing all orders, commissions, patents, and grants of land for the purposes of division at a profit. The Council surrendered its charter in 1635.

This manuscript is the original book of minutes of all the meetings of the Council for New England for the period 31 May 1622 to 29 June 1623, and is the oldest extant documentary record relating to all of New England. The volume, entitled "The booke of Orders", contains a list of members present, with frequent references to Sir Ferdinando Gorges (1565?-1647) and his election as Governor, and to Sir Samuel Argall (-1640?), the issues to be discussed, the votes, and frequent marginal notations. It is believed that clerk William Boles (-) entered the records at the close of each meeting from rough notes or abstracts of the votes as licenses for ships to go to New England, the granting of patents, Indian trouble caused by the ruthlessness of one "Captain Jones" along "Capecodd", and the division of New England into twenty parts among the patentees in June 1623 with a list of lots, the first of which was drawn by the King. The list somewhat alters previous suppositions regarding this division. Included also are orders concerning the apprenticing of youths and poor children to be sent to New England, punishments for contempt of authority, the granting of bills to "Adventurers," and the control of fishing in the area.

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Publications of Material in this Collection

The records of the Council for 1622-1623 and 1631-1638 were known in the 1860s only from a transcribed copy apparently made after the 1630s. This transcription was the source of the publication entitled, "Records of the Council for New England," PAAS, April 1867, p. 53-131.

In the 1870s, the original manuscript volume of records for 1622-1623 surfaced, and Charles Deane compared the published version with this original. His additions and corrections may be found in Charles Deane, "Records of the Council for New England," PAAS, October 1875, p. 49-63.

The original volume for 1622-1623 that constitutes this collection was given to AAS in 1912. For a discussion of the Council, the manuscripts, and the history of their publication, see Clarence S. Brigham, "The Records of the Council for New England," PAAS, 22 (1912), p. 237-247.