

The three novels that compose "New England Genesis" cover the first century of American history as seen through the eyes of three generations of an actual immigrant family named Hull. Through the experiences of this one family the trilogy chronicles the origins, growth, and consequences of the New England experiment from 1630 to 1720.

NEW ENGLAND GENESIS: A Trilogy

By Clint Hull

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NEW ENGLAND GENESIS



A TRILOGY

CLINT HULL

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Occupying Powers

A Novel of World War II and the Occupation of Japan

Author's Note

The three novels that compose *New England Genesis* depict that period in history from the founding of the Massachusetts Colony through Queen Anne's War as seen through the eyes of three generations of an immigrant family. The first novel, *New England Dreams*, is based on the life of the Reverend Joseph Hull, an Anglican minister who brought his congregation of 115 souls to Weymouth in 1635. The second novel, *New England Wakes*, deals with Joseph's son Tristram and his involvement with the first Quakers to arrive in Boston in 1656. *New England Rising*, the third novel, covers the lives and times of Tristram's sons Joseph and John, starting with King Philip's War in 1675 and ending with the death of Joseph in 1720. This first century in New England history evolved from a dream, or rather a variety of dreams. A gradual awakening to the realities of the Great Migration led inexorably to a rising dissatisfaction with and resistance to foreign rule. Hence the genesis of my title for this trilogy.

Clint Hull

Yarmouth Port, Massachusetts, 2020

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NEW ENGLAND WAKES

A Novel of Tristram Hull and
the First Quakers

One

“The devil is plying his trade here in Boston.”

(Massachusetts Colony, July 1656)

“The devil is plying his trade here in Boston.”

Tristram Hull caught the words as he entered the tavern at the Red Lyon Inn, an ordinary located near the docks in the north end of town. The speaker was John Norton, a middle-aged man in clerical garb. Tristram had seen him before at the inn but knew little about him, only that he was a minister and an outspoken supporter of Governor Endicott.

“I thought we put the devil to rest when we hanged Ann Hibbins on the Common a month ago,” a rum merchant said. His neatly trimmed red beard and tailor-made clothes attested to his status in the community. As the master of two merchant ships Tristram had business with him on occasion.

“A fine show it was, that hanging,” a swarthy laborer from the docks said. “Annie shed nary a tear when they put the noose around her neck.”

Nicholas Upsall, proprietor of the Red Lyon, spotted Tristram and motioned to him to join the group at the long table. He walked with a slight limp, which he attributed to age. A full apron served as his badge of office. Without being asked, he drew a tankard of ale for Tristram, then sat down beside him at the table.

“Ann Hibbins struck me a woman of wisdom and discretion,” he said. “Her husband William, God rest his soul, was a deputy and assistant to the governor. I can’t believe that she practiced witchcraft or consorted with the devil.”

“I knew her husband,” the rum merchant said. “As a magistrate he voted to condemn Goodie Jones for witchcraft. It’s ironic that his widow should be hanged for the same offense.”

“You’d think as deputy governor, Bellingham could have saved her,” Upsall said. “She was his sister, after all.”

“He tried,” the merchant said, “but Endicott persuaded the General Court to overrule the magistrates and find her guilty. I’m sure his death sentence made for bad blood between them.”

“Annie sued me once,” the laborer said. “Claimed I charged her too much for some work I did. She was excommunicated for treating workers the way she did. I can’t say I shed any tears when she was strung up.”

“Maybe she deserved to be excommunicated,” Upsall said. “but not to be hanged as a witch. Her only fault was that she had more wit than those who accused her.”

“A woman shouldn’t put herself forward as she did,” Norton said. “But it’s not Ann Hibbins I have in mind when I speak of the devil. I mean the two Quaker women who arrived on the *Swallow*. I thought we were safe at this far remove from that heretical sect. Now that their emissaries have arrived on our shores, we must impress on them that they are no more welcome here than in England, where many of their number have been whipped and branded for preaching their poisonous doctrines. Bellingham wisely put them in jail.”

“They broke no law by coming to Boston,” Upsall said. “What have they done to warrant being imprisoned?”

“It’s not what they’ve done,” Norton said. “It’s what they plan to do that should concern us all. They brought with them a hundred pamphlets filled with their blasphemies. Bellingham had every last one of them burned.”

“They made a lovely fire,” the laborer said. “The executioner tossed them into the flames one at a time, like he was giving each pamphlet one last chance to repent.”

Tristram nudged Upsall. “They say Bellingham did all this. Where is Governor Endicott?”

“He’s in Salem for at least a fortnight,” Upsall said. “Bellingham is acting as governor.”

“I confess my ignorance of Quaker doctrine,” the rum merchant said. “I’ve heard that they refuse to swear an oath or remove their hats in court.”

“Those are minor matters,” Norton said. “They claim that men and women can communicate directly with God through their own inner spirit.”

“I can see why they’re in jail,” Tristram muttered.

Norton gave him a scornful look. “That’s where they belong. At my behest all of the jail windows have been boarded, lest good God-fearing people be infected by contact with them.”

Upsall turned to a young man in seaman’s garb who had remained silent throughout this exchange. “You serve aboard the *Swallow* and had some contact with the women. What’s your opinion of them?”

“I steered clear of them,” the sailor said. “I couldn’t stomach all that jabber about inner voices. Otherwise, they seemed decent enough.”

“Decent in manner perhaps,” Norton said, “but deluded in the belief that this inner voice, of which you speak, is the voice of God. The devil is behind such blasphemy.”

“We’re back to the devil!” Upsall said. “I have some work to do.”

He rose and motioned to Tristram to follow him. They left the group at the table to their talk of devils and witches.

* * *

Tristram had frequented the tavern at the Red Lyon Inn since he acquired his first ship, a coastal schooner called *The Catch*; and he regarded Upsall as a second parent. His own father had returned to England some eight years ago and been caught up in the turmoil of the civil war. As an ordained Anglican minister he was keeping a low profile at a safe distance from the Lord Protector in London. Upsall spoke little about himself, but Tristram had gleaned a few facts about his past. He came to New England with the Winthrop company and for a number of years operated an inn in Dorchester, where he sheltered Roger Williams briefly after he was banished from Massachusetts. Now with his wife Dorothy he managed the Red Lyon in Boston. Built of red brick and wood, the inn had three stories and boasted twenty-four windows. A two-story addition housed the tavern. Unlike the Blew Anchor and State’s Arms, which catered to magistrates and deputies to the General Court, patrons of the Red Lyon were chiefly workers, tradesmen, and sailors.

Upsall led the way through a public room, where Dorothy was setting up for the evening meal. They entered a small parlor used by ladies for their talk after dinner. If an itinerant fiddler performed in

the public room, they could crack the door and enjoy the music. Now the parlor was deserted.

“You were wise to stay out of that talk in the tavern,” Upsall said as they took their seats. “I’m concerned about the two Quaker women. Given Norton’s influence, I fear they are being ill treated.”

“I know very little about Norton,” Tristram said. “Who is he?”

“He came to Boston three years ago from Ipswich. Endicott often calls on him to defend orthodox positions before the General Court.”

“Why does he hate Quakers so much?”

“I think he’s afraid of what they stand for. The idea that God speaks directly to everyone who is willing to listen must be anathema to a minister.”

“How long will they be in jail?”

“That’s hard to say. Bellingham has accused them of being a threat to the peace, but he needs some legal grounds to banish them from the colony.”

“Maybe he’s waiting for Endicott to get back from Salem.”

“I think he wants to take action himself. He hasn’t forgiven Endicott for hanging Ann Hibbins, and he’d like to be governor again. This is his chance to win favor with the magistrates and deputies to the court.”

“How are you involved in all this?” Tristram asked.

“I just want to make sure they have enough to eat. But I’d also like to know why they came to Boston. They must have known what to expect.”

“And how do you propose to find that out?”

“I’ve arranged to visit them at the prison tonight. I want you to come with me.”

Tristram half expected the answer. “I thought no one was allowed to speak to them.”

“The turnkey is a friend of mine.”

“Why do you need me? You could go by yourself.”

“I hear the younger one, Mary Fisher, can be quite abrasive. She might be more willing to talk to a man her own age. You can eat at the inn before we go, and I’ll put you up for the night when we get back.”

“I never refuse a good meal,” Tristram said, “but I prefer my cabin aboard ship to a room in your garret.”

“An upstairs chamber is free,” Upsall said, “and Dorothy will make sure the bedding is fresh. Will you come with me?”

“I’ll admit that I’m curious. Do they really talk with God?”

“I believe they listen and wait for God to speak to them,” Upsall said. “But apart from their religious beliefs, I admire their dedication and courage.”

“What good does dedication and courage do them if they’re not allowed to preach?”

“That’s what I want to find out. I need to know why Bellingham and Norton are so fearful of them. I suspect they’re still clinging to Winthrop’s dream of fashioning a church and a government that will serve as a model for the world. But his dream died with him. Many of those who are newly arrived in New England have other goals and different dreams.”

“One thing hasn’t changed,” Tristram said. “The authorities are still eager to banish anyone who holds different religious beliefs.”

“I’m waking to a conviction that what a man believes is his own concern,” Upsall said, “something between him and God. A number

of men feel as I do. These Quakers may find ready ears for their message.”

“If every man has to establish his own connection with God, the result will be chaos,” Tristram said. “We need ministers to guide us along the path to salvation. I’m my father’s son in that respect.”

“I met your father once when he was a deputy from Hingham. He stopped by my ordinary in Dorchester on his way to Boston. He struck me as a tolerant man with a thirst for justice. I’m sure he’d be concerned about the fate of these women, even if he couldn’t agree with what they preach. I take it he’s still in England.”

“He has a post at Launceston in Cornwall. In his last letter he spoke of attending the trial of the Quaker George Fox, who is in prison there. He was quite impressed by the man, so you’re right. He would be concerned.”

“Then you’ll go with me tonight?” Upsall asked.

“I look forward to one of Dorothy’s fine meals.”

* * *

Leaving the inn, Tristram crossed a courtyard framed on two sides by the barn and the brewing house. He paused to drink at the pump before relieving himself in the necessary next to the pigsty, then proceeded briskly down Richmond Street to the wharf where his second ship, the *Hopewell*, was undergoing minor repairs in preparation for a voyage to the West Indies.

As he walked, he questioned the wisdom of involving himself with the Quakers. He was no Puritan, though he was obliged as a freeman to join the church in Yarmouth and listen to the minister’s cautionary sermons. His father had taught him to look to heaven

rather than hell, to fear God rather than the devil. Was that what Quakers meant by an inner voice?

He had reached the waterfront. Even with the sails on her foremast and mainmast lashed to the yardarms and those on her mizzenmast furled, the *Hopewell* presented an imposing sight. He was part owner of the barque and looked forward to the day when she would belong entirely to him. Another voyage or two to the West Indies should enable him to reach that goal.

In the master's cabin he rummaged through the papers on his table until he found the letter from his father. It was headed, "St. Mary Magdalene, Launceston, Cornwall, 12 April 1656." He passed over family news about a pending move to St. Buryan, focusing his attention on the last paragraph.

"I recently attended the trial of George Fox who, as you may have heard, is a principal founder of that sect commonly known as Quakers. He has been in prison in Launceston since January. As a minister of the Gospel, I find some of their teachings naive and primitive. But their beliefs were not a major issue at his trial. Charged with distributing papers that disturb the peace and refusing to swear an oath, he was found guilty and returned to prison. I was impressed by his simple dress, his carriage, his knowledge of Scripture, and his manner in addressing the court. He managed somehow to assume the role of magistrate and place everyone else on trial. I know not whether he has divine inspiration, as he claims; but I feel certain that we shall hear more of these Quakers in the future. Your loving Father, Rev. Joseph Hull."

Why would his father express admiration for a man who saw no need for ministers? Had he begun to waver in his loyalty to the Church of England? More likely, his favorable opinion of George

Fox was inspired by the same spirit of tolerance that brought about his frequent moves after he came to New England.

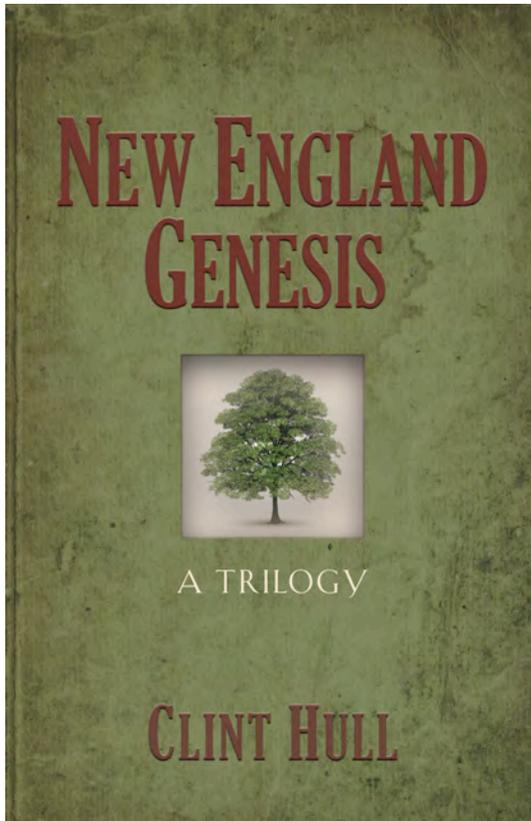
Tristram was eleven at the time, and the voyage across the Atlantic had instilled in him a love for the sea and ships that remained strong after two decades. He was happiest at sea, where he could commune directly with God and nature. He had at least that much in common with the Quakers. Odd that this letter from his father should coincide with their arrival in New England, an omen perhaps of things to come. His father was ever alert for such portents. Tristram was more attuned to signs of upcoming calms and tempests; whether at sea or in his marriage.

Strange also that the two Quakers were women. Could religious conviction inspire a woman to become a missionary? Why would George Fox entrust such a vital task to women? Tristram laughed as he tried to picture his wife as a missionary. With five children in the house Blanche had no time for preaching. Yet she had managed to find time for John Gorham, the most recent instance of her misbehavior.

Tristram had accepted or overlooked previous rumors of her misdeeds while he was at sea, but this affair with Gorham was too public to be ignored. It was termed an assault, yet the magistrate who fined them both seemed to have some doubts. Tristram had first learned about Gorham some weeks earlier, but repairs to the *Hopewell* and preparations for his next voyage took him to Boston before he could resolve the issue. He wanted to settle the matter before he sailed to the West Indies. If the facts pointed to Blanche's complicity, he was still undecided whether to punish or forgive her. Though he was inclined by nature toward leniency, the time might have come to take a firmer stand. He did not consider himself a

model of virtue, but his lapses were few and distant. And he had to think of the children.

Upsall was generally aware of his problems at home, but Tristram had not mentioned this latest instance involving Gorham. He might raise the issue after they returned from their visit to the Quakers. He realized that his interest in them was piqued not so much by the new religion as by the fact that they were women in trouble. That was what had drawn him to Blanche thirteen years earlier. What he learned at the prison might cast some light on his own circumstances.



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