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ENVIRONMENTAL IDEALS
AND LANDSCAPE CHANGE
AT SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS
1626 to 1660

An
Abstract of A
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The following thesis tests the hypothesis that environmental ideals are made visible in the cultural landscape. Salem, Massachusetts in the early seventeenth century is used as an example to analyze the influence that immigrant environmental ideals have on the cultural landscape.

The methodology used to achieve the objectives of the thesis is a humanistic assessment of environmental images and cultural landscape change. Library research in archival collections was the primary tool used to determine the initial and changing character of the cultural landscape. Scholarly works were consulted to arrive at an interpretation of the colonial mind. Primary sources were used whenever possible to reconstruct the environmental images held by the different immigrant groups.

From its first settlement in 1626 until the start of its commercial importance in 1660, the cultural landscape of Salem underwent many changes which reflected the landscape preferences of two major English immigrant groups: settlers from the West Country of England, and later, Puritans from East Anglia. Each immigrant group came to Salem with a vision of the territory they would soon be settling. Both groups held varying conceptions of the ideal community, proper land utilization schemes, and the quality of the New England environment. As a result, each group left its particular imprint in the cultural landscape of Salem.

The first group of settlers from the West Country migrated to Salem to undertake the establishment of a

settlement strongly influenced by economic forces. The West Country settlers desired to establish an agricultural and fishing community in the New World. On the other hand, the East Anglians came to Salem to establish a sacred community in the wilderness of New England. As the two different groups of immigrants attempted to create an ideal community, a merging of cultural landscape traits became visible in Salem's landscape.

As the settlers became more acquainted with their new environment, a new order was brought to the landscape. The growing familiarity with environmental conditions resulted in the realization that coastal communities such as Salem were better suited for commercial and maritime activities rather than agricultural pursuits.

From 1626 to 1660 Salem was transformed from a traditional rural community to a commercial seaport. During the late 1630's geographic segregation began to occur between the two migrant groups as the West Country settlers moved out to their farmlands on a permanent basis, while the East Anglians remained on the main peninsula of Salem. As population grew and additional migrant groups arrived in Salem, further segregation occurred among the residents of the town. Separation of the different interest groups into autonomous towns resulted as each group attempted to establish its ideal landscape in the New World.