

Editor's Note:

By popular request, the following program, given by member George J. Hill, MD at the 2013 dinner in Washington D.C., is being published so all members can appreciate it.



THE BUGLER

NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL ORDER OF THE BLUE AND THE GRAY

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RECONCILIATION

Notes for a talk by

George J. Hill, M.D., D.Litt.

to the

National Order of the Blue and Gray

and

**Hereditary Order of the Descendants of the Loyalists and
Patriots of the American Revolution**

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**The Washington Club
Washington, D.C.
April 15, 2013**

Thank you, Madame President.

I appreciate the opportunity to share my thoughts on Reconciliation with our societies this evening.

I would first like to give you some good news. You may wonder if I am going to speak about reconciliation as my father, a small-town banker, thought of it. In his bank, no employee went home at the end of the day until the books were balanced – reconciled – and every penny was accounted for. If the till was short, the cashier would have to dip into his pocket to make up the difference. But no, that’s not the reconciliation that I am thinking of. And in the second place, there will be no test at the end of this talk. You can just sit back and listen.

I hope that others may wish to share their thoughts about reconciliation after I finish my remarks. This is a meditation, not a lecture.

My mother taught me never to pick a fight, and never to hate anyone. I learned from her the verse that is the keystone of Christian charity: “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another” (John 13:34).

My mother also taught me that “Sticks and stones may hurt my bones, but words can never hurt me.” Many of you recall these words, too. With them in my mind, I had strength to withstand taunting, at least some of the time. Boys will fight over little things. But the statement is only half true. Ill-chosen words can cut deeply, and be long remembered. On the other hand, carefully chosen words may lead to reconciliation, to a peaceful settlement, and to harmony.

My mother’s mother was the daughter of a Quaker. This great-grandmother of mine was “read out of meeting” for marrying a non-Quaker without permission. She and her husband became Methodists, but they still kept Quaker ways and passed them on to their descendants.

I often heard “thee” and “thou” in Grandma’s house when I was a boy. Grandma often said, “If you can’t say something nice about someone, don’t say anything at all.” Grandma would never use the word “hate,” and she taught this concept to my mother. The word “hate” is not in my vocabulary, and even now, I utter the word with a note of caution. Putting hate aside is an important first step in reconciliation.

Good will eventually allows differences to be forgotten. In the Orient, it is called “face.” You “give face” by showing respect, and you never “take face” by showing disrespect.

I have a couple of stories to tell tonight, which I hope will illustrate how reconciliation has helped my own family get past awful tragedies. Many of you probably have stories like this in your families, though many others are unknown. I

only learned of these stories after I began research on my family's genealogy. In my family, "family secrets," as they were called, were intended to be suppressed. I believe, however, that suppression of uncomfortable facts is not as good a way to deal with tragedy as acceptance. I prefer to "forgive but remember," as the saying goes.

One of my stories is about the witchcraft delusion in Salem in 1692, and the other describes the shooting of a Tory farmer in Vermont in 1776. I have chosen them because the original words of the participants were preserved. With some imagination, when I read the words, you may be able to recreate these scenes in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.¹

I first became aware of the events in Salem when I saw "The Crucible" in 1952. My understanding of the witchcraft delusion has since been changed, and deepened. In the past twenty years, I have learned that both my wife and I have ancestors and close relatives who lived in Salem. I learned that her ancient grandmother was a sister of the Rev. John Hale, who interrogated some of the accused; and that John Proctor, who was hanged, had been married to my wife's cousin. I then had to reconcile what Arthur Miller wrote about Proctor – portraying him as an adulterer and pedophile – with what is the true story. I learned that Miller used sex to sell his play on Broadway. That was a difficult issue for me. Historians call this "counterfactual." But I reconciled myself to this. I have forgiven Arthur Miller. Not that he would have cared. But it was important for me to do this, in order to move on.

I then learned that I, too, through my mother, had relatives who lived in Salem at that time. They included the Towne sisters, who are best known by their married names – Rebecca Nurse (my ancient grandmother), Sarah Cloyse, and Mary Easty. I am also related to the Putnams who appear in the trials. All of us are descended from John Putnam, the Emigrant. And I have learned that the Magistrate, John Hathorn, and the spiritual leader of the trials, Cotton Mather, were married to my distant cousins.

The official records of Salem document the arrest of Rebecca Nurse, who was seventy years old; and of her interrogation, the testimony against her, two statements given on her behalf, and of her plea to the court. Here are some direct quotations from the record, beginning on March 23, 1692:

"To the Marshall of Essex, or his deputy.

"There being complained this day, made before us by Edward Putnam and Jonathan Putnam, yeomen, both of Salem Village, against Rebecca Nurse, the wife of Francis Nurse of Salem Village for vehement suspicion of having committed sundry acts of witchcraft and thereby having done much hurt and injury to the bodies of Ann Putnam, the wife of Thomas Putnam of Salem Village; Ann Putnam ye daughter of said Thomas Putnam; and . . . others.

“You are therefore in their Majesties names hereby required to apprehend and bring before us Rebecca Nurse, tomorrow in the afternoon, at Salem. . . . [signed] John Hathorne”

Rebecca Nurse was said to have “hurt, tortured, and afflicted” Ann Putnam Jr., Mary Walcott, Elizabeth Hubbard, and Abigail Williams. All four of them testified against her, and they screamed and writhed whenever Goody Nurse moved her hands or shifted her body in the courtroom. The transcript continues:

“Mr. Hathorn: What do you say (speaking to one afflicted): Have you seen this woman hurt you?

Abigail: Yes, she beat me this morning.

Ann Putnam in a grievous fit cried out that she hurt her.

Hathorn: Goody Nurse, here are two – Ann Putnam, the child, and Abigail Williams, complains of your hurting them. What do you say to it?

Nurse. I can say before my Eternal Father, I am innocent and God will clear my innocency.

Hathorn: Here is never a one in the Assembly but desires it. But if you be guilty, pray God discover you. . . . Here are not only these but here is ye wife of Mr. Thomas Putnam who accuseth you by creditable information and that both of tempting her to iniquity and of greatly hurting her.

Nurse: I am innocent and clear, and have not been able to get out of doors these 8 or 9 days. I never afflicted no child, no never in my life.

Hathorn: You see these accuse you. Is it true?

Nurse: No. Oh Lord, help me, and spread out her hands. (The afflicted were grievously vexed.) The Lord knows, I have not hurt them. I am an innocent person. . . .

Hathorn: It is strange to see you stand with dry eyes when there are so many wet.

Nurse: You do not know my heart.

Hathorn: You would do well if you are guilty to confess. Give Glory to God.

Nurse: I am as clear as the child unborn.

Hathorn: They say now they see there familiar spirits come to your bodily person, now what do you say to that?

Nurse: I have none, Sir.

Hathorn: Have you any familiarity with these spirits?

Nurse: No I have none but with God alone. . . .

Hathorn: Have you no wounds.

Nurse: I have not but old age. [An unusual “wound” was thought to be a mark made by the Devil. She was examined by a midwife and found to have none, but to no avail.]

Harthorn: You do know whether you are guilty and have familiarity with the devil.

Nurse: It is all false. I am clear.

Hathorn: Possibly you may apprehend you are no witch, but have you not been led aside by temptations that way.

Nurse: I have not.

Hathorn: What a sad thing it is that a church member . . . of Salem, should be thus accused and charged. Have not you had visible appearances more than what is common in nature?

Nurse: I have none nor never had in my life.

Hathorn: Do you think these suffer voluntary or involuntary?

Nurse: I cannot tell.

Hathorn: That is strange. Every one can judge.

Nurse: I must be silent. . . .

Hathorn: Why should not you also be guilty, for your apparition doth hurt also?

Nurse: Would you have me belie myself?

[The record then says that] She held her neck on one side, and accordingly so were the afflicted taken. Nurse held her neck on one side and Elizabeth Hubbard (one of the sufferers) had her neck set in that posture. Whereupon another patient, Abigail Williams, cried out, and set up Goody Nurse's head. The maid's neck will be broke, and when some set up Nurse's head, Betty Hubbard's was immediately righted."

"We committed Rebecca Nurse ye wife of Francis Nurse of Salem village unto their Majesty's Goale in Salem . . . JOHN HATHORNE"

Rebecca was examined by a midwife, who found no unusual marks, and she petitioned the court, "And being conscious of my own innocence, I humbly beg that I may have liberty to manifest itself to the world, . . . by the means above said."

But it was to no avail: The "Warrant for execution of Rebecca Nurse [and others], on Tuesday 19 July 1692. [They were] sent to Boston Goale, April 12th, on account of witchcraft at Salem."

Nineteen years later, on October 17, 1711, the court issued An Act to reverse the attainders of John Proctor, Rebecca Nurse and others for Witchcraft, and declared them "to be null and void."

Thirty-four years after that, on June 27, 1745, in Salem Village, Rebecca Nurse's great-granddaughter Elizabeth Nurse married Caleb Putnam, grandson of John Putnam [III]. The grandfather was Constable of Salem during the witchcraft episode, and an accuser of Rebecca Nurse. Elizabeth Nurse and Caleb Putnam were descended from bitter enemies. Elizabeth and Caleb could have been considered "blood enemies" (as in Romeo and Juliet, or the Hatfields and McCoys), but they were, instead, my mother's great (x4) grandparents. The families were, with this marriage, reconciled.

Another story: In my father's family, there is also a story of blood that was shed between two families. And of reconciliation which began in the next generation and was completed in the generation of the grandchildren. It began at the beginning of the Revolutionary War, near Bennington, in the southwestern part of the New Hampshire Grants – which is now the state of Vermont.

On one side, there were families that favored independence from England. They are now called Patriots in the United States, but they are still referred to in Canada as rebels. They were opposed by the Loyalists, who were derisively called “Tories” by the Patriots. Those who did not want to take part in this conflict, such as Quakers, were under pressure from both sides. In one branch of my family which lived just north of Bennington, we had Patriots: Allens (of whom Ethan was the most famous), Wards (General Artemas Ward, head of all New England forces), Hydes (of Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Hyde Park, Vt.), and Potters from Rhode Island. Oliver Potter was a captain of the Green Mountain Boys under Ethan Allen. He died on the failed expedition to Quebec in the fall of 1775.

The other side was led by the Quaker Jesse Irish, also from Rhode Island, who had refused to bear arms in the French and Indian War. His eight sons included two who were surely Loyalists, two who later became lukewarm Patriots, and four who managed to dodge the war. When Burgoyne was at Ticonderoga in 1777, on his way to Bennington and Saratoga, Jesse Irish appealed to him for protection. As a result, the Patriots considered that all of the Irishes were Tories, and they went after them with a vengeance. On one afternoon in August 1777, a Patriot band killed John Irish at his farmhouse in Danby, Vermont, in front of his wife and three young children. The first shot that hit Irish was fired by the leader, Ebenezer Allen. The Patriots then departed to have dinner with the “widow Potter,” Mary Colvin Potter.

As a result of the later marriage between Jesse’s granddaughter Dolly Irish and Oliver’s son Freeborn Potter (who were my great-great-great grandparents), Ebenezer Allen, who shot, and John Irish, who died, both became my great-x5 uncles. John Irish’s widow was given three months to vacate her farm, and after she went into the wilderness, her youngest child died of exposure. Before she left, the widow Irish was harassed by Noel Potter, a teen-aged son of the widow Potter, but she prevailed by brandishing a poker at him.

The widow Rebecca Doty Irish later testified about the afternoon of 27 July 1777, when she

begged [her husband] not to leave the house. He advanced about three rods from the door, when [Ebenezer] Allen raised up from behind a maple log and shot Irish through the hand, severing his third and little finger from his hand, or nearly so. [Isaac] Clark then in a rough manner asked him if he wanted to take more prisoners. Irish answered that he should take or harm no man, and added, you have wounded me, upon which he held up his hand and Clark shot him through the heart. He turned, walked about a rod and fell dead upon his face. When Clark and Allen shot him he was not more than three or four feet from the muzzles of their guns – so near that the smoke rolled up on his breast as lie turned round.

After this the men all disappeared in the woods. Mrs. Irish went immediately to Mr. William Irish's, who was just putting on his clean clothes, being on Sunday. He said 'Becca, you must take care of yourself, I cannot help you.' He immediately started off and did not return until about six weeks afterwards.

Ebenezer Allen later became a colonel. One of the “Three Heroes” Islands in Lake Champlain is named for him. Isaac Clark became a general. And Ethan Allen’s brother, General Ira Allen, married the daughter of my third cousin, 5 removes, Colonel Roger Enos, who was later a general in the Vermont militia. So much for the Patriots.

William Irish, the Tory, is my great-x3 grandfather. He fled alone to Canada, but later returned to Danby, where he gathered up his family. They spent the rest of the war in Kinderhook, N.Y., and then became original settlers of Milton, a small town in northern Vermont. William Irish’s daughter Dolly was eight or nine years old, too young to help her brother and sister and her aunt Becca bring her uncle John’s body into his house. But Dolly Irish must have remembered the events of that awful day, and she reconciled them in some way. For in 1790, she married the widow Potter’s son, Freeborn. He was ten years old and lived only a few miles from Dolly, when her uncle John was killed by the raiding party.

Freeborn Potter and Dolly Irish had a child, Fidelia, who married Harvey Hyde. The Hydys were staunch Patriots, too. Yet Emma Hyde, Fidelia and Harvey’s daughter, married Benajah Stockwell, who was a descendant of a well-known Tory leader – John Saxe, known as “Tory John.” Saxe and his family were expelled to Canada after the Revolution. Saxe led a large band of Tories from Dutchess County, N.Y., across frozen Lake Champlain, to the wilderness north of Vermont.

So in addition to all of my Patriot ancestors and collateral relatives in Vermont, I am also a descendant of two Tories – John Saxe and William Irish – and of several other collaterals who were Loyalists.

There are other stories of Reconciliation, sometimes unintended, in my own family, and I’ll bet you have similar ones, too:

In the War Between the States, also known as the Civil War:

My grandmother’s great-grandfather, William Manly, was a wealthy slave owner, who became a quiet abolitionist. After the War of 1812, probably inspired by his wife, he gave up his successful mill and his large farm and relocated from Cecil County, Md., to Pennsylvania. His slaves were thus automatically freed when they entered Pennsylvania. In my grandmother’s family tree there are perhaps two dozen Union soldiers, some of whom died in the war, and one – Aaron Tompkins – who won the Medal of Honor as a Yankee captain. But also in my grandmother’s family tree, there was Varina Ann “Winnie” Davis, daughter of President Jefferson Davis, known as “The Daughter of the Confederacy.” Winnie was my grandmother’s fifth cousin. Her grandfather, my third cousin, 4 removes, was truly blue and gray; a Lieutenant at the Battle of Plattsburg in the War of 1812, and Collector of Customs in New Orleans for the Confederacy when he died in 1863.

My father-in-law was a Lieutenant in the U.S. Navy in World War II, and he had second cousins who were in the German army at that time. After the war, my wife visited her German cousins, and they became friends.

My brother was a Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Air Force, while his brother-in-law was in the Japanese army in World War II. We now have a very warm relationship with our Japanese in-laws.

Adam Makos recently asked, in his book *A Higher Call*, which is a story of chivalry in the skies of World War II, “Can good men be found on both sides of a bad war?”²

An answer to this question can be found in Paul’s letter to the Romans: *Abhor that which is evil ... Be kindly affectioned one to another ... Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not ... Be of the same mind one toward another ... Recompense to no man evil for evil . . . [and] If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men (Romans 12:10).*

Thank you.

4/25/13, e-mail from Jane Power:

I especially want to thank you for your program. It was well thought out and remarkable that you have all the elements in your own family!

¹ For my previous publications on this subjects treated in this lecture, see:

George J. Hill, *John Saxe, Loyalist (1732-1808) and His Descendants for Five Generations* (Westminster, Md.: Heritage Books., 2010; Hill, “From Salem to Kalamazoo: A 14-Generation Family Odyssey,” *About Towne: Quarterly Newsletter of the Towne Family Association* 26 (No. 3, July-September) 2006: 50-56; and (No. 4, October-December 2006): 74-78; and Hill, “The Complex Legacy of Rev. Dr. Cotton Mather, F.R.S.: He Condemned Some as Witches at Salem, but He Later Saved Others from Smallpox,” *The Mayflower Quarterly* (September 2012), 244-256.

The quotations here from the testimony, interrogation, and outcome of the trial of Rebecca Nurse: W. Elliott Woodward, *Records of Salem Witchcraft, Copied from the Original Documents*, 2 vols. (Roxbury, Mass.: W. Elliot Woodward, 1864), 1:76-99, and 2:215.

I also refer to: Arthur Miller, *The Crucible* (1952; New York, N.Y.: Penguin Group, 1995), with Introduction by Christopher Bigsley.

For the death of John Irish, and the account given by his widow, Rebecca Doty Irish, see: J[ohn] C. Williams, *The History and Map of Danby, Vermont* (Rutland, Vt.: McLean & Robbins, 1869): 171-6.

I have found the following items to be useful, although this list of publications is incomplete:

For Cotton Mather, the best that can be said about his role may be in Norma Jean Lutz (Arthur M. Schlestinger, Jr., senior consulting editor), *Cotton Mather: Author, Clergyman, and Scholar* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Chelsea House Publishers, 2000).

For more on the life of Rebecca (Towne) Nurse, see: Charles Sutherland Tapley, *Rebecca Nurse: Saint but Witch Victim* (Boston, Mass.: Marshall Jones Company, 1930).

For the Salem Witchcraft Trials, see (in alphabetical order): Chadwick Hansen, *Witchcraft at Salem* (New York, N.Y.: George Brazillier, 1969); Frances Hill, *Hunting for Witches: A Visitor’s Guide to the Salem Witch Trials* (Beverly, Mass.: Commonwealth Editions, 2002); Peter Charles Hoffer, *The Devil’s Disciples: Makers of the Salem Witchcraft Trials* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); Mary Beth Norton, *In the Devils Sanare: The Salem Witchcraft Crisis of 1692* (New York, N.Y.: Vintage, 1992);

Marilynne K. Roach, *Gallows and Graves: The Search to Locate the Death and Burial Sites of the People Executed for Witchcraft in 1692* (Watertown, Mass.: Sassafras Grove Press, 1997); Marilynne K. Roach, "A Genealogical Perspective on the Salem Witchcraft Trials," *New England Ancestors* (Spring 2008), 22-28; Enders A. Robinson, *Salem Witchcraft and Hawthorne's House of the Seven Gables* (Bowie, Md.: Heritage Books, 1992); Marion L. Starkey, *The Devil in Massachusetts: A Modern Enquiry into the Salem Witch Trials* (1949; New York: Doubleday/Anchor, 1989); George Malcom Yook, *1692 Witch Hunt: The Layman's Guide to the Salem Witchcraft Trials* (Bowie, Md.: Heritage Books, 1992).

For studies of witchcraft in New England and Colonial America, see (in alphabetical order):

David D. Hall: *Witch-Hunting in Seventeenth-Century New England: A Documentary History, 1638-1692* (Boston, Mass.: Northeastern University Press, 1991); Carol F. Karlsen, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman: Witchcraft in Colonial New England* (New York, N.Y.: Vintage, 1987); D. Brenton Simons, *Witches, Rakes, and Rogues: True Stories of Scam, Scandal, Murder, and Mahem in Boston, 1630-1775* (Beverly, Mass.: Commonwealth Editions, 2006); Richard Weisman, *Witchcraft, Magic, and Religion in 17th-Century Massachusetts* (Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts, 1984).

² Adam Makos, with Larry Alexander, *A Higher Call: An Incredible True Story of Combat and Chivalry in the War-Torn Skies of World War II* (New York, N.Y.: Penguin/Berkley Publishing Group, 2013), 7.