

SUCCORING THE NEEDY:
ALMSHOUSES AND THE IMPOTENT POOR IN REFORMATION ENGLAND,
c. 1534-1640

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts

at

Dalhousie University
Halifax, Nova Scotia
February 2015

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Abstract

This thesis discusses almshouses and the impotent poor in early modern England between c. 1534 and 1640. England's Reformation had numerous implications for poverty and poor relief in the country, and a sorely neglected story in the current historiography is the charity provided to the impotent poor by the almshouse institution. The thesis analyzes the impact that the Reformation had on these institutions, and examines how English Protestantism influenced patterns of change and continuity in mid-sixteenth and early seventeenth century foundations by considering the statutes of pre- and post-Reformation almshouses. The discussion contemplates the cash, food, fuel, and clothing stipends afforded to residents, the rules and regulations that governed the behaviour of these almspeople, and the occasional difficulties that donors faced when founding an almshouse. The evidence suggests that the material benefits afforded by post-Reformation almshouses remained largely unchanged from earlier institutions, but it also indicates that in exchange for these benefits, founders expected their almsfolk to work and conform to particular behavioral standards. Some key changes nonetheless occurred during the early modern period. Almshouses, for example, became secularized institutions operated by private governors or civic bodies rather than the church, and the meaning behind prayers shifted toward thanksgiving for the founder's beneficence. Labour also became an integral part of daily life in these almshouses, just as it would in other institutions functioning for a different class of English poor. The inclusion of this feature was influenced chiefly by the shifting cultural emphasis on hard work that occurred during the Reformation. The evidence similarly reveals that founders occasionally encountered legal and political resistance when attempting to found their charity.

Acknowledgement

I find it perplexing that even after a year dominated by extensive research, countless days consumed by writing, and hours spent editing and re-editing written portions of this thesis, I discover the difficulty in expressing my pleasure for finally reaching the conclusion of my project. Yet, despite how arduous the past twelve months have been, I cannot help but feel a great sense of fulfillment for completing a goal that seemed so daunting only a year ago.

I was, of course, not without assistance during this period. I deem it necessary to thus begin by expressing my very warm gratitude and appreciation to my supervisor, Dr. Krista Kesselring. Her vigilance, constructive criticism, and friendly advice over the past year proved invaluable, and I am exceptionally grateful to her for that. It perhaps goes without saying, but she undoubtedly played the most essential role in helping me see this thesis through to its end. I would also like to extend my thanks to Dr. Jerry Bannister, my second reader. His comments and suggestions were similarly instrumental, helping to shape various aspects of my project as it neared completion. To Dr. Justin Roberts, I would like to extend my gratitude, mainly for his friendly conversation throughout my time as a graduate student, and for his illuminating comments during my defense. I am likewise grateful to the Dalhousie History department, chiefly for the weekly Stokes Seminar. Feeling particularly enlightened after these meetings, I often found myself in the library in their aftermath busily working on my own project. A big thank you must likewise be given to two critical people, both of whom together provide the foundation of Dalhousie's History Department: Valerie Peck and Tina Jones. Though it may have not have been noticeable, the encouragement and care given by you both was very warmly felt and accepted. My appreciation also goes out to my friends and fellow graduate students for keeping me grounded during this process, and for providing me with many cherished memories. Finally, my mother and father, Kerry and Danny, also deserve a large portion of my gratitude. Though I may not express it often enough, their support and aid in times of need were crucial to my success.

The undertaking of this project has also allowed me to develop a heightened appreciation for those individuals who study and practice History professionally. Through my own work, I came to understand the difficulties and frustrations that professional historians deal with on a regular basis, principally the lack of source material that suddenly halts examination into a particular subject, or the grueling hours spent analyzing, checking, and re-checking one's notes. Yet, these struggles notwithstanding, there exists a certain pleasure in researching the historical record, one which is all the more keenly felt when discovering new and relevant information to help shape one's historical field. Admittedly, this, for me, occurred only a handful of times during my time as a graduate student, but I cannot overstate the gratification I felt when I came across something new while tucked away in some corner of the library, nestled amongst volumes of books, sipping coffee with headphones in while music played softly in the background. Thank you Dalhousie University for this most amazing of experiences.

Chapter 1

Introduction

An interesting and yet curiously neglected facet of early modern English social history is the almshouse. These little foundations have provided institutionalized poor relief to destitute Englishmen and women for well over a thousand years, and many of the houses founded during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries continue to operate in much the same way today as they did four centuries ago, often in the same buildings.¹ It is rather peculiar, then, that so little attention has focused on almshouses as mechanisms of poor relief, especially in a period when deteriorating social conditions threatened endemic poverty. This neglect has little to do with a lack of source material available to the researcher. Many of England's county record offices have preserved the historical record of almshouses that operated in their shire, and a host of houses that have continued operation perpetually since their initial foundation have stored and maintained their own records. Instead, oversight by professional historians stems more so from the current trend of scholarly concentration on the poor laws, vagrancy, idleness, and the able-bodied poor, possibly because these allow a story of change which was prompted in part by the Reformation. This thesis focuses more intently upon almshouses because of the vital role they played in providing relief to the poor and opposing mounting destitution as it grew through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It also intends to discern whether and to what degree the Reformation prompted change in almshouses over this span.

¹ Nigel Goose and Leanne Moden, *A History of Doughty's Hospital, Norwich, 1687-2009* (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2010), 3

At the beginning of the early modern period, the problem of poverty worsened in England, both for the poor themselves and for those who governed them. Particularly during the first several decades of the sixteenth century, England struggled against a sea of social and economic change that persisted well into the 1600s. Poor harvests during the 1520s, 1530s, and 1540s, for example, drove many into penury, while heavy taxation, inflation, and population growth throughout the period contributed further to the number of poor in the country.² Much as it is today, poverty in England during the early modern period was a variable phenomenon caused by numerous factors, and people reached destitution – and different levels of it – in a variety of ways. In contemporary literature on the subject, though, the general consensus is that shifting demographics and inflation were at the forefront of expanding poverty rates. Paul Slack, for instance, notes that as England’s population grew from 2.3 million people to 5.3 million people between 1520 and the mid-1600s, the labour market became increasingly overwhelmed until it was finally saturated.³ This, in turn, led to an increase in vagrancy, despite the fact that the labour market and the economy were expanding and diversifying through the Tudor and Stuart eras. Inflation, too, had a severe impact on the growing number of poor in the country. Since the beginning of the sixteenth century, prices, especially those of

² Marjorie K. McIntosh, *Poor Relief and Community in Hadleigh Suffolk, 1547-1600* (Great Britain: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2013), 201; Paul Slack, *Poverty and Policy in Tudor and Stuart England* (England: Longman, 1988), 43-44; Marjorie K. McIntosh, “Poverty, Charity, and Coercion in Elizabethan England,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 35 (2005): 459-460.

³ Slack, *Poverty and Policy*, 44.

consumables, rose steadily. As many contend, this had the harshest impact on the laboring sectors of society, because wages could not keep pace with price increases.⁴

In a transforming social and economic atmosphere, moreover, the sudden shift in England's traditional religious culture during the early 1530s offered little aid to the matter of poverty or the plight of the poor. The onset of the Protestant Reformation during Henry VIII's reign had a very practical impact on poverty in England, chiefly because the shift from Catholicism to Protestantism saw the sudden removal of many forms of charitable assistance that had previously been available to the poor, most of which were operated by the Roman Catholic Church. During the first two decades of reform especially, England witnessed a sudden decrease in its existing mechanisms of poor relief. The dissolution of the monasteries and the closure of chantries, religious guilds, and hospitals between 1536 and 1549, for instance, left major pockets of poverty in the areas where they were located. While some historians contend that the link between the dissolution acts and rising rates of poverty in England was tenuous at best,⁵ the general consensus is that the loss of these Catholic institutions left very real problems for the poor in the years immediately following their abolition.⁶ What is particularly significant about the loss of monasticism in England is that leading Protestant reformers felt that suppressing Catholicism would actually help the poor. In 1529, for instance, Simon Fish wrote his famous *Supplication for the Beggars*, claiming that poverty in England could be directly attributed to idle Roman Catholic monks, bishops, and abbots

⁴ Ibid, 47; McIntosh, "Poverty, Charity, and Coercion," 460; and Geoffrey W. Oxley, *Poor Relief in England and Wales 1601-1834* (London: David and Charles, 1974), 15. Work by A.L. Beier, moreover, suggests that wages for agricultural and industrial laborers, the two main sources of work in England at the time, fell by nearly 50 percent. See, for instance, A.L. Beier, *The Problem of the Poor in Tudor and Early Stuart England* (London: Methuen, 1983), 7.

⁵ John F. POUND, *Poverty and Vagrancy in Tudor England*, second ed, (Harlow: Routledge, 2014), 34.

⁶ Slack, for example, shows that before their dissolution, Catholic monasteries in England contributed over £6,000 in alms annually. See Slack, *Poverty and Policy*, 13.

who did little to help alleviate dearth, despite possessing the means to do so.⁷ We know from hindsight that the early years of the Protestant Reformation actually had a paradoxical effect on the levels of poverty, but even in the 1540s contemporaries recognized that the loss of the Catholic Church severely handicapped those living in penury, despite the hopes of Protestant reformers.⁸

Before the split with Rome, the Catholic Church in England bore the brunt of the burden in dealing with poor relief. Mostly through monastic charities, the Church in England provided aid to a multitude of individuals, and while these charities became increasingly mismanaged and administered to the point that the role they played in combating poverty became questionable,⁹ they nonetheless remained an essential arbiter against endemic destitution in the years before the Reformation. The loss of these institutions, then, contributed to some degree to rising rates of poverty in England during the early and middle decades of the 1500s. It was not until much later in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, moreover, that post-Reformation institutional poor relief mechanisms, which despite their secularity still greatly resembled pre-Reformation structures, reached the same level of aid provided by the early Catholic monasteries and their charities.¹⁰

Since the twentieth century, the history of poverty and poor relief in England during the early modern period has captivated many intellectuals. For modern scholars,

⁷ Simon Fish, *A Supplication for the Beggars*, 1529, 1.

⁸ In 1546, *A Supplication for the Poor Commons* was published, although it remains unclear who penned it. In any case, this supplication argued that the poor had been better off when monastic lands were still in the hands of the Catholic Church. Despite agreeing with Fish's point that the Catholic Clergy could have done more to alleviate poverty, it argued that the Catholic Church at least provided some sustenance to the poor. The loss of this system, it argued, was more detrimental to poverty than when the monastic system was operating in the country. See, for instance, C.H. Williams, ed, *English Historical Documents: 1458-1558* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1967), 940-941.

⁹ W.K. Jordan, *Philanthropy in England, 1480-1660* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1959), 58.

¹⁰ McIntosh, "Poverty, Charity, and Coercion," 461.

the touchstone of this interest arguably derived from the works of Sidney and Beatrice Webb, especially after the publication of their work on the history of the English poor laws and the political and social theories that lay behind them.¹¹ Since then, the social history of England has continued to draw in new generations of historians, which has not only led to a diversification of literature on the subject, but also to a considerable expansion in our understanding of poverty and the poor in this particular period. From the Tudor poor laws, to popular philanthropy, to the influence of Christian humanists on social reforms, the history of poverty in England has thus continued to receive attention from scholars. As W.K. Jordan pointed out in his influential work on philanthropy, the largest reason for this was that the attitudes, policies, and institutions that formed in the early modern period endured into the modern era, molding and influencing the development of social welfare systems in England for four centuries.¹²

In the past three or four decades particularly, English social history has seen the emergence of several notable academics whose work has influenced and shaped current perspectives and approaches to studies concerned with poverty and poor relief in an early modern context. Among these notables is Paul Slack, whose work since the late 1970s has made significant contributions to the field. Of especial significance, though, was his 1988 publication of *Poverty and Policy in Tudor and Stuart England*. While the book itself acts mostly as a survey to the period, Slack offered new insights into the breadth of poverty during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and examined the multitude of ways that poverty and the poor were managed during the Tudor and Stuart periods.

Slack's study thus answered several fundamental questions, including how Englishmen

¹¹ Sidney and Beatrice Webb, ed. W.A. Robson, *English Poor Law History: The Old Poor Law* (United States: Archon Books, 1927 & 1963).

¹² *Ibid*, 16.

were categorized as poor in this period, and how such categorizations changed following shifts in the economy and through the influence of changing ideas and beliefs in society, culture, and religion.¹³ Similarly, he attempted – quite successfully – not only to outline what the general nature and scale of poverty was during this era, but also to show the various means through which people in this period reached poverty. Slack likewise revisited older arguments concerning the philanthropy of private donors during the Tudor and Stuart period that had been established by the previous generation of social historians. W.K. Jordan’s analyses of philanthropy in England between 1480 and 1660, which appeared in the late 1950s and early 60s, were especially challenged by Slack. He argued that while private philanthropy in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries certainly expanded, it was not nearly as widespread as Jordan’s findings suggested.¹⁴

The contributions made by Margo Todd, whose work began appearing around the same time as Paul Slack’s, have also had a lasting impression on studies of poverty and poor relief in Tudor and Stuart England. Through her research, we found that attitudes towards the poor were influenced chiefly by a cultural revolution occurring in the background of the Reformation. Particularly in her book *Christian Humanism and the Puritan Social Order*, she suggested that a transition in cultural values during the English Reformation gradually changed traditional moral, social, and cultural norms in England, including contemporary opinions towards penury and the mechanisms used to relieve it.¹⁵ Before the Reformation, for instance, poor relief in England was directed by two

¹³ Slack deals with this concept primarily in his second, third, and fourth chapters.

¹⁴ Slack, *Poverty and Policy*, 162-163.

¹⁵ Margo Todd, *Christian Humanism and the Puritan Social Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 139-147.

principal beliefs: that alms-giving was necessary for gaining access to heaven, and that poverty was intrinsically linked to holiness and thus should not be targeted for removal by the state.¹⁶ Todd contends that after the Reformation the shifts in standards of behaviour stemmed primarily from the ideas that English religious reformers had towards social theory, especially work and idleness, poverty and poor relief, and spending. Likewise, she convincingly argued that these ideas were not invented by English Protestants, but rather that they were informed and adopted from the beliefs held by early Christian humanists. Her work is of particular importance because prior to its publication, the intellectual origins of Protestant attitudes in England, and Puritan attitudes in particular, remained muddled as a result of differing opinions and arguments in the historiography. Since 1987, though, we now have a much keener idea of why and how the English addressed problems of poverty at the turn of the seventeenth century as they did. Through Todd, we learned that it was because of the adoption of Christian humanists' ideals and philosophies that Protestant reformers in England felt that the primary means of confronting issues of poverty was by sanctifying work and disciplining the poor.¹⁷ Todd points out that while developing gradually during the Reformation, such notions saw increasing fulfillment as the sixteenth century came to a close and the seventeenth century began.

Marjorie K. McIntosh has likewise done much to expand our comprehension of society in England during the Tudor and Stuart eras, especially at the community and county level. Though she began researching and writing during the 1970s, her recent work has been particularly influential, both with regards to the current thesis, and also in

¹⁶ Ibid, 121.

¹⁷ Ibid, 147.

shaping how scholars understand both the history of charity in medieval and early modern England and the development of the poor law during the Tudor period. In *Poor Relief in England, 1350-1600*, for instance, McIntosh charts how poor relief in the country moved from a range of diverse and complex assistance programs to a more stable network of provision. The transition of poor relief between 1350 and 1600, she argued, largely derived from demographic and economic shifts, changing perceptions of charity and poverty, and governmental changes, specifically the expanding role of parishes in providing secular support for the poor.¹⁸ Her work challenged those scholars who first delved into the subject of early modern English poor relief and who, according to her, focused too intently upon arguing that the Elizabethan poor laws of 1598 and 1601 created a new system of assistance in England. She refuted their findings by arguing that the poor laws developed at the tail end of the Tudor period simply enhanced and offered only minor corrections to a parish-based relief system that had operated since at least the mid-sixteenth century.

Ian Archer's scholarship has also had a prodigious impact on contemporary views of social welfare in the early modern period, predominantly at the urban level since much of his research focuses on governance, poverty, and charity in early modern London. In *The Pursuit of Stability: Social Relations in Elizabethan London*, for example, Archer inquired into the state of social welfare in London during the late Elizabethan era.¹⁹ This was a period of social decay throughout England following a spike in poverty in the aftermath of harvest failures, grain riots, and threatened uprisings during the late 1590s.

¹⁸ Marjorie K. McIntosh, *Poor Relief in England, 1350-1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 2.

¹⁹ Ian W. Archer, *The Pursuit of Stability: Social Relations in Elizabethan London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 149-198.

Archer's work provides a viable argument for why London avoided the social unrest that gripped the rest of England, and, in doing so, it likewise refuted conventional explanations established by earlier academics. Through the fifth chapter, Archer explores public policy toward poverty and provision for the poor within London. Simultaneously, he challenges an article concerned with a similar issue penned by Valerie Pearl in 1979, taking particular issue with her views on the extent and effectiveness of London's parish administrators' charity toward the city's poor.²⁰ Through his reconsideration of the source material, we see that poor relief in late Elizabethan London was confined mostly to parishes in the city's heart, while problems associated with poverty were most extensive in the outer parishes. Archer's work also suggests that poor relief measures in London were successful only in so far that they staved off social unrest by managing to maintain the fabric of social stability and ward off desperation, not because relief measures eliminated begging and penury altogether.

More recent scholarship by Steve Hindle over the past decade has also seen some innovations in how we comprehend poverty and relief, contributing especially to our understanding of how contemporary attitudes towards the deserving poor shifted during the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In *On the Parish? The Micro-Politics of Poor Relief in Rural England c. 1550-1750*, and in his article "Dependency, Shame and Belonging: Badging the Deserving Poor, c. 1550-1750," Hindle examines the historical practice of badging the poor in England, and how the connotations behind such badges evolved through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The significance of Hindle's research in both works stems largely from his analysis concerning why the symbolism of badges for the poor changed through the Tudor and early Stuart eras where

²⁰ Ibid, 149.

they increasingly became marks of shame. Hindle's findings suggested that the principal reason for this change in symbolic connotation came chiefly from the changing meaning of shame among the poor themselves.²¹ During much of the sixteenth century in England, badges were issued to paupers as a stamp of approval, distinguishing the deserving from the diseased and undeserving poor. Hindle's examinations, showed that popular sympathies were frequently given to paupers who had once been householders but who had fallen into penury, and who were, out of pride and shame, unwilling to show their plight via a badge. Gradually, this changed when, by the 1630s, it was finally felt by many that it was fear, sloth, and ignorance that stopped poor householders from conveying their destitution. Hindle found that badges for the poor moved away from signs of admiration toward marks of abhorrence, where they became comparable to the physical branding and whipping of the idle poor that became common during the sixteenth century.²²

Studies into poverty and the poor in England have thus grown dramatically since the subject's initial pioneers first began looking into social history during the early modern period. From the extent of poverty and shifting notions towards it, to the influence of Christian humanism on social reforms, to reconsiderations of the development of the poor law, to social programs implemented in major urban centres, and shifting ideals associated with badging the poor, our understanding and considerations regarding England's social development through the early modern period have grown immensely. Yet, despite the development and diversification on the subject

²¹ Steve Hindle, "Dependency, Shame and Belonging: Badging the Deserving Poor, c. 1550-1750," *Cultural and Social History* 1 (1) 2004: 14; and Steve Hindle, *On the Parish? The Micro-Politics of Poor Relief in Rural England c. 1550-1750* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), 435.

²² Hindle, "Dependency, Shame, and Belonging," 14.

of poverty and poor relief, gaps in our knowledge remain. This is especially true with regard to our views on the “impotent” poor and the care and relief provided to them during the complex social, economic, and religious transformations occurring throughout the early modern period.²³ Much of the scholarly focus, for example, has been on the development of relief for the so-called “able bodied” poor, the highlight of which story culminated into the Elizabethan Poor Law of 1601. Todd, Slack, and others have traced how some of the able-bodied poor, long either ignored or denounced by their contemporaries, gradually came to be seen as deserving of relief by the beginning of the seventeenth century. In a similar vein, an ever-growing body of literature has been dedicated to vagrants and the idle poor and how the English state dealt with issues of vagrancy and idleness during the Tudor and Stuart years. The point, here, is that too little attention has been paid to the impotent poor and the measures that developed over the period to care for them.

This thesis intends to rectify this scholarly oversight by analyzing how the impotent poor were provided for and examining whether this, too, changed over the early modern era. It examines institutional poor relief mechanisms set up by private benefactors in the years immediately following England’s split with Rome, and focuses attention on the aid afforded by almshouses. From shelter and clothing, to cash stipends and medical care, to simple peace of mind, almshouses provided institutionalized aid for thousands of poor individuals throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As later chapters will show, almshouses were multifarious organizations serving various

²³ While it generally denotes a different meaning today, in an early modern context, the word “impotent” was used to refer to those poor who could no longer meet their own needs. It was used as an umbrella term and typically referred to the sick, the infirm, the elderly, and, occasionally, orphans. Most of the source material from the period used the word to describe this class of the poor, including nearly every reference utilized for this thesis.

purposes, not least of which was alleviating penury for a specific class of poor in early modern England.

This is not to say that there is no literature on almshouses. A number of works have indeed been written on these institutions, but nothing that approaches a scholarly examination of almshouses within the wider context of poverty and poor relief in early modern England has yet been produced. In an academic sense, then, commentary on almshouses remains relatively brief and unsubstantial.²⁴ The current body of literature surrounding these institutions tends to be the work of local historians and antiquarians who typically produce studies of certain houses in particular English counties, parishes, or towns. Of course, these works should not be ignored because they focus solely on the historical development of single almshouses, but an academic study into how these institutions fit within the transforming social, religious, and economic atmosphere of England during the Tudor and Stuart period is necessary as well. A small surge of interest in almshouses has led to several studies by Nigel Goose and Marjorie McIntosh, but even these are brief. The former's work compares almshouses in England to those in the Dutch Republic during the late middle ages, a study that mostly sought to enhance scholarly comprehension of these institutions, while the latter's work sits more as a side examination within a larger study on the development of the English poor laws.²⁵

The small number of works aside, it is evident that almshouses existed in England for nearly a thousand years, and that the social role they served – and continue to serve –

²⁴ Ian W. Archer, "Sources for the Early Modern English Almshouse," in *Sources for the History of Hospitals in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Martin Scheutz (Bohlaus Verlag: Oldenbourg, 2010), 105.

²⁵ Goose, Nigel and Henrick Looijestijn. "Almshouses in England and the Dutch Republic, Circa 1350-1500: A Comparative Study." *Journal of Social History* 45 (2012), 1049-1073; and McIntosh, *Poor Relief in England*, 53-89 and 186-214.

has remained largely unchanged. It is also clear that there is a distinction between medieval and early modern hospitals and medieval and early modern almshouses. Though the former is indeed an establishment in and of itself, for contemporaries, the word 'hospital' was typically an umbrella term for various forms of institutionalized poor relief schemes, which included almshouses. Hospitals, in the narrowest sense of the term, provided free housing to their inmates, along with simple meals and care. Rotha Mary Clay probably provided the best explanation for the medieval hospital in 1909 when she stated that they were for "care, rather than cure: for the relief of the body, when possible, but permanently for the refreshment of the soul...faith and love were more predominant features in hospital life than were skill and science."²⁶As hospital services diversified in the fifteenth century to incorporate the changing definition of who was considered poor, almshouses resembling those from later periods gradually emerged. Unlike hospitals, which traditionally provided care to the diseased in lazar houses or to children in orphanages,²⁷ the almshouse largely cared for the needs of the impotent, maimed, and elderly poor. In contrast to hospitals, almshouses were usually smaller and guaranteed free housing only, though some offered their inmates other benefits. For founders, though, the distinction between hospitals and almshouses mattered little, particularly since a number of donors labeled their foundations as hospitals, when, in fact, their operative function was more akin to an almshouse.²⁸

It is difficult to determine how almshouses and almsfolk were viewed during the early modern period, chiefly due to the nature of the historical record. It is probable that people viewed these institutions and their residents positively, though. For one thing,

²⁶ Rotha Mary Clay, *The Medieval Hospitals of England* (London: Methuen & Co, 1909), xviii.

²⁷ McIntosh, *Poor Relief in England, 1350-1600*, 59.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 60.

almshouses limited the number of beggars roaming around parishes and towns seeking alms, and most also required their residents to have been former laborers. This ensured that only those deemed deserving of relief actually received it. Similarly, and this will be discussed more thoroughly later, almshouse residents were often selected for residence in a house by members of the foundation's wider community. We also know from will and probate documents that almshouses frequently received bequeathals from town residents upon their death. The act of giving charity to the poor upon one's death was still popular during this period, and most probably gave to almshouses because their residents represented a specific group within those characterized as the deserving poor.

We noted already that the Reformation saw the closure of hundreds of hospitals during the 1540s. What was not noted was that many of these suppressed institutions were actually monastic and lay almshouses. The loss of such establishments was more of a secondary consequence of parliamentary action against Catholic institutions, but a major void in the foundation of these institutions nonetheless remained and the implications of the Reformation cannot be overlooked. This will be discussed in much greater detail in later chapters, but suffice it to say that it was not until the Elizabethan period that almshouse foundation was once again reinvigorated.²⁹ In large part, this was because ties to Roman Catholicism were severed and almshouses had to redraw themselves along secular lines in the years after the rise of Protestantism. What appears on their historical timeline, then, is a rise in the number of operating houses during the

²⁹ Marjorie McIntosh's estimates indicate that the number of almshouses and hospitals in existence continued dropping until around 1560, after which point the number of these institutions began increasing to pre-Reformation rates. According to her calculations, from 1540 to 1599, 138 almshouses were founded in England, with the bulk of these foundations made during the Elizabethan period. It was around this time that foundations finally began reaching pre-Reformation levels. See, for instance, Appendix A and Appendix D in McIntosh, *Poor Relief in England*, 301 and 304.

fourteenth, fifteenth, and early sixteenth centuries,³⁰ followed by the sudden loss of most institutions through the early Reformation, and then a gradual increase during the Elizabethan period. Finally, by the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, almshouse foundation exploded in England until their numbers once again resembled pre-Reformation figures, though this was due more to social and legal changes in the late 1590s than due to further religious change.

The beginning of the Stuart period saw almshouse foundation in England increase rapidly. By the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries serious problems were associated with begging and alms gathering in the country, and especially concerning was the rising number of vagrants. Vagrancy was a parliamentary concern since the days of Henry VIII, but social conditions in England had grown particularly dire by the late 1590s following a series of bad harvests in the country. While destitution itself had been increasing since at least the early 1520s from changing social and economic circumstances,³¹ the failed harvests of 1596 and 1598 led to even worse conditions. Paul Slack's work, for instance, suggests that the years 1596-98 saw death rates in England climb to nearly 6%, and this, he argues, was perhaps the closest the country came to famine during the Tudor and Stuart era.³² Even in periods when the national death rate rose because of increases in plague and influenza, especially in the mid-1550s, the death rate was not nearly as high as in the crisis years of the late 1590s. It is, of course, nearly impossible to draw a precise poverty line to determine conclusively levels of impoverishment from crisis periods like those that arose in England at the end of

³⁰ Though the absence of essential source material skews estimates about the number of almshouses operating in medieval England, current estimates suggest that perhaps 138 operated sometime between 1350 and 1530. See, McIntosh, *Poor Relief in England*, 301.

³¹ Paul Slack, *Poverty and Policy in Tudor and Stuart England* (London: Longman, 1988), 40.

³² *Ibid*, 48

sixteenth century, and we also have no idea how close to destitution people actually lived. Likewise, it is equally difficult to determine the intensity of their poverty.³³ In any case, it is logical to assume that those hovering just out of destitution's reach were suddenly driven into it during periods of crisis, and this would account for the sudden increase not only in the number of beggars and vagrants at the turn of the seventeenth century, but also the rise in impoverishment in general.³⁴

Besides the growing number of almshouses founded from 1560 and onwards, it is important to note that responses to poor relief from an institutional standpoint varied. Among the more significant variations were the five royal hospitals founded – or re-founded - in London during the mid-Tudor period, mostly because they influenced the development of similar institutions all over the country. Christ's Hospital became a refuge for orphaned or foundling children; the reorganized hospitals of St. Bartholomew and St. Thomas received the sick; Bethlem took in the insane; and Bridewell developed as a prison and workhouse to help control vagrancy by putting vagrants and the idle poor to work.³⁵ Each of these foundations is historically important, not least because some continue to operate over four hundred years after their respective foundations. Of particular significance, though, is the lattermost of these institutions, chiefly because it inspired the foundation of similar establishments in both England and in Europe after the mid-sixteenth century.

A minor comparison can be made between almshouses and the Bridewell and smaller workhouses that began cropping up in England after 1560. Chiefly, this was that

³³ Ibid, 39.

³⁴ Ibid, 48.

³⁵ Paul Griffiths, "Contesting the London Bridewell, 1576-1580," *The Journal of British Studies* 42 (2003), 284.

labour featured prominently in both institutions despite differences in the class and character of the poor being provided for in these two types of foundations. The discussion will look at labour in almshouses more thoroughly later with a discussion on the growing Protestant ethic in England. For now, though, it is worth noting that although almshouses tend to be perceived with a positive impression and workhouses typically possess a less positive image,³⁶ both institutions similarly mandated that their poor perform some kind of work while they were an inmate, and usually this was some form of manual labour. Despite differences in popular perceptions of the impotent poor and the idle and vagrant poor in early modern England, the changing social climate brought about by the Reformation led to similarities in treatments for two different classes of poor in two different types of poor relief institutions.

With penury rising through the sixteenth century, contemporary agencies and customary mechanisms for dealing with the issue no longer sufficed. The dire situation developing in England near the end of the century thus prompted the Elizabethan government to pass the influential Poor Law Act of 1598 and its amended variation in 1601.³⁷ Over the next two centuries, these Acts served as the nucleus of the country's poor laws until they were finally replaced in 1834. In large part, the Elizabethan poor laws are best known for having authorized relief for even the able bodied poor, a third group of the destitute who had long fallen between the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor.³⁸ Less often noted, though, are the statutes passed alongside the poor laws that

³⁶ Alannah Tomkins, "Almshouse Versus Workhouse: Residential Welfare in 18th- Century Oxford," *Family & Community History* 7 (2004), 46.

³⁷ McIntosh, *Poor Relief in England*, 1; 39 Elizabeth c. 3; and 43 Elizabeth c. 2.

³⁸ The able-bodied poor were those individuals that were capable of labour, but unable to find work due to rising unemployment rates in England brought on by shifting demographics and inflation during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Increased recognition for this class of poor as a distinct group grew during the sixteenth century. See, for instance, Slack, *Poverty and Policy*, 28. As for the deserving and

made it easier to found and sustain charitable institutions.

Prior to 1597-8, it was particularly difficult for an individual to found and then subsequently maintain an almshouse or hospital. Before this time, it was unlawful for a person to found or incorporate a hospital without first gaining royal consent to do so via royal letters patent under the great seal of England, a process both lengthy and financially taxing. However, following the passage of An Act for Erecting of Hospitals or Abiding and Working Houses for the Poor in 1597-8, any individual in possession of land, or someone acting in their stead and with their authority, was granted the lawful right to found and erect a hospital or some other abiding place at their will and pleasure.³⁹ This also allowed the establishment of a corporate body, granting them significant legal standing, especially in the attainment and subsequent use of land, and provided them the lawful right to sue or be sued in the country's courts. This was followed in 1601 by a second Act that increased accountability in charitable institutions. Referred to as the Charitable Uses Act of 1601, this statute granted authority to the Lord Chancellor to commission local bishops to enquire into a house's expenditures in order to ensure that such institutions were indeed abiding by the statutes afforded to it by its founder.⁴⁰ Concerning almshouses, these two statutes probably help account for the sudden explosion in foundation during the first three decades of the seventeenth century, a trend which W.K. Jordan noticed while analyzing philanthropy in England between the late

undeserving poor, the former typically referred to those poor who were viewed by their contemporaries as deserving of relief, usually the impotent and able-bodied poor. This was especially the case after the development and integration of the Elizabethan Poor Laws. The latter group was the opposite, and usually referred to the idle and vagrant poor.

³⁹ 39 Elizabeth, c. 5.

⁴⁰ 43 Elizabeth, c. 4. Concerning the commissioning of local bishops, the Act of 1601, which was actually an amendment made to the earlier Act passed in 1597, specified that any institution that made their own appointments for governors to visit their institution on an annual basis were exempt since they could ensure their own accountability.

fifteenth and mid-seventeenth centuries.⁴¹

The main goal of this thesis, then, is to set almshouses within the larger body of literature concerned with poor relief in early modern England. The discussion will be set largely within the framework of the Reformation's beginning under Henry VIII in 1534 and will end just before the beginning of the English Civil War in 1642. This time frame will allow the discussion to incorporate the shifts in religion, society and culture, and discuss how these changes affected almshouses and the impotent poor through the Tudor and Stuart eras. Understanding how almshouses evolved during the Reformation and the changing social and cultural climate of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is crucial for both appreciating how these organizations developed and operated in subsequent years, and for contributing to our comprehension of Protestantism's broader implications for the impotent poor. The thesis considers continuity and change in almshouses founded during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, mostly because the discussion compares the rules and regulations of medieval institutions with those founded during the Reformation and post-Reformation era. The intent is not only to determine whether England's religious, social, and cultural conversion impacted post-Reformation almshouse donors, but also to examine how this affected the impotent poor residing in early modern foundations during the Tudor and early Stuart period. In doing so, the thesis argues that almshouses played a vital role in England's mixed economy of welfare during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Chapter One compares and contrasts pre-Reformation almshouses with post-Reformation almshouses to determine how the shift from Catholicism to Protestantism affected these institutions. It discusses whether the residents and benefits provided by

⁴¹ Jordan, *Philanthropy in England*, 260.

early modern almshouses differed from those in houses founded in earlier periods. Foundations made by donors in the years after the Reformation catered specifically to the impotent poor, mainly those elderly individuals past labour, while the benefits these individuals received, though varying from almshouse to almshouse, typically consisted of regular cash, food, fuel, and clothing stipends. The purpose is to examine whether the shift from Catholicism to Protestantism affected how almshouses provided for their residents, and the chapter does so largely by examining the statutes of pre-Reformation and post-Reformation foundations. The findings suggest that the material benefits of post-Reformation almshouses remained largely unchanged from earlier institutions. In a similar vein, the discussion analyzes the Reformation's impact on spirituality in almshouses founded after the break with Rome, and how the growth of the Protestant ethic influenced administration and governance in these institutions. Prayers, a staple feature of almshouses in both pre- and post-Reformation England, for example, took on an entirely different meaning in foundations made in the later sixteenth century and onwards. Though it will be discussed in much greater detail later, administration and governance shifted mainly from church regulation in the pre-Reformation era to secular regulation in the post-Reformation period.

Chapter Two explores the regulations that governed almshouses in the post-Reformation period, and the residential experiences of inmates. Apart from the provision of benefits afforded to residents, almshouses expected their residents to conform to particular standards of behaviour. In a sense, this was an exchange between a resident and their almshouse. The evidence indicates that in return for free housing, and in some instances the additional cash, food, and fuel stipend, residents had to swear to uphold the

regulations laid out in an almshouse's statutes. Most houses founded after the Reformation rejected idleness and expected inmates to engage in some form of manual labour, despite their advanced age. This will be discussed in much fuller detail later, but it is worth noting here that the rejection of idleness was part of much broader social trend that permeated the statutes of almshouses founded in the late Elizabethan and Stuart eras. This was the case with institutional rejection of particular behaviours, especially those considered immoral and ungodly by contemporaries. Nearly every house founded during the early modern period forbade gambling, drunkenness, and fornication, for example, and inmates who broke these and other rules typically faced hefty punishments. This is crucial since it emphasizes how shifting cultural norms in the Tudor and Stuart periods influenced how founders regulated their institutions. The intent of this chapter is thus to garner an idea of what life in almshouses was like for their early modern residents, or, more precisely, to gain some sense of how founders perceived, regulated, and expected institutional life to function.

Chapter Three steps away from a broad analytical approach to almshouses in the Tudor and Stuart eras to focus more intently upon two significant foundations made in the early seventeenth century. It is thus a case study examining the foundations made by Thomas Sutton in the London Charterhouse in 1611 and Edward Alleyn in the village of Dulwich in 1619, two institutions that continue operation today. These two foundations were selected because of the stark similarities that existed between Sutton and Alleyn and their foundations, particularly the difficulties both founders had in establishing their institutions. Discussion of Sutton's foundation in the Charterhouse will focus chiefly upon the institution's early history as an almshouse and examine the legal complication

that surrounded it. The chapter will deal more fully with this as it progresses, but for now let it be said that Sutton's Charterhouse had a tremendous impact on the legal community following a two year law-suit between Sutton's executors and his nephew, Simon Baxter. The effects of this legal battle have reverberated through time and continue to influence aspects of corporation law even today. Concerning the foundation made by Alleyn, the discussion will again focus on the legal difficulties faced by this institution during its earliest years as an almshouse. More than that, though, the chapter will attempt to provide insight into how older almshouses influenced the donations made by new founders. This chapter provides an idea of the complexities behind founding an almshouse during the early modern period and the complications that occasionally arose, though it is worth noting that both Sutton's and Alleyn's represent rather extreme instances.

Chapter 2

Continuity and Change: Benefits, Religion, and Administration in Pre- and Post-Reformation Almshouses

Introduction

The start of the Reformation in the 1530s drastically reduced existing schemes of poor relief, and this was true as well for those hospitals and almshouses that were so prevalent in the preceding years. Before England's break with the papacy, between 750 and 800 of these institutions were in operation, more or less evenly distributed throughout the country.¹ By the time that Elizabeth I ascended the throne in 1558, the number of hospitals and almshouses had dropped sharply, ravaged by the Reformations of Henry VIII and Edward VI. Though some secular bodies operated their own establishments,² most hospitals and almshouses in the early decades of the sixteenth century continued to function as they had during the middle ages: as extensions of the larger ecclesiastical institutions scattered throughout the realm. Because of their close association with England's monasteries and chantries, the vast majority of hospitals and almshouses found themselves increasingly assaulted as the traditional religion was attacked between 1534 and 1553. As the crown appropriated the lands, buildings, and properties of the country's

¹ Brian Howson, *Almshouses: A Social and Architectural History* (Great Britain: The History Press, 2008), 27; Rotha Mary Clay, *The Medieval Hospitals of England* (London: Methuen & Co, 1909), xviii.

² Some hospitals and almshouses were operated by civil authorities during the middle ages, including a number that were operated by the livery companies in London and other urban areas. See, for example, Archer, "The Livery Companies and Charity in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," *Guilds, Society, & Economy in London, 1450-1800*, ed. Ian Anders Gadd and Patrick Wallis (London: Centre of Metropolitan History, 2002.),15.

religious bodies and sold them to members of the laity, the charitable institutions they ran, including hospitals and almshouses, were lost. Though largely a secondary consequence of the Reformation, most establishments were nevertheless dissolved during the early stages of England's religious transition.

For a period of about three decades, residential aid provided by hospitals and almshouses practically ceased.³ Since these institutions essentially functioned as chantries in the years preceding the Reformation, the shifting religious atmosphere in the country more or less rendered hospitals and almshouses incompatible with English Protestantism. It was not until the mid-sixteenth century that hospital and almshouse foundation revived, only after these establishments became secular in their foundation and operation. Yet, despite their establishment along secular rather than religious lines, these post-Reformation institutions continued to provide much the same fundamental aid that they had during the pre-Reformation era. Although they were no longer operating alongside religious bodies and were being run by secular authorities - usually municipal governments or private bodies -, hospitals and almshouses continued to provide care to a select group of needy English men and women. As they had in times past, post-Reformation institutions generally targeted the impotent poor, those aged, maimed, and the infirm individuals.⁴

England's religious transformation had mixed consequences for both hospitals and almshouses. On the one hand, clearly, the Reformation dramatically reduced the number of these institutions, and forced them to become secular entities operated by either civic bodies or private individuals. On the other hand, it appears that the

³ Elizabeth Prescott, *The English Medieval Hospital c. 1050-1640* (England: Seaby, 1992), 72.

⁴ Marjorie K. McIntosh, *Poor Relief in England, 1350-1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 71.

Reformation, or Protestantism, rather, had little effect on their underlying and fundamental purpose since this form of charity continued, providing residential care to a specific demographic of poor. Yet, some differences do appear, and this is especially telling upon closer examination of the statutes provided to post-Reformation establishments by either their founders or others on their behalf. Change in almshouses is revealed even further when a comparison is made between the statutes of those institutions founded after 1558 with those founded in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

This chapter examines the implications that the English Reformation had for almshouses from the mid-sixteenth century forward by comparing the founding statutes of these institutions with those founded earlier. It will begin first by examining the residents that these institutions provided for in the pre- and post-Reformation eras, and the living arrangements and benefits that inmates received. The aim is to demonstrate that post-Reformation almshouses continued to provide the same type of benefits to their residents as their medieval counterparts. After considering this, the chapter will analyze the shifting purpose of almshouses in the post-Reformation era. It will be argued that the rise of Protestantism affected various aspects of the internal functioning and day-to-day operation of almshouses, and changed how founders governed and administered their foundations. Before England's religious shift, for example, founders generally entrusted the governance and administration of their foundations to the country's religious bodies; but after the Reformation, founders increasingly enlisted the aid of secular authorities. Such an examination, then, will contribute to historians' understanding of the impact that the Reformation had on residential poor relief in the late-sixteenth and early seventeenth

century. It should be remembered, however, that most of the surviving documents on almshouses in the medieval and early modern period deal only with the larger and better endowed institutions, those that have either survived into the modern era, or maintained adequate book-keeping during their years of operation. As some academics have pointed out, very little is actually known about those smaller institutions that survived only a few decades.⁵

Residents and Charitable Benefits in Pre-Reformation and Post-Reformation

Almshouses

Almshouses were not meant to house common beggars, vagrants, or those who lived in poverty for most of their lives. As lay charities expanded in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, founders of these establishments targeted a sort of middling poor, those parish or town residents who were at one time able to subsist through labour, but because of some misfortune were no longer able to care for themselves. The usual causes of this were age, illness, or injury and founders of these institutions generally targeted this demographic of poor exclusively when erecting their foundations. On top of this, some almshouse founders expected their inmates to be religiously humble, but also materially poor and incapable of living without aid. God's House at Ewelme, an almshouse founded by William de la Pole and his wife in 1437, for example, was erected with the intent that it provide only to those poor who were of good conversation, though "meek in spirit, poor in temporal goods, [and] in such ways that without other relief than

⁵ McIntosh, *Poor Relief in England*, 201; and Angela Nicholls, "A Comfortable Lodging and One Shilling and Fourpence A Day: The Material Benefits of an Almshouse Place," *Family and Community History* 15 (2) 2012: 81.

of his own goods he shall not now competently live.”⁶ Preferred inmates for election to the house, moreover, were those that were chaste in body, of good conversation, of advanced age, and who had been broken in service to the county through work. This was similar to the requirements made by Walter Hungerford’s widow in 1449 for her husband’s almshouse in Wiltshire’s parish of Heytesbury. Lady of Hungerford and Heytesbury, Hungerford’s wife, Margaret Botreaux, ruled that servants to the family should be preferred above all others. According to her, each of the poor who occupied a dwelling, moreover, had to be “destitute of temporal goods... meek in spirit, chaste of body, and of good conversation.”⁷ Occupants of Pykenham’s almshouse in Hadeligh, founded at the end of the fifteenth century by the Archdeacon, similarly had to be poor local residents of good and honest conversation and living, and who had fallen into poverty by some misfortune.⁸

Although advanced age was among the most essential and usual requirements, in some instances founders favoured those who were living in destitution because of an illness or injury. This was the case with the Saffron Waldren almshouse in Essex founded in 1400. The statutes of the house declared that it had been built for the care of thirteen poor persons who were “decrepit, blind, [and] lame.”⁹ The hospital founded in Leicester in the 1510s by William Wigston, a wool merchant, sought to fill its two dwellings with a similar group of poor. The houses’ regulations stipulated that the poor, consisting of

⁶ H.M. Stationery Office, *The Ninth Report of the Royal Commission of Historical Manuscripts* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 221.

⁷ John Jackson, “Ancient Statutes of Heytesbury Almshouse” in *The Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine, Vol XI*, ed. Edward Hungerford Godford (Devizes: L.H.F. & E. Bull, 1869), 299.

⁸ Marjorie K. McIntosh, *Poor Relief and Community in Hadleigh, Suffolk, 1547-1600* (Great Britain: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2013), 110.

⁹ Francis W. Steer. “The Statutes of Saffron Walden Almshouses,” in *Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society*, n.s. 25 (Colchester: Published by the Society at the Museum in the Castle, 1955-1960), 167.

twelve men and twelve women, should only be chosen from those that were “decrepit, blind, lame, or maimed, or that want natural wit.”¹⁰ Additionally, being respectable and of good fame and name was an essential requirement for each of the poor men and women elected to the house. According to Marjorie McIntosh, moreover, in 1512, the almshouse operated by the Holy Trinity Guild in Wisbech admitted only those “persons of the greatest weakness.”¹¹

Concerning the impact of the Reformation, besides driving almshouses to become secular establishments, England’s religious transformation effected little change with regard to who dwelled in these establishments. In the post-Reformation era, almshouses largely continued providing care to impoverished lay people. Founders - and those who elected the poor in post-Reformation almshouses - still concerned themselves primarily with those elderly, ill, and injured poor just as founders had done earlier. The notion of housing only the respectable poor similarly persisted in the years following the Reformation. David Smith, a citizen of London and embroider to Queen Elizabeth, founded an almshouse via his will in 1584 for six poor widows living in the parish of Saint Bennett, his birthplace. Smith specified that only those who were held “in good name and fame” and advanced to the “age of three score years, or fifty-six at the least” should be selected to occupy one of his six dwellings.¹² Several years later, John Fuller, a London lawyer and treasurer of the Inner Temple, donated to the poor rather generously by erecting two almshouses, one for twelve poor men and the other for twelve poor women. Concerning the poor, he mandated in his will - proved in 1592 - that his

¹⁰ A. Hamilton Thompson, ed., *A Calendar of Charities and Other Documents Belonging to the Hospital of William Wyggeston at Leicester* (Leicester: C.H. Gee Co. Ltd., 1933), 69.

¹¹ McIntosh, *Poor Relief in England, 1350-1600*, 72.

¹² TNA PROB 11/71/127. In his will, Smith specified that the task for electing widows to his almshouse was to be undertaken by the parson and churchwardens of Saint Bennett.

institutions house only those who were of “good name [and] of the age of fifty years or about.”¹³ John Wynne similarly sought to provide for the aged poor by leaving instructions in his will for the erection of an almshouse in the town of Baldock, in the county of Hertfordshire – his birthplace. A London merchant and member of the Mercer’s company in the city, Wynne founded his almshouse in 1617 for the continual “dwelling and abiding of six poor old folks.”¹⁴

Ensuring that those suffering from illness or injury were cared for similarly persisted in the minds of almshouse founders in the post-Reformation period. In 1575, Sir Thomas Gresham, a London merchant, required that those occupying his almshouse in the parish of St. Peter’s be impotent poor persons,¹⁵ while Richard Huish erected his almshouse in Taunton, Somerset, in 1616 for relieving aged men who were needy, impotent, and maimed.¹⁶ Although it falls just outside the range and scope of this particular thesis, the almshouse of Sir Thomas Holt provides a good example of how care for decrepit poor continued long after the Reformation. For his house erected in 1655 in Aston, a town now in modern day Birmingham in the West Midlands, Holt required that the five men and five women elected should not only be aged, but lame, decrepit, blind, impotent, “or likely to be a burden to the parish of Aston.”¹⁷

Yet, despite the continued trend of caring for the aged, impotent, and injured poor in post-Reformation establishments, some almshouse founders in the years after 1553

¹³ TNA PROB 11/79/367.

¹⁴ TNA PROB 11/130/749.

¹⁵ John Gough Nichols and John Bruces, eds., *Wills from London Doctors’ Common: A Selection from the Wills of Eminent Persons Proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, 1495-1695* (Westminster: John Bowyer Nichols and Sons, 1862), 61.

¹⁶ Ian W. Archer, “Sources for the Early Modern English Almshouse,” *Sources for the History of Hospitals in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Martin Scheutz (Bohlau Verlag: Oldenbourg, 2010), 107.

¹⁷ Sir Thomas Holt, *Orders and Rules appointed by the Last Will and Testament of Sir Thomas Holt, knight and Baronet to be observed in the electing, and After the Election, of the Ten Poor Persons Inhabiting in his Almshouse at Aston Juxta Birmingham in the County of Warwick* (London: S&N, 1656), 2.

increasingly ranked which poor their house should elect. This stemmed partly from the fluctuating social, economic, and religious atmosphere in England, and partly from the changing meanings of poverty in the years following the Reformation. With the increase of vagrancy after 1530 and the gradual rise in the number of beggars following the loss of monasticism in the country, almshouse founders focused more intently upon those elderly individuals who were, at one time, able to sustain themselves. This is not saying that founders ignored those who were injured or impotent, but they certainly focused more intently upon providing care to the aged poor specifically. Marjorie McIntosh noted this transition to some extent already,¹⁸ but the scope of her study ends at the turn of the seventeenth century. The College of the Poor, which Thomas Cure founded in St. Saviours, Surrey in 1584, arranged in descending order the preferred degrees of poor individuals that the house was preferably to elect. According to the statutes, which Cure drafted himself, the first degree of poor people to be chosen were those who were aged and had worked as a labourer, but could do so no longer.¹⁹ Those unable to work because they were “lame, or maimed by sickness, or by service to the crown” were considered second, while the physically handicapped, especially those who had “become blind and [were] thereby unable to work,” should be selected thirdly. The fourth degree of poor was any individual who had once been rich, but had been brought to poverty by misfortune, namely by a “sudden casualty,” including fire, robbery, and shipwreck. For the fifth degree, one had to be continually sick with no contagious disease, while those burdened

¹⁸ See, for example, McIntosh, *Poor Relief in England, 1350-1600*, 192-200.

¹⁹ Archer, “Sources for the Early Modern English Almshouse,” 115.

with children that they could no longer sustain through labor met the sixth and final requirement.²⁰

McIntosh used the example of Thomas Cure as well, but because her study ends in 1600, she does not examine those institutions that continued to rank-list their preferred poor in the succeeding years. This is particularly significant because the social implications of the failed harvests of the late 1580s and 1590s probably enhanced rank-listing of poor among almshouse founders. In 1597, for instance, the Archbishop of Canterbury, John Whitgift, founded an almshouse in Croydon, Surrey, and mandated that poor individuals who were aged sixty years and had previously served in the household of the archbishop should be preferred before all others.²¹ Perhaps a better example of how founders at the turn of the century continued to rank-list their poor comes from the statutes of the New College of Cobham, re-founded in 1598 by the then lord of Cobham, Sir Joseph Williamson, in the county of Kent. These statutes, it is worth noting, bear a rather striking resemblance to those laid out by Cure for his almshouse. Here, it was regulated that those who were aged and had previously been labourers, but were now “past work” should be “first and before all chosen” to occupy the almshouse.²² The second group of poor considered were those who were lame, or maimed by sickness or service to the crown. Any individuals that were either born blind or had had become blind and were thus unable to work were considered thirdly, while those who became “despised of their goods” through fire, robbery, shipwreck, or otherwise were to be chosen fourth. The fifth class consisted of those suffering from continual sickness, and the sixth, and

²⁰ Ibid, 116.

²¹ D.W. Garrow, *The History and Antiquities of Croydon* (London: Geo, Cowie & Co., 1818), 338.

²² Sir John Williams, *Abstract Containing the Substance of the Rules and Ordinances of the New-College of Cobham, In the County of Kent* (England, 1687), 16.

final, class consisted of any poor individual suffering from destitution because their labour could not sustain their children.²³ The hospital founded by Sir Thomas Coningsby in 1614 was erected with the intention that it house only poor soldiers or mariners, but only if they had served for at least three years at war or sea, or had been serving men of at least seven years.²⁴ The almshouses founded by Thomas Cure and Sir William Cooke in 1584 and 1597 respectively, likewise catered to this demographic, stipulating that injured individuals maimed by service to the crown should be the second highest preferment for entry behind aged laborers.

In those almshouses founded after Elizabeth's ascension, moreover, requiring sustained residence in a parish or town for a specific duration of time became progressively more common. When drafting statutes to regulate their almshouses, most founders in the post-Reformation era stipulated that only poor individuals previously residing or working in a parish for an extended period should see election to their house. With poverty levels increasing after 1530, coupled with the escalating social and economic complications that the country experienced through the entirety of the sixteenth century, founders probably included clauses like these to ensure that only the respectable poor secured a dwelling in their institution. Years of local residence probably meant that prospective candidates' characters were better known, and it probably emerged from a founders' sense of localism. Similarly, supporting one's own was common in almshouses founded by those representing the gentry and aristocracy as founders often privileged former servants before extending their charity to those from the locality.

²³ Ibid, 17.

²⁴ Sidney Heath, *Old English Houses of Alms: A Pictorial Record with Architectural and Historical Notes*, (London: Francis Griffiths, 1910), 102.

While the preference for local residents was not specific to post-Reformation institutions,²⁵ it nonetheless became far more pronounced and frequent in the statutes of almshouses founded in the mid-sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. In some instances, statutes of later institutions ruled that a pauper be considered for election only if he or she resided in a parish or town for a period of two decades or more. The founder of the almshouse in Little Thurlow, Sir Stephen Soame, mandated that a poor individual must have “dwelled or remained in the town of Little Thurlow...for the space of four and twenty years” before being considered for election.²⁶ This, too, was the case for the almshouse founded by David Smith in Saint Benet. In his will, Smith ruled that almswomen elected to his establishment had to have dwelled in the parish for at least twenty years at some point in past or present.²⁷ For other post-Reformation almshouses, the time spent in a parish or community was not quite as high, but it remained an underlying requirement for election nevertheless. Holy Trinity Hospital in the parish of Long Melford ruled that their inmates had to have lived there for the space of two years, while three years was the requirement for those occupying a spot in the almshouse of Thomas Seckford in the town of Great-Bealings, Suffolk.²⁸

²⁵ According to McIntosh, after 1350, English law distinguished between those poor who were unable to work for their own sustenance and vagrants - those poor individuals who moved through the country begging for alms. See, for example, McIntosh, *Poor Relief in England, 1350-1600*, 41-42. The growing awareness of vagrants and social attitudes towards them, moreover, may have influenced medieval almshouse founders to incorporate statutes related to time spent in a parish by a pauper. The statutes of the almshouses of St. John Baptist and St. John the Evangelist, founded in Sherburne in 1437, both ruled that only poor people living in the parish of Sherburne were to be chosen to reside in the institutions. See, for instance, Charles Herbert Mayo, *A Historic Guide to the Almshouses of St. John Baptist and St. John the Evangelist, Sherburne*, (England: Oxford University Press, 1926), 38.

²⁶ TNA PROB 11/138/64.

²⁷ TNA PROB 11/71/127.

²⁸ Elizabeth Wigmore, ed., *Holy Trinity Hospital, Long Melford: A Sixteenth Century Almshouse* (England: AP3 Imaging Services Ltd., 1995), 33; and Robert Loader, ed., *The Statutes and Ordinances for the Government of the Alms-Houses, in Woodbridge, in the County of Suffolk Founded by Thomas Seckford* (London: Robert Loader, 1792), 2.

Besides time lived in a parish, the issue of marital status became a prominent matter for founders in the later 1500s and early 1600s, although it was subject to disagreement. McIntosh has already examined this for those institutions founded in the late sixteenth century,²⁹ but the discrepancy in almshouses allowing married or single inmates to occupy a dwelling persisted into the seventeenth century. At Dulwich College, founded in 1619 by the actor, Edward Alleyn, the poor men and women had to be single, unmarried individuals, probably widowed, before admitted to the house. On the other hand, Robert Rogers, who erected his almshouse in Poole, Dorsetshire, in 1601, intended his institution to service the needs of six poor, aged couples.³⁰ The significance, here, is that a pauper's age, impotency, or illness were no longer the only requirements for admittance to an almshouse in the decades after the Reformation. Though there was widespread disagreement between houses and founders, a person's poverty, while still fundamental, was scarcely the only factor regarding whether an almshouse elected them. By the later sixteenth century, marital status was an additional factor to be considered by some founders or electors deciding whether a pauper held a spot in their institution.

Concerning the benefits given to almshouse inmates in the years succeeding the Reformation, these, too, remained largely unchanged. In pre-Reformation establishments, almshouses generally provided more than just free housing. Most of the surviving records of the earlier institutions dictate that in addition to perpetual living, almshouse dwellers received a weekly or monthly cash stipend, an allowance of food, fuel for cooking and warmth in the winter months, simple care, and, in some of the secular and well endowed institutions, an annual or bi-annual gift of clothing. The typical amount of each of these

²⁹ McIntosh, *Poor Relief in England, 1350-1600*, 194-195.

³⁰ William Young, *The History of Dulwich College, Down to the Act of Parliament Dissolving the Original Corporation, 28th August, 1857* (London: Morrison and Gibb, 1889), 65; and TNA Prob 11/99/141.

benefits varied from almshouse to almshouse, of course, but these added luxuries were more or less always present in pre-Reformation almshouse living - at least in those records that survive. According to the statutes of the Saffron Walden almshouses, the poor received four hundred faggots of wood, four bushels of peas, one quarter of oats, and six flagons of beer each year.³¹ This was in conjunction with an undisclosed money pension and care afforded by a poor woman residing in the institution, whose duty it was to wash, bath, cook, and nurse the sick poor men of the house. The Ewelme almshouse provided for its inmates in a like manner, but in addition to a cash stipend of 13d per week, the almshouse gave its thirteen inmates a decorated gown to be worn during prayers or church services.³²

Margaret Botreaux, the widow of William Hungerford who founded an almshouse in Heytesbury during the mid-fourteenth century, provided for her poor in a similar fashion. The woman of the house, moreover, was expected to look after the needs of the poor men, especially for those suffering from severe impotency or during times of increased sickness.³³ In addition to a small fuel and clothing stipend, Lady Margaret provided a large cash stipend, and she actually made regulations to increase this pension to compensate for possible periods of inflation. So, for instance, if the price of a bushel of wheat was under 10d then the poor of the house received a stipend of 6s 8d per week, collectively. However, if wheat was priced at or above 10d then they received an enhanced allowance of 7s 2d per week. At 15d per bushel, the poor received 7s 8d, and if wheat rose to a price above 20d, then it was stipulated in the statutes that the keepers of

³¹ Steer. "The Statutes of Saffron Walden Almshouses," 167.

³² H.M. Stationery Office, *The Ninth Report*, 219.

³³ Jackson "Ancient Statues of Heytesbury Almshouse", 302-303.

the house should decide what to pay the poor.³⁴ The provision made by Heytesbury's almshouse is rather interesting since the cash allowances of most almshouses were fixed, thus subject to reduced purchasing power during times of rising inflation.

For those secular almshouses operating in late medieval England, cash stipends in particular varied from almshouse to almshouse since they largely depended on the social status and financial background of founders. In some cases, like the almshouse in Heytesbury, the poor received a rather large sum of money, but more generally, almshouse pensions rarely exceeded one shilling per week. The Domus Dei of Stamford, which was an almshouse founded by William Brown in 1485, provided its poor with a weekly stipend of only 7d, while the statutes of the almshouse founded by Elly Davis in 1447 specified that 10d per week be afforded to inmates.³⁵ During the Reformation, Anne Wethers founded an almshouse with a landed endowment for five poor women in 1547. A peculiar foundation since Wethers founded her house in the midst of the Reformation's attack on the Catholic Church in England (a time when almshouse foundation basically ceased), and because it retained aspects that dominated pre-Reformation institutions.³⁶ She nonetheless willed that her almshouse inmates receive a stipend of 6d.³⁷

Concerning monetary stipends, pensions remained an essential aspect of almshouse living in the years after the Reformation. Cash allowances more or less became the standard in post-Reformation almshouses, and a growing number of almshouse founders from the 1560s onward attempted to provide adequate stipends to

³⁴ Ibid, 304.

³⁵ H.P. Wright, *The Story of the Domus Dei of Stamford* (London: Parker & Co., 1890), 48.; and Garrow, *The History and Antiquities of Croydon* (London: Geo, Cowie & Co., 1818), 326.

³⁶ TNA PROB 11/31/716. According to her will, through which she founded her almshouse, Wethers desired that the women of her almshouse pray for her soul, and for the souls of her dead family members.

³⁷ Ibid. It is unclear from Wethers' will whether this stipend was to be paid weekly or monthly, though from the rather small amount being afforded to the almswomen, it was likely a weekly allowance.

their inmates so they would not become reliant upon begging. This was particularly true for those larger and better-endowed institutions that managed to survive periods of economic turmoil. Lord John Williams of Thame provided the five poor men and one poor woman residing in his almshouse, which was founded in the late-1550s, with an annual stipend of £7 4s 9d each. According to his will proved in 1559, Williams intended that the stipend be doled out to his alms people twice yearly in a divided sum. On the feast of the annunciation of Our Lady, usually held on March 25, Williams' alms people received £3 11s 6d, while on the feast of St. Michael the Archangel, in late September, they earned £3 13s 3d.³⁸ Williams, moreover, stipulated that payments could be received in bulk within two months of each feast, or given on a weekly basis, with the money doled out proportionately until the sums noted above were met.³⁹ Several pieces of land, including the rents from lands and tenements that Williams owned in Littlemore, were endowed to the almshouse to ensure its continual operation.

St. Anne's Hospital at Appleby founded by Lady Anne Clifford, Countess Dowager of Dorset, Pembroke, and Montgomery, in the mid-seventeenth century for poor women inhabiting the town provided a similarly large cash pension. Clifford's statutes ruled that the twelve sisters receive an annual cash payment of £6, while the thirteenth member, the mother of the house and who acted in the same fashion as a warden in a male or male and female almshouse, received £8.⁴⁰ This was generated mostly from land

³⁸ John Williams, *Some Account of Lord Williams, of Thame: Founder of the Grammar School and Almshouse, at Thame; Together with the Copy of His Will and the Copies of Very Valuable English and Latin Documents Relating to the Above Charity* (Thame: C Ellis Machine Shop, 1873), 51.

³⁹ *Ibid.* Aside from founding an almshouse at Thame, Williams also established a schoolhouse. According to his will, he left the decision regarding payments to the poor of the almshouse up to the Schoolmaster. For more on the school specifically, including its foundation, financing, and inmates, refer to pages 37 through 51.

⁴⁰ E. Alex Heelis, "St. Anne's Hospital at Appleby," *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquaries and Archaeological Society*, ns, ix (1909), 194.

owned and endowed to the almshouse by Clifford. The men and women of Whitgift's almshouse also received generous stipends, amounting to £6 yearly for each of the poor brothers and £5 yearly for each of the poor sisters.⁴¹ This, too, came from the rents and revenues of lands endowed to the almshouse by Whitgift. The twenty poor inhabiting the New College of Cobham, which Sir Joseph Williamson founded in the late 1590s, received rather healthy stipends of nearly £4 annually, while each of the twelve poor men and women residing in Dulwich College, an early seventeenth-century foundation, received a salary over £7 a year.⁴² As with the almshouses of Clifford and Whitgift, the founders of the latter two institutions both provided their charities with landed endowments to ensure the perpetual continuance of payments. To contextualize the stipends given to almshouse residents in this period, it is perhaps useful to note the earnings of wage labourers. According to Stephen Deng, by the late sixteenth century the average sum earned by a skilled carpenter roughly equated to one schilling daily, while unskilled workers and shoemakers earned nine pence a day and £4 a year respectively.⁴³

In considering institutions founded by the lesser gentry and the middling sort of people during the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, cash allowances similarly remained a staple of almshouse foundation and living. The stipends from these institutions, however, were, for the most part, far more modest than those houses founded by members of the English aristocracy. This was partly because establishments founded by the middling sort, usually wealthy merchants or landowners, were generally smaller,⁴⁴ and partly because they were not always as well endowed as some of the larger charities.

⁴¹ Garrow, *The History and Antiquities of Croydon*, 340.

⁴² Williams, *Abstract Containing the Substance...*, 11.; Young, *The History of Dulwich College*, 88.

⁴³ Deng, Stephen, *Early Modern Cultural Studies 1500-1700: Coinage and State Formation in Early Modern English Literature* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 171.

⁴⁴ Howson, *Almshouses: A Social and Architectural History*, 30.

The almshouse founded by Robert Rogers in his will, for instance, paid its inmates a weekly sum of 12d for each of the six couples. Rogers, a leather seller in London, endowed the almshouse with lands worth just over £15, which he directed his executors to purchase following his death for use towards the charity and its inmates.⁴⁵ The provisions left in George Slee's will (1610) stipulated that the six inmates residing in his almshouse, which he partially erected during his lifetime, receive a salary of 12d every Saturday.⁴⁶ John Yaxley of Waterbeach, Cambridge, ordered the executors of his will (1614) not only to build six single roomed almshouses, but also to pay each of the six almshouses a stipend of £2 every year. To generate this income, Yaxley endowed his almshouse with lands he owned in Waterbeach.⁴⁷ According to the will of Sir Stephen Soame (1619), the alms people living in his establishment received a weekly stipend of 14d,⁴⁸ while the four aged couples residing in the almshouses founded by Edward Goffe in 1612 received £1 5s apiece. Regarding the latter foundation, Goffe provided his almshouses with a rather small endowment worth £10, most of which supplied the cash stipends for inmates in his almshouses. According to Wilbur Jordan's research, Goffe ordered this endowment to be halved every ten years so that £5 could go toward maintaining the almshouse, which most likely reduced drastically the stipends of inmates during those years.⁴⁹

The point is that despite how much cash stipends varied in post-Reformation almshouses, as an aspect of almshouse living, they remained a fundamental and underlying feature in the years following England's religious transformation. However,

⁴⁵ TNA PROB 11/99/141.

⁴⁶ TNA PROB 11/126/521.

⁴⁷ TNA PROB 11/65/487.

⁴⁸ TNA PROB 11/138/64.

⁴⁹ W.K. Jordan, *The Charities of Rural England, 1480-1660* (England: G. Allen & Unwin, 1962), 28.

what about those other benefits that dominated almshouse life in the years before the 1530s, namely fuel, clothing, and food? In truth, gauging whether additional benefits were marked by continuity or change in post-Reformation almshouses is a particularly challenging task. In large part, this is because the only information available generally relates to those larger or better-documented almshouses whose records have survived. What is not reflected in the historical record are those almshouse institutions that were either not endowed and simply maintained by a founder during his or her lifetime, or so poorly endowed that they managed only to survive for a few generations before disintegrating completely - probably from an inability to compensate for rising inflation. Regardless, this has hardly swayed historians from speculation concerning the altered benefits in almshouses following the Reformation. McIntosh, for example, suggests that the benefits that alms people received in the second half of the sixteenth century changed from the earlier foundations, stating that their generally smaller size, in combination with the rather limited resources of some houses, were the primary reasons behind this transition.⁵⁰ Angela Nicholls, on the other hand, suggests that with such a distortion in the records, the only plausible conclusion is that post-Reformation almshouses provided greatly varying levels of benefits for their residence.⁵¹ Although McIntosh and Nicholls do not point it out, it is almost certain that definitive conclusions about the benefits of pre-Reformation houses can ever be fully reached. This is due mostly to lack of surviving records, as well as probable variations between religious and secular institutions. Nonetheless, both McIntosh and Nicholls are probably correct in their presumptions regarding the benefits of post-Reformation institutions. What is certain, though, is that for

⁵⁰ *McIntosh, Poor Relief in England, 1350-1600*, 200. McIntosh, it is worth noting, notes, too, that the lack of information pertaining to the smaller institutions distorts our understanding of how benefits changed.

⁵¹ Angela Nicholls, "A Comfortable Lodging and One Schilling and Fourpence a Day..." 81.

the records that survived into the modern era, pre-Reformation as well as post-Reformation, there exists little significant change in the benefits that almshouses provided their residents.

In the same vein as cash stipends, fuel remained a staple feature in a number of the larger almshouse institutions founded during the Elizabethan era and the years thereafter. The provision of fuel, usually wood or coal, was, for founders, in many instances as important as providing almshouse residents with cash stipends. In most cases fuel not only ensured that inmates had an adequate heat source during the winter months, but also enabled residents to cook or bake the food they bought with their weekly or monthly money pensions. In some instances, founders, or those drawing up the statutes in their stead, placed particular emphasis on the continual provision of this resource. Founded in the late 1580s, the statutes of Thomas Seckford's almshouse ruled that in addition to their yearly cash pension, the twelve poor received an annual stipend consisting of three loads of wood, or fifteen shillings to buy three loads of wood.⁵² Similarly, the statutes penned by William Cecil in 1597 for his almshouse stipulated that during the term of twenty-one years, thirteen loads of firewood were to be delivered to each of the poor residents. This was to be harvested out of the forested areas surrounding Cecil's lands in Cliffe Park and provided to the poor sometime before the Feast of Saint Michael the Archangel.⁵³ After the expiration of the first twenty-one years of the almshouse's operation, moreover, Cecil ruled that the Bailiff of the Manor of Stanford

⁵² Loader, ed., *The Statutes and Ordinances for the Government of the Alms-Houses, in Woodbridge*, 3. The "Principal" of the poor, the thirteenth poor individual and head of the almshouse, received an additional bundle of wood for his added duties in the day-to-day operations of the house.

⁵³ William Cecil, Baron of Burghley, *Ordinances made by Sir William Cecil, Knight of the Order of the Garter, Baron of Burghley, for the Order and Government of xiii Poor Men* (Michigan: University of Michigan, 2011), 2.

Baron provide the almsmen with wood. In Little Thurlow, the almshouse operating there after 1619 received eight parcels of wood each year for use by the eight poor men and women residing therein. According to the founder's will, every year between the feasts of the Assumption of a Blessed Lady and Saint John Baptist, "eight loads of good faggots or billets shall be bought out of the next fell of wood" and then brought to the almshouse for use by the poor, with each receiving a single load.⁵⁴

Clothing, too, remained integral in almshouses operating during the post-Reformation period. While many institutions likely expected their inmates to use their cash stipends to purchase their own clothing, some used house resources to provide garments, usually canvas shirts, leather or hemp shoes, and woolen stockings.⁵⁵ The poor men living in John Clapham's 1605 foundation in Bedale, Yorkshire, for instance, received a regular clothing stipend worth 16 shillings, while those living in Sir George Croke's 1639 foundation in Studely, Oxfordshire received a clothing stipend on top of both a money and fuel pension.⁵⁶ For many of those houses founded during the Elizabethan era and early seventeenth century, however, the provision of livery gowns, tabards, or house cloaks grew in popularity. The provision of this type of clothing was hardly a new feature of almshouses operating after the Reformation,⁵⁷ but the provision of livery gowns or cloaks in particular seems to have increased in the late Tudor and early Stuart periods. For founders and almshouse governors in the post-Reformation era, the

⁵⁴ TNA Prob 11/138/64.

⁵⁵ McIntosh, *Poor Relief in England, 1350-1600*, 202.

⁵⁶ Jordan, *The Charities of Rural England*, 265 and 48.

⁵⁷ In addition to a regular clothing stipend consisting of two pairs of hosen, two shirts, and two pairs of pants annually, the fifteenth-century foundation in Heytesbury provided its poor with a white woolen gown with the letters "JHU. XRT" stitched upon the breast and back. Similarly, in the 1437 statutes of William de la Pole's almshouse in Ewelme, the poor were given a decorated and hooded tabard with a cross over the breast. See, for example, Jackson, "Ancient Statutes of Heytesbury Almshouse", 304.; H.M. Stationery Office, *The Ninth Report of the Royal Commission of Historical Manuscripts*, 219.

provision of distinctive clothing to residents served a host of purposes. In one sense, they marked residents as members of an institution, facilitating affection between members of a house and strengthening group identity, among other things.⁵⁸ At the same time, they fulfilled a ceremonial function, donned on feast days or whenever the poor of a house attended prayers or public services. In this way, they functioned largely as they had in the years before the Reformation. This was the case at the Elizabethan foundation operating in Thame in 1559. The statutes of this almshouse, which Lord John Williams founded posthumously, were drawn up by the executors who ruled that in addition to their regular clothing stipend paid every four years, the poor received a decorated cloak badged with a button representing the houses' founder. This cloak, one of Williams' executors eventually determined, should be worn only during feast days, especially Christmas, Pentecost, and Easter.⁵⁹

Provisions of distinctive clothing to almshouse inmates also allowed founders outwardly to display their generosity and philanthropy, either during their lifetime or for posterity. This was especially true in the larger and wealthier houses, though some of the smaller institutions also used clothing as a means to display one's philanthropic legacy.⁶⁰ Often, though not always, almshouse gowns bore the crest of their founder, like those worn by residents of Thomas Stafford's 1607 foundation in Buckinghamshire who all received a gown with a red cross stitched onto the left sleeve.⁶¹ However, it was probably more typical that an almshouse provided its inmates with a badge representing their

⁵⁸ McIntosh, *Poor Relief in England 1350-1600*, 204.

⁵⁹ John Williams, *Some Account of Lord Williams, of Thame: Founder*, 124-125.

⁶⁰ Alanna Tomkins, "Retirement From the Noise and Hurry of the World? The Experience of Almshouse Life," in *Accommodating Poverty: The Housing and Living Arrangements of the English Poor, c. 1600-1850*, ed. Joanne McEwan and Pamela Sharp (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 271.

⁶¹ Jordan, *The Charities of Rural England*, 45.

house or founder. This was the case at the New College of Cobham, which ruled that a badge representing the college be worn over the right shoulder by each of the house's inmates.⁶² In other instances, founders provided their alms people with elegant gowns that stood out from typical clothing as a method for expressing their charitableness. This was likely the case with Holy Trinity Hospital in Long Melford, whose alms people received a dark coloured gown bi-annually on top of a yearly clothing stipend.⁶³ This, too, was probably the situation with the gown provided to the almsmen of William Cecil's 1597 foundation. According to that institution's statutes, the poor of the almshouse received a new gown each year that matched the "livery coats of the Lord Burghley or his heirs."⁶⁴ Sir Stephen Soame similarly made regulations relating to the bi-annual provision of a gown to the alms people dwelling in his early seventeenth-century foundation in Little Thurlow. While it likely acted as a means of identifying the poor as members of that almshouse, as many livery gowns tended to do, the provision of a gown probably allowed Soame outwardly to display his philanthropy since he made no specifications concerning the provision of other forms of clothing.⁶⁵ The statutes of the almshouse at Stoke Poges actually stated explicitly that the gowns their inmates received served as a means of reminding townsfolk of the donor's generosity. According to McIntosh, every year each resident received a coloured livery gown so that everyone could see that alms people were all "brethren and sisters, found and maintained by one man."⁶⁶

⁶² Williams, *Abstract Containing the Substance of the Rules and Ordinance of the New-College of Cobham*, 9.

⁶³ Wigmore, *Holy Trinity Hospital, Long Melford*, 35.

⁶⁴ Cecil, Baron of Burghley, *Ordinances made by Sir William Cecil*, 1.

⁶⁵ TNA Prob 11/138/64.

⁶⁶ McIntosh, *Poor Relief in England 1350-1600*, 204.

What remains odd about the practice of badging among almshouses is that by the end of the sixteenth century, badges for the poor, in a more general social context, had evolved from being tokens of approval to become symbols of humiliation.⁶⁷ The fact that almshouses continued the habit at the end of the sixteenth century and then persisted with the practice into the seventeenth century is thus rather striking. Badging itself had been practiced in England since at least the mid-fourteenth century. As early as 1370, beggars had to wear signs to signify their pauperism, and this was true as well in a broader European context. According to Steve Hindle, for instance, paupers in Nuremberg, Regensburg, and Zurich all had to wear symbols indicating that the public relieved their poverty.⁶⁸ During the early decades of the sixteenth century in England specifically, badges were issued to paupers as a kind of stamp of approval, symbolizing one class of poor, usually the deserving, from other classes, typically the undeserving. The practice evidently caught on with the country's endowed charities, though the badged coats and gowns of these institutions tended to be much more elaborate than those worn by a typical beggar. These, Hindle argues, essentially acted as liveries, publicly representing the founder and the gratitude of those who donned them.

Whatever the earlier connotation represented, though, by the turn of the seventeenth century, the symbolism behind badging had begun shifting. As Hindle argues in his study, the principal reason for this sudden swing stemmed primarily from the changing significance of shame among the poor themselves.⁶⁹ Prior to the seventeenth century, shame fundamentally held the poor in check. Many simply refused to beg and

⁶⁷ Steve Hindle, "Dependency, Shame and Belonging: Badging the Deserving Poor, c. 1550-1750," *Cultural and Social History* 1 (1) 2004: 8.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 11.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 14.

seek alms or publicize their penury because of their pride. These individuals, Hindle explains, were the shamefaced poor, those paupers that were, at one time, householders of considerable social standing. During much of the sixteenth century, they were admired for their unwillingness to show that they had fallen into destitution. Yet, by the beginning of the seventeenth century this attitude gradually changed, and by the 1630s, other factors, namely fear, sloth, and ignorance, stopped poor householders from expressing their poverty.⁷⁰ Badging by the early seventeenth century, Hindle argues, was thus a modification of the sixteenth-century practice of branding or whipping the idle poor; it acted as a new means of marking the poor, inscribing a sign on the clothes, rather than the body.⁷¹ In any case, the practice of badging and providing livery gowns continued amongst almshouses founded during the seventeenth century, and it does not seem as if the same connotations that Hindle describes had been applied to those poor representing an endowed charity.⁷²

Although many houses probably expected their inmates to use their cash stipends to purchase their own food, a large number of almshouses after the Reformation continued the tradition of providing food to their inmates. In the 1570s, before the institution was actually provided with formal statutes, the almsmen of Holy Trinity Hospital were expected to pay for their own food with the yearly cash pension of £3 9s

⁷⁰ Ibid, 14.

⁷¹ Ibid, 19.

⁷² In a different, yet related, study, Hindle makes several suggestions concerning why the practice of badging continued in almshouses. According to him, it is possible that the habit of badging almsmen persisted because benefactors and founders wanted community members to remember the contributions they made to charitable works. Similarly, badges of almshouses, especially those that represented foundations by notable and high ranking members of English society, were worn as a symbol of pride, where an almsman or woman was identified by locals as being affiliated with a distinguished house founded by a prominent individual. Likewise, and Hindle draws attention to this by noting how children of a particular charitable schools were distinguished from those not affiliated with one, badges from almshouses were likely used as a way to distinguish the almsmen and women from the other poor in a particular parish or town. See, Steve Hindle, *On the Parish? The Micro-Politics of Poor Relief in Rural England c. 1550-1750* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), 435.

4d. By 1591, this stipend dropped to £1 per annum after Sir William Cordell posthumously provided his executors with official administrative and regulatory ordinances for the charity. Despite the major decrease in their cash pension, those living in Cordell's establishment after 1591 now received a regular food stipend.⁷³ The alms people dwelling in John Whitgift's almshouse in the late 1590s received an equal allowance of corn on a regular basis, though they were likely expected to use their money stipends to purchase their own meat and drink.⁷⁴ Sometimes almshouse founders or governors took an active role in the diet of their inmates, typically regulating the size and type of food or drink that house residents consumed. During its operation in the early seventeenth century, the statutes of Dulwich College specified that their alms folk daily receive a "wheaten loaf, weigh[ing] xii troy weight, and a full quart of eight shillings beer to each of them."⁷⁵ Similarly, during the 1570s, St. Thomas' Hospital in London stressed that each resident receive a loaf of penny bread and three-eighths of a gallon of beer each day for their consumption.⁷⁶

Occasionally, almshouses provided food in a way wholly different from an outright and regular daily or weekly stipend. For some of those houses operating in the later Tudor and early Stuart periods, providing alms folk with a weekly meal became steadily more popular. Usually this entailed the alms folk attending meals together with either their establishment's founder, or the founder's heir. William Cecil required the thirteen poor dwelling in his almshouse to have dinner at Burghley house, provided, of course, that he or his wife were present in the manor. According to his houses' statutes, at

⁷³ Wigmore, *Holy Trinity Hospital, Long Melford*, 37.

⁷⁴ Garrow, *The History and Antiquities of Croydon*, 340.

⁷⁵ William, *The History of Dulwich College*, 88.

⁷⁶ McIntosh, *Poor Relief in England 1350-1600*, 202.

one table together, the poor received a meal consisting of “two mease of meat, every mease of two dishes, one with pottage and boiled meats, the other [a] roast (if it be no fasting day), and if it be a fish day, then they have two like meases of white meat and fish.”⁷⁷ It was also William Feke’s desire to provide the residents of his foundation with a weekly meal. Feke, a Goldsmith from London who erected an almshouse in Wighton in 1590, ruled that the six poor men living in his almshouse should attend a dinner at his home every Sunday.⁷⁸

Even more popular than providing a weekly meal at a founder’s home was the steadily growing provision of gardens around almshouses, especially for those institutions founded and erected in rural parishes. In conjunction with their free lodging, some houses provided their residents with small plots of land with which to grow their own food. Though these were less frequent, some houses provided communal gardens for their residents with the same expectation that they would use the land for food production. When Thomas Seckford founded his almshouse in the late 1580s, he provided his thirteen poor men with a garden with the intent that they plant, sow, or set “herbs, roots, or any fruit that shall be most commodious to them.”⁷⁹ As with the rooms in the house, which provided shelter to two residents each, Seckford expected his almsmen to share their garden in the same way they shared rooms. According to Jordan, Sir George Croke provided garden plots to his almsfolk when he founded his institution in Studely, Oxfordshire in 1639.⁸⁰ Though Jordan does not specify what the garden was used for, presumably Croke expected his inmates to use it for agricultural purposes. John

⁷⁷ Cecil, Baron of Burghley, *Ordinances made by Sir William Cecil*, 1.

⁷⁸ Jordan, *The Charities of Rural England*, 123.

⁷⁹ Loder, ed, *The Statutes and Ordinances for the Government of the alms-house...by Tomas Seckford*, 1.

⁸⁰ Jordan, *The Charities of Rural England*, 48.

Clapham probably had similar expectations when he founded his almshouse in Bedale in 1605 and erected it around a one-acre garden, likely intending all members of the house to use it communally.⁸¹

Fuel, clothing, and food, then, continued to feature prominently in almshouse life after the Reformation, at least in respect to those records that have survived. It is important to remember, too, that almshouses in the post-Reformation period were generally built in the centre of towns. Founders, or those erecting an institution on a founder's part, purposefully erected their almshouses in the heart of a community with the hope that the institution's open visibility would coax members of a town or parish into donating alms, and to better advertise the founder's munificence.⁸² While casual donations probably helped in some respects those inmates residing in wealthier establishments, smaller almshouses suffering from lack of an endowment likely relied on community gifts to ensure their continued operation and function. Though it is difficult to discern what people were giving during their lifetimes, wills from the late Tudor and early Stuart period provide an excellent resource to perceive exactly what individuals posthumously donated to their local almshouse. Before sailing to Spanish America in 1596, for instance, Sir Francis Drake drew up his will and provided generously to the poor of Plymouth. Leaving £40 to the poor of the city, he willed that the poor residing in the local almshouse receive half of that sum.⁸³

Yet, while the nature of the residents and benefits of an almshouse remained largely unchanged during the course of the Reformation, England's religious transformation had a pronounced impact upon the internal operation, function, and

⁸¹ Ibid, 267.

⁸² Tomkins, "Retirement From the Noise and Hurry of the World?," 91.

⁸³ Nichols and Bruces, eds., *Wills from London Doctors' Common*, 73.

activities of almshouses founded after 1560. This is particularly evident concerning the transition in the religious function and behavior of houses and residents, the shifting size and architecture of establishments, and changes made in institutional governance and administration.

Transitions in Religion, Governance, and Other Aspects in Post-Reformation Almshouses

As a central component in almshouses before the Reformation, religion featured prominently in the day-to-day function of institutions, governing various aspects of an inmate's life during his or her time as a resident in a foundation. This was particularly true with prayers. In the years leading up to the Reformation, almshouses, and hospitals in a more general sense, functioned largely as quasi-chantries. Founders of these institutions in the years before the Reformation expected their inmates to pray for their souls or for the souls of family members after their decease, and they often made very strict regulations in their house statutes to ensure that alms folk engaged in this on a regular basis. In a sense, then, almshouses were an exchange between a pauper and a founder. In return for continual free housing, security, and charitable benefits, inmates had to continually pray for the souls of their founder or benefactors in purgatory. In medieval England and through the first decades of the sixteenth century, it was widely believed that the prayers of the poor reached God's ear with particular efficacy.⁸⁴ This notion was probably a central component for inspiring secular almshouse founders in pre-Reformation England, and it is also probable that such beliefs motivated these founders to include regularly scheduled prayer clauses in the statutes of their foundations.

⁸⁴ Paul Slack, *Poverty and Policy in Tudor and Stuart England* (London: Longman, 1988), 19.

For the sixteen poor men and women living in the early fifteenth-century almshouse of St. John Baptist and St. John the Evangelist in Sherburne, there existed a paramount obligation concerning prayers for the dead that their founder expected them to fulfill. The ordinance concerned with prayers was easily the longest of the statutes required for the folk of this almshouse, who not only prayed for the soul of their institution's founder, but for his family and numerous other individuals as well.⁸⁵ The seven poor people dwelling in the 1447 foundation of Ellis Davis in Croydon had to likewise pray for their founder, especially during daily mass. When in good health, the poor of Saffron Walden in the early 1400s were similarly expected to go to the church and pray. In addition to praying for the health of each brother and sister in the almshouse, the house expected them to pray for the "good [benefactors of] this aforesaid place [of charity] and for the souls of all their friends and especially for the souls of John Boteler and Eleanor, his wife, and all Christian souls."⁸⁶ The founders of the Almshouse at Ewelme in 1437 also stipulated that while in church, the thirteen poor men should remember to pray for the soul of the king following his decease, for the souls of the founders after their passing, and for all Christian souls. In addition to a strict regiment of prayers each day, the statutes of Heytesbury hospital in the mid-fifteenth century required the Keeper of the poor to sing mass in the parish church each day. Acting as the chaplain of the almshouse as well, while singing, the Keeper was to always have the souls of the house founder, Walter Hungerford, and his wife in mind, in addition to Hungerford's father, his son, and numerous other family members.⁸⁷ All residents of the house were

⁸⁵ Charles Herbet Mayo, *A Historic Guide to the Almshouse of St. John Baptist and St. John the Evangelist, Sherborne* (England: Oxford University Press, 1926), 38.

⁸⁶ Steer. "The Statutes of Saffron Walden Almshouses," 175.

⁸⁷ Jackson, "Ancient Statutes of Heytesbury Almshouse", 293.

expected to attend, and this was in addition to saying a lengthy list of ave marias, paternosters, and other prayers they were expected to say several times each day. Moreover, the poor men at Thomas Bond's almshouse, founded in 1506, were required to attend matins and evensong and sing three lady psalters, all of which was in addition to attending church to recite fifteen paternosters and fifteen aves (Hail Mary) before retiring to bed.⁸⁸ The almshouse in the small town of Hadeligh, Suffolk, located roughly nine miles to the west of Ipswich and founded by William Pykenham sometime at the end of the fifteenth century, held its inmates to a strict schedule of prayers as well. In return for the benefits that residents received upon entering the almshouse, Pykenham required that the folk therein pray daily. Signaled by the sound of a bell, those who were healthy had to report to the almshouse chapel and begin their daily set of prayers.⁸⁹

The obligation to pray, then, was more or less an essential requirement for poor folk living within a medieval almshouse. This changed with the beginning of the Reformation under Henry VIII in the 1530s. Before the Reformation, one of the primary benefits for founding an almshouse was that the poor dwelling within would pray for the founder, thereby reducing the time he or she spent in purgatory.⁹⁰ As Catholicism declined in England through the Henrician and Edwardian Reformations, however, emerging Protestant theologies increasingly undermined traditional church dogmas, and this included beliefs related to purgatory. With the English Reformation's rejection of purgatory, prayers for the souls of the dead were essentially rendered obsolete. For almshouses of medieval foundation operating during the early years of the Reformation,

⁸⁸ Michael Orton and John Cleary, *So Long as the World Shall Endure: The Five Hundred Year History of Bond's and Ford's Hospital* (Great Britain: Coventry Church Charities, 1991), 13.

⁸⁹ McIntosh, *Poor Relief and Community in Hadleigh*, 112.

⁹⁰ Prescott, *The English Medieval Hospital*, 91.

this was particularly devastating since these institutions were in effect functioning as lay chantries. In large part, then, their appearance as a chantry because of the obligation to pray for the souls of the dead was largely responsible for why so many institutions closed following the Henrician and Edwardian dissolution policies through the 1530s and 1540s. For a short time thereafter, almshouse foundation practically ended. However, while the Reformation challenged the function and purpose of these institutions, their role as social caregiver allowed them ultimately to survive. In the aftermath of the Reformation, certainly by the time of Elizabeth's ascension, founders had repurposed almshouses along largely secular lines. The religious aspects that so dominated these buildings in the years before Catholicism's decline all but disappeared by 1560, and rather than being founded for the provision of one's soul in the afterlife, almshouse founders reassessed their reasoning for establishing this type of charitable housing by stressing their social role as a care provider, and for the exaltation of the earthly memory of the founder.⁹¹

Though the Reformation certainly influenced other aspects of religion in almshouses, prayers in particular were affected. From Elizabeth's reign onwards, as McIntosh has noted, these institutions could no longer offer prayers for souls in purgatory, but prayers never wholly disappeared from these institutions in the aftermath of the Reformation. Even after 1560, most founders still required their inmates to pray. The connotation and purpose of these prayers changed, however. Rather than pray for the souls of the dead, most houses now demanded that their inmates pray and give continual thanksgiving for the generosity provided to them by their founder and benefactors. The changing nature of prayers was nonetheless gradual. Though they were rare indeed, for some of those houses established during the Reformation, founders continued to require

⁹¹ McIntosh, *Poor Relief in England*, 186.

their alms folk to say prayers for their souls. The almshouse founded by Anne Wethers in her will (1547), for instance, required its inmates to pray each day for the soul of its founder and more. According to Wethers' will, the five poor women dwelling in her almshouse were to pray daily for her and her husband's souls, her mother and father's souls, and for the souls of her children.⁹²

For the most part, though, by the Elizabethan era, this practice ceased, and houses increasingly required their inmates to say prayers of thanksgiving instead. At Lord Williams' almshouse in Thame in 1559 there were two strict regulations governing prayers in the house's statutes. The first regulation ruled that when praying, the alms folk give eternal glory and praise to God and thank him for their good fortune. Concerning the second statute, Williams' house statutes stipulated that men and woman of the house "carefully remember to hold in high esteem the memory of that most illustrious man, John Williams, of the rank of the military order of knighthood, and Lord of Thame."⁹³ Similarly, McIntosh's work shows that the residents at the hospital at Stokes Poges and the residents at Trinity Hospital in Bristol both said regular prayers for their founders during the later sixteenth century. According to her, the occupants at the former institution said prayers three times daily at the parish church for their founder, while at the latter institution the alms folk continually gave thanks to God for the benefits and mercy they received from their institution's founder.⁹⁴ At turn of the seventeenth century, the residents at the New College of Cobham presented themselves at Cobbham-Hall

⁹² TNA PROB 11/31/716.

⁹³ Williams, *Some Account of Lord Williams, of Thame*, 60.

⁹⁴ McIntosh, *Poor Relief in England*, 207.

every second Sunday. While there, they were to give thanks to the Lord of the house for their maintenance inside his almshouse.⁹⁵

Other houses required their residents to pray for peace and tranquility in England, or simply mandated that they adhere to a strict and regular routine of prayers at the house chapel or parish church. The statutes for Holy Trinity Hospital in Long Melford instructed their twelve alms folk not only to pray for the peace, tranquility, and concord of all Christendom, but for the “good and quiet estate of all this church and realm of England” as well.⁹⁶ The residents of Whitgift’s almshouse attended prayers in the houses’ chapel everyday except Wednesdays and Fridays in the morning, and Saturdays in the afternoon. The statutes of the mid-seventeenth century almshouse of Thomas Wright in Suffolk held similar regulations, ruling in the early 1640s that the two poor female residents report to the parish church of Hartest at times of public exercise. While there, moreover, Wright stipulated that they must “behave themselves orderly from the beginning of such exercises until the end thereof.”⁹⁷ At St. Anne’s Hospital in Appleby, the residents said prayers every day at about eight or nine in the morning in the house’s chapel. For the thirteen poor sisters dwelling in the establishment, attendance was mandatory, unless sickness or some other urgent occasion hindered the women from being present.⁹⁸

Gradually, over the Elizabethan period and onwards, almshouses increasingly used prayers as a means of ensuring that the institution only accepted those of godly

⁹⁵ Williams, *Abstract Containing the Substance of the Rules and Ordinances of the New-College of Cobham*, 11.

⁹⁶ Wigmore, *Holy Trinity Hospital, Long Melford*, 33.

⁹⁷ Samuel Tymms, ed, *Wills and Inventories From the Registers of the Commissary of Bury St. Edmunds and the Archdeacon of Sudbury* (London: J.B. Nicholls and Son, 1850), 187.

⁹⁸ Heelis, “St. Anne’s Hospital at Appleby,” 196.

character. Upon their election to a house, prospective almsmen or women had to recite certain prayers before they could gain full access to the benefits of the house electing them. Before elected into the almshouse founded by Thomas Cure in 1584, potential inmates had to recite a host of prayers, presumably to the electors. Cure ruled that his house should accept into the foundation only those who could say the Lord's Prayer, the articles of the Christian Faith, and the ten commandments of God, in English. Further, he ruled that the governors should never consider any enemy of the gospel of God, or "to his religion now established by authority in the realm."⁹⁹ At Cecil's almshouse, before officially named to the house each elected individual, including the house warden, had to be presented to the Vicar in the Church of St. Martins on a Sunday morning. While there, the poor were to recite the Lord's Prayer, the creeds, and the Ten Commandments. In other instances, houses frequently required their inmates to recite specific prayers at certain times through the year, probably to confirm that were indeed living a godly life while dwelling in the house.

Ensuring that his almsmen were pious seemed to be of the utmost importance for Richard Huish, who founded his almshouse in Taunton, Somerset in 1616. On the first Sunday of every quarter of the year, Huish required his inmates to recite the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments to the chief minister of St. Mary Magdalen's church, who was also to examine each inmate on the principles of Christian religion.¹⁰⁰ If an inmate failed to recite each of these prayers in full, then they were provided with one month so they could learn and instruct themselves. At the New College of Cobham, the incumbent minister was to assemble the poor in the parish

⁹⁹ Archer, "Sources for the Early Modern English Almshouse," 116.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 110.

church before the beginning of evening prayer on the first Sunday of every quarter. Here, the Minister was to listen to each individual recite the Lord's Prayer, the articles of the Christian faith, and the Ten Commandments. Eight days were afforded to any who were unable to do this, after which time they were to recite all three prayers.¹⁰¹

The Reformation's impact transcended more than just prayers in almshouses founded after the decline of Catholicism, though. Religion, as noted, played a key role in essentially all aspects of these institutions since almshouses were largely ecclesiastical establishments in the years before the Reformation, and this included their governance and administration. Before the religious transition in the early sixteenth century, the church was mostly responsible for the governance and operation of almshouses, and this was true as well for those secular institutions founded during the late medieval period. Concerning the daily operation and governance of almshouses both monastic and secular, institutions founded before the Reformation generally enlisted members of the clergy to act as masters in their house. This usually meant ensuring that a house remained peaceful, or ensuring that dwellers maintained a virtuous lifestyle. The early fifteenth-century almshouse at Ewelme, Ipswich appointed two priests to the house, one to act as a grammar teacher to certain children in the founders' chapel, while the other became master of the almshouse. According to William de la Pole and his wife, Alice, the house's founders, the latter priest was responsible for guaranteeing that "peace and rest be had and kept among the brethren," and providing a good example for virtuous living and

¹⁰¹ Williams, *Abstract Containing the Substance of the Rules and Ordinances of the New-College of Cobham*, 11.

speaking.¹⁰² Lord Hungerford's almshouse in Heytesbury made similar provisions when he founded his almshouse and his widow devised its statutes in the mid-fifteenth century. Hungerford's wife, Margaret, established the house with the purpose of providing for twelve poor men and one poor woman, and appointed a chaplain to act as keeper and warden of the foundation. She required, moreover, that in addition to singing mass and saying prayers in the parish church, Heytesbury's keeper teach any children or people that attended mass if they wished, while simultaneously maintaining good governance in the almshouse.¹⁰³

Following the disintegration of Roman Catholicism, however, the task of in-house governance shifted drastically. With the monastic system dissolved and institutions now founded solely along secular lines, almshouses from the Elizabethan era onward generally accorded the day-to-day governance to the actual almshouse occupants. Sometimes this meant that they left things up to the residents, though more often it meant that donors left the responsibility of choosing a master, warden, principal, or keeper from amongst the poor inmates to an institution's administrators, or a founder's heir. At Appleby, the charter of St. Anne's Hospital left the task of appointing the "mother", or master, of the house to the founder or her heirs following the founder's death.¹⁰⁴ Occasionally, though, donors specified that only literate inmates become masters. This was probably to ensure proper bookkeeping, including stipend tracking, but also to ensure that prayers were read to the rest of those dwelling in the house. Literacy was crucial for the warden of Holy Trinity Hospital in Melford during the late sixteenth century since he

¹⁰² H.M. Stationery Office, *The Ninth Report of the Royal Commission of Historical Manuscripts*, 217. Alice, de la Pole's wife, was, according to this report, the granddaughter of Geoffrey Chaucer, the famous medieval poet. See page 216.

¹⁰³ Jackson, "Ancient Statutes of Heytesbury Almshouse," 293 and 295.

¹⁰⁴ Heelis, "St. Anne's Hospital at Appleby," 193.

had to log all of the expenses made by the house. To help him with this cause, the institution's founder, William Cordell, provided for a sub-warden, essentially any almsman who similarly held the capacity to read and write. Selected personally by the house's warden, the sub-warden's primary responsibility was to aid in bookkeeping, especially tracking all receipts and payments for food, provisions, and expenses.¹⁰⁵ Sir Stephen Soame's early seventeenth-century almshouse in Little Thurlow likewise required its master to be literate so he could read prayers to the rest of the alms folk in the morning and evening.¹⁰⁶ In the statutes drafted for his 1616 foundation in Somerset, Robert Huish left strict specifications that at least one of the thirteen poor elected to his house had to "read and write in English at the least." According to him, this individual became the house president and was responsible for "keeping evidences, records, accounts, and other matters concerning the said hospital."¹⁰⁷ It bears mentioning, as well, that clauses concerned with literacy help historians understand that almshouses in the sixteenth and seventeenth targeted only a specific demographic of poor individuals, even if only one or two of a house's residents were required to be literate.

Although some houses retained their chapels, especially those that managed to survive the Reformations of Henry VIII and Edward V, for the most part, governance by the clergy had ceased after donors began founding almshouses in the post-Reformation period, though clerical contact nevertheless persisted. This was true as well for the external administration of these institutions. Besides their internal governance, almshouses relied on a system of external management to ensure that, among other things, policy decisions were made, that money generated from endowments was

¹⁰⁵ Wigmore, *Holy Trinity Hospital*, 34.

¹⁰⁶ TNA Prob 11/138/64.

¹⁰⁷ Archer, "Sources for the Early Modern English Almshouse," 107.

properly tracked and doled out, and to ensure that a stable system of electing poor individuals into the house existed.¹⁰⁸ As with internal governance, this task fell largely upon the church during the late middle ages with monasteries or chantries managing their own institutions, or having secular founders designating the task of overseeing an institution to them. By about the mid-fourteenth century, however, this trend of ecclesiastical management was beginning to shift as founders increasingly enlisted secular bodies, usually towns, fraternities, or a group of private individuals, to administer their establishments. According to McIntosh, this was probably because charitable donors gradually realized that England's religious houses had too many other concerns and neglected to fully manage those charitable institutions designated to them.¹⁰⁹ While this is certainly true and reflected in many of the records from this period, the church likely continued to manage the vast majority. Arriving at a definitive conclusion about this, though, is difficult. McIntosh, for instance, notes that of the existing records from medieval almshouses, only 15 percent of institutions founded from the late fourteenth to the early-sixteenth century were entrusted to religious houses.¹¹⁰ But in the same vein as understanding the benefits these institutions provided during the pre-Reformation and post-Reformation periods, historians' comprehension might be skewed since the historical record does not fully reflect those records that have not survived. Even if the trend of almshouse administration shifted gradually to secular bodies, though, many houses after 1350 nonetheless retained an ecclesiastical presence in their administration, usually a church official.

¹⁰⁸ McIntosh, *Poor Relief in England*, 89.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid*, 90.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, 89.

The 1447 foundation of Elly Davis in Croydon specified that it was the duty of the Vicar and the churchwardens of Croydon, in conjunction with four parishioners, to administer the almshouse. Here, it was their responsibility to replace the tutor of the house – its master – within twenty days of the previous incumbent’s death, and to replace the poor within fifteen days of their passing.¹¹¹ In Heytesbury in the mid-fifteenth century, the almshouse of Lord and Lady Hungerford also retained elements of ecclesiastical administration. To ensure proper governance in his house, Hungerford’s widow provided power over the houses’ keeper to the Dean of the Cathedral of Salisbury, though his main responsibility involved punishing the former for any crimes or excesses.¹¹² While the priest, who also served as master over this fifteenth-century foundation, received responsibility for the internal governance at God’s House in Ewleme, as noted earlier, the founding statutes ruled that he, too, should administer all aspects of the houses’ affairs.¹¹³

This ecclesiastical presence all but disappeared in the years after 1530. While this was certainly part of the larger trend that McIntosh acknowledges in her study, the decline of Catholicism and the loss of the monastic system, along with the evolving secularity of almshouses in the post-Reformation years, effectively saw a nearly complete transition to lay administration in these institutions after 1560. In the same way as donors after 1350 had, post-Reformation founders entrusted the administration of their charities to a variety of lay-run bodies, including cities, towns, parishes, merchant guilds, or private individuals. In 1575, the London merchant, Thomas Gresham left the task of

¹¹¹ Garrow, *The History and Antiquities of Croydon*, 325.

¹¹² Jackson, “Ancient Statutes of Heytesbury Almshouse”, 290-295.

¹¹³ Sidney Heath, *Old English Houses of Alms: A Pictorial Record with Architectural and Historical Notes* (London: Francis Griffiths, 1910), 56.

administration in his almshouse to the city of London, while Robert Rogers of Dorsetshire entrusted the town governors of Poole with managing his charity.¹¹⁴ Robert Huish and John Yaxley, on the other hand, left their foundations in the hands of private individuals. In the case of the former, governance was left to sixteen individuals, the first of which Huish himself selected. Administration thereafter largely fell to members of select families in the Taunton area, where the house was erected, and should always remain as close to sixteen as possible.¹¹⁵ In Yaxley's case, the executors of his will became the first governors of his almshouse. The founder, however, left instructions to ensure that after the deaths of his executors, the churchwardens of Waterbeach, Cambridgeshire - where Yaxley built his charity— took up the task of management.¹¹⁶ In 1614, William Jones, a member of the London Haberdashers' company and a merchant adventurer, posthumously founded his almshouse and tasked its administrative governance to the Haberdashers of London. He provided the company with three thousand pounds to erect his almshouse, endowed it with lands he owned in the south of London, and then left it in the company's hands thereafter.¹¹⁷ This, too, was the case with house founded by William Goddard, a wealthy fishmonger. According to W.K. Jordan, Goddard died in December of 1619 but left a large sum of money for the erection of a brick hospital for over forty poor in Bray, Berkshire, to be governed by the Fishmongers' Company.¹¹⁸ The tasks performed by house administrators in the later sixteenth and early

¹¹⁴ Nichols and Bruce, eds., *Wills from London Doctors' Common*, 61.; TNA PROB 11/99/141.

¹¹⁵ Archer, "Sources for the Early Modern English Almshouse," 107. Huish, is it worth noting, left explicit instructions about which families the remaining governors should consider. These names can be found on page 108, and most were all families of the surrounding gentry.

¹¹⁶ TNA PROB 11/65/487.

¹¹⁷ TNA PROB 11/126/240.

¹¹⁸ W.K. Jordan, *The Charities of London, 1480-1660: The Aspirations and the Achievements of the Urban Society* (Connecticut: Archon Books, 1974), 150.

seventeenth century, it is worth noting, remained largely unchanged from those establishments in the pre-Reformation era.

Part of the reason behind the shift from ecclesiastical administration to lay administration was, as others have observed, poor supervision on the former's part, in combination with the growing distrust and angst towards England's religious houses that developed and spread during the late 1400s and early 1500s. The maladministration of many charitable institutions by the Catholic religious houses, moreover, including misappropriation of funds and general neglectfulness, probably underscored their incompetency as overseers to the public. This, Caroline Barron argues, discouraged almshouse donors, and donors of other charitable institutions for that matter, from entrusting the management of their foundation to a religious house.¹¹⁹ Simultaneously, the Reformation's impact on monasticism meant that even if a founder wanted to entrust his or her almshouse to a religious institution, they no longer could after 1547. The result, then, was that by the mid-sixteenth century, almshouses were essentially lay bodies operated for needy lay people.

Protestantism affected almshouses in ways beyond just prayers and governance, and while still substantial, these changes were generally less significant. After the 1530s, for example, the physical appearance of these establishments contrasted considerably from their medieval counterparts. A number of works have already analyzed the architectural transition of almshouses,¹²⁰ but it bears mentioning here since it was the Reformation specifically that caused these changes. Concerning the physical appearance

¹¹⁹ Caroline M. Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages* (England: Oxford University Press, 2004), 267-268.

¹²⁰ Prescott, *The English Medieval Hospital c. 1050-1640*, Brian Howson, *Almshouses: A Social and Architectural History*, and Howson, *Houses of Noble Poverty*.

of almshouses, the most notable change wrought by the Reformation was the gradual decline of institutional chapels. With the rejection of purgatory and the loss of prayers for the dead, founders put less stress on including a chapel when designing their almshouses.¹²¹ Once foundations began anew during the second half of the sixteenth century, most founders regulated that their alms folk use the parish church as their centres for worship and prayer. Perhaps the thinking here was that the inclusion of a chapel would make an almshouse resemble a chantry too closely. This is not to say that this trend was universal, though. While most houses ruled that the parish church should be used, some post-Reformation founders continued including chapels when erecting their foundations. The almshouse at Appleby erected by Lady Anne Clifford in the mid-seventeenth century, for instance, was among those almshouses that retained the traditional idea of including a chapel with the almshouse proper, and so, too, was Dulwich College, also a seventeenth-century foundation.¹²²

The names of these institutions similarly changed following the rise of Protestantism in England, and this similarly reflects the weakening religious identity of almshouses after the Reformation. Before the decline of the traditional church, founders of almshouses, and hospitals, too, for that matter, generally named their foundations after various Catholic saints. After the Reformation, especially by the Elizabethan era, founders progressively moved away from naming their institutions after prominent saints to either labeling them with generic religious titles,¹²³ or simply naming them after themselves or the town or parish they operated in. Thomas Seckford's foundation of the 1580s was named after its founder, and so, too, were Thomas Oaken's and Nicholas

¹²¹ Howson, *Almshouses*, 92.

¹²² Heelis, "St. Anne's Hospital at Appleby," 193., and Young, *The History of Dulwich College*, 70.

¹²³ McIntosh, *Poor Relief in England*, 191.

Eeffeler's intuitions, both of whom founded almshouses in the Castle Hill region two decades apart in the late sixteenth century.¹²⁴ William Cecil named his foundation the "Almshouse of Lord Burghley," after his title, and Sir William Brooke had similar intentions when he named his foundation, the New College of Cobham, after his position as the Lord Cobham. The Moretonhampstead almshouses near Dartmoor, founded in 1637 by an unknown individual,¹²⁵ received their name from the parish it operated in, while the Bedwin Row almshouses in Bristol's St. Edmund's parish seemingly received their name from the street they operated on.¹²⁶

Conclusion

Almshouses functioning in the post-Reformation period, particularly those of Elizabethan and early Stuart foundation, were marked by both continuity and change from their pre-Reformation counterparts. The nature of the residents of these institutions remained largely unchanged as donors continued targeting poor elderly individuals who had previously been self-sustaining, despite the fact that some founders gradually rank-listed their poor after the Reformation. Most mid-sixteenth and early seventeenth century houses, at least those whose records have survived, similarly retained the benefits offered by medieval institutions. The guarantee of a cash stipend remained fundamental in almshouse living in both pre-Reformation and post-Reformation almshouses, and though these varied considerably from house to house, nearly every inmate could expect a money

¹²⁴ Loder, ed, *The Statutes and Ordinances for the Government of the alms-house...by Tomas Seckford*,; and TNA PROB 11/79/99.

¹²⁵ Brian Bailey, *Almshouses* (London: Robert Hale, 1988), 116-117.

¹²⁶ Paul Slack, ed, *Poverty in Early Modern Salisbury* (Warwick: Devizes, 1975), 6.

pension.¹²⁷ The provision of other benefits by an almshouse, namely clothing, fuel, and food, also continued in houses founded after the Reformation. The certainty of this, though, is questionable since records are sparse. However, for those records that survived, providing almshouse inmates with regular clothing, fuel, and food stipends seemed to be a common concern for many founders in both medieval and early modern England.

On the other hand, the Reformation greatly affected religion and governance in these institutions. Prayers, for instance, took on a different connotation in almshouses founded in the later sixteenth century onwards. Before the decline of Catholicism, almshouse founders and benefactors expected almshouse residents to pray for their souls, or for the souls of their dead family members. In this way, almshouses in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries functioned largely as lay chantries. With the English Reformation's rejection of purgatory, however, prayers for the souls of the dead were basically rendered obsolete. Praying, however, did not wholly disappear from almshouses, although the nature of these prayers certainly changed. From the Elizabethan period onwards, almshouses expected their inmates to pray routinely for thanksgiving and the benefits provided to them by their founder, usually in the parish church. The governance and administration in these almshouses also changed, and this, too, was largely an implication of the Reformation. In most medieval foundations, the church had a stake in the internal governance and external administration. Following the disintegration of Catholicism and the loss of England's various religious houses, combined with changing opinions about the church's supervision of charitable institutions, the internal governance of almshouses largely shifted to the inmates

¹²⁷ Tomkins, "Retirement From the Noise and Hurry of the World?," 269.

themselves. As for the external administration, founders after the Reformation entrusted these tasks to lay bodies or private individuals.

Concerning the physical structure and naming of almshouses, the Reformation again had a significant impact. Chapels fell largely into disuse following the rejection of purgatory, and while some almshouses after the Reformation retained them, most founders ruled that their inmates should use the local church for prayers. Simultaneously, the names of these institutions increasingly disassociated from the tradition religion. While it is true that some houses continued using religious designations, most of these were generic titles. After the Reformation, donors usually named their foundations after themselves or the parish or town where the almshouse operated. In the end, then, post-Reformation almshouses were marked by both continuity and change, retaining the benefits they provided to their inmates, but changing in their religious expectations, governance, and administration.

Chapter 3

Almshouse Residency:

Principles, Regulations, and Life in Tudor and Early Stuart Almshouses

Introduction

The previous chapter demonstrated that almshouses and their founders continued targeting the impotent poor through the Elizabethan period and onwards. Thus, from a charitable standpoint, almshouses remained unchanged from those foundations made in the years before the Reformation. Understanding this, as well as the changes discussed in the first chapter, is essential for determining the effects that the Reformation had on these institutions, certainly, but determining what life was like in almshouses founded in the later sixteenth century proves more challenging. It is evident that an individual gained access to numerous benefits that were previously out of reach, but aside from perpetual housing, cash, food, and fuel stipends, along with the occasional clothing grant, what else could one expect after entering a house?

Answering this question is a hard task, largely because those dwelling in late Tudor and early Stuart almshouses left very little in the way of written records detailing their time as alms people. This is not to say that alms people were completely silent in the historical record, though. In March of 1630, for instance, we find the will left by the recently deceased Rose Dowsing, an almswoman residing in a house in Hardwick, who bequeathed money and bedding to her nephew and one William Jony, as well as a wheel,

chair, and gown to John Dowsing, presumably her son.¹ For the most part, however, source material produced directly by almsfolk, and the poor more generally, is limited. Lack of first-hand source material is, of course, a problem all social historians face when analyzing poverty and poor relief in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. While the lack of written records from the poor themselves is frustrating, this hardly diminishes the importance of other contemporary accounts.

A precise historical reconstruction of daily life in a Tudor and early Stuart almshouse is nearly impossible due to the nature of the historical record. However, it is possible to garner an idea of what life may have been like by analyzing the statutes provided to these institutions by their founders. The previous chapter discussed how donors, when founding almshouses, usually presented their institutions with regulatory statutes and ordinances that outlined - often in minute detail - not only the benefits that almsfolk received upon their election, but also how the house would be governed and administrated. At the same time, founders were expressly interested in controlling the day-to-day conduct of their almsfolk. In most cases, founders prescribed a set of daily routines to their residents, and many also mandated that inmates conform to particular behavioral requirements or face punishment for failing to do so. Although detailing existence through the eyes of an almsman or woman is difficult, examining how founders perceived life in these institutions, combined with how they sought to regulate it, is achievable.

This chapter considers almshouse life in late Tudor and early Stuart foundations by considering how founders perceived and regulated institutional living. To do this, the chapter will analyze how donors sought to structure and control the behaviour of their

¹ Nesta Evans, *The Wills of the Archdeaconry of Sudbury, 1630-1635* (England: Boydell Press, 1987), 7.

almsfolk through the regulatory statutes they provided to their houses. It will begin first by exploring the gendered arrangement of daily labour in almshouses. The purpose, here, is to examine how founders regulated daily life based on the sexual composition of a foundation. After considering this, the discussion will look at some additional expectations founders prescribed to their almsfolk, particularly the provision of aid to other inmates and the need to remain on the grounds of their foundation. The last section surveys the remaining rules of houses as they appear in the ordinances of various foundations, focusing mostly on the rather stringent guidelines donors left in their efforts to regulate the conduct of those benefitting from their charity. This section will demonstrate how these principles bound inmates to specific standards of behavior by discussing the punishments residents potentially faced for failing to adhere to the rules of their foundation. It will also explore the different methods institutions used to police and enforce their regulations.

Residential Life in Post-Reformation Almshouses: Residents, Labour, and Lodgings

It is evident from the existing source material that the balance of residents in post-Reformation almshouses continued to consist mostly of elderly individuals, with old age usually acting as the fundamental requirement for entry into a foundation. Almshouses concerned with fostering inmates of mixed gender or men only, moreover, seemed to remain as prevalent after the Reformation as they had before it. From the existing source material, and particularly those documents used for the current discussion, the bulk of almshouse foundations sought males or both males and females - and the vast majority of donors continued to be men. A rather striking feature of post-Reformation institutions,

though, was the sharp increase in focus upon female residents from the Elizabethan era onwards. McIntosh's work on almshouses during the later middle ages and the sixteenth century shows that just over half of the institutions founded before the Reformation allowed female membership.² By about the middle of the 1500s, however, about three quarters of England's almshouses accepted women. It is not entirely clear whether this shift directly correlates with the Reformation, but it is unlikely. McIntosh, for instance, postulates that the increased emphasis placed upon women probably stemmed from demographic reasons, or because donors felt that women faced particular hardship and would be easier than men to control.³ In any case, it is evident that founders from the later sixteenth century onwards increasingly targeted both men and women when founding charities.

Regarding these mixed institutions, the allocation of men and women to a house occasionally varied. In some occurrences, donors founded their houses with the intention of distributing accommodation and care to an equal population of men and women. During the Elizabethan period, Sir Richard Fulmerston founded an almshouse in Thetford via his will in 1567, and used a portion of his capital to erect an almshouse for the maintenance of two poor men and two poor women.⁴ In Leicester in the later 1500s, William Wigston's almshouse ordained that it would provide for twelve poor men and twelve poor women.⁵ It is bears noting that Wigston founded his house 1513, but the foundation was not provided with statutes until 1572. The early seventeenth-century

² McIntosh, *Poor Relief in England*, 194.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Jordan, *The Charities of Rural England*, 121. According to Jordan, Fulmerston obtained rather lucrative landholdings from the Duke of Somerset and the Duke of Norfolk in that community.

⁵ A. Hamilton Thompson, ed., *A Calendar of Charities and Other Documents Belonging to the Hospital of William Wyggeston at Leicester* (Leicester: C.H. Gee Co. Ltd., 1933), 69.

foundation made by Edward Alleyn (1619) and the later establishment made by Sir Thomas Holt (1655) similarly provided for an equal number of men and women. Dulwich College, the almshouse founded by Alleyn, supported a total of six men and six women, while Holt's almshouse housed a total of ten poor, five men and five women.⁶ In other cases, and probably in most instances, houses provided for both sexes but founders left no specification about choosing the sex of residents. In most of the surviving statutes of this kind, donors simply indicated that their foundation should care for a total number of poor so long as it consisted of both males and females. Thomas Gresham's will from 1575 instructed the mayor, commonality, and citizens of London to select eight inhabitants to reside in the eight, presumably single dwelling, almshouses he built in the parish of St. Peters, but he left no indication concerning the sexual distribution of those elected.⁷ This, too, was the case with the almshouse founded in 1614 via the will of William Jones, who simply stipulated that his foundation be erected for "twenty poor, old distressed people, as blind and lame."⁸ At Sir Stephen Soame's almshouse in Little Thurlow, the founder stipulated that the institution was for the dwelling and habitation of eight poor, both men and women.⁹

Occasionally, though, founders were far more predisposed in how they selected male and female inhabitants. This frequently meant that donors catered disproportionately for a particular sex; more often than not, men constituted the bulk of

⁶ William Young, *The History of Dulwich College, Down to the Act of Parliament Dissolving the Original Corporation, 28th August, 1857* (London: Morrison and Gibb, 1889), 65; Sir Thomas Holt, *Orders and Rules appointed by the Last Will and Testament of Sir Thomas Holt, knight and Baronet to be observed in the electing, and After the Election, of the Ten Poor Persons Inhabiting in his Almshouse at Aston Juxta Birmingham in the County of Warwick* (London: S&N, 1656), 1.

⁷ John Gough Nichols and John Bruces, eds., *Wills from London Doctors' Common: A Selection from the Wills of Eminent Persons Proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, 1495-1695* (Westminster: John Bowyer Nichols and Sons, 1862), 61.

⁸ TNA PROB 11/126/240.

⁹ TNA PROB 11/138/64.

targeted individuals. The statutes of the almshouse founded by Lord John Williams in the late-1550s ruled that its intention was provision for five poor men and only one poor woman.¹⁰ Peter Symonds, a mercer residing in London, had similar intentions when he erected an almshouse in Winchester in 1587 to care for the needs of six poor men and one poor woman.¹¹ In a similar vein, Thomas Stafford founded an almshouse in Tattenhoe, Buckinghamshire, for four men and two women.¹² Usually, though not always, women in these types of almshouses were there expressly to provide aid and care to the poor men. This will be explained more fully later in the chapter, but for now it bears mentioning that founders essentially expected these women to act as quasi-nurses and housekeepers, tasking them with jobs like laundry, cooking, and bathing their male brethren.

Houses erected solely for the benefit and residence of women saw a marked increase during the Elizabethan era, with widowed women being the primary targets of this charity. As the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries progressed, almshouse donors increasingly founded houses specifically for women, and a number of these founders were women themselves. In 1547, for example, Anne Wethers left provisions for the establishment of an almshouse for five poor women in her will.¹³ Similarly, during the mid-1600s, Lady Anne Clifford founded St Anne's Hospital at Appleby solely for widows and perhaps following the example of her mother who founded an earlier house for thirteen women, while in 1609 the widow of Thomas Owen, Dame Alice Owen,

¹⁰ John Williams, *Some Account of Lord Williams, of Thame: Founder of the Grammar School and Almshouse, at Thame; Together with the Copy of His Will and the Copies of Very Valuable English and Latin Documents Relating to the Above Charity* (Thame: C Ellis Machine Shop, 1873), 51.

¹¹ Jordan, *The Charities of London*, 142. Symonds, it is worth noting, lucratively endowed his almshouse, and aside from the poor men and women housed therein, the institution also afforded support to four homeless boys.

¹² Jordan, *The Charities of Rural England*, 45.

¹³ TNA PROB 11/31/716.

purchased eleven acres of land in Middlesex and erected an almshouse for the care of ten poor widows.¹⁴

Men, of course, also founded almshouses expressly for women and widows. David Smith's 1584 charity on Saint Peter's hill was built for six poor widows to dwell in, and so, too, was George Slee's 1610 foundation in Tiverton.¹⁵ However, unlike men in the historical literature of this period, women generally tend to be underrepresented as providers of charity. Ian Archer noted this in his work on the charity that London widows provided during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, wherein he noted that women, and widows in particular, are usually "treated as the receivers rather than the dispensers of charity."¹⁶ Yet, women, especially those widows of London's elite, were far more active in charitable distribution than previously believed, and this likely included their participation in the founding of almshouses since their pattern of charity was similar to that of men.¹⁷ However, as Archer notes, even more so than men's, the charity of women was far more gendered, in so far that women and widows often directed their charity towards other women and widows.

Archer's point is apparent when considering almshouse foundations in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, or at least in those used for the current discussion. While male founders erected houses for the dual occupancy of either gender, or one sex specifically, female donors usually founded their institutions exclusively for female residency. In Buckinghamshire in the later 1500s, Dorothy Dayrell founded an

¹⁴ E. Alex Heelis, "St. Anne's Hospital at Appleby," *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquaries and Archaeological Society*, ns, ix (1909), 192; and W.K. Jordan, *The Charities of London, 1480-1660: The Aspirations and the Achievements of the Urban Society* (Connecticut: Archon Books, 1974), 150.

¹⁵ TNA PROB 11/71/127; and TNA PROB 11/126/521.

¹⁶ Ian Archer, "The Charity of London Widows" in *Local Identities in Late Medieval and Early Modern England*, ed. Norman L. Jones and Daniel Woolf (England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 181.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 187.

almshouse for six poor women, while Alice Carter, the widow of one George Carter, erected an almshouse complete with adjoining grounds and gardens for five impotent and needy widows.¹⁸ This was true as well for the almshouse founded in Norwich by Ann Johnson in 1611, which provided housing and aid to five poor widows of the city.¹⁹ Of the twenty-seven post-Reformation almshouse records used for the current discussion, moreover, three foundations had female donors. Two of these women founded their institutions specifically for other females, while the third foundation made by Lady Anne Dacre in 1594 was built for both men and women. However, according to her will, she was fulfilling a decision about erecting a hospital for twenty aged and poor people that she and her late husband had made before his death.²⁰

Sexual distribution of almshouse residents diversified somewhat in institutions founded after the Reformation. This may seem unremarkable at first glance since donors' shift toward founding mixed gendered and female houses probably corresponded simply with shifting definitions and the multiple meanings of poverty that emerged after the Reformation.²¹ Careful assessment of existing almshouse records, however, permits one to examine differences in how founders regulated the daily lives of inmates based on the sexual composition of a foundation. Furthermore, exploring the records of mixed gender almshouses shows whether founders discriminately doled out tasks to almsfolk based solely upon their gender. It bears mentioning again that arriving at any definitive conclusions about the daily life of almsfolk in Tudor and Stuart almshouses based upon

¹⁸ W.K. Jordan, *The Charities of Rural England, 1480-1660* (England: G. Allen & Unwin, 1962), 28.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 125.

²⁰ TNA PROB 11/86/47. From Dacre's will, it seems that the hospital also acted as a school for poor children since, according to Dacre, the hospital was also for the "bringing up of children in virtue and good and laudable arts... whereby they might better live, in to time, to come by their honest labour."

²¹ McIntosh, *Poor Relief in England*, 192.

the existing statutes is unlikely. In large part, this is because the existing source material only portrays how founders expected their institutions to function, and, as such, it is difficult to discern whether perceptions of residential life by founders were actually reflected in an almshouse's daily functioning. Yet, this barrier has not deterred historians from engaging with these materials in an attempt to reconstruct the lives of almsfolk in earlier periods. Marjorie McIntosh, for instance, used this approach to analyze almshouses operating in medieval England by relying heavily upon the statutes of medieval foundations, and this included an examination on the institutional life of almsfolk.²² Because of her research, historians have gained a broader conception of almshouse living in England during the later middle ages. In the same vein, then, analyzing the statutes of early modern almshouses is crucial for discerning how late sixteenth and early seventeenth-century almsfolk potentially experienced almshouse living.

The previous chapter discussed how once elected into an almshouse, residents were required to meet certain spiritual obligations in exchange for their perpetual sustenance. Usually, this consisted of a daily routine of prayers whereby inmates gave thanks to the founder of their almshouse. Aside from this, though, founders, or those drafting statutes in their stead, often required their inmates to perform additional activities during their time as an almsperson. In large part, these were labour related. This may seem rather odd since these institutions catered to an aged and elderly demographic, but most founders typically disallowed idleness in their establishment and expected their

²² Marjorie K. McIntosh, *Poor Relief in England, 1350-1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 79-89.

inmates to engage in some form of daily labour. The statutes of Thomas Seckford's almshouse in the late 1580s, for example, stipulated that:

The poor of the said almshouse, shall, in avoiding of idleness, each of them, according to their ability and strength of body, labour and be occupied, either in digging, planting, or setting the gardens and grounds allotted unto them...or else to be occupied in some other commendable exercise.²³

The almshouse founded by Thomas Cure made similar requirements. Here, in 1584 when Cure founded the house, he ruled that the poor, along with their children if they had any, should engage in laborious activity at least once during the week "according to their abilities of body and former manner of honest life."²⁴ At the New College of Cobham in the late 1590s, too, maintaining a respectable labour ethic was enjoined. The house's ninth statute required the poor to perform some honest labour daily, either within the confines of the almshouses, or abroad in the larger community.²⁵

For men, this usually involved some type of manual labour, and occasionally it meant performing work for the institution's benefit. During the early seventeenth century, the statutes for Dulwich College ruled that its six poor male residents should take turns sweeping and keeping the inner and outer courts and cloisters of the college clean.²⁶ The institution at Long Melford in the later sixteenth century made similar requirements for the poor men living there. According to McIntosh, the statutes from this house instructed the men to not only to keep their own chambers clean and tidy, but also to sweep the hall

²³ Robert Loader, ed., *The Statutes and Ordinances for the Government of the Alms-Houses, in Woodbridge, in the County of Suffolk Founded by Thomas Seckford* (London: Robert Loader, 1792), 3.

²⁴ Ian W. Archer, "Sources for the Early Modern English Almshouse," *Sources for the History of Hospitals in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Martin Scheutz (Bohlau Verlag: Oldenbourg, 2010), 119.

²⁵ Sir John Williams, *Abstract Containing the Substance of the Rules and Ordinances of the New-College of Cobham, In the County of Kent* (England, 1687), 8.

²⁶ Young, *The History of Dulwich College*, 72.

of the almshouse twice each day.²⁷ Sometimes founders ruled that employment should centre on one's acquired skills, so long as an inmate routinely occupied himself.

According to the twelfth statute of John Whigift's foundation in the 1590s, it was lawful for any brother to engage in a manual trade within or outside of the almshouse, so long as he possessed the necessary skill to do so.²⁸ The men at Holy Trinity Hospital in Long Melford were to engage in work agreeing to their ability and skill, while those men residing at Seckford's institution should, as earlier alluded, labour as best as they could according to the skills they had acquired in the years leading up to their election.²⁹

Founders continued to expect some type of work from female residents, too, much of which was generally tailored around domestic activities. At Dulwich College, for instance, the master of the house was tasked with choosing one of the six poor women to act as matron to the twelve poor scholars also residing within the institution. Usually this task fell to the most able and healthy woman in the house, and it was her duty to mend the scholars' clothing, make their beds, sweep their chambers, and to simply attend them.³⁰ The master and warden of this house, moreover, were also required to appoint another woman, usually the oldest, to make the beds and sweep the chambers of the college's fellows. Those women not selected for a particular duty by the almshouse were to weed and maintain the garden of the almshouse.³¹ Following the re-foundation of the Saffron Walden almshouse during the reign of Edward VI, a new set of statutes was drafted to replace those provided to the house in the fifteenth century. According to these,

²⁷ McIntosh, *Poor Relief in England*, 210-211.

²⁸ D.W. Garrow, *The History and Antiquities of Croydon* (London: Geo, Cowie & Co., 1818), 341. This, too, was the case for the sisters who resided at Whitgift's almshouse.

²⁹ Elizabeth Wigmore, ed., *Holy Trinity Hospital, Long Melford: A Sixteenth Century Almshouse* (England: AP3 Imaging Services Ltd., 1995), 35; and Loader, ed., *The Statutes and Ordinances for the Government of the Alms-Houses, in Woodbridge*, 4.

³⁰ Young, *This History of Dulwich College*, 72.

³¹ *Ibid*, 72.

it was the responsibility of one poor woman residing in the house, usually the most sober woman, to “prepare [and cook] the meat, make bread, brew drink, and nurse those that are sick, washing and looking after them [the other poor] so far as she is able.”³² For the women at St. Anne’s Hospital at Appleby in the mid-seventeenth century, tasks largely involved cleaning. The almshouse stipulated that its court, or rather its yard, was to be swept at least once per week, with the women further required to clean the kennels and the water courses of the house as well.³³ During the early seventeenth century at the almshouses in Bath, a town that housed two institutions, the resident women were to work at the town’s local spas in return for their perpetual care. As Amanda Herbert noted, these women were tasked with washing clothes, caring for those given access to the town’s baths, and cleaning the building.³⁴

Occasionally, founders required their female inmates to engage in more demanding chores. McIntosh’s work, for instance, has shown that the women at the Stokes Poges almshouse worked alongside their male counterparts in the garden and orchards of the house, while those female almsfolk at William Lambard’s foundation in East Greenwich harvested hemp and worked it into cloth for the house’s benefit with their brother residents.³⁵ Typically, though, female labour in almshouses revolved more so around domestic activities.

In a few instances, almshouses founded specifically for a male population actually included clauses in their statutes to bring in local widows to see to the needs of the

³² Francis W. Steer. “The Statutes of Saffron Walden Almshouses,” in *Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society*, n.s. 25 (Colchester: Published by the Society at the Museum in the Castle, 1955-1960), 213. Following the almshouse’s re-foundation in the late 1540s by Edward VI, it was renamed by the king’s desire, to “King Edward VI Almshouse in Walden”. See page 205.

³³ Heelis, “St. Anne’s Hospital at Appleby,” 196.

³⁴ Amanda Herbert, “Gender and the Spa: Space, Sociability and Self at British Health Spas, 1640-1714” *Journal of Social History* (43) 2009, 368.

³⁵ McIntosh, *Poor Relief in England*, 210.

almsfolk. Seckford's almshouse in Woodbridge required three poor widows from the community to serve the men whenever they were feeling especially weak.³⁶ These widows were chosen in the same fashion as the house's almsmen: by Seckford during his lifetime, and then by the governors of the house thereafter. Once elected, it was the responsibility of the three widows to comfort, help, succor, tend, and look after whichever poor man was feeling especially weak, sick, or infirm in body.³⁷ Seckford actually provided these women with a piece of land adjoining the almshouse that previously belonged to his brother, mostly because he wanted them to be "ready the sooner and more speedily to attend...the said thirteen poor men."³⁸ At Trinity Hospital in Long Melford, moreover, two widows from the parish, above the age of fifty and of good conversation and honest fame, were to be chosen by the house warden to help the almsmen. According to the statutes, one widow was designated to be both the butler and laundress, while the second widow was to cook and dairy. In addition, the house tasked each widow with brewing and baking for the poor, and providing care when an almsman fell ill.³⁹

Occasionally, there was a chance for an almsman or woman to earn an additional sum of money to supplement what they earned from their weekly, monthly, or yearly cash stipend. This largely required the completion of certain chores around the almshouse. The woman labouring at the almshouse in Saffron Walden, for instance, was considered the dame of the house, given a larger stipend worth 6s 8d, and awarded the

³⁶ Loader, ed., *The Statutes and Ordinances for the Government of the Alms-Houses, in Woodbridge*, 5.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.* In addition to the land Seckford provided to them, the three widows also received a payment of 13s 4d each year for their services.

³⁹ Wigmore, ed., *Holy Trinity Hospital, Long Melford*, 35.

best garments of any almsfolk who had recently perished.⁴⁰ The almshouse founded in Thame by Lord Williams made similar stipulations. Here, during the mid-sixteenth century, an almsman could earn an additional four schillings each year for his work in maintaining the almshouse. The task usually defaulted to the eldest member of the almshouse, but if the oldest refrained from taking up the opportunity, then any of the other residents became eligible.⁴¹ At Dulwich College, the matron likewise received an enhanced income. For the responsibilities of her charge, the matron was awarded 6d from each of the other five sisters every quarter for the additional tasks she took on.⁴²

Although labour requirements were not a universal feature in almshouses founded in the years after England's religious transformation,⁴³ for the most part, sixteenth and early seventeenth-century foundations did not tolerate idleness. Despite the gendered distribution of labour in these institutions, it is apparent that most founders expected their almsfolk to perform some kind of work while occupying a dwelling in their almshouse. It is probable that labour was not seen as a form of punishment comparable to the workhouses that grew in popularity in both urban and rural England after 1550, however. Rather, it was, as some have already pointed out, mainly a means of keeping almsfolk occupied, and a method through which founders ensured that their buildings were well maintained.⁴⁴ It is also possible that labour in almshouses was tied to the broader moral

⁴⁰ Steer, "The Statutes of Saffron Walden Almshouses," 213.

⁴¹ Williams, *Some Account of Lord Williams, of Thame*, 54.

⁴² Young, *The History of Dulwich College*, 72.

⁴³ The will of Richard Huish, who erected his almshouse in Taunton Somerset in 1616, implies that labour was not expected of the inmates residing therein. Huish stipulated that no man was to be admitted into his almshouse if he "may live well by his trade or labour...nor have any certainty of living of fifty schillings by the year" Seemingly, then, only the poorest and most impotent of men occupied residence in this seventeenth-century almshouse. See, for example, Ian W. Archer, "Sources for the Early Modern English Almshouse," *Sources for the History of Hospitals in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Martin Scheutz (Bohlau Verlag: Oldenbourg, 2010), 109.

⁴⁴ McIntosh, *Poor Relief in England*, 211.

concern and notion that idleness led to vice and sin, while work was seen as righteous and godly. In any case, labour was also not an inherently new feature in almshouses founded in the years after England's religious transformation. While it was not a universal feature in all pre-Reformation houses,⁴⁵ many almshouses in the years before the Reformation similarly ruled that their inmates should engage in some form of work. Elly Davis, who founded his almshouse in the mid-fifteenth century in Croydon, wished for his poor to farm while residing in their dwelling.⁴⁶ The Ewelme Almshouse in Ipswich in 1437 likewise ordered its poor to keep the area about the well and garden clean to ensure that "unclean water of filth" did not enter the house.⁴⁷ The only major change occurring to labour in almshouse founded after the Reformation was the sudden inclusion of work related clauses in house statutes. The pre-Reformation statutes used in the current discussion, for instance, rarely included individual labour regulations specifically detailing the work inmates should perform, though most founders still expected inmates to work. As for the nature of labour in medieval houses, this, too, remained largely unchanged. Just as they would in houses founded after the Reformation, men usually engaged in more demanding labour, while women performed domestic duties.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ The regulations for the *Domus Dei* founded by William Brown in 1485 in Stamford, for example, stated that the poor were forbidden from engaging in manual labour while residing at the almshouse. The only exception to this rule was when one had to engage in the reparation and mending of their own effects, but even then, this work was to be "done secretly in their own rooms at especially fitting times," usually prescribed by the Warden. See, for instance, H.P. Wright, *The Story of the Domus Dei of Stamford* (London: Parker & Co, 1890), 36.

⁴⁶ Garrow, *The History and Antiquities of Croydon*, 329.

⁴⁷ H.M. Stationery Office, *The Ninth Report of the Royal Commission of Historical Manuscripts* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1883), 220.

⁴⁸ The woman of Walter Hungerford's almshouse, for example, was to act as a housewife, charged with attending to the needs of the poor men in their times of sickness. See, John Jackson, "'Ancient Statutes of Heytesbury Almshouse'" in *The Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine, Vol XI*, ed. Edward Hungerford Godford (Devizes: H.F. & E. Bull, 1869), 302-303.

Provisions for labour aside, a number of almshouses also required their inmates to provide aid to their fellow residents. Usually this meant offering care during times of sickness in a house, or when inmates had grown to such an advanced age that they were unable to care for themselves properly. Sometimes, as noted above, resident women or women hired from the wider community were expected to perform these duties, but a number of early modern founders still required their inmates to combine their efforts in relief provision. In the early seventeenth century, Dulwich College expected its poor inmates to remain constantly vigilant about the possible increase of sickness within the institution, desiring both the men and women to be ready to take on the responsibility of caring for one another during periods of heightened illness.⁴⁹ This, too, was how Sir Thomas Holt governed his institution in the mid-1600s. During times of sickness at this almshouse, the poor were required to look after each other, helping, aiding, and assisting wherever they could.⁵⁰ At other almshouses, founders allowed lodgers to enter the institution in order to provide help and care to an ailing almsperson during the duration of his or her sickness. Thomas Wright allowed the widows residing in his almshouse in Suffolk to bring in a single lodger during instances “of sickness or other [occasions of] extreme necessity.”⁵¹ St. Anne’s Hospital at Appleby made very similar specifications, allowing the women to bring in a lodger to live with them and provide care only during times of sickness or other reasonable circumstances.⁵²

Some almshouses also restricted the movements of their almsfolk, requiring them to remain constantly within their institution’s premises, just as Dulwich College did in the

⁴⁹ Young, *The History of Dulwich College*, 72.

⁵⁰ Holt, *Orders and Rules appointed by the Last Will and Testament of Sir Thomas Holt*, 3.

⁵¹ Samuel Tymms, ed, *Wills and Inventories From the Registers of the Commissary of Bury St. Edmunds and the Archdeacon of Sudbury* (London: J.B. Nicholls and Son, 1850), 190.

⁵² Heelis, “St. Anne’s Hospital at Appleby,” 196.

Jacobean period.⁵³ For other houses, perhaps the vast majority in this period, the biggest concern was almsfolk sleeping away from their almshouse, or not returning to the institution in the evening. At Holy Trinity Hospital in Long Melford the poor were forbidden from being away from the almshouse at night without a license from the warden, as were those poor residing in the almshouse founded by Thomas Cure.⁵⁴ The almshouse that Thomas Seckford founded in the late 1580s strictly prohibited leaving the institution during sleeping hours without the permission of the Lord of Seckford-Hall, while the charity founded by Whitgift near the turn of the century specified that brothers or sisters should never lodge outside of the almshouse without sufficient cause and the warden's permission.⁵⁵ At the New College of Cobham in 1598, both the warden and sub-warden could grant permission for a poor man or woman of the house to spend a night away from the house, though the house likewise ruled that the total number of nights spent away by an almsman or woman should never exceed four in a year. In addition, the college gave authority to the paymaster - who distributed cash stipends to the poor on pension days - to provide licenses to the almsfolk. A license from the paymaster allowed the poor to lay away from the house for up to three nights at a time, so long as it did not exceed two times in a year. Further, the presidents of the institution could grant upwards of a month to each poor resident.⁵⁶ During the seventeenth century at St. Anne's Hospital at Appleby, moreover, the house ruled that the poor women

⁵³ Young, *The History of Dulwich College*, 73. At Dulwich, it was ruled that none of the poor were to be absent from the almshouse unless given leave from the Master or Warden.

⁵⁴ Wigmore, *Holy Trinity Hospital, Long Melford*, 35; and Archer, "Sources for the Early Modern English Almshouse," 119.

⁵⁵ Loader, ed., *The Statutes and Ordinances for the Government of the Alms-Houses*, in Woodbridge, 3; and Garrow, *The History and Antiquities of Croydon*, 342.

⁵⁶ Williams, *Abstract Containing the Substance of the Rules and Ordinances of the New-College of Cobham*, 8.

residing there must never sleep away from the almshouse unless they, too, had permission.⁵⁷

Stipulations such as these were hardly new to houses founded in the post-Reformation period. In the same vein as labour, a number of medieval foundations made similar specifications.⁵⁸ However, the statutes from the later establishments suggest a far more vigorous attempt by houses to confine their alms people to the almshouse or its grounds. This was probably because founders did not want their almsfolk begging or seeking alms in the local community since such activity would reflect poorly upon both themselves and their institution. Others have suggested that it likely stemmed from donors desiring a reduction in the number of poor wandering about, and to ensure that almsfolk attended their scheduled prayers and work routines.⁵⁹ The growth of Protestant and Puritan concerns regarding the enforcement of godly behaviour through the sixteenth century may have also influenced how founders regulated the movements of almsfolk, as McIntosh points out.⁶⁰ Quite possibly, it was a combination of each of these factors.

It is apparent, then, that founders expected inmates to conform to their rules in exchange for the benefits provided by their almshouse. In addition, donors usually included explicit safeguards in their statutes to ensure that residents properly adhered to house ordinances. This is particularly evident with statutes relating to the behaviour of inmates. Typically, though not always, founders incorporated forms of punishment when

⁵⁷ Heelis, "St. Anne's Hospital at Appleby," 196.

⁵⁸ When Margaret Botreaux drafted the statutes for the almshouse founded by her husband Walter Hungerford, she ruled that inmates within the institution were restricted from being away from the house for more than one day without the permission of the Keeper, or the deputy in his stead. Elly Davis made similar regulations when he, too, ruled that the poor in his almshouse were never to be away from the almshouse for one whole day, or never to be out of sight of it, without permission. See, Jackson, "Ancient Statutes of Heytesbury Almshouse," 299; and Garrow, *The History and Antiquities of Croydon*, 326.

⁵⁹ McIntosh, *Poor Relief in England*, 211.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

drafting their statutes in an attempt to guarantee that their perceived notions of almshouse living were indeed met.

Almshouse Rules, Restrictions, and Punishment

By the mid-sixteenth century, strictly regulating the conduct and the daily lives of almshouse inmates became the norm in these institutions. While certain correlations existed in the principles governing almshouses, no one institution operated in quite the same way as another. Many sets of statutes contained their own unique principles, with founders typically laying out regulations based on their beliefs or conception of institutional life. Lord Williams' almshouse, for example, ruled that the oldest and longest resident male inmate should sit nearest to the founder's tomb in church, followed by the second longest resident, then the third, and so on.⁶¹ The woman of the almshouses, moreover, was to occupy the seat furthest from the tomb, regardless of how long she occupied a dwelling in the house. In addition, the house ruled that this order should always be maintained whenever the residents appeared in public together or did anything in common because the founder's executors believed that "men ought everywhere to be the head of women, as the apostle himself bears witness."⁶² The almshouse founded by Sir Thomas Holt in the mid-seventeenth century also included a unique clause in its statutes. As with most other institutions from this period, Holt erected his almshouse solely for the elderly poor. However, unlike the other institutions, he included a clause

⁶¹ Williams, *Some Account of Lord Williams, of Thame*, 103.

⁶² *Ibid.*

specifying that no witch, wizard, sorcerer, or any person acquainted with familiar spirits should ever be elected into his foundation.⁶³

Minor differences aside, the vast majority of founders nevertheless expected inmates to conform to specific codes of conduct, and although this meant performing tasks like those noted above, it likewise meant avoiding other kinds of behaviour. The point, here, is that while certain clauses set almshouses apart individually, early modern institutions bear striking resemblances in the behaviours they prohibited, as well as the punishments they apportioned to inmates who defaulted against house rules. It is not entirely clear why this was the case, though it is likely that it was largely a reflection of the social and religious atmosphere at the time, and, presumably, founders copying from each other, too.

Among the foremost of misbehaviors rendered intolerable for those residing in early modern almshouses was missing prayers and church services. The importance placed upon praying each day in institutions founded after the Reformation was noted in the previous chapter, and though it was left largely unexplored in that discussion, founders often included disciplinary clauses in their statutes for those neglecting their prayers - probably to ensure that residents actually performed them. Discipline varied from house to house, but for the most part, fines and admonishment constituted the bulk of punishment in Tudor and Stuart almshouses. Lord William's almshouse accepted no excuse for missing prayers except infirmity or serious business matters. Residents missing prayers for another reason were subjected to admonishment by the institution's master or under-master for the first three instances.⁶⁴ After the third offence, the

⁶³ Holt, *Orders and Rules appointed by the Last Will and Testament of Sir Thomas Holt*, 2.

⁶⁴ Williams, *Some Account of Lord Williams, of Thame*, 103.

almshouse levied fines against inmates missing prayers. For a fourth offence, the house took a small portion from an inmate's cash stipend, and half of one's salary was taken for a fifth offence. If this type of misbehavior continued after five transgressions, then an inmate lost his entire cash and clothing stipend.⁶⁵ Whitgift's almsfolk similarly received fines for missing prayers without just cause, and so, too, did William Cecil's poor, who lost 7d for failing to attend church on Sunday, Wednesday, Friday, and on holidays.⁶⁶ In Long Melford near the turn of the seventeenth century, the poor attended services each morning and evening at the parish church. Any who defaulted in this regard were initially fined half a penny, though this was to be increased at the warden's discretion if such negligent behaviour by an inmate continued.⁶⁷ The poor dwelling in the almshouses of either Thomas Cure or Richard Huish likewise lost a portion of their weekly salary for missing church. The institution founded by the former fined the poor 4d for missing prayer and 2d for either failing to attend service at the parish church, or not remaining therein through the entirety of its duration, while the latter house took 6d from one's weekly wage for absences in their routine prayers at the almshouse or for missing church services.⁶⁸

In a few almshouses, founders and house administrators also strictly controlled labour. As earlier discussed, labour was a fundamental feature in almshouse life during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and in an attempt to eliminate idleness, houses frequently punished inmates who refused to work. It was pointed out earlier that

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Garrow, *The History and Antiquities of Croydon*, 340; and William Cecil, Baron of Burghley, *Ordinances made by Sir William Cecil, Knight of the Order of the Garter, Baron of Burghley, for the Order and Government of xiii Poor Men* (Michigan: University of Michigan, Digital Library Production Service, 2011), 1.

⁶⁷ Wigmore, *Holy Trinity Hospital, Long Melford*, 34.

⁶⁸ Archer, "Sources for the Early Modern English Almshouse," 109 and 119.

maintaining proper labour ethics was essential to almshouse life in the foundation made by the Lord of Cobham in the early 1600s. While the house's ninth statute stated that the poor, their wives, and their children must work during the days, it also decreed that any individual who was able to labour but chose not to was to be fined, and rather heavily. A first offence led to a fine of 18d, while a whole month's pension was levied for a second offence.⁶⁹ For a third offence, one could be expelled from the institution.

Leaving the college without a license also carried strict penalties for almsfolk. The poor living away from Cure's almshouse lost 7d from their cash stipends, while those at Seckford's almshouse lost 4d a day for lodging away from their quarters.⁷⁰ Dulwich College also fined its poor if they decided to dwell away from the almshouse, though fines at this foundation were much steeper than those levied against inmates at both Cure's and Seckford's almshouses. At Dulwich, neglecting to obtain permission to leave the house's premises resulted in a fine of five shillings for a first offence, ten shillings for a second offence, a whole months pension for a third offence, and expulsion if inmates continued transgressing.⁷¹ Although the inclusion of expulsion articles for sleeping away from a house was far more infrequent than those related to fines, almshouses occasionally included it. As the case was at Dulwich College, Holy Trinity Hospital in Long Melford likewise ruled that a pauper receive a 12d fine for a first fault, admonishment for a second offence, removal from the house for month in the event of a third transgression, and expulsion for a fourth fault.⁷²

⁶⁹ Williams, *Abstract Containing the Substance of the Rules and Ordinance of the New-College of Cobham*, 8.

⁷⁰ Archer, "Sources for the Early Modern English Almshouse," 119; and Loader, ed., *The Statutes and Ordinances for the Government of the Alms-Houses*, in Woodbridge, 3.

⁷¹ Young, *The History of Dulwich College*, 73.

⁷² Wigmore, *Holy Trinity Hospital, Long Melford*, 35.

A different stance on lodging was taken by the foundation made by William Cecil. Though it is unclear why, on a number of rules, Cecil's almshouse stood in stark contrast to other houses founded during the early modern period. With lodging specifically, Cecil's foundation was far more lenient toward where its paupers slept and lived, permitting residents to spend nearly a month away from the almshouse so long as they spent at least one night therein.⁷³ The regulation itself applied only to married paupers of the almshouse, though. Regulations for lodging and living for single residents at Cecil's institution were different than those rules afforded to married brethren. Yet, here, too, Cecil's almshouse was markedly different from other foundations made in the Tudor and Stuart era. At a time when private living for almsfolk was increasing, for instance, Cecil's institution clung to the older pre-Reformation notion of communal living and sleeping. So long as they were unmarried and healthy, Cecil's required single paupers to "lodge every night in the common house, without some special impediment."⁷⁴

In a likely attempt to strengthen the bond between inmates, many institutions stressed verbal and physical civility between residents in both single and mixed gendered foundations. At Wigston's almshouse in Leicester, the poor were strictly prohibited from fighting, brawling, chiding, and slandering, and were expected to live godly, lovingly, and quietly among themselves while residing in the institution.⁷⁵ The house founded by Thomas Seckford made similar stipulations. Almsmen resident at this almshouse were prohibited from saying "uncharitable speeches to any other of the poor of the said alms-

⁷³ Cecil, Baron of Burghley, *Ordinances made by Sir William Cecil*, 1. It is worth mentioning that failing to spend at least one night in the almshouse was punishable. If a married inmate neglected to lodge at least once at Cecil's foundation then it could result in the loss of a week's wage, which was to be paid to the poor box in S. Martins.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁷⁵ Thompson, ed., *A Calendar of Charities and Other Documents Belonging to the Hospital of William Wyggeston at Leicester*, 77.

house, under pain of six pence, for every such offence.”⁷⁶ The fines for physical aggression were far stricter. A first offence led to a fine of 2s 6d, a fine of 5s resulted from second offence, and expulsion from the house ensued following a third transgression. At the turn of the seventeenth century, the New-College of Cobham levied fines against any inmates that abused another resident, while physical harassment was subject to harsher punishment. For verbally abusing another, an inmate could expect a fine totaling 6d, while any who engaged in a fight suffered a whole months loss of pay for a first offence, and expulsion from the almshouse for a second.⁷⁷

Begging, too, was also strictly forbidden at the vast majority of almshouses operating in the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The reasons for the prohibition against begging have already been briefly noted, but it bears mentioning again that begging by an alms person reflected poorly upon an institution and its founder, especially in wealthier foundations. Similarly, because of the social and economic atmosphere in England during the sixteenth century, along with the rapid increase in poverty, the suppression of begging in almshouses may have been an attempt to stem the growth of alms seekers. In any case, near the end of sixteenth century, inmates from Thomas Cure’s almshouse were to be harshly punished if they were found begging.

When he founded his institution, Cure ordained:

If any of the poor of [his] college shall [be] found begging, either at or about the college itself or elsewhere abroad, the same shall, for the first offence lose xviii d, for the second vi d, and for the third offence shall forthwith expelled [from] the said college forever.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Loader, ed., *The Statutes and Ordinances for the Government of the Alms-Houses*, in Woodbridge, 4.

⁷⁷ Williams, *Abstracts Containing the Substance of the Rules and Ordinances of the New-College of Cobham*, 9.

⁷⁸ Archer, “Sources for the Early Modern English Almshouse,” 120.

None of the poor residing at Whitgift's almshouse were permitted to beg for alms either, nor were those residing at Seckford's house, where hefty monetary fines were levied for any inmate caught disobeying this particular ordinance.⁷⁹ In her own study, McIntosh likewise noted Seckford's rules against begging, and she also noted several other almshouses opposed to alms seeking.⁸⁰ However, since her study ends at the beginning of the seventeenth century, she does not note that the embargo against begging in almshouses persisted well into the 1600s. What is especially interesting about these later foundations including clauses against begging is that by 1598, virtually all forms of begging by an individual were outlawed in the country.⁸¹ Despite this, though, Richard Huish's 1616 foundation in Taunton, Somerset, found that while the poor were allowed to take and keep anything that was voluntarily given to them by anyone in the community or elsewhere, begging or desiring alms of any kind was disallowed under pain of expulsion and the loss of house benefits.⁸² At the mid-century foundation made by Thomas Holt, moreover, begging was likewise outlawed under pain of expulsion.⁸³

As with sanctions against begging, rules against allowing lodgers into almshouses existed almost universally amongst foundations operating in both the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. One possible reason for this may have been the 1589 *Act Against Erecting and Maintaining Cottages*, the purpose of which was, among other things, to reduce destitution in rural areas by decreasing over-population in villages suffering from

⁷⁹ Garrow, *The History and Antiquities of Croydon*, 341; and Loader, ed., *The Statutes and Ordinances for the Government of the Alms-Houses*, in Woodbridge, 5.

⁸⁰ McIntosh, *Poor Relief in England*, 210.

⁸¹ 39 Elizabeth, c.4.

⁸² Archer, "Sources for the Early Modern English Almshouse," 110.

⁸³ Holt, *Orders and Rules appointed by the Last Will and Testament of Sir Thomas Holt*, 3.

employment issues and poverty.⁸⁴ It is difficult to say for sure, however, since a number of institutions before the passage of this act made stipulations against allowing their residents to house lodgers for any reasons beyond being ill. Whatever the reason, it is apparent that founders typically prohibited anyone besides their almsfolk from residing within their institution, and left stringent punishments in place to ensure that residents adhered to the rule. Both Lord Williams' almshouse in Thame and Holy Trinity Hospital in Long Melford forbade lodgers and boarders in their institutions,⁸⁵ and the house founded by Whiftgift stipulated that no man or woman of the house lodge anyone not belonging to the institution.⁸⁶ For his foundation posthumously made in 1584, David Smith left rather stringent rules in place for any of his alms women who allowed someone to lodge with them. As he noted:

They [the women], nor any of them, shall not lodge in her, or their, house, or houses, suffer to be lodged therein any manner of person, either man [or] woman...either father, mother, sister, brother, son, or daughter, lame or not lame. And if any of them shall offend therein, they, upon knowledge given by any manner of persons unto the said treasurer or governor or some of them, for the time being, the said treasurer or governors shall expel and pull out such and so many of them as shall offend.⁸⁷

At Smith's almshouse, then, any woman who allowed a lodger into her dwelling was to be removed from her place in the almshouse by the institution's governing authorities.

Richard Huish ordained in 1616 that the poor men of his house were not to harbor any men, women, or children, no matter their age, and doing so resulted in one's immediate

⁸⁴ 31 Elizabeth, c. 7; and Geoffrey W. Oxley, *Poor Relief in England and Wales, 1601-1834* (London: David and Charles, 1974), 39.

⁸⁵ Williams, *Some Account of Lord Williams, of Thame*, 105; and Wigmore, ed., *Holy Trinity Hospital, Long Melford*, 35.

⁸⁶ Garrow, *The History and Antiquities of Croydon*, 337.

⁸⁷ TNA PROB 11/71/127.

expulsion.⁸⁸ In his will proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury in 1619, Sir Stephen Soame noted that if one of his alms people took on a lodger then they would find themselves removed and expelled from the house forever.⁸⁹ The statutes of Dulwich College in 1619 held like sentiments towards inmates lodging outsiders in the almshouse, though the rules were slightly more lenient than other foundations. Lodging someone in one's apartment was strictly prohibited by the almshouse, though it was possible if a resident first gained the consent of either the housemaster or its warden.⁹⁰

Ungodly behaviour and social wrongdoing was also commonly prohibited, and defaulting risked not only immense fines, but dismissal as well. While the statutes of Lord Williams' almshouse were comparatively shorter than those of other foundations since his executors believed "there will be need of fewer words on the duties of the paupers, for they themselves are such an advanced age as to know well off how to conduct themselves respectably, or at any rate, they ought to",⁹¹ they nonetheless made regulations against social misbehaviors. Williams' executors described these as "open adultery, daily drunkenness, and other of this sort," and the warden was to deprive the offenders of both their clothing and cash stipend for offending.⁹² In addition, the house attempted to shame a transgressing inmate by making him sit and watch as the warden doled out the fined money equally to the other residents. Holy Trinity Hospital in Long Melford barred inmates from frequenting alehouses, essentially seeing these places as areas of misdemeanor and crime.⁹³ John Whitgift's almshouse stated that inmates should

⁸⁸ Archer, "Source for the Early Modern English Almshouse," 109.

⁸⁹ TNA PROB 11/138/64.

⁹⁰ William, *The History of Dulwich College*, 85.

⁹¹ Williams, *Some Account of Lord Williams, of Thame*, 101.

⁹² *Ibid*, 105.

⁹³ Wigmore, *Holy Trinity Hospital, Long Melford*, 35.

avoid scandalous and notable crimes, particularly those punishable by loss of life or limb. His foundation also stipulated that anyone found engaging in any kind of immoral or profane behaviour would be displaced, admonished, or fined.⁹⁴ Both Seckford's almshouse and Dulwich College made similar rules, with the former institution prohibiting the poor from "haunting any tavern, ale-house, or tipling-house," while the latter outlawed going to taverns or alehouses and being intoxicated.⁹⁵ To discourage this behaviour, the lattermost foundation included rather harsh punishments in its statutes. A loss of three day's pension came from a first, second, and third offence. Being placed in the stocks in the outer portion of the college's yard for an hour was the penalty for a fourth offence, and it also included forfeiting three days pension. The fifth offence was similar to the fourth, though duration in the stocks increased by one hour, and monetary loss was a week's pension. A sixth offence resulted in a three-hour placement in the stocks, and loses of two weeks pension, while a seventh offence was expulsion from the college.⁹⁶ Corporal punishment clauses, like those found at Dulwich, are, however, exceedingly rare in statutes for these institutions, or at least they were in those used for this project. Because some almshouses were established alongside schools, examples of corporal punishment statutes exist, though such clauses were applicable only to the students. Most founders included such clauses only to rule against the use of such punishment on their scholars. Founders thus included such rules only as a means to ensure that corporal punishment was never actually used a form of punishment. This was the scene at Lord Williams' almshouse and school in the late 1550s, where his executors

⁹⁴ Garrow, *The History and Antiquities of Croydon*, 342.

⁹⁵ Loader, ed., *The Statutes and Ordinances for the Government of the Alms-Houses, in Woodbridge*, 5; and Young, *The History of Dulwich College*, 75.

⁹⁶ Young, *The History of Dulwich College*, 75.

determined that the scholars attending the school should never be struck. As they stated: “One thing we have determined to forbid utterly... that on no pretense what so ever may a boy be struck, or beaten, or thumped, either with a rod or by another blow, either on the head, the eyes, the ears, the mouth, or any other part of his body.”⁹⁷

Gambling, too, was banned at a variety of foundations in both the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This was the case at Cecil’s almshouse in the later 1500s. Here, the founder ruled that none of the thirteen poor men engage in cards, dice, or any other games considered illicit, with any one offending this statute receiving only a single warning before dismissal.⁹⁸ A single warning was also given to inmates at Richard Huish’s seventeenth-century almshouse for playing cards, dice, or any other unlawful game, after which they, too, would be removed for further transgression.⁹⁹

Other houses and founders also undertook initiatives to prevent fornication between inmates in their foundations. Despite the fact that most foundations operating during the early modern period accentuated that only those of godly behaviour and good conversation should be elected, a number of institutions nonetheless included clauses prohibiting the sexual activity of residents. Unlawful sexual engagements at Seckford’s almshouse, including fornication, adultery, or incest, resulted in immediate expulsion.¹⁰⁰ Meanwhile, at Long Melford’s Holy Trinity Hospital, fornication and adultery were included in a long list of forbidden behaviours that ended in dismissal for inmates partaking in such activities. Dulwich College likewise took steps to prevent sexual engagements between its male and female inmates, largely by separating the sleeping

⁹⁷ Williams, *Some Account of Lord Williams, of Thame*, 82.

⁹⁸ Cecil, Baron of Burghley, *Ordinances made by Sir William Cecil*, 1.

⁹⁹ Archer, “Source for the Early Modern English Almshouse,” 109.

¹⁰⁰ Loader, ed., *The Statutes and Ordinances for the Government of the Alms-Houses, in Woodbridge*, 4

quarters of the resident men and women.¹⁰¹ It is possible that rules concerned with regulating the social and moral conduct were included because founders sought to use their establishments to reflect proper morality and godly behaviour to the wider community. At the same time, though, founders may have simply been attempting to thrust virtuous habits upon their inmates to mold their morals appropriately, as the case was with many hospitals in London in the late Elizabethan era.¹⁰²

The prohibition of ungodly activity and social immorality in almshouses operating in the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries itself was largely connected to the broader cultural overhaul occurring in England at the same time as the Reformation. Particularly by the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods, the Reformation in England arranged new standards of behaviours that gradually changed traditional moral, social, and cultural norms in England. While this remains an oversimplification of a complex and protracted affair, this transition, which Margo Todd attributes to the adoption of Christian humanist ideals by English Protestants,¹⁰³ ultimately gave rise to the belief that loose living – gambling, drunkenness, adultery, and idleness for instance – was scandalous to the church and flouted a religious standard unbefitting a Reformed nation.¹⁰⁴ The discipline of ungodly behaviour in early modern almshouses, then, was an extension of this growing English Protestant belief, and it was this cultural transition that inspired how the English addressed problems of poverty at the turn of the seventeenth century. Todd, for example, argues that through their adoption of Christian humanist ideals, Protestant reformers in

¹⁰¹ Young, *The History of Dulwich College*, 85.

¹⁰² Ian Archer, *The Pursuit of Stability: Social Relations in Elizabethan London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 155.

¹⁰³ Margo Todd, *Christian Humanism and the Puritan Social Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 139-147.

¹⁰⁴ Margo Todd, "England After 1558," *The Reformation World*, ed. Andrew Pettegree (New York: Routledge, 2000), 378.

England felt that the primary means of addressing poverty was by sanctifying work, suppressing idleness, and exalting discipline.¹⁰⁵ The shift in morality following the cultural reformation thus spilled into institutionalized poor relief programs, including almshouses, and this led to an increase in how founders sought to regulate virtue and godly behaviour in their foundations.

A number of pre-Reformation houses banned ungodly behaviours like those earlier noted, but in the statutes for these houses, or at least those used for this discussion, founders did not always attach discipline and punishment clauses.¹⁰⁶ In the decades following the country's denunciation of Catholicism, though, clauses against such behaviours not only became far more pronounced, but more inclusive of other conduct deemed ungodly as well, especially behaviours relating to sexuality and idleness. We have discussed both of these subjects at length already, but it is worth mentioning that almost every post-Reformation document used for the current discussion forbade idleness and punished sexual abuses. Transitions in the perceptions of labour during this cultural shift had arguably the largest impact in early modern almshouses. Banning social and moral misconduct was hardly a new feature in almshouses founded after 1534, but the inclusion of clauses forbidding idleness was a rather fresh addition. In the years before the Reformation, almshouses generally forbade their inmates from working when they became a resident. Most of the documents used here, for example, include statutes which required their inmates to refrain from engaging in labour. After the Reformation, though,

¹⁰⁵ Todd, *Christian Humanism*, 147.

¹⁰⁶ The pre-Reformation almshouses founded in Saffron Walden, for instance, did not include punishments for gambling or fornication as many others did. It did, however, rule that its inmates never be inebriate. See Steer. "The Statutes of Saffron Walden Almshouses," 169.

and increasingly by the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods, founders of almshouses included labour statutes to ensure their almsfolk were not idle.

As it had earlier, disciplining breaches in behaviour in post-Reformation almshouses ensured that morality was properly molded and instilled in the poor inmates served by these institutions. In a broader context, shaping morality, especially among the poor, was part of the Protestant ethic in England because reformers thought it distinguished England from its Catholic neighbors, and because it determined the correctness of individual behaviour, thus ensuring proper order in the community.¹⁰⁷ This new trend in belief, then, was arguably the reason why almshouses founded in the post-Reformation years increased their inclusion of punishments for social wrongdoings. This was the case with labour as well, particularly with its increase in almshouses founded after 1558. By the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, labour in England was not only considered conducive to combating poverty, but it was also felt that productivity was essential for the good of the commonwealth and its advancement.¹⁰⁸ Thus, as perceptions of labour shifted on a broader social and cultural framework in England through the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods, so, too, did views on labour change in almshouses. As such, more and more founders began including work clauses in their house statutes, probably in an unconscious effort to mimic the shifts occurring in larger society. What is interesting, here, is that the statutes of almshouses founded in the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries allow us to see how shifts in social and cultural norms permeated the country's institutionalized poor relief programs and influenced how they were regulated.

¹⁰⁷ Todd, "England After 1558," 378.

¹⁰⁸ Todd, "Christian Humanism," 148-149.

Destroying the almshouse or taking substances from its grounds was also a concern for early modern founders. Ensuring that his almshouse and its beauty remain intact was an utmost concern for Thomas Seckford. The statutes for his almshouse, for instance, forbade inmates from taking tiles, brick, or wood from the almshouse to repair their own lodgings, and it also ruled that unlawfully cutting, or carrying away any wood, quickset or spring would result in a 4d fine for a first offence, an 8d fine for a second offence, and removal from the almshouse for a third.¹⁰⁹ This was the situation at the New-College of Cobham as well. At this institution, the poor, under pain of expulsion, were not to hurt the building in any way, and this included never pulling down or breaking any of the brick, tile, timber, or stone work that made up the house unless otherwise allowed by the houses' presidents.¹¹⁰ The two widows at Thomas Wright's almshouse in Suffolk in the mid-1600s, moreover, were forbidden from removing wood, trees, or bushes that grew upon the pathways or land leading to the foundation. In his will, Wright ruled that the widows "nor any other person for them...shall cut, crop, fell, have, or take any wood, underwood, trees, or bushes, which are growing...upon the way or land wherein the almshouse is erected, upon pain of removal."¹¹¹

Along with mandating acceptable and unacceptable behaviours, founders generally made inmates swear to uphold a house' statutes upon their election into a foundation. Furthermore, the vast majority of foundations ensured that its statutes were read aloud to inmates at least once during the year, either by one of the literate residents or by a member of the governing body. As such, inmates were continuously reminded of

¹⁰⁹ Loader, ed., *The Statutes and Ordinances for the Government of the Alms-Houses, in Woodbridge*, 4.

¹¹⁰ Williams, *Abstract Containing the Substance of the Rules and Ordinances of the New-College of Cobham*, 9.

¹¹¹ Tymms, ed, *Wills and Inventories*, 190.

their houses' rules, and failure to adhere to them was likely due to their own ignorance. All twelve brethren at Holy Trinity Hospital in Long Melford, for example, had to take an oath that they would swear to observe the ordinances of the house during their time as a resident, all of which were read to them by the house warden.¹¹² It was likewise ordained that the statutes of the house were to be read to the almsmen twice annually, once on the Friday of Lent and the second on the Friday of Whitsun week. All brethren, warden, almsmen, and widows alike were to be present for this on pain of forfeiting four pence.¹¹³ At Seckford's institution, the paymaster was required to read the rules of the house to the inmates twice each year, typically in the church of Woodbridge after the evening prayer. It was Seckford's intent that reading the ordinances would remind listeners that although ignorance was punishable, living in peace could be obtained by simply obeying the statutes.¹¹⁴ Each year, usually on pension days in both January and May, the paymaster at the New-College of Cobham was to gather all the poor of the almshouse in the common hall and read and publish the ordinances by which they all lived.¹¹⁵ Tracking the transgression of inmates, it should also be noted, likewise fell upon the paymaster at many early modern almshouses, though some others simply used the sub-warden for record keeping.

Actual occasions of inmates acting against the statutes are exceedingly rare in the historical record, but some accounts exist. Research into cathedral almshouses by Ian Atherton, Eileen McGrath, and Alannah Tomkins revealed that just prior to the civil war, three almsmen at Worcester were punished for neglectfulness. Robert Davis, Richard

¹¹² Wigmore, ed., *Holy Trinity Hospital, Long Melford*, 33.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 37.

¹¹⁴ Loader, ed., *The Statutes and Ordinances for the Government of the Alms-Houses, in Woodbridge*, 5.

¹¹⁵ Williams, *Abstract Containing the Substance of the Rules and Ordinances of the New-College of Cobham*, 10.

Dirram, and Walter Evans were all temporarily banned from the house, and had their pensions suspended until the dean thought it time to return them, a result of their scandalous behaviours and non-attendance to answer charges against themselves.¹¹⁶

McIntosh, too, noted several occasions where an inmate was punished by their foundation, including an inmate at Heytesbury Hospital who used slanderous language towards the house's female attendant.¹¹⁷ Even more rare are instances of expulsion from a house, though these, too, sometimes occurred. At Dulwich College in 1631, the almsman John Allanbee was expelled for violating the statutes on various occasions. The governors of the College had this to say about Allanbee:

Forasmuch as John Allanbee, one of the almsmen of the college called God's Gift College in Dulwich, hath been a disorderly person since he came into the college and often offended by breaking the statutes of the said college, for which his misdemeanors he hath been sundry times admonished and reprov'd and his offence pardon'd. Nevertheless, the said Allanbee continuing in his vices both of drunkenness and other lewd offences was by the master of the college reprov'd the first day of March, 1631, but the said Allanbee did stubbornly answer the master that he did no more then [sic] the spirit of God moved him to, justifying himself and would not be brought to any obedience of an orderly and civil life and being often found guilty of these offences following viz: 1. Being a scolding and railing person, falling out with the rest of his brothers and sister, and would live at peace with them. 2. For abusing the fellows of the college sundry times cursing and swearing and wishing God to confound all proud priests. 3. For often being drunk. 4. For running into Chapel in time of Divine Service drunk and reeling and could not stand upright upon his legs. 5. For his obstinate answers to the Master of the College to justify himself in his lewd courses being reprov'd. 6. For frequenting the women chambers, contrary to the statutes for which he had often warning to the contrary. 7. For that it did appear by confession of one of the poor sisters of the college that the said John Allanbee would have laid with the poor sister persuading Her that fornication was not sin at all, if both parties agreed.

¹¹⁶ Ian Atherton, Eileen McGrath, and Alannah Tomkins, "Pressed Down By Want and Afflicted with Poverty, Wounded and Maimed in War or Worn Down with Age?" Cathedral Almsmen in England, 1538-1914," in *Medicine, Charity, and Mutual Aid: The Consumption of Health and Welfare in Britain, c. 1550-1950* ed. Anne Borsay and Peter Shapely (Great Britain: Ashgate, 2007), 27.

¹¹⁷ McIntosh, *Poor Relief in England*, 213.

For these offences we whose names are subscribed do concave that the said Allanbee was not worthy to live in a civil society and therefore with full consent have expelled that said Allanbee out of the said college forever according to the statutes and ordinances made in that behalf.¹¹⁸

Expulsion for Allenbee, then, stemmed largely from his drunkenness, both during and outside of church service, frequently swearing and cursing at the fellows of the college, frequenting the women's chambers, and attempting to convince one of the poor sisters to lay with him by convincing her that fornication was not a sin if both parties agreed to the act.

Policing and enforcing house regulations varied from almshouse to almshouse, but the task generally fell upon an institution's paymaster or a literate resident, or upon a foundation's governing body. Seckford's house required its paymaster to track the misbehavior of its residents, as did the New College of Cobham's, where the paymaster worked in conjunction with the warden and sub-warden and made the appropriate changes for fined inmates on pension days.¹¹⁹ Huish's almshouse, on the other hand, relied on its president, a literate inmate tasked with "keeping evidences, records, accounts, and other matters concerning the hospital."¹²⁰ Simultaneously, Holy Trinity Hospital in Long Melford and Thomas Cure's foundation relied on alternative mechanisms to oversee the enforcement of their respective house policies. The governors of the former almshouse, for example, felt that the best way of guaranteeing cooperation was by granting the Bishop of Norwich the authority to visit the house every three years –

¹¹⁸ William, *The History of Dulwich College*, 104.

¹¹⁹ Loader, ed., *The Statutes and Ordinances for the Government of the Alms-Houses, in Woodbridge*, 5.; and Williams, *Abstract Containing the Substance of the Rules and Ordinances of the New-College of Cobham*, 5-10.

¹²⁰ Archer, "Sources for the Early Modern English Almshouse," 107.

or whenever he pleased.¹²¹ While at the college, he was to ensure that nothing was amiss and confirm that the residents were indeed following the statutes. Cure's almshouse made similar specifications, but instead of using an ecclesiastical official, the governors decided that they, and their successors thereafter, would visit the house at least once each year to view and consider the state of the poor, among other things.¹²²

Whistleblowing by other inmates probably played an important part in policing as well. While most of the records do not mention clauses about whistleblowing, and rarely offer any outright incentive for inmates who did so, it is conceivable that some residents reported their peers for acting contrary to their houses' statutes. We discussed earlier how faults against lesser rules normally resulted in a fine. What was left unstated, however, was that in nearly every early modern foundation, money levied from an individual went into a house's common box and was later used for any necessary maintenance. In addition, and although a minority amongst houses in this period, some foundations also distributed fined money to the other residents, and occasionally a whistleblower received an enhanced portion of this. If any of the thirteen poor women broke the rules at St. Anne's Hospital at Appleby then they forfeited a fortnight's allowance, which was taken out of their next pay schedule. The money that was taken was to be divided in half; the first half went the parish poor, while the second half went to the informant.¹²³

Conclusion

Although the residential experience of occupants in early modern almshouses could benefit from more extensive examination of manuscript records, this chapter has

¹²¹ Wigmore, *Holy Trinity Hospital, Long Melford*, 37.

¹²² Archer, "Sources for the Early Modern English Almshouse," 121-122.

¹²³ Heelis, "St. Anne's Hospital at Appleby," 196.

nonetheless attempted to provide an idea of what an inmate could potentially expect upon their election into a foundation. In exchange for the numerous benefits and peace of mind an inmate received, founders expected conformity to particular standards of behaviour. Most houses operating in the early modern period, for instance, rejected idleness in their houses, expecting their inmates to engage in some kind of work during the day. Typically this was gender specific, with most founders requiring agricultural labour out of male residents while women usually undertook more of a domestic role. Providing aid to fellow inmates during heightened occasions of illness was also expected of inmates in many early modern houses, and so, too, was returning to the almshouse at night. Concerning the physical structure of almshouses and the lodging provided to inmates, the foundations whose records survive tended towards stronger and sturdier materials, and generally emphasized some form of private living, either by providing single rooms, or giving inmates their own floor.

In the same vein as regulating the daily conduct of inmates, early modern donors similarly restricted behaviours and at least threatened to punish recalcitrant residents. Usually, these were restricted to admonishment or fines, though occasionally corporal punishment and expulsion from the house could be exercised. Neglecting prayers, unwillingness to labour, or leaving the almshouse without a license from the warden or governors usually constituted grounds to admonish or fine an inmate at most early modern institutions. As for expulsion clauses, these were included in most statutes governing early modern almshouses, but it is probable that they were rarely employed. Most houses certainly reserved the right to expel a misbehaving resident, but usually only after an inmate transgressed against a particular ordinance several times. This was usually

the case with lesser offences, like an inmate's failure to labour on three or four occasions, or for failing to obtain a license from the college to sleep away from its grounds. For more serious offences, expulsion was levied. Usually, this occurred after only two warnings, although in some instances, inmates transgressing against a certain rule were expelled immediately. Most foundations in this period included this type of expulsion clause for inmates who begged for alms, or harbored lodgers in their dwelling. Depending upon the foundation, inmates engaging in social misbehaviors and ungodly conduct, including drunkenness, gambling, and fornication, were similarly warned either once or twice before ejection, or they were ejected immediately. This, too, was the case with any resident who defaced their institution, whether removing brick and tiles from the house itself, or manipulating a house's grounds but cutting its shrubbery or overgrowth. Though instances of punishment are recorded in scattered supplementary evidence, some founders sought to reduce the need for discipline by requiring their inmates to swear that they would uphold the house's statutes upon their election. Other founders required their statutes to be regularly read to residents, usually once or twice annually, while in other instances, donors required their rules to be sworn to upon one's institution and also habitually read through the year a reminder. In exchange for perpetual dwelling and assisted living, then, almshouse residents had to be not only willing to perform daily duties, but also swear to obey the rules of their house, or be punished for neglecting to do so.

Chapter 4

Two Almshouses In-Depth: The History and Significance of the Foundations

Made by Thomas Sutton and Edward Alleyn

Introduction

In the years before the English Reformation, the burden of relieving the poor fell chiefly upon the Roman Catholic Church and its various ecclesiastical institutions spread throughout the country. Until their dissolution during the Henrician and Edwardian Reformations, and despite their increasing mismanagement through the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, monastic charities acted as the primary arbiter against increasing rates of poverty in England by providing essential charity to the poor.¹ This came usually in the form of outdoor relief through the provision of clothing, food, or money, but a host of monasteries, from the larger Benedictine and Augustinian orders to a number of England's smaller houses, also offered indoor relief through clerical hospitals and almshouses. The aid provided to the poor by the Pre-Reformation church has been mentioned at several points throughout this thesis, but it bears reiteration because despite the sudden loss of monasticism and ecclesiastical aid in the 1530s and 1540s, post-Reformation charity, especially indoor poor relief programs, adopted earlier mechanisms of aid developed and operated by the Catholic Church during the medieval era. The significance, at least in regards to the current discussion, is the amount of influence that medieval almshouse foundations had upon founders donating houses in the

¹ Neil S. Ruston, "Monastic Charitable Provision in Tudor England: Quantifying and Qualifying Poor Relief in the Early Sixteenth Century," *Continuity and Change* 16 (2001): 35.

post-Reformation years. The previous two chapters discussed to a large extent the changes and continuities of houses founded both before and after the Reformation, and through those examinations we found that despite some variations, fundamentally, charity for the impotent poor through almshouses remained comparable in both periods.

When the seventeenth century began, the foundation of charitable institutions in England became a much-simplified process made easier by the passage of two chief statutes at the close of the Elizabethan era.² As a result, almshouse foundation mounted over the next three decades, reaching a pinnacle in the 1620s before slowly tapering off during the lead up to the English Civil War at the beginning of the 1640s.³ During this period, two significant almshouse foundations were made, both of which were donated in the second decade of the seventeenth century, and both of which continue their operation into the present. While both houses are noteworthy for their own reasons, one is of particular significance because although it was founded as an almshouse in the early 1600s, its existence as a charity dates back much further, to the late fourteenth century. Given the general arc from monastic charity to post-Reformation charity drawn throughout this thesis, part of the intrigue for this particular almshouse stems from the fact that it began as a monastic charity, saw dissolution during the Henrician Reformation, but was resurrected as a charity by Thomas Sutton several decades later to fulfill many of its original and principal purposes.⁴ The point, here, is that despite the Reformation wiping out traditional forms of charity for the impotent poor, what we see

² Recall from the introductory chapter the statutes passed alongside the Poor Laws of 1597 and 1601: An Act for Erecting of Hospitals or Abiding and Working Houses for the Poor in 1597, and the Charitable Uses Act of 1601.

³ W.K. Jordan, *Philanthropy in England, 1480-1660*, (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1959),

⁴ Stephen Green, "The London Charterhouse," *Historian* 108 (2010): 6.

occur in the post-Reformation period is a revival of the older mechanisms, and Sutton's almshouse corporeally reflects this trend.

The long duration of time that Sutton's almshouse spent as a charity (roughly seven centuries, minus a few brief decades between its dissolution and subsequent re-foundation where it acted as a mansion house for several individuals) is among one of the chief reasons for why it attracts scholarly attention. However, its development as a charity aside, the history of Sutton's foundation possesses a quality that makes it particularly attractive as a case study for the current discussion, namely that the foundation's early years were riddled with political and legal difficulties. A similar opportunity is presented by Edward Alleyn's almshouse, another foundation made during the 1610s. Alleyn's donation likewise witnessed difficulties during its early history, and this, too, is despite the simplification in founding charities after the 1597 and 1601 statutes. Sutton and Alleyn's benefactions thus provide an opportunity to analyze the complexities behind founding an almshouse during the early modern period and the complications that occasionally arose while doing so.

This chapter examines these two significant almshouses, both of which were somewhat atypical of others founded around the same time. It will begin first by exploring the foundation made in 1611 by Thomas Sutton, an English commoner with extraordinary financial wealth. Unlike the donations made by others in the seventeenth century, most of which housed around a dozen or so paupers, Sutton's foundation offered sustenance to no less than eighty poor individuals, and provided a school for an additional forty children. This alone warrants closer study of the establishment, and it will certainly constitute a discussion in this section. However, of greater import is the

legal complication surrounding the early history of Sutton's hospital, chiefly the legal battle that took place shortly after the founder's death between his nephew, Simon Baxter, and the first governors of the almshouse. As the chapter will discuss and argue at length, the significance of Sutton's Charterhouse, at least from an historical standpoint, lay partly in the effects that Baxter's legal suit had on both the historical development of Sutton's foundation and the lasting impact it had in English common law.

The second portion of this chapter will examine the foundation made by Edward Alleyn, another English commoner who likewise amassed a fortune, though as an Elizabethan and Jacobean actor. Alleyn similarly had no direct heir to whom to bequeath his wealth. As a result, near the close of his life, he turned toward philanthropic endeavors and founded the College of God's gift in Dulwich to serve the dual purpose of providing an almshouse and school for children. This particular section will reconstruct the processes undertaken by Alleyn to achieve the foundation of his charity, but it, too, will look more intently upon the political difficulty that the college met early in its history. A brief discussion of the statutes Alleyn made for his foundation will conclude this section, with emphasis being placed on the factors that influenced how he regulated his charity. Examining Sutton and Alleyn together offers the opportunity to note the similarities between them as individuals and the difficulties they had in founding their institutions.

The London Charterhouse: Its Legal Significance and Historical Development

Sutton was born in 1532 in Knaith, a small community along the river Tren in the

county of Lincolnshire.⁵ His early education was cultivated at Eton College and, for a short time, he studied law at Lincoln's Inn. Shortly after starting at the latter institution, he dropped his studies in favor of travel, going abroad and visiting the Netherlands, France, Italy, and Spain.⁶ Though it is not entirely clear, some contend that his retreat from England was in some degree related to the religious persecutions of Mary I's reign.⁷ It is likewise unclear when Sutton returned to the country. His father, Richard Sutton, died in July of 1558, but his will was not proved until February of 1562, of which Sutton was the sole executor. In any case, it seems apparent that Sutton had returned to the country sometime in the early 1560s. Following his reappearance, Sutton attached himself as steward to Thomas, Duke of Norfolk, and then later became secretary to the Earl of Warwick. During the outbreak of the Rebellion in the North of England, and likely at the earl's behest, Sutton served as Master of the Ordinance in the county of Northumberland.⁸

Concerning his military service, there exists some dispute in the literature about whether the 1569 rebellion was, in fact, the first occasion that Sutton served as a soldier. Speculation suggests that the four-year interlude between the death of Sutton's father in 1558 and the proving of his will in 1562 by his son was actually caused by the latter's

⁵ Due to the sheer magnitude of Sutton's charitable contribution, numerous volumes have been published on his life. See, for instance, William F. Taylor, *The Charterhouse of London: Monastery, Palace, and Thomas Sutton's Foundation*, (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1912), William Haig Brown, *Charterhouse Past and Present: A Brief History of the Hospital Founded in Charterhouse by Thomas Sutton, and More Particularly the School Belonging Thereunto*, (London: Godalming, 1879), and Stephen Porter, *The London Charterhouse: A History of Thomas Sutton's Charity*, (United Kingdom: Amberley, 2009). The latter book looks more intently upon the development of Sutton's foundation, but nonetheless offers insight into the man's life, too.

⁶ Brown, *Charterhouse Past and Present*, 28.

⁷ *Ibid*, 28; and Taylor, *The Charterhouse of London*, 195.

⁸ Taylor, *The Charterhouse of London*, 196.

deployment in a garrison near Berwick-upon-Tweed.⁹ There was a Captain Sutton garrisoned there between December of 1558 and November of 1559, and some academics hold that this was the same Thomas Sutton who later founded the almshouse and school at the London Charterhouse, arguing that Sutton's delay in proving his father's will derived from preoccupation with his military duties.¹⁰ It is difficult to determine whether the Captain Sutton garrisoned near Berwick-upon-Tweed was the same Thomas Sutton who founded the influential almshouse and school in London, but it is clear that he was indeed engaged against the rebels in the English north by 1569, and then later took part in the siege of Edinburgh in 1573.¹¹

It was during his posting in the north part of England that Sutton made his vast fortune. Before this time, he had various sources of income, namely leases of manors which he held from various bishoprics, and this was enhanced further following the death of his father. While serving in the Queen's army in Northumberland, Sutton prospered greatly from the developing coal mining that had recently gripped the region. As his numerous biographers argue, Sutton possessed a rather keen business intellect and saw an opportunity to increase his worth while simultaneously suppressing the rebellion. He obtained leases from the Bishop of Durham for the manors of Gateshead and Wickham, both of which were rich in coal, and must have then shipped the mined product to London, where it was in high demand.¹² By 1580, Sutton's career as a soldier came to an end. His cunning exploitation of Durham's coalfields during his time as a military man yielded considerable fortune. When he eventually moved south, Sutton was reportedly

⁹ Ibid, 195.

¹⁰ Ibid, 195.

¹¹ Ibid, 197; and Porter, *The London Charterhouse*, 9.

¹² Taylor, *The Charterhouse of London*, 199.

worth £50,000, a quantity he earned at a remarkably swift pace and which made him an uncharacteristically rich man, and this was a fortune that he built upon during the rest of his life.

Beginning in 1582, Sutton's wealth was augmented considerably following his marriage to Elizabeth Dudely, the affluent widow of John Dudely of Stoke Newington who was worth £20,000.¹³ Sutton's wealth increased further following his settlement in London. Over the next decade, Sutton used his wealth as a moneylender, allowing him to become one of the richest men in all of England. The idea of lending money for interest had largely been detested in medieval England.¹⁴ Increasingly, though, and especially by Sutton's time, the abhorrence against lending for interest had gradually broken down, which may have been due to England's economic diversification over the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In any case, Sutton's fortune continued to expand between the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth century, with some suggesting that he lent upwards of £220,000 during the last two decades of his life, including sums to the Queen.¹⁵

Concerning Sutton's philanthropic endeavors, from what can be gathered from the historical record, it was not until 1594, when he was sixty-two years old, that Sutton first began undertaking the steps necessary for bestowing his wealth towards the founding of a charity. It is unclear what motivated him in this direction. Perhaps it was his vast wealth and lack of an heir that predisposed him towards providing for the poor, or maybe it was the influence of his wife, who was, according to some, a charitably minded woman.¹⁶

¹³ Brown, *Charterhouse Past and Present*, 30.

¹⁴ Taylor, *The Charterhouse of London*, 201.

¹⁵ Porter, *The London Charterhouse*, 9; and Taylor, *The Charterhouse of London*, 209.

¹⁶ Taylor, *The Charterhouse of London*, 215-126.

Whatever the reason, in June of 1594, Sutton spoke with Lord Chief Justice Sir John Popham about conveying a portion of his estate to the founding of an almshouse at Hallingbury, Essex. In the first draft of his will, which he drew up in the autumn of the same year, he outlined the proposed foundation and was ready to bequeath £3000 for the erection of a hospital and schoolhouse in the area. The foundation of this almshouse never did come to fruition, but it is certain that sixteen years after he took those initial steps at bestowing his wealth, Sutton was still avidly pursuing the erection of such an institution at Hallingbury. In 1609/10, for instance, he secured his Act of Mortmain – legal permission to pass land to a corporation for perpetual use - and his intention was still to place his charity in Essex.¹⁷ However, shortly after obtaining the necessary documents, and for reasons that remain rather obscure, he purchased the Charterhouse in London from the Earl of Suffolk, Thomas Howard. It bears noting, too, that the Charterhouse itself has a rather long history, beginning with its foundation by Walter de Manny in 1371. Of particular interest, though, are the institution's development as a Catholic monastery, its suppression by the Henrician Reformation in the late 1530s, and then its subsequent redevelopment as a post-Reformation charity by Thomas Sutton. The Charterhouse thus existed as a charitable institution in both the pre-Reformation and post-Reformation periods, and while not an almshouse per se in the years before its suppression, it has performed nearly identical roles since its initial foundation in the fourteenth century.¹⁸ In any case, Sutton obtained the letters patent for the institution in

¹⁷ W.K. Jordan, *The Charities of London, 1480-1660*, (Connecticut: Archon Books, 1974), 151-152.

¹⁸ In the several decades succeeding its dissolution, the Charterhouse's ownership shifted hands frequently until Sutton purchased it in 1611. As for documentation on the institution, it is generally studied either on its own or in conjunction with studies on Thomas Sutton. For a compressed history of the institution, see Gerald Davies, *Sutton's Hospital in Charterhouse*, (England: S&N, 195-), 195. For a more in depth account, see Bruno Barber and Christopher Thomas, *The London Charterhouse*, (London: Museum of London Archaeology Service, 2002).

June of 1611 from James I,¹⁹ and transferred his foundation to the old monastic building. A few months after the purchase of this place, Sutton redrew his will and bestowed the greater part of his wealth on his newly founded institution.

In the same year that he purchased the Charterhouse and secured its letters patent, Sutton died, leaving the institution in the hands of its first governors. Yet, despite his acquisition of the building, and the appointment of its initial governing officials, the Charterhouse did not begin operation as an almshouse and school for an additional two years. The reason for this is among the defining characteristics of this particular institution. In the immediate aftermath of Sutton's death, the Charterhouse, along with its board of governors, many of whom were high-ranking church and state officials,²⁰ became entangled in a legal affair with Sutton's nephew, Simon Baxter. For Baxter, the issue stemmed largely from the inheritance his uncle left for him in his will. Besides leaving money for diverse charitable purposes, which included donating one hundred marks to the poor in the town of Berwick-Upon-Tweed, giving ten pounds to the poor in Stoke Newington in Middlesex, and providing ten young merchants with £1000 start up money to aid them in setting up their business,²¹ the bulk of Sutton's fortune went towards his charity. Sutton assumed that he would not live to see his hospital, school, and

¹⁹ When Sutton applied to change the position of his almshouse, there was no parliament sitting. As such, it was actually King James I who granted Sutton permission via royal letters patent. According to it, the hospital was to be named after the Stuart king, and it was through this patent that the hospital and school's first board of governors were selected and named by Sutton. See 77 Eng. Rep. 937.

²⁰ Various sources have already noted the names of the Charterhouse's first governors, and thus it is not necessary to reprint each here. However, to provide an idea of the importance of these individuals, several people given the post of governor will be listed. These include: the Archbishop of Canterbury, George Abbot, Robert Cecil, Lord Chancellor Thomas Egerton, and the Lord Chief Justice, Sir Edward Coke. For a more complete list see either: Jordan, *The Charity of London*, 152, Taylor, *The Charterhouse of London*, 227-228, or William Haig Brown, *Charterhouse, Past and Present*, 58-73. The lattermost book has a fully transcribed version of Sutton's letters patent.

²¹ Thomas Sutton, *The Charterhouse with the Last Will and Testament of Thomas Sutton, Esquire, Taken out of the Prerogative Court, According to the True Original* (London: Printed [by George Eld] for Thomas Thorp, 1614), 2-19.

its chapel erected during his life time, thus towards the building of his charity he left five thousand pounds, and he provided an additional one thousand pounds to its treasury so the institution could sufficiently defend its rights in the courts should it ever be sued. He likewise endowed it with lands that he owned in Essex, Lincoln, Wiltshire, Cambridge, and Middlesex, among others.²² To his relatives and friends, Sutton left varying amounts, but for his nephew, Sutton left a legacy of only £300.

Sutton proved exceptionally shrewd when it came to his bequests. As his various biographers note, Sutton was keenly aware that his immense wealth would be the subject of intense interest by surviving family members, or others who thought that they might benefit by attempting to upset or go against Sutton's wishes. To protect the dispersal of his wealth, Sutton thus included a clause to bar the bequeathal of sums to any individual who attempted to go against his intended desires. He ruled, for instance, that:

Any person or persons whosoever, to whom I have in and by this, my last will and testament, given and bequeathed any legacy or sum, or sums, of money shall [in] anyway gainsay, impinge, contradict, or impeach this, my last will and testament, that then all and every of so impinging, contradicting, impeaching, or gainsaying this, my last will and testament, and every of their children and kinsfolk to whom I have in this, my last will and testament, bequeathed any legacy or sum, or sums, shall have no part or portion of any such gift, legacy, or bequest but shall utterly lose the same and be utterly barred thereof.²³

Sutton's judgment concerning his friends and family and their want to upset his will for their own financial profit ultimately proved right.

Hardly content with the legacy left for him by his uncle, Baxter, who was actually provided with an estate in Lancashire by Sutton before his death, and who was fully

²² Ibid, 20-22 and 8.

²³ Ibid, 24.

aware of the above noted clause in his uncle's will, nonetheless took legal action in an attempt to set aside the will. In brief, Baxter claimed that he was the true heir of his uncle's fortune and petitioned the king as such, arguing that he should inherit the whole of the estate set aside by Sutton for the Charterhouse on these grounds. He posed a strong challenge, too, not least by his own validations as being Sutton's heir, but because Sir Francis Bacon, who was then the Solicitor General, came to Baxter's aid. In a letter to the king, Bacon argued that if a hospital worth as much as the Charterhouse should be erected then it would hastily degenerate, wherein the master would, in time, reap the financial benefits while leaving the poor to "take but the crumbs; as it comes to pass in diverse hospitals of this realm."²⁴ This, he continued, had happened before in other well-endowed hospitals, which had "wealthy benefices in respect of the mastership; but the poor...[are] little relieved."²⁵ Though he does not draw attention to it, Bacon's reservations were reminiscent of those harbored by early Protestant thinkers against the country's Catholic monasteries at the end of the 1520s, especially those sentiments advocated by Simon Fish in 1529.²⁶ In any case, Baxter's attack on Sutton's will entered the realm's legal processes.

Sutton's will was not without its defenders. Sutton's executors, some of whom made up the bulk of the Charterhouse's sixteen original governors, fought against the claims made by Baxter, including the Archbishop of Canterbury, George Abbot, and

²⁴ Taylor, *The Charterhouse of London*, 237. In his book, Taylor transcribed Bacon's letter to the king, the whole of which details his reservations about erecting the Charterhouse in the manner proposed by Sutton.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 237.

²⁶ Fish, Simon. A Supplication for the Beggars. 1529. Writing directly to Henry VIII, Fish essentially claimed that the rise of "lepers and other sore people, needy, impotent, blind, lame, and sick, that live only by alms" could be directly attributed to idle Roman Catholic monks, bishops, and abbots, among others. He argued, moreover, that "these greedy sort of sturdy idle holy thieves" do nothing to help alleviate the qualms of the poor, despite possessing the monetary means to do so. Fish continued to urge Henry VIII not to build any more hospitals. According to him, hospitals were fundamentally ineffective because ecclesiastical institutions operated them.

Bishop Andrew of Ely. The proceedings themselves were grueling and prolonged, ultimately lasting eighteen months. In the end, Baxter's suit failed. By June of 1613, the judges, among whom sat Sir Edward Coke, determined by a majority vote of ten to one that the will would stand as Sutton had intended it prior to his death. In addition to losing the legal battle, Baxter's design in attempting to upset his uncle's will led to the forfeiture of his inheritance. Yet, in the suit's aftermath, Baxter's defeat and exclusion from the will prompted him to petition the Archbishop of Canterbury and beg to retain his original bequest. His actions in appealing to the Archbishop likely stemmed from hefty legal fees paid to his counsel both during and following the trial's conclusion.²⁷ Whatever motive pressed Baxter, though, his appeal claimed that his actions stemmed directly from seduction by poor counsel and his own lack of education. He must have found favor with the Archbishop, too, because the latter petitioned the executors asking them to forgive Baxter's actions and afford him his share, according to Sutton's initial intent.²⁸

The importance of the legal turmoil following Sutton's death in 1611 can hardly be overstated. The battle between Baxter and the will's executors had especially long lasting effects, particularly in the realm of English common law, but also, and perhaps more importantly with regards to the current study, on the historical development of the Charterhouse once it began operations in 1613. Concerning the former matter, the ruling of the judges in the case of Sutton's Hospital, and especially that made by Sir Edward Coke, had a major impact in corporate law, so much so that it is still frequently referenced in legal arguments and cases today.

²⁷ Taylor, *The Charterhouse of London*, 241.

²⁸ Brown, *Charterhouse Past and Present*, 93.

After the poor laws and accompanying statutes of 1598 and 1601, receiving letters patent for charitable institutions like almshouses became much easier and far less expensive. Once provided with the letters patent, that particular charity became a corporation and legal body and was thus subject to the rule of law, capable of suing and being sued. When Bacon sent his letter to the king in 1611, he offered alternative applications for Sutton's legacy besides the erection of the Charterhouse foundation – including its use to erect several smaller charities, to provide greater pay to university teachers and thus encourage them to remain in their posts longer, and to propagate religion by building colleges for religious debate, especially in areas where religion was neglected -²⁹ but his arguments in the Charterhouse suit revolved mostly around the regulations made in the Charitable Uses Act of 1601. According to this act, the founder of a charitable trust - typically used in this period to create universities, hospitals, and other charitable institutions – had created a corporation since the founder intended for their trust to have perpetual existence. Obtaining a royal charter for these institutions, which had become much simpler process after 1598, was essential because a trust's founder was transferring their entitlement of property to their foundation, or, rather, into the hands of their selected trustees or the corporation's governors.³⁰ While the crown lost revenue that it would otherwise have gained had a trust not been created, these institutions were nonetheless tolerated because the roles and functions they performed were deemed laudable. Fundamentally, then, creating a trust meant that ownership would never be broken because as one trustee or governor died, the remaining members would

²⁹ Brown, *Charterhouse Past and Present*, 97-100; and Porter, *The London Charterhouse*, 12.

³⁰ Robert Hessen, *In Defense of the Corporation*, (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1979), 8.

simply replace the deceased.³¹ Trusts could, of course, be voided if it was discovered that an institution's trustees were not following the purpose laid out for the establishment by its founder.³² If that were the case, then the trust would revert either to the donor's surviving heirs or be relinquished to the crown. This was the argument mounted by Baxter and his council in his suit against the Charterhouse: that Sutton had not created a trust, that because no hospital had been created, there could be no governors, and that the lands he granted to the Charterhouse in his will should rightfully revert into the possession of his nephew.³³

Sutton's executors ultimately prevailed in their defense by arguing that a charitable trust had been created in the form of the Charterhouse. Yet, it was Sir Edward Coke's final ruling and opinion in the trial that has permeated time to become one of the most influential factors in developing modern corporate law and corporate legal theory.³⁴ On the most fundamental level, Coke argued that the first necessity vital for a corporation was to be granted a lawful means of incorporation, possible by being created in common law, by Parliament, by prescription, or by royal charter via letters patent.³⁵ Even after incorporation, though, a corporation was recognized in law only as a synthetic body, not as an actual being. The influence that Coke has held on modern law is summed up in his opinion and arguments near the conclusion of Baxter's suit against Sutton's charterhouse in 1613. According to him:

³¹ Ibid, 8.

³² 43 Elizabeth c.4

³³ Sir Edward Coke and George Wilson, *The Reports of Sir Edward Coke*, (London: Printed for J. Rivington and Sons, 1777), 23-24; and 77 Eng. Rep. 937, 953-54.

³⁴ W.S. Holdsworth, "English Corporation Law in the 16th and 17th Centuries," *The Yale Law Journal* 31 (4), 1922: 382; and Hessen, *In Defense of the Corporation*, 9.

³⁵ Ibid, 382.

A corporation aggregate of many is invisible, immortal, and rests only in intendment and consideration of law; and therefore a dean and chapter cannot have predecessor nor successor. They cannot commit treason, nor be outlawed, nor excommunicate, for they have no souls, neither can they appear in person, but by attorney. A corporation aggregate of many cannot do fealty, for an invisible body can neither be in person nor swear. It is not subject to imbecilities, death of the natural body, and divers other cases.³⁶

Thus, by being an artificial body existing only in law, corporations cannot commit crimes or moral wrongdoings because they lack a physical and mental presence, and can only be represented by people in their stead.³⁷ As such, they were afforded their own rights and accountabilities wholly distinct from their members.

Concerning the framework of Sutton's almshouse, and to a lesser extent the school as well, operations did not officially begin until after Baxter's suit in 1613, when the executors met to discuss how to arrange the charity. As earlier noted, the scale of Sutton's charity was immense. Even within the context of those almshouses that were considered conspicuously large in this period, like the charity of John Whitgift which afforded sustenance to forty individuals, Sutton's foundation rendered these as modest in comparison. By providing for eighty paupers and forty scholars, Sutton's munificence was considered the largest charitable foundation made in England.³⁸ Yet, its size notwithstanding, historically, the Charterhouse's development, prestige, and significance derived largely from the same the legal complications that hindered its beginnings and so impacted modern corporate law and theory.

³⁶ 77 Eng. Rep. 937, 973. Coke's argument here was in response to Baxter's sixth objection, which, in short, was that until there actually was a hospital with resident poor, no incorporation could be made since there cannot be governors for a non-existent institution.

³⁷ Kathleen F. Brickey, "Corporate Criminal Accountability: A Brief History and an Observation," *Washington University Law Review* 60 (2), 1982: 396.

³⁸ Jordan, *Philanthropy in England*, 226.

The powerful effect of the legal issues in the Charterhouse's evolution came primarily from the letter that Bacon wrote to James I in 1611, the same one in which he made recommendations for alternative methods in expending Sutton's wealth. The original letters patent that Sutton received from his sovereign stated that the foundation would provide, sustain, and relieve "poor, aged, maimed, needy, [and] impotent people."³⁹ The letters patent, moreover, held that the institution's governors had the power to not only name the poor to the hospital, but also to provide the charity with a set of regulatory statutes. When the executors met at the Charterhouse in June of 1613, they commenced discussion over what the type of poor Sutton's charity should provide for, and while the recommendations made by Bacon in 1611 were largely ignored, some aspects of his letter had a lasting impression on the first governors of the Charterhouse. In particular, it was Bacon's opinion about which sort of poor the Charterhouse should maintain that shaped the governors' views when they drew up the almshouse's first set of statutes.⁴⁰

In his address to the king, and amongst his various suggestions, Bacon argued that the Charterhouse's superior endowment to other institutions of its kind should afford aid to a better class of poor than those specified in the foundation's letters patent. In that vein, Bacon felt that the Charterhouse should move away from provisions for the maimed, aged, and impotent and towards the relief of "maimed soldiers, decayed merchants, householders, aged and destitute churchmen, and the like."⁴¹ These

³⁹ Brown, *Charterhouse: Past and Present*, 60.

⁴⁰ Porter, *The London Charterhouse*, 14. It is worth mentioning that Stephen Porter noticed this in his own study on the Charterhouse, but he only touched on Bacon's influence briefly before moving on. As such, the topic deserves elaboration here.

⁴¹ Brown, *Charterhouse Past and Present*, 97. As with the letter patent, Brown's book offers a fully transcribed version of Bacon's letter to the king in 1611.

individuals, he continued, were a better sort of poor than “loose” people and beggars, and as such they not only deserved a more liberal stipend and allowance, but also a proper place of relief that would not have them intermingled or “coupled with the basest sort of poor.”⁴² Despite his social preferences, though, Bacon was still not overly optimistic about the Charterhouse’s design, even after professing his social preferences about which poor it should relieve. His opinion held that few men of any vocation who had not previously been poor would condescend to the condition where they would have to live by alms in a corporation for the poor. Likewise, even if someone had decayed to that point, he argued, it was more probable that they would “hide themselves with some private friends” before opting for the care of an almshouse or other charity.⁴³ As a result, the Charterhouse would thus become an institution filled with the worst sort of idle and immoral people from a background of varying professions that would, in the end, lead to an establishment of drunkards and scandals.⁴⁴

Four hundred years of operation has shown that Bacon’s reservations towards the Charterhouse were wrongly founded, but without his letter, it is probable that Sutton’s foundation would have provided only for the poor subjects specified in the letters patent. This was not the case, however. When the executors eventually met to draft the institution’s first statutes, they drew on Bacon’s arguments, determining that Sutton’s foundation should target almsmen that had been gentlemen by descent that had fallen into poverty, servants to the crown who were now old and decrepit, specifically captains at sea or land, soldiers maimed or impotent, and, in the same vein as other almshouses,

⁴² Francis Bacon, *The Letters and the Life of Francis Bacon, Including all of his Occasional Works Newly Collected and Set Forth in Chronological Order With a Commentary, Biographical and Historical*, ed. James Spedding, Vol IV, (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1868), 251.

⁴³ Brown, *Charterhouse Past and Present*, 97.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 97.

decayed merchants, or men fallen into decay through some misfortune as well.⁴⁵ Bacon's opinion on the character of the Charterhouse foundation's poor likewise led to the rule that each man should be single, either a bachelor or a widower, and above the age of fifty before being accepted. This latter rule was lifted for maimed soldiers and reduced to the age of forty, though it is not entirely clear why preference of age was given to this demographic. It is possible that since Sutton himself was soldier, his first governors decided to favor this particular class of poor. The Charterhouse foundation was hardly the only one to follow this prerogative, though. Numerous houses founded in the early modern period targeted soldiers or mariners specifically.⁴⁶ In any case, after determining the character of the poor, Bacon's sway over the Sutton's governors came to an end.

As for the remaining statutes as they appeared in the early and mid-seventeenth century, these remain available through the *State Papers Online* in manuscript format and are thus accessible for examination in the current study.⁴⁷ This is fortunate since it allows this study to compare this grandiose foundation with other almshouses operating simultaneously. The statutes themselves took nearly a decade to complete, and they needed an additional four years before they were finalized and confirmed by a private Act of Parliament in 1627.⁴⁸ According to Stephen Porter, moreover, the rules governing the Elizabethan foundation of the College of St. George's in Windsor provided much of the

⁴⁵ Charterhouse, *Charter-house, Its Foundation and History With a Brief Memoir of the Founder, Thomas Sutton, Esq.* (Great Britain: General Books, 2010), 43. As for the scholars of the Charterhouse, it was specified that only children of poor men who lack the means of to bring them up should be accepted.

⁴⁶ Recall from the first chapter that from the mid-sixteenth century onwards, almshouse founders gradually rank-listed their poor. This included ex-mariners and ex-soldiers.

⁴⁷ SP 16/89 f.37.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

necessary groundwork for the Charterhouse, and likely set the precedent for how the latter institution would be governed.⁴⁹

In the same vein as most other houses, especially in the mid-seventeenth century, the Charterhouse found that in order to avoid becoming an asylum for the sick, no man suffering from any foul or infectious disease should ever be accepted.⁵⁰ No man who could competently maintain himself should ever be considered for election, or be allowed to remain within the foundation if his worth suddenly exceeded £200 or £24 per annum. Concerning the accommodations, the Charterhouse likewise tended toward private dwellings for its inmates. Given the sheer size of the foundation, though, these were generally larger than those found elsewhere. Each poor person received use of a single, commodious apartment, or in some cases they were apportioned two smaller rooms. As with most other institutions founded in the post-Reformation era, inmates at Sutton's foundation received a food and fuel stipend, though this, too, was somewhat grander. Dinner was held in the house's great hall at three o'clock PM, and all inmates, poor and scholars alike, were expected to dine together.⁵¹ Moreover, the house afforded inmates with their own daily food ration, on top of regular provisions of coal and candles.

Cash stipends, too, were a regular provision at the Charterhouse, though this was also comparatively large. It was noted in an earlier chapter that cash stipends varied widely from almshouse to almshouse and were largely based upon both the status of the founder and the strength of their institution's endowment. As we have seen, smaller houses founded by the middling sort tended to have smaller stipends than those founded

⁴⁹ Stephen Porter, "Order and Disorder in the Early Modern Almshouse: The Charterhouse Example," *The London Journal* 23 (1), 1998: 4; and SP 16/89 f.37.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 73.

by the gentry and members of the aristocracy, with many of the institutions founded by those in the latter class providing considerable annual wages in excess of £6. At the Charterhouse, though, inmates received an annual stipend worth £26 10s per annum, divided and distributed quarterly through the year, an amount that dwarfed even the finer endowed hospitals.⁵² It was determined by the governors that a large cash pension would allow the poor to procure the supplies of any personal necessity that they desired. Unlike other almshouses, moreover, the poor men of the Charterhouse were not subjected to any particular mobility restraints, but while they were free to move in and out of the hospital as they desired during the day, they still had to return to the Charterhouse in the evening to lodge therein.⁵³ As it was in so many other houses, allowing lodgers was strictly forbidden, and so, too, was swearing and quarreling with the foundation's other pensioners.

Rather unlike other almshouses, though, and perhaps due to the specific demographic initially targeted by the Charterhouse, the poor pensioners had to bring two pairs of new sheets with them upon their entry into the hospital, although this stipulation was not added until the middle of the seventeenth century.⁵⁴ In addition, they had to provide reverence to the Master, and swear to never speak ill of him, either before his face or behind his back. Wearing weapons was likewise forbidden, a rule unique to the Charterhouse and likely stemming from the fact that it was largely populated with ex-military men. Wearing unseemly clothing was forbidden, too. Gowns had to be worn by

⁵² Ibid, 73; and SP 16/89 f.49.. Recall that even at the grand foundation made by John Whitgift, inmates received a stipend worth only £7.

⁵³ Ibid, 58.

⁵⁴ SP 16/89 f.51.

the pensioners while on the premises of the Charterhouse, but only then.⁵⁵ They were never to be worn off campus, and especially never into taverns or alehouses. Doing so resulted in a punishment at the discretion of the Master. This last rule was possibly motivated by the fact that the governors did not want the behaviour of their almsmen in the community to reflect poorly upon Sutton's foundation. As for time away from the Charterhouse, each pensioner was afforded up to two months leave each year. Likewise, women were banned from the Charterhouse, and this included burials in the foundation's cemetery.⁵⁶

The internal administration of the Charterhouse also reflected the governance in other almshouse charities. One of the sixteen governors acted as the Master in the house, and his office was considered the highest. According to the foundation's statutes, the master was to be observed and obeyed by all others in the house, poor, scholars, and other officials alike.⁵⁷ The incumbents of the other offices consisted of the resident preacher and the schoolmaster. It was the former's role to perform daily services and communion, catechize the scholars on Sunday afternoons in the presence of the poor, and instruct them in the fundamentals of religion. He also had to be at least thirty years of age before he could be awarded the position. The schoolmaster's role was to carefully monitor, instruct, and correct the scholars. Unlike the preacher, the schoolmaster was permitted to enter the college three years earlier, at the age of twenty-seven.⁵⁸

By the 1640s, the governors rescinded the initial regulations concerning entrance into the college, deeming the selection of candidates by the backgrounds noted above as

⁵⁵ Taylor, *The Charterhouse of London*, 244.

⁵⁶ Brown, *Charterhouse Past and Present*, 163.

⁵⁷ Taylor, *The Charterhouse of London*, 244.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 243.

too narrow.⁵⁹ In all likelihood, this was a consequence of the outbreak of civil war in the country. Whatever the reason, though, the governors at the time decided to make the Charterhouse more inclusive. Francis Bacon's influence over the Charterhouse's selection of the poor more or less vanished as Sutton's foundation opened its doors to poor and aged individuals from a far more diverse background. Aspects of Bacon's preferences lingered since priority was still given to those noted in the institution's original statutes, but the governors' willingness to allow other individuals entrance nevertheless increased. The result was that over the years the Charterhouse has seen a host of people from variable and diverse backgrounds, and despite Bacon's reservations, the Charterhouse has remained a well-regarded institution, although, as Porter points out, as with any community of people from varying backgrounds and personalities, tension and issues amongst inmates in the Charterhouse occasionally arose.⁶⁰

As earlier noted in this chapter, the munificence and size of the Thomas Sutton's foundation in the Charterhouse, along with its continual operation for over four centuries, are enough to warrant an examination of this particular almshouse. From a scholarly standpoint, though, the institution's significance, both legally and historically, derives mostly out of the legal battle with Simon Baxter and the opinions held by his council, Francis Bacon, who, oddly enough, became a governor of the institution in 1619.⁶¹ As we have seen, the two-year battle between Sutton's nephew and the Charterhouse not only helped develop modern corporate law, but it shaped the character of Sutton's foundation

⁵⁹ Brown, *Charterhouse Past and Present*, 163.

⁶⁰ Porter, "Order and Disorder in the Early Modern Almshouse," 5. In this particular paper, Porter argues that because the Charterhouse's governors came from high society, they attempted to make Sutton's foundation cosmopolitan reflecting the ideals of their social class. He ultimately argues that the Charterhouse defaulted in this regard, failing to fulfill the expectations of its governors, mostly because of certain tensions and issues that arose between brethren and house officials.

⁶¹ Brown, *Charterhouse Past and Present*, 95.

as well, at least in respect to its first statutes and inmates. Interestingly enough, a noteworthy parallel of Sutton's charity exists in the form of Dulwich College, that almshouse and school founded by Edward Alleyn in 1619. Alleyn's college has been referenced numerous times in this thesis already, but never in a direct comparison with the Charterhouse.

Edward Alleyn and the College of God's Gift

The significance of Alleyn's college lies not in its size, for it was typical of most other well-endowed almshouses, but rather in the fact that Alleyn, like Sutton, was an heirless man of common stock who amassed a fortune and then chose to bequeath it charitably in the form of an almshouse and a school. For many, the importance of analyzing Alleyn's foundation probably lies in his life as an actor and contemporary of Shakespeare. Much of the literature written about Alleyn, for instance, revolves around his life in the Elizabethan theatrical world.⁶² For the current discussion, though, the college's significance stems more from how comparable the founder and his institution are to Sutton's Charterhouse and the ordeals that institution faced. This is especially true with regards to the political trouble the charity faced early in its establishment. Alleyn's college was the target of political antipathy shortly after it was erected and began operation. Just as he had with Sutton's earlier institution, Francis Bacon took a stand against the foundation made by Alleyn in Dulwich.

⁶² See, for example, David Mateer, "Edward Alleyn, Richard Perkins and the Rivalry Between the Swan and the Rose Playhouses," *Review of English Studies* 60 (243) 2009, 61-77; A.D. Wright *Christopher Marlowe and Edward Alleyn*, (England: A. Hart, 1993); and Aileen Reid and Robert Maniura *Edward Alleyn: Elizabethan Actor, Jacobean Gentleman*, (London: Dulwich Picture Gallery, 1994).

Alleyn was born at his father's inn in Bishops Gate in 1566. During his youth, and probably because plays were frequently performed at the inn's yard, Alleyn grew increasingly attached to acting. Around the age of eighteen, he joined the Earl of Worcester's acting company and then later transferred to the Lord Admiral's men in 1589.⁶³ In 1592, he married the stepdaughter of Philip Henslowe, then the owner and manager of the Rose Theater. Shortly after this, Alleyn and Henslowe partnered together and gradually acquired property. The partnership with his father-in-law greatly increased Alleyn's worth, and this was later subsidized by his solo endeavors in land acquisition. By 1605, Alleyn decided to purchase the manor of Dulwich from Sir Francis Calton for £5,000, but he remained in Southwark for several years before deciding to move into the manor in 1613.⁶⁴

Alleyn's decision in 1613 to return to the manor he purchased was probably motivated by his age. He was then forty-seven years old, and his marriage to Henslowe's stepdaughter had yielded no heirs. With his age advancing, and in consideration of his lack of family and sizeable estate, it is probable that Alleyn had begun contemplating the best means of disposing of his possessions, ultimately concluding to found an almshouse and school in Dulwich. How long before this date Alleyn had considered bequeathing his estate in this fashion remains unclear. It has been suggested that he was likely motivated by his lack of an heir and the recent surge in almshouse and school foundations, including the Charterhouse, as well as by his desire to perpetuate his name through the establishment of a charitable institution.⁶⁵ Whatever his motivation, his idea of erecting a

⁶³ Hodges, *God's Gift*, 1.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 3.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 4; and Collier, ed, *Memoirs of Edward Alleyn*, 111.

hospital for the poor and a school for children had come to fruition by 1616, with the first poor gaining entrance shortly afterwards.

Works by early authors had suggested that Alleyn's donation was inspired by the piety of Thomas Sutton, with many citing a diary entry he made in late September of 1617. On this day, Alleyn stated that: "My wife, Mr. Austin, Mr. Young, and myself went to Sutton Hospital."⁶⁶ Alleyn's visit to the Charterhouse probably did occur, but it was unlikely that he was inspired by it in 1617 since his charity had already been completed, with plans for its erection dating back to the spring of 1613. This is evidenced mostly from the original indenture for the brickwork made between the founder and one John Benson, a bricklayer from Westminster. The document still exists at the college and stipulates that Benson was to begin his work on the institution before the last day of May. Further, it stresses the agreement between Alleyn and Benson that the latter receive £10 for every five rods of brick he managed to lay.⁶⁷ Construction itself lasted for several years and Alleyn enlisted the aid of a plasterer, a carpenter, a plumber, and a glazier during this period. The first handful of poor elected to the house had been chosen in 1616 out of the parish of St Botolph, Bishopsgate by the rector Stephen Gosson, an old playwright and longtime friend of Alleyn. According to a letter written to Alleyn by Gosson in October of that year, the latter had chosen three poor for Alleyn to consider; Mawde Lee, a poor widow aged sixty and a pensioner in St. Botolph, Henry Philips who was almost nearly the same age, and John Muggleton, who was also near three score years.⁶⁸ Muggleton was later removed from consideration, though the circumstances surrounding this removal are hazy. Edward Cullen, a poor pensioner and a single man,

⁶⁶ Collier, ed, *Memoirs of Edward Alleyn*, 112.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 113.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 134.

replaced him. According to another letter written by Gosson, Cullen was actually the second recommendation made by the rector. Initially, John Woodhouse had been chosen, but his “encumbrance” of a wife eliminated him from Alleyn’s acceptance as a beadsman since the college accepted only bachelors or widowed men or women.⁶⁹ While the college was accepting its first poor by 1616 and 1617, the institution did not officially open until two years later in 1619. Only then was the patent of incorporation received by Alleyn, although this was not without its difficulties.

We saw from the discussion of Sutton’s Charterhouse that obtaining royal consent via letters patent was essential for a charity’s incorporation, allowing property to be given in perpetuity from founder to foundation. By the beginning of 1617, this process had yet to be completed by Alleyn, mostly because his attempts to secure the royal seal were met with resistance from Francis Bacon, Lord Chancellor at the time. His reservations towards Dulwich College were largely the same as his reservations towards the Charterhouse. Towards education, his feeling was that providing endowments to universities and increasing the payment of the professors therein was the most appropriate means for the realm’s education to flourish.⁷⁰ Thus, on one front, he opposed Alleyn’s attempt at a license because of the college’s inclusion of a school alongside its almshouse. On the other front, he felt that these institutions failed to serve a social purpose. According to him, hospitals and almshouses existed in abundance in the country, and yet, there continued to exist a high number of beggars and vagrants.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Ibid, 135.

⁷⁰ Jan Piggot, *Dulwich College, A History, 1616-2008*, (London: Dulwich College, 2008), 31.

⁷¹ Francis Bacon, *The Letters and the Life of Francis Bacon, Including All His Occasional Works, Namely Letters, Speeches, Tracts, State Papers, Memorials, Devices, and all Authentic Writings not Already Printed Among his Philosophical, Literary, or Professional Works*, ed. James Spedding, Vol. IV, (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1872), 249.

The patent was initially written up in July of 1618, and the urgency in obtaining his license for incorporation shows through from the fact that Alleyn ventured to London four times over a five-day span in order to secure it. Among other things, Alleyn's patent sought to donate £800 of land to his college to be used for a variety of ends, including security for its perpetual operation and payment to the brothers and sisters of the almshouse. It was not until a month later that Alleyn learned that his patent had not yet been secured. More than this, he discovered that it was Bacon who stayed the royal seal from being issued.⁷² On the seventeenth of August, Alleyn once again rode to London in an attempt to determine why the Lord Chancellor had halted his patent. In a letter to the Marquis of Buckingham on the following day, Bacon explained his actions more fully. Bacon commended the fact that "Alleyn play[s] the last act of his life so well," but warned that if the king provided the patent, then he sacrificed his rights to the land forever and thus allowed the royal coffers to be greatly depleted.⁷³ Just as he had several years earlier, moreover, Bacon proposed alternative applications for Alleyn's estate, which he claimed were likewise princely works. For him, Alleyn's fortune would be more appropriately applied if it were abridged from £800 to £500, with the deducted £300 going towards two lectureships at Oxford and Cambridge, one for Sir Henry Saville for £200, and the other for Sir Edward Sandy for £100. Both of these, he noted, had been recently denied by his majesty, but each were something that should be reconsidered since both foundations "are of singular honor to his Majesty and of which there is great

⁷² William Young, *The History of Dulwich College, Down to the Act of Parliament Dissolving the Original Corporation, 28th August, 1857*, (London: Morrison and Gibb, 1889), 37.

⁷³ Francis Bacon, *The Letters and the Life of Francis Bacon, Including All His Occasional Works, Namely Letters, Speeches, Tracts, State Papers, Memorials, Devices, and all Authentic Writings not Already Printed Among his Philosophical, Literary, or Professional Works*, ed. James Spedding, Vol. VI, (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1872), 324.

want.”⁷⁴ Fundamentally, the letter sent from Bacon to the Marquis acted as the former’s attempt to influence the latter to aid in a suit to persuade the King towards this alternate purpose for Alleyn’s estate.

Bacon’s unwillingness to concede the royal seal eventually gave way, and although this took some coaxing by Alleyn, the Lord Chancellor ultimately provided Dulwich College with its necessary patent. The founder visited Bacon on various occasions through the rest of 1618, and made several additional visits during the succeeding year. By the twenty-first of June in 1619, Bacon overcame his reservations and granted Alleyn the great seal for his college.⁷⁵ The reason for his relinquishment, however, is difficult to determine conclusively. Surely Alleyn’s continued visits had some impact, but whether Bacon determined to issue the seal of his own accord or through some other pressure remains obscure.

It is probable that Bacon’s reluctance to provide Alleyn with his seal, not to mention his involvement in the Case of Sutton’s Hospital, stemmed more so from his own philosophy toward charity and poor relief. Some have suggested, for instance, that Bacon’s mindset was firmly rooted in the establishment of a welfare state rather than in the distribution of private charity.⁷⁶ This thinking may explain why he felt that such a large endowment for the Charterhouse foundation would be better used in the establishment of a variety of poor relief institutions across England, not just a single hospital for the elderly and a school for children. The same mindset he possessed in 1611 may have also led him to lobby against Alleyn’s foundation in 1618-19 as well. His

⁷⁴ Ibid, 38.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 38.

⁷⁶ Nieves Mathews, *Francis Bacon: The History of a Character Assassination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 359.

beliefs about charity and the poor, moreover, seemed to derive from the Protestant ethic against idleness and the emphasis toward hard work developing at the time. His worry with the Charterhouse, and perhaps with Alleyn's foundation, too, was that such large and singular foundations would create an excess of idle people.⁷⁷ It seems evident that Bacon was more of an advocate for the foundation of houses of correction - or workhouses - over the establishment of hospitals and schools, which he felt were already excessive in the country. In the letter he wrote to the king advising him on Sutton's estate, for instance, Bacon argued that it could "not be denied that houses of correction have done much good."⁷⁸ It seems, then, that Bacon had adopted the ideals concerning the sanctification of work and let those mold his judgment on the dispensation of poor relief.

With the political issue solved and the patent for perpetual operation now secured, Alleyn was finally able to look more intently at how he wished his hospital to be ruled, governed, and administered. According to the letters patent, these statutes were to be drawn up and issued by Alleyn, or by someone in his stead should he decease before finishing. The statutes themselves have already been discussed at length in previous chapters, and so revisiting them here is unnecessary. It is worth noting, though, that the rules governing Dulwich College were, in fact, penned by Alleyn, and that they were only finalized several weeks before his death in November of 1626.⁷⁹ However, it is useful to examine exactly how they were drawn up, and what factors influenced Alleyn in

⁷⁷ J.G. Crowther, *Francis Bacon: The First Statesman of Science*, (London: The Crescent Press, 1960), 230.

⁷⁸ Bacon, *The Letters and the Life of Francis Bacon*, 252.

⁷⁹ Hodges, *God's Gift*, 7; and William. *The History of Dulwich College*, 64-95. The statutes for Dulwich were especially long since Alleyn had to mandate the behaviour and governance of both the almshouse and school. The Regulations concerning the general rules of the house, the master, the poor, the fellows, and the warden, including each of their individual electoral specifications and punishments, are included in the first half of Alleyn's statutes. At statute 65, Alleyn's regulations transition to the operative functioning of the school, and he does not return to the college as whole until statute 93. There were 123 statutes in total.

the process, not least because it shows the effects that older foundations had on new donors. For the architecture of his almshouse, Alleyn followed a Dutch prototype of almshouses in Amsterdam.⁸⁰ These were founded in the 1530s and designed in the courtyard style, a fashion becoming rapidly popular in England around the time of Alleyn's foundation. He likewise had a transcript of their statutes, and although this may have affected how he eventually regulated his charity, he still decided to move about England in order to study the constitutions of similar corporations. For his school and the curriculum taught therein, Alleyn chose to examine the statutes governing the free grammar schools in Westminster and St. Paul's. Likewise, he reviewed the rules for Eton College, founded in 1440/41 by Henry IV, the Mercer's Chapel School, founded in the 1540s, Christ's Hospital, the almshouses founded by the Merchant Taylors in 1561, and then visited various houses founded in the sixteenth century in Rugby, Uppingham, and Harrow.⁸¹ As noted earlier, the Charterhouse, too, received a visit from Alleyn. In the autumn of 1617, Alleyn went with his then schoolmaster, Edward Young, to Sutton's foundation in order to observe how that foundation was governed. Unlike the observations made by earlier scholars about his diary entry on this particular date - which was discussed earlier - Alleyn's piety in donating a charity was not inspired by this particular visit to the Charterhouse; rather, the visit was fueled by his desire to examine the institution's governance and apply what he deemed appropriate to his own foundation. Finally, and according to the work done by G.L. Hosking, Alleyn extracted points from a 1611 translated copy of the Dutch *Hospitals for Orphans and Old Folks*. As Hosking notes, this told of the founding of a hospital and school in the Netherlands by a

⁸⁰ Piggot, *Dulwich College, A History*, 33.

⁸¹ G.L. Hosking, *The Life and Times of Edward Alleyn: Actor, Master of the King's Bears, Founder of the College of God's Gift at Dulwich*, (Oxford: Alden Press, 1952), 200.

wealthy Dutch woman whose charity provided a home for poor, aged men and women, and a school for boys born to poor parents.⁸²

Following the founder's death, the College passed into the hands of Alleyn's cousins, Thomas and Matthias Alleyn, both of whom had been associated with the institution since 1619. Its operations as an almshouse and school continued in largely the same fashion as it had before Alleyn's passing, though there were some legal hiccoughs in the later 1620s,⁸³ and some financial troubles that followed in the late 1630s.⁸⁴ Notwithstanding this, though, it is rather gripping that that many of the same factors that threatened to halt the operations of the Charterhouse also existed in the early history of Alleyn's foundation. This intrigue is even further enhanced by the fact that the same actor was involved in both instances, and that in both cases he was heavily vested in deterring the wills of both Sutton and Alleyn. That aside, and though it was little discussed in this chapter, both Sutton and Alleyn provided schools for poor children alongside their almshouses. The importance, here, is how unusual this practice was in this period. Most charitable founders in the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries donated either one institution or the other. It was rare for both an almshouse and school to be founded together by a single individual.

⁸² Ibid, 201.

⁸³ Thomas and Matthias, who had been master and warden of the college since 1619 respectively, were, by Alleyn's death, both married men. The issue, here, was that Alleyn's letters patent and statutes called for the incumbents of these offices to be unmarried. It was ultimately decided that both men could keep their positions. See, for instance, Hosking, *The Life and Times of Edward Alleyn*, 241.

⁸⁴ In the late 1630s, the institution was vexed by economic trouble, which led to issues with the charity's structural integrity. In his 1638 visit to the hospital, the Archbishop of Canterbury suggested a temporary suspension of the institution's operations to allow the foundation's coffers time to replenish, thus providing the necessary income to repair the building. For more information on this, see Hodges, *God's Gift*, 12.

Conclusion

As almshouse institutions developed at an increased rate in the years succeeding the passage of the Elizabethan poor laws and associated statutes, two particularly significant foundations emerged. The importance of the donation made by Thomas Sutton in 1611 derives primarily from the foundation's complications early in its history. As discussed in this chapter, the Charterhouse's significance lies chiefly in the two-year legal suit between Simon Baxter and institution's first governors. This battle with Sutton's nephew not only affected and shaped modern English common law and theory, but also influenced how the institution eventually governed itself during the first several decades of its existence. Yet, while the attempt to upset Sutton's will was undertaken by Baxter, it was the arguments purported by his legal council, Francis Bacon, and the determinations made Sir Edward Coke that make the Charterhouse's early history truly significant. As we saw, Coke's ruling in the trial's conclusion has affected contemporary corporate law to this day and is still frequently quoted, and the arguments made by Bacon in his 1611 letter to James I left a strong impression on the Charterhouse's first governors to the point that they largely redrew the categories of poor laid out in the original letters patent to include those preferred by Bacon.

As for the foundation made by Edward Alleyn in 1619, this chapter has attempted to argue that its importance lies largely in how much founder and charity compare with Sutton and his Charterhouse. More than that, it has also attempted to show that donations made by new founders could, and often were, influenced by older foundations. Alleyn, like Sutton, was an heirless man who used his wealth to found and endow an almshouse

for poor and aged men and women and school for poor children. Though there was no outright legal battle that took place with Dulwich College at its foundation, Alleyn's charity nonetheless ran into political complications. What is remarkably interesting, here, is that complications again came from the same source. In an identical fashion to how he attempted to thwart the establishment of the Charterhouse, Francis Bacon tried once more to halt the foundation of Dulwich, though in this case it was by endeavoring to withhold the royal seal of England on Alleyn's letters patent. After several visits from Alleyn himself, and upon some obscure reason of his own, Bacon relented and finally issued the seal and thus the College of God's Gift was formally founded in 1619. Concerning the regulatory statutes for both the school and the almshouse, Alleyn based these largely on older institutions, both foreign and domestic. We see, then, that the publication of statutes by almshouses - and schools as well - had a direct impact on how new founders designated their charities.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Studies of England's social history have increased substantially since its pioneer academics first approached the subject in the early twentieth century, and since this time the field has expanded considerably. We saw in the introduction how contemporary scholarship on poverty and poor relief in early modern England is focused primarily on the able-bodied poor, vagrancy, and idleness. While this is certainly important for improving our understanding of England's social development through the early modern era, too little attention has been given to the impotent poor and the care they received through the varying complexities of this period. Although overarching in its narrative, this thesis offers a scholarly examination into the provisions made for the impotent poor by analyzing the early modern almshouse institution and the care they provided to their residents during the Tudor and Stuart era. It has sought to demonstrate how shifting social, cultural, and religious beliefs in England permeated almshouses and influenced the experiences faced by early modern residents.

Beginning around 1534 and ending just before the outbreak of the English Civil War in 1642, this thesis analyzed almshouses as they existed before the Reformation and compared them with institutions founded after the Catholic Church's abolishment. The goal, here, was discerning whether the Reformation and the subsequent rise of Protestantism in England influenced almshouses and the care they provided to a specific class of English poor. It is clear that additional work on this subject is necessary for definitive conclusions to be drawn about whether a dichotomy existed between post-

Reformation almshouses founded in Southern England versus those founded in the religiously conservative North of England, for instance, but the current discussion certainly allows for some preliminary conclusions to be made. We saw, for example, that the type of poor that almshouses cared for remained largely unchanged in the post-Reformation period, but Protestantism and the later development of the Protestant ethic in Tudor and Stuart England surely impacted these institutions.

The religious shift in England after the Henrician Reformation in the mid-1530s, not to mention the subsequent reforms made under Edward VI in the 1540s and early 1550s, left a major hole in welfare schemes specifically dedicated to the impotent poor, almshouses among them. It was not until much later in the century, when these institutions divorced themselves from the church and became secular in nature, that the system began recovering, and, indeed, entered a period of expansion, albeit only briefly. The only real change that occurred in almshouses following the dissolution of Catholicism was a minor increase in founders rank listing their preferred inmates, whether they based it on one's level of impotence, grounded it more in the duration of time one spent in a locality, or based it on past service to the country. Besides, this, though, the Reformation's impact on almshouses was very little, at least in regard to their charitable function. Even this change was probably less related with the Reformation and more correlated with the broader social shifts occurring over the sixteenth century. From a charitable perspective, then, the Reformation, or Protestantism, rather, had little effect on the underlying function that almshouses provided to the impotent poor. The targets of this charity remained unchanged, and the cash, food, clothing, and fuel stipends that existed in almshouses before the Reformation persisted in institutions founded after the

1530s, or at least this was the case for those larger foundations whose records have survived.

The most striking impression that the Reformation had on almshouses related more so to religion and the operative functioning in these institutions. The shift to Protestantism rendered purgatory obsolete so the rules governing prayers for the souls of the dead that so dominated pre-Reformation houses all but disappeared in later foundations. Prayers nonetheless continued, but instead they connoted thanksgiving toward the benevolence of a charity's founder. The Church's stake in governing and administering almshouses likewise disappeared in post-Reformation foundations. As this type of charitable institution redefined its purpose after the adoption of Protestantism, the internal governance of almshouses gradually fell upon the inmates themselves, usually through the election of in-house masters or wardens supervised by external boards of governors. Administration, too, changed, and though largely dependent upon the intention and desires of the founder, most donors left the task to lay bodies, town administrators, or private individuals.

The consequences brought about by the development of Protestantism transcended more than just government and administration in almshouses, though. As the sixteenth century progressed into the seventeenth century, Protestantism and the Protestant ethic gradually took hold in England, and the ideas that formed with regards to social welfare permeated institutionalized charity to a large extent. The prominence of statutes associated with residential work in almshouses increased as foundation rates grew through the later Tudor and early Stuart period, and this was likely a result of the shifting cultural ideals associated with labor. The use of labour discipline in response to

the problems of the able-bodied poor has long been noted by historians, but it is striking that the privileging of labour and concern about idleness was so strong in this period that it even pervaded almshouses intended for the elderly and infirm. Founders similarly expected conformity to a number of other regulations, which included residents providing care to their sick fellows, and remaining within the grounds of their foundation at particular hours during the day. An increase in the prohibition of ungodly activity and social immorality increased later in the sixteenth century as well. During the late Elizabethan era, and certainly by the beginning of the Jacobean period, almshouses increasingly forbade debauched behaviours, including stipulations against gambling, drunkenness, and fornication. These types of behaviours were certainly forbidden in a number of Pre-Reformation almshouses as well, but as Protestant reformers gradually adopted the ideals of Christian humanists and helped arrange new standards of behaviours in the country, more and more almshouse founders felt it necessary to explicitly state their opposition to such conduct in their foundations.

As for the residential experience of inmates living in post-Reformation almshouses, this almost certainly varied from foundation to foundation. For the most part, though, so long as inmates followed the regulations of their house, it is probable that their experience as an almsperson was better than the alternative. The bulk of early modern founders nonetheless ensured that residents followed their rules by including punishment clauses within the statutes of their foundation. In a few instances, almshouses indeed took action against defaulting residents. Nevertheless, it remains difficult to discern the frequency of punishments in early modern institutions, and also whether house governors apportioned discipline to the standards set within the statutes of a house. In any case,

punishments in early modern almshouses had three main forms: admonishment, generally used for misdemeanors like missing prayer times; fines, typically reserved for offences considered more pronounced, like dwelling away from the almshouse or failing to obtain a license to leave its grounds; and dismissal, which was reserved only for consistent offences against a particular statute, or for those behaviours deemed exceptionally ungodly and socially immoral. The latter of these might seem severe, but it was likely reflection of the shifting cultural values in England brought about the swing in religion.

From the end of the Elizabethan period to the outbreak of the Civil War, almshouse foundation in England became an easier process. This likely accounted for the sudden increase in the number of the donations made during the first three decades of the seventeenth century. During this time, two influential foundations were made, and this research has shown that despite the legal simplification of founding charities, early modern almshouse founders occasionally experienced complications. Although it continues to operate today, the College of God's Gift in Dulwich initially faced a number of issues that threatened its intended purpose as a charity and hindered its operations until 1619. The complications experienced by Dulwich College derived chiefly from reservations against institutionalized charity held by Francis Bacon, though persistence on the founder's part eventually led Bacon to concede the Royal Seal to the College. What we also see, here, is how influential older foundations were on new donors. Before founding his college, Edward Alleyn spent a large portion of his time analyzing the statutes of established almshouses to inform the development of his institution's regulatory statutes. In Alleyn's case, and likely in a number of other instances as well, influence from the statutes of older almshouses was not restricted to only those

institutions founded in England. Instead, the research found that Alleyn's charity also drew upon the statutes of almshouses founded in other part of Europe, particularly those in the Netherlands.

The foundation made by Thomas Sutton in the London Charterhouse several years before the one made by Alleyn in Dulwich in 1619 has been even more historically influential. This has less to do with the fact the Charterhouse operated as a charity in a near perpetual sense since its initial foundation in the late fourteenth century and more to do with its role in developing contemporary legal history. The evidence used in this research certainly helps shed light on the potential difficulties founders faced while attempting to donate a charity, but its historical importance stems more directly from how the legal battle between the Charterhouse's governors and Sutton's nephew led to an overhaul in the practice of common law when dealing with corporate bodies.

This thesis only scratches the surface of work that needs to be done on almshouses in the early modern period. However, the discussion has attempted to show that historical inquiry into this form of charity by professional historians is indeed crucial for understanding the part almshouses played in providing relief to a specific class of poor. The inclusion of studies on almshouses and the impotent poor, moreover, would mold effectively with the established historiography concerned with poverty and poor relief in early modern England, especially with the impacts wrought by the Reformation and rise of Protestantism. Such studies would certainly provide us with a more rounded interpretation of how poverty and the poor were maintained during a particularly complicated period of change in England's history. Though more work is indeed needed, the evidence used here suggests that almshouses played a key role in opposing poverty,

and it also indicates that these institutions, like other poor relief mechanisms, were largely influenced by the broader changes occurring in both the background of the Reformation and as a direct result of it.

The arrangement of this thesis facilitated an exploration of the early modern English almshouse, and, in doing so, provided a broad overview of how some of the impotent poor were maintained in Tudor and Stuart England. This is intended to act only as an overarching narrative on the subject, but will hopefully lead to an invigoration of scholarship on almshouses and the role they played in moderating poverty by providing relief to a specific class of English poor.

The biggest issue currently facing a more detailed analysis into this subject is the availability of the source material. The records used for this thesis, for instance, relied mostly upon the few records found in printed secondary sources transcribed by antiquarians and local historians, through *Early English Books Online*, or wills available via The National Archives website. The source material for almshouses founded during the early modern period certainly exist, but their records are housed in the various archival offices of England's various counties, making it difficult for scholars to access if they are not in England. Cooperative efforts between county offices and academics might yield an increase in the availability of online records, but this could only occur if the subject of almshouses expanded. In any case, what this thesis has shown is that in order to fully comprehend England's mixed economy of poor relief during the early modern period, future studies will have to more thoroughly include almshouses and their residents into their examinations.

Appendix I

Almshouses

The following is a list of almshouses whose records and statutes were used through the course of this thesis. It begins chronologically, with pre-Reformation foundations preceding post-Reformation foundations.

Name:	Date Founded:	Founder:	County/Parish/Town:	Pensioners:	Notes/Reference
King Edward VI Almshouses	1400	Town officials	Saffron Walden, Essex	13 men, and after 1548-9, 15 poor persons, both men and women	This foundation was renamed by Edward VI after its re-foundation in 1548-9. Steer, Francis W. "The Statutes of Saffron Walden Almshouses." <i>Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society., n.s.</i> 25. Colchester: Published by the Society at the Museum in the Castle, 1955-1960.
St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist	1437	Henry VI	Sherborne, Dorset	12 men and 4 women	Escaped dissolution during the early Reformation. Wright, H.P. <i>The Story of the Domus-Dei of Stamford.</i> London: Parker & Co. 1890.

The Ewelme Almshouses	1437	William de la Pole	Ipswich, Suffolk	13 men	<p>Following the contraction of a disease and subsequent removal from the house, the removed individual was still to be considered a member of the almshouse and thus continue receiving his pension.</p> <p>H.M. Stationery Office. <i>The Ninth Report of the Royal Commission of Historical Manuscripts</i>. London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1983.</p>
Almshouse of Elly Davis	1447	Elly Davis	Croydon, London	7 poor persons, both men and women	<p>The statutes required the almsfolk to bequeath their belongings to the almshouse when they neared death, probably to enhance its resources.</p> <p>Garrow, D.W. <i>The History and Antiquities of Croydon</i>. London: Geo, Cowie & Co. 1818.</p>

Heytesbury Almshouse	1449	Walter Hungerford	Heytesbury, Wiltshire	12 men and 1 woman	<p>The original house was destroyed by fire in 1765. Margaret de Botreaux, Hungerford's daughter-in-law, penned the original statutes.</p> <p>Jackson, John, ed. <i>The Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine, Vol XI</i>. Devizes: H.F. & E. Bull, 1869.</p>
Wigston's Hospital	1513	William Wyggston	Leicester, East Midlands	12 men and 12 women	<p>Wigston was a wool merchant who sought to fill his charity only with decrepit, blind, lame, or maimed individuals.</p> <p>Thompson, A. Hamilton, ed. <i>A Calendar of Charities and Other Documents Belonging to the Hospital of William Wyggston at Leicester</i>. Leicester: C.H. Cee Co. Ltd, 1993.</p>
Almshouse of Anne Wethers	1547	Anne Wethers	St. Botolph-without-Aldgate, London	5 women	<p>Despite early reforms, Wethers still required her pensioners to</p>

					<p>pray for her soul and the souls of her family.</p> <p>TNA PROB 11/31/716</p>
Almshouse of Lord John Williams	1559	Lord John Williams	Thame, Oxfordshire	5 men and 1 woman	<p>Along with the almshouse, Williams founded a grammar school and erected it next to his charity.</p> <p>Williams, John. <i>Some Account of Lord Williams, of Thame: Founder of the Grammar School and Alms-House, at Thame: Together with the Copy of his Will and the Copies of Very Valuable English and Latin Documents Relating to the Above Chariry.</i> Thame: 1873.</p>
The Hospital of the Holy and Blessed Trinity	1573	Sir William Cordell	Long Melford, Suffolk	12 men	<p>This charity has operated for over 400 years, and continues to do so today. Also, despite being founded in 1573, it was not formally provided with statutes until 1591.</p> <p>Wigmore, Elizabeth, ed.</p>

					<i>Holy Trinity Hospital, Long Melford: A Sixteenth Century Almshouse.</i> England: AP3 Imaging Services Ltd., 1993.
Almshouse of Thomas Gresham	1575	Thomas Gresham	St. Peter's, London	8 poor persons	Gresham was a London Merchant and founder of the Royal Exchange. Through his will, he left instructions to civic leaders in London to erect his almshouse. Nichols, John Gough and John Bruce, eds. <i>Wills from London Doctors' Common: A Selection from the Wills of Eminent Persons Proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, 1495-1695.</i> Westminster: John Bowyer Nichols and Sons, 1862.
Almshouse of Sir Anthony Gell	1579	Sir Anthony Gell	Wirksworth, Derbyshire	6 men	Left instructions to his executor and brother, Thomas Gresham, to build the almshouse

					using sixty pounds. TNA PROB 11/150/363
Thomas Cure's Almshouse	1584	Thomas Cure	St. Saviours, London Borough of Southwark	16 poor persons	Was a saddler to the queen, and rank listed by preference the character of poor persons elected into his almshouse. Archer, Ian W. "Sources for the Early Modern English Almshouse." <i>Sources for the History of Hospitals in Medieval and Early Modern Europe</i> . Edited by Martin Scheutz. Boblau Verlag: Oldenbourg, 2010.
Almshouse of David Smith	1584	David Smith	Saint Bennet, Paul's Wharf, London	6 poor widows	Smith, an embroider to the Queen, founded his almshouse in the back of the Woodmonger's Hall on Saint Peter's hill. TNA PROB 11/71/127
Thomas Seckford's Almshouse	1586-7	Thomas Seckford	Woodbridge, Suffolk	13 men	Seckford endowed his almshouses with land worth £112

					12s 4d. Loader, Robert, ed. <i>The Statutes and Ordinances for the Government of the Alms-Houses, in Woodbridge, in the County of Suffolk Founded by Thomas Seckford</i> . London: Robert Loader, 1792.
Almshouses of the Merchant Taylor's of London	1589	Merchant Taylor's	Tower Hill, London	14 widowed women	The widows preferred in this almshouse were those who married Merchant Taylors. Archer, Ian W. "Sources for the Early Modern English Almshouse." <i>Sources for the History of Hospitals in Medieval and Early Modern Europe</i> . Edited by Martin Scheutz. Boblau Verlag: Oldenbourg, 2010.
John Fuller's Almshouse	1592	John Fuller	Stepney, Middlesex and Shoreditch, Middlesex	12 men in Stepney and 12 women in Shoreditch	Fuller, according to his will, required his wife to endow the almshouses with one hundred

					pounds a year, fifty pounds for each TNA PROB 11/79/376
New- College of Cobham	1597	Sir William Brooke	Cobham, Kent	20 poor persons	This house was erected on the site of a medieval chantry. Williams, Sir John. <i>Abstract Containing the Substance of the Rules and Ordinances of the New-College of Cobham, In the County of Kent.</i> England: 1867.
Hospital of the Holy Trinity	1597	John Whitgift	Croydon, Surrey	40 poor persons	The number of poor in Whitgift's almshouse was always to be maintained at 30 at the least. Garrow, D.W. <i>The History and Antiquities of Croydon.</i> London: Geo, Cowie & Co. 1818.
Lord Burghley's Almshouses	1597	William Cecil	Stamford, Lincolnshire	13 men	The responsibility of naming the poor to the house fell upon Cecil and his male heirs following his death. Cecil, William,

					Baron of Burghley. <i>Ordinances Made by Sir William Cecil, Knight of the Order of the Garter, Baron of Burghley, for the order and Government of xiii Poor Men.</i> Michigan: University of Michigan, Digital Library Production Service, 2011.
Emanuel Hospital	1601	Lady Anne Dacre	Westminster	20 poor persons	Both a hospital and school for bringing up children with virtuous habits. TNA PROB 11/76/417
Robert Roger's Almshouse	1601	Robert Roger	Poole, Dorsetshire	6 poor couples	Rogers left instructions for the governors of the town to purchase land worth over £15 to be used for the inmates' pension. TNA PROB 11/99/141
George Slee's Almshouse	1610	George Slee	Tiverton, Devon	6 poor widows or maidens	Erection for this almshouse began one year prior to the death of its founder. TNA PROB 11/126/521

William Jones' Almshouse	1614	William Jones	Monmouth, Monmouthshire	20 poor persons	In addition to founding an almshouse, Jones also founded a free school. The governance of both were left to the Haberdasher Company. TNA PROB 11/126/240
Richard Huish's Almshouse	1616	Richard Huish	Taunton, Somerset	13 men	Any surplus revenue from the lands endowed to the almshouse went to reparation of the institution. Archer, Ian W. "Sources for the Early Modern English Almshouse." <i>Sources for the History of Hospitals in Medieval and Early Modern Europe</i> . Edited by Martin Scheutz. Boblau Verlag: Oldenbourg, 2010.
John Wynne's Almshouses	1617	John Wynne	Baldock, Hertfordshire	6 poor persons	Wynne was merchant in London and member of the company of Mercer's. He dedicated a thousand pounds for the purchase

					and building of his almshouse. TNA PROB 11/130/749
Sir Stephen Soame's Almshouse	1619	Sir Stephen Soame	Little Thurlow, Suffolk	8 poor persons	This almshouse was actually erected in 1618, though Soame used his will to lay out the requirements concerning admittance. TNA PROB 11/138/64
The College of God's Gift	1619	Edward Alleyn	Dulwich, South London	6 men and 6 women	In addition to founding his almshouse, Alleyn's charity also included an attached grammar school for children. Young, William. <i>The History of Dulwich College, Down to the Act of Parliament Dissolving the Original Corporation, 28th August, 1857.</i> London: Morrison and Gibb, 1889.
Almshouse of John Yaxley	1624	John Yaxley	Waterbeach, Cambridge	6 poor persons	Yaxley initially required his executors to act as the charity's governors. Following their

					deaths, the task fell upon the churchwardens of the town. TNA PROB 11/65/487
Robert Hitcham's Almshouse	1636	Robert Hitcham	Framlingham, Suffolk	12 poor widows	In addition to erecting an almshouse, Hitcham also intended to found a college in Framlingham for poor children. TNA PROB 11/173/364
Thomas Wright's Almshouse	1646	Thomas Wright	Hartest, England	2 poor widows	Judging from his will, it seemed that Wright's almshouses were operational prior to his death. However, he used his will to lay out rules and regulations for the widows residing within his charity. Tymms, Samuel, ed. <i>Wills and Inventories From the Registers of the Commissary of Bury St. Edmunds and the Archdeacon of Sudbury</i> . London: J.B. Nicholls and Son, 1850.
Hospital of St. Anne	1651	Lady Ann Clifford	Appleby, Westmorland	13 poor widows	To make room for her charity,

					<p>Lady Anne leveled the buildings that previously existed on the site where she intended to erect her almshouses. These were finished in April of 1652.</p> <p>Heelis, Alex E. "St. Anne's Hospital at Appleby." <i>Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society</i>, 1909, ns, ix. (Great Britain: Published by Cumberland & Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, 1909).</p>
Sir Thomas Holt's Almshouse	1655	Sir Thomas Holt	Birmingham, West Midlands	5 men and 5 women	<p>Unlike most of the other almshouses examined in this thesis, Sir Thomas Holt's forbade the entrance of witches, wizards, and sorcerers.</p> <p>Holt, Sir Thomas. <i>Orders and Rules Appointed by the Last Will and</i></p>

					<p><i>Testament of Sir Thomas Holt, Knight and Baronet to be Observed in the Electing, and After the Election, of the Ten Poor Persons Inhabiting in his Almshouses at Aston Juxta Birmingham in the County of Warwick. London: S&N, 1656.</i></p>
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Appendix II

The following is a list of almshouse foundations made during the early modern period and drawn from secondary literature. These, too, will begin chronologically, with earlier foundations preceding later ones.

Name:	Founded:	Founder:	Parish/Town /County:	Number of Poor:	Source:
Trinity Hospital	1395	John Barstaple	Old Market Street, Bristol	24 poor persons	W. Leighton, "Trinity Hospital, Bristol," <i>Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society</i> , 36 (1913), 251.
Pykenham's Almshouse	1491	William Pykenham, Archdeacon of Suffolk	Hadleigh, Suffolk	24 poor persons	Marjorie K. McIntosh, <i>Poor Relief and Community in Hadleigh, Suffolk, 1547-1600</i> , (Great Britain: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2013), 112.
Bond's Hospital	1506	Thomas Bond	Coventry, West Midlands	10 men and 1 woman	Michael Orton and John Cleary, <i>So Long as the World</i>

					<i>Shall Endure: The Five Hundred Year History of Bond's and Ford's Hospital,</i> (Great Britain: Coventry Church Charities, 1991), 13.
Almshouse operated by the Holy Trinity Guild	1512	Holy Trinity Guild	Wisbech, Isle of Ely	6 poor persons	Marjorie K. McIntosh, <i>Poor Relief and Community in Hadleigh, Suffolk, 1547-1600,</i> (Great Britain: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2013), 72.
Almshouse at Stoke Poges	1557-8	Edward, Lord Hastings	Stoke Poges, Buckinghamshire	5 men	Marjorie K. McIntosh, <i>Poor Relief in England, 1350-1600,</i> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 204.
The Almshouse of Sir Richard Fulmerston	1567	Sir Richard Fulmerston	Thetford, Norfolk	2 men and 2 women	W.K. Jordan, <i>The Charities of Rural England, 1480-1660,</i> (England: G.

					Allen & Unwin, 1962), 121.
Dorothy Dayrell's Almshouse	1583	Dorothy Dayrell	Buckingham Borough	6 women	W.K. Jordan, <i>The Charities of Rural England, 1480-1660</i> , (England: G. Allen & Unwin, 1962), 31.
Peter Symmonds' Almshouse	1587	Peter Symmonds	Winchester, Hampshire	6 men and 1 woman	W.K. Jordan, <i>The Charities of London, 1480-1660: The Aspirations and the Achievements of the Urban Society</i> , (Connecticut : Archon Books, 1974), 142.
Sir William Feke's Almshouse	1590	Sir William Feke	Wighton, Norfolk	6 women	W.K. Jordan, <i>The Charities of Rural England, 1480-1660</i> , (England: G. Allen & Unwin, 1962), 123.
Alice Carter's Almshouse	1597	Alice Carter	Buckingham Borough	5 poor widows	W.K. Jordan, <i>The Charities of Rural England, 1480-1660</i> , (England: G.

					Allen & Unwin, 1962), 31.
John Clapham's Almshouse	1605	John Clapham	Bedale, Yorkshire	7 men	W.K. Jordan, <i>The Charities of Rural England, 1480-1660</i> , (England: G. Allen & Unwin, 1962), 267.
Thomas Stafford's Almshouse	1607	Thomas Stafford	Tattenhoe, Buckinghamshire	4 men and 2 women	W.K. Jordan, <i>The Charities of Rural England, 1480-1660</i> , (England: G. Allen & Unwin, 1962), 45.
Ann Johnson's Almshouse	1611	Ann Johnson	Norwich, Norfolk	5 poor widows	W.K. Jordan, <i>The Charities of Rural England, 1480-1660</i> , (England: G. Allen & Unwin, 1962), 125.
William Goddard's Hospital	1619	William Goddard	Bray, Berkshire	40 poor persons	W.K. Jordan, <i>The Charities of London, 1480-1660: The Aspirations and the Achievements of the Urban Society</i> ,

					(Connecticut : Archon Books, 1974), 150.
Moretonham pstead Almshouse	1637	Unknown Founder	Moretonham pstead, Devon	8 poor persons	Brian Bailey, <i>Almshouses</i> , (London: Robert Hale, 1988), 116-117.
Sir George Croke's Almshouse	1639	Sir George Croke	Studely, Oxfordshire	4 men and 4 women	W.K. Jordan, <i>The Charities of Rural England, 1480-1660</i> , (England: G. Allen & Unwin, 1962), 48.

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