

# The New England Knight: Sir William Phips, 1651-1695

Emerson W. Baker, John G. Reid

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Born in 1651 in what is now Maine, William Phips became a sea captain out of Boston, an adventurer in search of Spanish treasure in the Caribbean. He captured and plundered Port Royal in Acadia, now Nova Scotia, and led an unsuccessful expedition against Quebec in 1690. He became the first royal governor of Massachusetts in 1692, put an end to the Salem witchcraft trials, and negotiated a treaty with the native Wabanaki.

This biography presents a well-rounded picture of Phips, one that looks at all phases of his colourful career. He was an unusual figure among colonial governors, and his very uniqueness, as well as his difficulties as governor, help us to understand the politics and society of New England during his era. Helped and hindered by his obscure origins, Phips struggled for advancement, and his struggle illustrates the fluid nature of the British Empire in the late seventeenth century.

Phips's life was left unexplored by scholars for the past seventy years. The New England Knight reconstructs his career using contemporary material that brings life and immediacy to the narrative. It interacts with recent studies in colonial, imperial, aboriginal, and marine history to set Phips's eventful life in context.



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