

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

Grooming a New "Political Man"

"Cotton Mather's *Life of Phips*: 'A Vice With the Vizzard of Vertue Upon It'" by Philip F. Gura, in *The New England Quarterly* (Sept. 1977), Hubbard Hall, Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Me. 04011.

To many 17th-century New Englanders, William Phips (1651-95) epitomized what a good governor should *not* be. But preacher Cotton Mather found an overriding virtue in Phips's checkered career: his "love for his country."

Gura, a professor of English at the University of Colorado, finds the appeal to patriotism in Mather's *Life of Phips* (1697) a fateful updating of the Puritans' political vocabulary. Massachusetts' old charter, which made church membership the prerequisite for political rights, had been revoked in 1683. The new charter based the franchise firmly on ownership of property. A new kind of public man was emerging—with Phips the outstanding example. This carpenter, treasure-hunter, and charismatic soldier (his forays against French Canada secured New England's northern border) beguiled his way to a knighthood in 1687 and, on the recommendation of Mather's father, to the governorship of all New England in 1692. He died three years later in London, facing charges of bribery, piracy, and misconduct in high office.

Faced with this mixed record, Mather emphasized Phips's courage, ambition, diligence in worldly affairs, and endearing manner with the lower classes. If these qualities had a "sinful" smell about them, they were nevertheless the virtues, Mather explained, of an incipient "political man." Hence, the *Life of Phips* set a new standard in colonial politics; for the first time, public patriotism superseded personal piety as the chief measure of a good leader.

City Limits and Stunted Growth

"Understanding the Urban Predicament" by Richard P. Nathan and Paul R. Dommell, in *The Brookings Bulletin* (vol. 14, nos. 1 & 2, 1977), 1775 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

The decay of the nation's Northern "core cities" has become *the* U.S. domestic problem, say Brookings government specialists Nathan and Dommell. But while the public tends to associate urban decline with city size, the authors believe other factors are more critical.

One cause is the balance—or lack of it—between a city and its suburbs. In a review of 55 of the nation's largest cities, Nathan and Dommell find that 43 of them are economically worse off (in varying degrees) than their suburbs; 2 are about the same; 10 are better off. Almost all of these are in the South and West, and 4 have populations greater than 1 million.

The 14 worst off cities (including Newark, Gary, Baltimore, Cleveland, Detroit, and Hartford) are primarily in the northeast quadrant of the United States. Their rate of population loss doubled between 1970