THE CHESHIRE ELECTION OF 1656

By PAUL J. PINCKNEY
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF HISTORY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
AT CHAPEL HILL

THIS paper seeks to analyse the county election in Cheshire in 1656 and to illustrate the relationship of the Cromwellian regime to local power structures. Before the election itself can be presented, something of the sweep of events since 1642 will have to be reviewed and the activities of Major-General Worsley in 1655 and 1656 considered in detail.

As in many other counties, attempts at neutralization were made, and it is probably significant that the two Parliamentary signers of the pacification attempt in December 1642, William Marbury and Henry Mainwaring, were related to two of the main actors in 1656, Thomas Marbury and Thomas Mainwaring. Cheshire early fell into an east-west division with the supporters of Parliament grouped around the prospering industrial and mining areas in the vicinity of Manchester and Stockport. In a sense they were forced to make a decision earlier than others in Cheshire because of the Royalist attempts to gain the magazine at Manchester. But given the religious and political attitudes of such people as Sir George Booth, Sir William Brereton, Robert Duckenfield, and the Bradshaw brothers, Henry and John, all residents of the easternmost part of the county, it would seem that the division was only a matter of time. The division became hardened, of course, after Brereton established the main Parliamentary garrison at Nantwich, the county's second town, in opposition to the Royalist stronghold of Chester.

There was a great deal of continuity between the attitudes of the sixteen-forties and those of the sixteen-fifties on the part of many supporters of Parliament. Sir William Brereton had beaten the drums in Chester at the first sign of the approaching troubles. He became the leading military figure and sat on most of the sequestration, assessment, augmentation and other committees of the county throughout the whole period. Other figures such as Thomas Stanley, Thomas Croxton, Henry
Bradshaw, and Thomas Marbury remained active. Unlike the situation in Kent where only eight of 274 served on the county committee during the whole period 1643-60, the corresponding figures in Cheshire were approximately twenty-five out of seventy-five, both figures being significant.¹

Cheshire was often called on after the civil war to remember Parliamentary principles. There were many local involvements in the weeks of the battle of Preston and the Royalist rising in Wales in 1648 and in the events surrounding the battles of Wigan and Worcester in 1651.² The personnel involved in raising four regiments locally in 1650 help to point up the loyalty of the old Parliamentarians. The commissioners present at Middlewich on 20 August 1650 who agreed to raise the regiments were Sir Henry Delves, Bart., Henry Brooke, Thomas Stanley, Thomas Mainwaring, Robert Duckenfield, Thomas Marbury, Thomas Croxton, Henry Bradshaw and Peter Holford. Delves and Holford had been added to the committee in 1647 and 1648 respectively, but the other men, or the families they now represented, had been active since the beginning, and almost all were still to be at the time of the 1656 election. Many of the officers appointed to these regiments later were appointed to the county committees, while the colonels were the four most influential commissioners with military experience, Brooke, Duckenfield, Croxton and Bradshaw. Almost all of the commissioners were ordered by Parliament in the troubled summer of 1651 to take measures to secure the county against "conspiracies", "disaffected persons", "papists", and other dangers, and almost all of the regi-

¹ C. H. Firth and R. S. Rait (eds.), Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660 (3 vols., London, 1911), i. 90, 111, 147, 228, 543, 642, 962, 1079, 1112, 1235; ii. 31, 294, 462, 659, 757, 969, 1063, 1321; Commons Journal, iii. 157, 238, 484, 704; iv. 212; v. 47; vii. 356, 744; Public Record Office, SP 28/224; SP 28/225. The figures for Kent are from A. M. Everitt, "The Kent Gentry, 1640-60" (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, 1957), p. 190. For Cheshire I have begun with 1644 because the committee before then was very small. Most of the later comments on committee members are based on the above references.

² Thomas Malbon, Memorials of the Civil War in Cheshire and the Adjacent Counties, and Edward Burghall, Providence Improved, ed. James Hall (The Record Society for... Lancashire and Cheshire [hereafter Record Society], 1889), pp. 214-22.
mental officers were involved in the subsequent trial and execution of the Earl of Derby in September. During the period of the Rump when President Bradshaw and Brereton were active in London, Colonel Duckenfield seems to have been a main figure in Cheshire. One of the earliest Independent churches in England had been established in the Chapel at his home near Stockport in 1644. He was appointed High Sheriff of Cheshire in 1649 and Governor of Chester in 1650. He was returned with his fellow sectarian Henry Birkenhead, his lieutenant in the regiment mentioned above, to Barebone's Parliament in 1653. After the act of that year requiring civil marriages was passed we find J.P.'s Thomas Stanley, Sir William Brereton, Henry Bradshaw and a new name but an old Parliamentary officer, Edward Hyde, a close associate of Duckenfield's in the civil wars, active in this regard in the Hundred of Macclesfield.

More enduring in its consequences than this continuation of civil war attitudes on the part of a few was a trend for the older patterns of gentry life to re-emerge in the sixteen-fifties. This is to some extent conjectural, but much evidence points to a determination on the part of the ruling class to work together and avoid a repetition of the expensive divisions of the recent past. Most Royalists found relief from governmental harassment after compounding in 1646 or 1647 while others had to wait for the Act of Pardon of 1652. Very few important members of the Cheshire gentry had their estates confiscated. In 1652 the county commissioners wrote the Committee for Advance of Money:

... We cannot heare of any in this county who appeared for Charles Stuart, son of the late King [except two unimportant people]. ... Most of this county declared for Parliament, and four regiments of foot and one large troop of horse, raised at the county's charge, marched to Worcester and were at the battle. The


3 Earwaker, i. 100, 232, 408; ii. 215, 599.
old delinquents that had compounded aided the said troops, and kept aloof from Charles Stuart.¹

By 1654 it would appear that most of the "old delinquents" were enjoying their estates again. In August of that year petitions reached the Council of State from "oppressed tenants" in Lancashire and Cheshire who said that their landlords' malice was "seven times hotter than before. They have turned some of us out of doors and threaten to turn out the rest for our service to Parliament, which will depopulate the northern counties." A committee of ten led by Sir George Booth was appointed for Cheshire "to try an accommodation between landlords and tenants".² In May 1656 Major-General Worsley wrote to Secretary Thurloe that "I find much rediness amongst the gentlemen of this county to answer the desires of the malignant [to have their decimation tax removed]".³ What I consider the dominant note in gentry opinion appears in an admittedly extreme letter of 1656: "In these degenerating times, the gentry had need to close neerer together, and make a banke and bulwarke against that Sea of Democracy which is over running them."⁴

It is clear from the fact that the letters concerning Cheshire in the Thurloe papers, with one or two exceptions, begin in March 1655 that the Royalist uprising at that time was the cause of much of the subsequent activity of the government. Secretary Thurloe depended on Captain John Griffiths, a commissioner in Chester, for sending information concerning not only that city but the county at large and for disseminating infor-

---

¹ Committee for Advance of Money, 1642-1656 (hereafter CAM), i. 103. Cf. Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series (hereafter CSPD), 1651, pp. 347, 353.
² CSPD, 1654, pp. 294-5, 318.
³ Thurloe State Papers (hereafter TSP), v. 9.
⁴ Written to Sir Justinian Isham trying to prevent an Isham daughter from marrying a doctor's son (Memoirs of the Verney Family, ed. Margaret M. Verney (London, 1894), iii. 199). I have chosen it in this paper to omit questions concerning religious opinion in Cheshire, but is likely that the reconciliation or consolidation of the gentry was reflected in the "voluntary association" of Cheshire ministers after 1653 outlined in The Life of Adam Martindale (Chetham Society, 1845), pp. 112-25; cf. William A. Shaw, A History of the English Church... 1640-1660 (2 vols., London, 1900), ii. 152-74, 441-3. Most of the ministers (whom I judge to be overwhelmingly Presbyterian) supported Booth's Presbyterian-Royalist rising of 1659 (Urwick, p. 429; C. H. Firth (ed.), The Clarke Papers (4 vols., Camden Society, 1891-1901), iv. 38).
mation and orders to the various commissioners. The extent of the service performed by Griffiths was great; he advised, for example, that Alderman William Wright be appointed to command the foot within the city because, although others such as Lieutenant-Colonel Birkenhead might have more experience, the people of Chester would not appreciate having a non-citizen command them. He modified the previous list of suspects sent him by the Master Intelligencer, but it is doubtful whether it was a service or not. He declared that the former Parliamentary commanders Sir Thomas Middleton and Sir George Booth "possibly were unsatisfied, yet against the cavaliers interest you may as safely trust them as ever: and it will not bee convenient to slett persons of eminency and interest in their country, being assured of their fidellity." These two men were to be the military leaders of Booth's rebellion, and the fact that Booth, although returned as a county member in 1654 and 1656, absented himself from those parliaments does not attest to his "fidellity". Perhaps because of this recommendation from a man on the spot, however, Booth was appointed a militia commissioner and a Treasurer at War at this time.

Griffiths also informed Thurloe of the meetings of the Cavaliers and foreshadowed the instructions to the major-generals by asking that people be empowered to apprehend suspected persons. It is probable that the suggestions coming into Westminster from all over the country at this time had a great influence on that future system. Colonel Duckenfield, whom Cromwell asked to raise a horse regiment, wrote suggesting that the Protector raise about 2000 horse equally out of all the counties on the North side Trent, and to impose the charge of maintaineing and finding them onely upon such as are convicted or suspected notoriously for malignancy; whereby your highnes would doe a very just and feasible act, without putting your selfe, or anyone else, that be innocent or well affected, to any great charge about them. The clamour of most men, that you punish the innocent promiscuously with the [guilty], will be taken away by this meanes.

Duckenfield's letter announcing his refusal of the commission tendered by Cromwell gives many insights into the local situation. It would seem that he was being pressured by his fellow gentry, for he wrote that his former military activities

1 TSP, iii. 223, 217. 2 DNB, v. 317. 3 TSP, iii. 226. 4 Ibid. p. 294.
"have beene taken in ill part". Another reason for refusing was that the county was "soe wonderfully impoverished, as without destroying of it, not many souldiers can be raised theirin in the way you intend". He also judged that the attitude of his section of the country had been "soe corrupted of late, by the subtildties of the jesuited party" that the people to be entrusted with arms would not prove faithful. He was probably one of the few who had the boldness to write the Protector such a statement as "Charles Stewart hath 500 freinds in these adjacent counties, for every one freind to you amongst them, and he doubts not of finding you worke enough, whilst hee lives".¹ If Duckenfield refused to work with the militia commission because of what might be termed left-wing opposition, there were others who caused trouble from the right-wing. Griffiths wrote complaining of the obstructive tactics of Peter Brooke, later to be a 1656 M.P., who declared "against raiseinge any horse or foote at all". Brooke had been a Presbyterian elder and a recruited M.P. from 1646 to 1653.² He and his family will be discussed below.

The result of the agitation of this year was the establishment of the major-generals, and Colonel Charles Worsley was appointed to oversee the counties of Lancashire, Cheshire, and Staffordshire. He had raised a foot regiment for Cromwell in Lancashire in 1650, had fought the Royalists as late as 1651, and had assisted in the dissolution of the Rump. His letters present us with much information concerning the affairs of the county. One of his first indicates that he worked from the beginning with Colonel Thomas Croxton, the governor of Chester, in such matters as disarming the disaffected and putting the ordinance concerning scandalous ministers into execution. Colonel Croxton, Worsley wrote, "is a good instrument in these parts, and very much deserves your thanks".³

¹ TSP, iii. p. 294.
³ TSP, iv. 189. This was written on 13 November 1655, the day of Worsley's first meeting with the commissioners. On Worsley see the DNB; C. H. Firth and Godfrey Davies, The Regimental History of Cromwell's Army (2 vols., Oxford, 1940), ii. 481, 484-6; John Booker, A History of the Ancient Chapel of Birch in
Worsley, as did the other major-generals, had trouble with sheriffs. He wrote on 30 November 1655 that after advising with the “best men”, he found it “a difficult busines to find fitt men rightly quallifyed for the employment” but declared it his opinion that John Legh of Booths was the best choice. It is likely that this was an occasion when Cromwell tempered the influence of the military party on the Council of State. John Legh did become sheriff in 1658 and managed through moving the place of election to return John Bradshaw to Richard Cromwell’s Parliament. This would seem to indicate that Legh was more republican than Cromwell approved of. The Protector picked for sheriff in 1656 Philip Egerton of Oulton whose father had been a Royalist before his death in 1646. At that time his huge estates in several counties had been divided, Philip receiving the property in Cheshire and Flintshire. He must have been rather young in 1656, for, although he was knighted soon after the Restoration, he was only a militia captain in 1660, did not become sheriff again till 1675, and lived till 1698. He is a perfect example of the type of person to whom Cromwell was now turning—someone of good family and estates who was too young to have been actively partisan in the earlier troubles.

It is perhaps not this simple, however. Chief Justice John Glynne sent in his list of persons fit to be sheriff of Cheshire on 8 November, and it is likely that his list included the names of both Duckenfield and Egerton, for on 8 December Worsley wrote that the man suggested by Thurloe “doth not act with us; yet I heare hee’s honest”, and on 30 January he wrote, “The report wee have here is, that Coll. Duckenfield is named high Sheriffe. I thought fitt to signifie, that hee is the onely person, that refuses to act with us upon the orders and instructions of his highness and councell.” Worsley found himself, as did the

---

1 Ormerod, ii. 220, 627.
2 TSP, iv. 171.
3 Ibid. pp. 300, 485. This rumoured appointment of Duckenfield suggests that Cromwell was not automatically master of the sheriffs. Duckenfield was the brother-in-law of General Fleetwood, a great power on the Council of State, and their views seem to have been similar (A. J. Shirren, “The Family Book of Martha Duckinfield”, Notes and Queries, cc (1955), 158-60).
government in general, caught between republicanism and royalism. When the news of Egerton's appointment finally came to him, he was horrified. On 8 April he wrote,

I am afraid that hee that's now sheriffe is not a persone, that may be justly suspected for his integritie to the present government. I have alreadie found him to be a person, whose pleasure and delight is onely in those, who I verilie believe are the most dangerous enemyes wee have in these contyes; and I am a little jeluse of him.

A month later he reported, "I have some ground to believe he is one, that was privy to the last designe. I am of a mind, we shall have him upon the stage for his disaffection e're long." 1 In any case it would appear that Cromwell paid more attention to the suggestions of Glynne, the army's erstwhile Presbyterian opponent, than to those of Worsley.

But sheriffs were just a part of the local pattern which the government had to control before its ideas could be implemented. Worsley set out to bring every facet of the local apparatus into line with his thinking. The situation which he found on arrival was not encouraging. One of his first letters reports a "want of good justices of the peace", and he complained both of "the condition of some already in" and of "the number of them, which is very small". 2 The Commission of the Peace for 1650 only contained eighteen names besides government officials, 3 and of these only eight are named as active in the sixteen-fifties in the printed extracts from the quarter session records. 4 Worsley not only had to find men of acceptable opinions but people who would venture to serve at a time when the future was uncertain. By the end of January 1656 Worsley still had to write, "I shall be at a straight how to gett fitt and active men in these countyes for the commission of peace, but I'll shortly send you up the list". A little later he complained of those "that refuse to act". 5

Worsley, of course, recognized the importance of the office of constable, for it was that overworked agent who perhaps was closest to the populace. Worsley wrote in December 1655;

There is divers constables here and there, that are honest, who are doubtfull of what poure they have, and how farr they may proceed of themselves in punishing

1 TSP, iv. 684, 765. 2 Ibid. p. 277 3 Ormerod, i., lxiv.
4 J. H. E. Bennett and J. C. Dewhurst (eds.), Quarter Sessions Records with other Records of the Justices of the Peace for the County Palatine of Chester, 1559-1760 (Record Society, 1940), pp. 146 sqq. 5 TSP, iv. 473, 485.
The law is very darke in that; soe that divers have suffred upon that account; and they find it hard to find justices, that will encourage them in that worke.¹

Over a month later he reported attempts to place "honest and sufficient men" in the office "for truly the want of that is a great evell to this nation".² Part of the Major-General’s concern with the local base of influence is reflected in his February statement that "wee have agreed of a list of honest juditious freeholders for this yeare".³

Although the major-generals were appointed primarily to prevent recurrences of the Royalist rising of 1655, there was still that ambiguous area in which the individual officer could act according to his general attitude concerning people with Royalist tendencies. If his revolutionary fervour had been strong and his distrust of much of the gentry hardened through the years, he certainly had the power to attempt a revolution of sorts in the counties. If such a major-general found himself with, or managed to nominate, commissioners of a similar stamp, a very active and far-reaching programme might be attempted. From what we have seen of Worsley, it would appear that this situation existed in Cheshire. Otherwise it is hard to explain such a letter as Worsley’s on 13 February 1656 in which he wrote that the commissioners some of them this day expressed, that they could find nere 60 gentlemen in this county, many of them younger sons, that were fit to be sent out of this commonewelth, which done would much tend to the securitie thereof and terrific others.... Wee have sent for all malignant attorneyes in this county, to give securite, that they act noe more as attorneys or solicitors in this commone­welth without speciall order of his highness or counsell.⁴

The zealous Worsley died in June 1656, a few weeks before his thirty-fourth birthday. He had ridden constantly through­out his district in the spring although he knew himself to be in bad health.⁵ He was succeeded by Colonel Tobias Bridge who had formerly been a deputy Major-General in the South. A captain under Okey in 1647, he had advanced to the majority in that regiment in 1649 and had followed the regiment to Scotland in 1651. In 1653 Bridge, in the absence of Okey, headed the list of signers of a regimental address favouring the expulsion of the

¹ TSP, iv. p. 315. ² Ibid. p. 473. ³ Ibid. p. 534. ⁴ Ibid. ⁵ Ibid. v. 19.
Rump, and later in the year the commander of the army in Scotland reported that Bridge was the only major or colonel of horse in that country. He succeeded to the command of the regiment in 1655 when Okey was cashiered following the case of the petition of the three colonels.  

Bridge had attempted to arrange for favourable election returns in Staffordshire before coming into Cheshire. The fact that Worsley and Bridge made their chief headquarters at Nantwich tended to place Cheshire in the front of their minds, but Worsley's connections with Manchester and Lancashire led him to take a great deal of interest in that county's activities. Neither man spent much time in Staffordshire.

Part of the reason for Bridge's close attention to the Cheshire election was the fact that he only arrived on the scene on 13 August and had to concentrate his energies in order to have any hope of influence on the 20th, the day set for county elections. Another reason was the known intention of President Bradshaw to contest the election. Bradshaw had been implicated in most of the plots of the last year or so and was now suspected of being in the group attempting a coalition of levellers, republicans, and Spaniards. He was also dangerous because of his popularity with the lower orders in Cheshire, reflected in several Quaker letters bespeaking an almost unique kindness from the bench (Bradshaw was "Chief Justice of Chester" throughout the period). Cromwell told Bradshaw at their conference on 1 August that he hoped the accusations against him could be proved.

The best introduction to the preparations for the election in Cheshire is given in Bridge's letter to Cromwell on 15 August. He wrote that he had been with the county commissioners for two or three days at Middlewich, being obviously pleased that "there was not lesse than twenty Gentlemen at this meeting".

1 Firth and Davies, i. 294, 296, 298; ii. 675.
2 Friends House Library, London, Swarthmore MSS. i. 195. The microfilm of the seven volumes of this collection, which I used, and G. F. Nuttall's excellent unpublished calendar of the personal letters before 1660 in Vols. 1, 3 and 4 are available at several libraries in the United States and England.
3 House of Lords Records Office, Braye MSS. 3, fol. 44-50. My edition of this manuscript report of the conference will appear in the Huntington Library Quarterly.
He had told them of Cromwell’s letter of the 8th which probably warned of possible attempts to cause trouble at election time. He did not doubt that those elected would be “both satisfactory to the County, and also faithfull to your Highnes”, but he pointed out that “my Lord Bradshawe hath a greate party heare in this County, even amongst the Commissioners”. Some of them had met several times with the sheriff in preparation for the election and had resolved on the slate of Bradshaw, Peter Brooke of Mere, Richard Legh of Lyme, and Thomas Marbury of Marbury. “After much debate and arguing with them concerning the Lord Bradshawe, I believe they are now satisfied to leave him out.” Bridge proposed to the commissioners his own slate, consisting of Colonel Thomas Croxton of Ravenscroft, Edward Hyde of Hyde and Norbury, Thomas Mainwaring of Over Peover, and the same Thomas Marbury, but he did not know how it would succeed, “the other Gentlemen having made their party strong, having beeene any time this month about it”. He also informed Cromwell that Sir William Brereton had been “bestirring himself what hee can by himselfe and agents, to procure voices, but I finde his interest among the gentlemen very little, only some of the riged Clergy cry him up”. Bridge “to prevent any disturbance at the Ellection...[had] appointed that Troope of the Army lying at Nantwyche to drawe neare Chester, and bee in readiness, as also the County Troop, and Col. Croxton’s care will not be wantinge to secure the Castle, in which the Ellection is to bee, as alsoe to prevent any inconvenience elsewhere”.

Cromwell’s letter of 8 August which Bridge communicated to the commissioners, of which Professor Abbott could only surmise the contents, did not necessarily name Bradshaw specifically. Ludlow, however, states that Cromwell sent letters saying that the election of such republicans would be resented and that such a letter was read aloud at Chester. Bridge evidently did not consider the opposing slate of candidates too obnoxious after

---

1 Bodl. MS. Rawlinson A 41, fol. 495. This letter is printed in TSP, v. 313-14, with numerous errors.
he had engineered the withdrawal of Bradshaw's name, for his letter of 15 August goes on to say that he is leaving that day for Lancashire, having arranged a meeting at Preston on Monday the 18th. As his whereabouts are not known until September, when he was at Nantwich in Cheshire, it is likely that he considered the Lancashire situation more serious and decided to spend his time there. His letter went on to say that he expected "much thwarting there, through the peevishness of some, and disaffection of others". It was probably he that arranged the postponement of the Lancashire county election from August to September.

The question naturally arises as to the differences between Bridge's group of candidates and the sheriff's. All the major-generals tended to take willingness to participate in local government as a sign of loyalty to the present regime. Their job was security, and if a man was willing to sit on the commissions and renew old wounds among neighbours, then there would seem to be little chance of a sudden conversion. Bridge's nominees were all men who had been active from the beginning for Parliament and who were still active as militia commissioners in the summer of 1656. It is almost true to say that Bridge's group consists of the most traditional and wealthy gentry who had been actively for Parliament and who were still willing to serve under Cromwell. The list does omit the wealthier Thomas Stanley of Alderley, but his career shows a certain reluctance to be in the front line of action, and we know from another source that he was one of the commissioners who had joined with the sheriff in nominating the other slate.¹

In considering Bridge's slate individually it could be said that Colonel Thomas Croxton of Ravenscroft made up with enthus-

---

¹ Rylands Library, Mainwaring MSS. Book 20a [Diary of Thomas Mainwaring, 1649-59], hereafter referred to as Mainwaring Diary. There are commissioners of many sorts in the 1650s, the ones assisting the Major-Generals technically being called "the commissioners for securing the peace" (cf. Samuel Rawson Gardiner, History of the Commonwealth and Protectorate, 1649-1656 (4 vols., London, 1903), iii. 321 n.). A comparison of the available lists for Cheshire, however, shows much the same personnel throughout the Protectorate (Firth and Rait, ii. 1063; P.R.O., Chancery 193/13/5; Chester 24/131; SP 25/76A, fol. 30; SP 25/77, fol. 321; TSP, v. 129).
iasm what he possibly lacked in estates. He had worked on the Parliamentary "Council of War" in Cheshire which had demanded money of neutral-minded gentry in early 1643 and had been active in the county committees since then. He had been appointed colonel of one of the Cheshire regiments raised in 1650 and had charge of the castle at Chester throughout the Protectorate. His family dated from the thirteenth century in Cheshire and was important enough for Croxton to have married into a county family of Lancashire, the Hollands of Denton. Croxton was thus the brother-in-law of Colonel Richard Holland, the 1656 M.P. for Lancashire. Croxton's seat was Ravenscroft Hall, about a mile from Middlewich, which Ormerod referred to as a respectable mansion of James I's time.

Edward Hyde of Hyde and Norbury, a distant relative of the future Lord Chancellor, had been since 1643 the representative of one of the oldest families in East Cheshire, their half of the Hyde manor dating back to King John. His estates probably totalled over 3,500 acres. He had early sided with Parliament, as had most of the leading gentry in the eastern region of both Lancashire and Cheshire, and had worked with Sir William Brereton, Croxton, Robert Duckenfield, and other enthusiasts to raise money from neutral-minded gentry. He had been appointed a Deputy-Lieutenant for Parliament in 1643 and had served on most of the county committees since then. Although he did not attend the spring or autumn assizes in 1656 in his position as Justice of the Peace, he is listed as present at the commissioners' meeting of 17 June and was one of that number present at Bridge's introductory meeting.

Although the manuscript lists "Mr. Mannringe" as one of Bridge's candidates (the printed Thurloe papers reading "Mr. Manning"), it seems certain that Thomas Mainwaring of Over Peover is intended, since he fits perfectly with the group of landed Parliamentarians willing to serve under Cromwell that

1 Malbon and Burghall, p. 243. P.R.O., SP 28/224, passim.
2 Ormerod, iii. 206-8.
3 Clarendon writing in 1668 seems proud of his lineage (The Life of Edward Earl of Clarendon (Oxford, 1760), i. 1).
4 Earwaker, ii. 40-42.
5 Malbon and Burghall, p. 243.
6 P.R.O., Chester 24/131; TSP, v. 129.
we have been observing. The fact that he was appointed sheriff the coming December and was returned to the Convention Parliament points to his importance, and his diary shows his constant work as commissioner and J.P. in the sixteen-fifties.\(^1\) His father Philip had been sheriff in 1639 and had worked in 1642 to bring the gentry into the militia commission, a fact which led to his brief imprisonment by the king.\(^2\) He and Croxton had been appointed Deputy-Lieutenants for the Parliament at the same time and had worked together on the committee till his death in 1647, at which time his son's signature begins to appear in the committee accounts.\(^3\) The Mainwarings were very wealthy Puritans who established close ties with some of the wealthiest trading families of Nantwich and Chester. They had been in Cheshire since the thirteenth century and owned over 6,000 acres. Their wealth is reflected in the fact that Thomas was one of the intended "Knights of the Royal Oak" at the Restoration when he was listed as having a yearly income of over £1,000. He and his mother, who lived till 1656, constantly added to the establishment at Peover, building a chapel in 1648, ornate stables in 1651, a dove house in 1656, and a deer park in 1665.\(^4\)

Thomas Marbury of Marbury appears on both lists. Possessed of an Oxford M.A., he was perhaps not expecting to be the heir in 1645 to his half-brother William, who had been one of the early Parliamentarians with Duckenfield, Brereton and others. Thomas replaced William on various county committees and served regularly there and as an energetic J.P. in the sixteen-

---

\(^1\) The manuscripts of the Mainwaring family, an important collection, are in the Rylands Library which has published a Hand List (1923). There is much confusion about the spelling of the family name. Dugdale recorded 131 variations drawn from documents (James Croston, *County Families of Lancashire and Cheshire* (London, 1887), p. 362). The brief article on Thomas Mainwaring in the *DNB* is largely concerned with his famous genealogical feud with the antiquary Sir Peter Leicester, but see the introduction to William Beamont's edition of the Amicia tracts (3 vols., *Chetham Society*, 1869).


\(^3\) P.R.O., SP 28/224. Thomas also signed in late 1646 when his father was probably sick. Father and son were both on the sequestration committee in 1645 (Earwaker, i. 25).

\(^4\) Ormerod, iii. 456-7, 503; Croston, pp. 380, 382-4; Urwick, pp. 95, 141.
fifties. The Marburys, like many of the Parliamentarians and some of the Royalists in Cheshire, had profited from the dissolution of the monasteries, receiving the manor of Weaverham, part of Vale Royal Abbey and only about four miles from Marbury, from Thomas Holcroft to whom it was granted by Henry VIII.¹ Marbury Hall was an extensive brick building near Great Budworth in the northern part of the county. It is impossible to estimate the extent of the Marbury estates, but it is probable that the family was being absorbed by the more vigorous, prolific, and aggressive family, that of Brooke of Norton. Thomas, his sister Elizabeth, and his half-brother’s widow all married into that family.

The Brookes descend from Richard Brooke, a soldier of fortune under Henry VIII who became a Knight of Malta and Vice-Admiral of England. In 1545 he purchased Norton Priory with its appurtenances, Stockham, Acton Grange, Aston Grange, and Cuerdley in Lancashire, becoming a major landowner in the northern part of Cheshire.² The Brookes never looked back. From their land-buying activity in the time of the troubles, it appears certain that they had kept in practice. Colonel Henry, the head of the family from 1632 to 1664, had been an early Parliamentarian and served as sheriff for the Parliament from 1644 to 1647. He had commanded one of the four regiments raised in Cheshire in 1650 and had attended the Earl of Derby’s trial. His views during the Protectorate, however, are indiscernible. Although elected along with Bradshaw and others as a 1654 M.P., he is not listed on committees and probably followed the President’s lead in refusing Cromwell’s demand that the members agree not to change the essentials of the Instrument of Government. From energy in the sixteen-forties to silence in the sixteen-fifties argues some change in attitude. He had already purchased royal lands in and around Halton and is mentioned as the Steward of the castle there throughout the Protectorate.³

It is difficult not to think of the Brookes as trying to be on both sides of the political fence. Henry's brother and house guest John, his lieutenant-colonel in the 1650 regiment, wrote Cromwell early in 1655:

Fear of being tedious to your highness patience prohibits mee to speake of anything that concerns my native country, Cheshire, where my relations as to the publique service, interest in and alliance to most of the principal gentry therein, enables mee to manifest upon your highnes commaund, who are most zealously affected to the present government, and for piety and prudence in the magisteriall function are of singular note amongst us.¹

Meanwhile he was dabbling in Crown lands. He had purchased the manor of Middlewich with its appurtenances, the toll of the market, and several tenements in the town. His nephew Richard, Henry's son, had purchased the manor of Iveley.²

This, however, was not the way for Peter Brooke, the obstructive militia commissioner mentioned by Griffiths, a successful candidate of 1656, and a recruited member of the Long Parliament. He was an uncle of sorts to Henry, though only a year older, being the half-brother of Henry's father Richard. He had been a major in the army and an influential member of Parliament from 1646 to 1653 for Newton in Lancashire. His land buying was strictly of a private nature, though the opportunity was created, no doubt, by the struggles of the times. The manor of Mere, about twelve miles from Norton and seven from Brooke's old home of Reddish, had been held by the Mere family since the reign of King John, but it was sold to Peter Brooke in 1652 who soon after built his "spacious and handsome brick mansion" there.³ One branch of the Marbury family had held Walton, situated a few miles from Norton, since the reign of Edward I, but now it too was sold to Major Brooke.⁴ In 1654 he obtained a lease in Upton in Wirral from the sister of Sir Thomas Aston, the Royalist commander at the battle of Middlewich in 1643, who had died in 1645.⁵ Obtaining lands from declining Royalists

¹ TSP, iii. 179. ² Madge, "Calendar", vol. ii. ³ Ormerod, i. 464; Hanshall, p. 399. There are several references to the purchases and methods of the Brookes of Mere in Bishop Gastrell's Notitia Cestriensis, ed. F. P. Raines (4 vols., Chetham Society, 1845-50); cf. ii. 323, 340, 352. ⁴ Ormerod, i. 464. ⁵ Atkinson, p. 30; Ormerod, i. 723-4. The lease is number 35 in the calendar of the Linaker MSS. in the National Register of Archives.
evidently became a habit, for after the Restoration Brooke gained possession of Astley, the traditional home of the Charnocks, near Chorley, Lancashire, probably on the understanding that it would pass to his son Richard, who married the Charnock heiress in 1666.  

Brooke's power in the election, however, could not depend on the estates of the various branches of his own family. This was more the result of his arranging to be included in the slate with the young Richard Legh of Lyme whom Brooke was serving as election manager. Brooke's relationship to the important house of Legh is difficult to trace, but as the Leghs largely controlled the Lancashire borough of Newton, and Brooke was elected there in 1646, it would seem that the alliance was of long standing.  

One may surmise that the Leghs had leaned upon a man wise in the ways of the world during the minority of Richard, who had inherited the family estates from his uncle in 1643 at the age of nine. In any case the relationship was reinforced by the marriage in April 1656 of Legh's sister Francisca Posthuma to Richard Brooke, son and heir to Colonel Henry Brooke of Norton.  

The Leghs of Lyme date from 1398, when the manor of


2 Mary Frear Keeler, The Long Parliament, 1640-1641: A Biographical Study of Its Members (Philadelphia, 1954), p. 54. Cf. Lady Newton, The House of Lyme (London, 1917), p. 165. Brooke had some sort of involvement in the civil war period with Winwick Church in Lancashire where the Leghs had their chapel. Charles Herle the incumbent had been presented to the rich living by the Earl of Derby in 1626. Herle was later to be President of the Westminster Assembly and then an object of distrust in the Royalist fright of 1650-1. The Leghs supported Herle in 1642, and Brooke in the years following bought the rectory, possibly to secure it for Herle (VCH Lancaster, iv. 123-6, 128-9; Newton, House of Lyme, p. 167; Calendar of the . . . Committee for Compounding [hereafter CCC], p. 2539).  

3 This had followed an unusual series of deaths and murders of the intended heirs to Richard's grandfather, Sir Peter Legh, the famous magnate who died in 1636. The story can be traced in Lady Newton's The House of Lyme and in William Beamont, A History of the House of Lyme (Warrington, 1876). The Legh papers are in the Rylands Library.  

4 Ormerod, i. 680.
Lyme Handley with over 3000 acres had been granted by Richard II to Piers de Legh because of the services of his wife’s father Sir Thomas Danyers at Crecy. The estates had grown in the following centuries, largely through marriages, and by 1660 their worth was estimated at £4,000 a year. Legh’s electoral power is indicated by a letter written to him from London in the exciting early months of 1660 when rumours of impending elections were in the air:

I hope your selfe will not waive that service to your country which the exigency requires from you, which is the advice and desire of our most cordial and real friends here: your Interest will carry it against all competitors, whereas if you cast it upon a weaker Interest it may strengthen the factious party of the Country to the Increase of your slavery and oppression. It will likewise concern you to be active and Instrumental for the setting up fitt persons in other places where either your Interest or advice may take place, wherein it will be of much advantage to prevent the factious party by a timely engagement of your friends.

One might wonder why John Bradshaw, who would be considered a radical by someone like Legh, was initially included in the sheriff’s slate. He was very popular, winning first place in the 1654 election, and as Chief Justice of Chester was in a position of much influence. Also, he had been a friend of the Legh family for decades, as had Brereton. Bradshaw’s wife was the sister of Marbury’s late half-brother William, whose widow was now married to Peter Brooke. There had probably been earlier plans but a group of gentry influential in deciding on the slate had met at Northwich on 25 July and had consisted of the sheriff (Philip Egerton), Thomas Stanley of Alderley, Thomas Brereton of Ashley, Marbury, Jonathan Bruen of Bruen Stapleford, Brooke, Roger Wilbraham of Dorfold, and John Arderne of

1 Earwaker, ii. 241. The reward was thus somewhat tardy.
2 The list reporting the intended “Knights of the Royal Oak” gives their estimated yearly incomes (John Richard Magrath (ed.), The Flemings of Oxford (3 vols., Oxford, 1904-24), i. 510). The latest marriage was that of Richard’s father with the co-heiress of the Calveley family, noted Royalists. Legh was related to many of the chief Royalist families. An account book for the period January 1662-January 1633 would put the yearly estate income at £2,678 (Rylands Library, Legh Muniments, Filing Box 52). In 1883 the Leghs had 13,800 acres in Lancashire and Cheshire valued at £45,000 a year (The Complete Peerage, ix. 557).
Harden. Stanley, we know from the 1659 election, was a supporter of Bradshaw. Arderne had married Legh’s other sister the year before and with Brooke probably represented Legh, now barely twenty-two, who seems to have been in London this summer. Egerton and Brereton were sons of Royalists, and although Brereton had been listed as a J.P. since 1650, he had not been very active.

What chance did Bridge’s slate have against the sheriff’s? His late arrival did not add to his influence. Dr. William Denton, the relative and friend of the Verneys, wrote a letter to them which described the situation on 15 August:

Here is a new Major General come downe, his name is Bridges, and I heere, labours to have a great influence upon elecions, and that he hath laid a good foundation to his minde in Staffordshire as he passed. Its thought he will misse of his ayme however. There is like to be strong and stout canvassinge. The sheriff and justices at the last sessions [8 and 9 July] pitched on 4, to which they will unanimously adhere. Sir William Brereton he stands on his owne leggs and labours might and maine, and the Major he intends to prefer others. Bradshaw writt not to be nominated nor chosen.

Bridge would have had a better chance if his candidates had been single-minded in their allegiance. Colonel Croxton probably was, though he was to aid Bradshaw in 1659. But the other three were more interested in closing ranks with the leading gentry of their neighbourhood. Marbury, under the influence of Brooke, would probably not work for Bridge’s men. He, Brooke, and Thomas Brereton, of the in-group which met on 25 July for further consultation, talked with Mainwaring at Northwich on 7 August. Mainwaring had already talked with the sheriff and several Royalists on 5 August. Mainwaring was related to four of the eight men of the 25 July agreement. Hyde, whose mother and grandmother were of families which became Royalist in the civil war, and who was a close friend and neighbour of both Arderne and Legh, had married Colonel Henry Brooke’s sister around 1639, and her sister was on the

1 Mainwaring Diary. Although he does not include himself, one suspects that Mainwaring was there, for practically all the entries in the diary pertain to his location.

2 Memoirs of the Verney Family, iii. 283-4.

3 Mainwaring Diary. It is perhaps noteworthy that Mainwaring never mentioned Worsley’s death.
verge of marrying Hyde's half-brother Lawrence. Hyde wrote Legh a letter in 1657 which appears to look with favour on a Restoration, and he and Arderne did celebrate the event finally in 1660 in Stockport with, as Arderne wrote, "all possible ceremony of Guns, Drums, Bells and te Deums".

Bridge's letter would have the Protector believe that he alone was responsible for Bradshaw's being dropped from the slate. This was an exaggeration. Although, as we have seen, there were grounds to include the President, there were also reasons why he might be unacceptable to the increasingly conservative gentry. In the sixteen-forties he had been counsel for the compounding committee. In 1647 he had called the army "the truest champions and assertors of publique liberty". He had worked to get John Lilburne's sentence reduced and, of course, had presided at the king's trial. He had profited greatly from parliamentary grants of confiscated estates, had dabbled in Crown lands, and had acquired as his present residence the Deanery of Westminster. He had even engaged in such ungentlemanly actions as profiting from "discovered lands", those supposedly confiscated but hidden from the government. He had great influence in the towns of Stockport and Congleton, the latter of which he had served as mayor in the sixteen-thirties and then as High Steward until the preceding May.

Both Bradshaw and Brereton had a great following with the poorer classes and Bradshaw at least with the radical religionists.

1 The marriage was in November 1656 (Earwaker, ii. 46). The Brookes thus became allied with the Leghs and the Hydes in the same year. Further, Hyde's daughter was to marry Legh's first cousin in 1660 (Newton, The House of Lyme, p. 207).
3 The author hopes to provide a biography of Bradshaw, at present lacking. Much information can be quarried from Ormerod and Earwaker. In addition, see the following unpublished works: Rylands English MSS. 745 (Holland Watson, "Memoirs of the family of Bradshaw of Marple in Cheshire") and 746 (Hugh H. C. Bellot, "John Bradshaw, Regicide"). A useful article, which prints some of Bradshaw's letters, is A. Craig Gibson, "Original correspondence of the lord president Bradshaw; with other documents illustrating his personal history" (The Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, Transactions [hereafter Historic Society] (1862), pp. 41-74). On Bradshaw and Crown lands, including those "discovered", see Sidney J. Madge, The Domesday of Crown Lands (London, 1938), pp. 219, 340, 395; on grants see a series of notes in Notes and Queries, vols. cl and cli (1926).
The Quakers spoke kindly of Bradshaw at a time when the Cheshire magistrates, including Thomas Marbury, were noted for their cruelty. Clarendon intimates that the common people of Cheshire did more in the civil war to aid Brereton than they did for the Royalists, perhaps because their traditional allegiance to the great Royalist magnates had been based more on fear than affection. In one instance, the tenants of the Royalist family of Davenport of Bramhall, near Stockport, had deserted to enlist with Hyde, then a zealous friend of Brereton and Duckenfield. Brereton also played a major part in the civil war in Staffordshire, where it appears that he often neglected the feelings of the ruling gentry families.

Some local feeling against Brereton had probably arisen from the fact that after the civil wars he had been appointed Seneschal of the Hundred of Macclesfield and Master Forester (formerly called King's Steward) of Macclesfield Forest which comprised one third of the whole hundred, including the Lyme estate of the Leghs. The Leghs had been accustomed, however, with the Earls of Derby to have it their own way in the forest. But now Brereton, or his deputy Bradshaw, was holding court every month at Macclesfield. Brereton was also High Steward of that town, a post which the noble family of Savage (Earl Rivers, Viscount Savage) enjoyed both before the civil war and after the Restoration. The feeling against Brereton was probably more intense than that suffered by Bradshaw, for Brereton had been the chief instigator in forcing the war at the beginning. He had even imprisoned gentry reluctant to contribute to the Parliamentary cause. Although emotions had possibly subsided, his

1 Swarthmore MSS. i. 149, 189, 195; iv. 16, 66. Marbury in 1654 had ordered watches to be set and the Quakers to be put in stocks.
3 Earwaker, i. 430.
influence had waned each year that he had continued to live near London at the archiepiscopal palace at Croydon.¹

The Cheshire gentry would not look with favour on Brereton's candidacy since he was the outstanding symbol of old animosities which were better forgotten. But others might oppose him for the continuing suggestion that his career offered of political and financial opportunism. He had not been the "patriotic" candidate in 1640 but had quickly become the aggressive commander of 1642. He complained to Parliament about lack of funds with which to pay his troops and then, appointed to oversee the county's money, paid his own men at double rates while others such as Duckenfield went for over a year without a penny. He allowed his troops to plunder and then received compensation from Parliament (the right to receive fines from various Royalists) for damages to his own holdings. It appears that he collected as many lucrative posts as he could. In addition to the Macclesfield ones, there is a suggestion in the State Papers that he obtained the Vice-Admiralship of Chester. In 1651 he put in a bid to farm the Cheshire excise. Brereton might argue that his pre-war moderation was returning. He was appointed to the High Court of Justice to try the king but did not sit. Later he was appointed to the third and fifth Councils of State during the Rump but only attended about one-third of the time.²

But meanwhile he was making all he could from the Macclesfield posts. In 1651 Worsley, the future major-general and a transparently honest though ambitious man, accused Brereton of illegally possessing an estate of £200 which the Earl of Derby had formerly held in the forest. Worsley, of course, was hoping for his discoverer's fee, and after three years the charges against

¹ Beamont, p. 129; Newton, The House of Lyme, p. 220; Earwaker, i. 255, 259; ii. 5, 6, 467; Ormerod, iii. 643; Malbon and Burghall, pp. 243, 249-50; Atkinson, passim. Earwaker (i. 259) says that Brereton occasionally resided at Croydon, was often at Handforth Hall during the Protectorate, but died at Croydon in 1661.

Brereton were dismissed, but the suspicion remains that Brereton was taking advantage of his new position. ¹

Probably Brereton had spent his small fortune in the service of Parliament and felt justified in recouping in any way that he could. We know that he owed a debt of £1,000 in 1650. Perhaps his embarrassing financial situation led Brereton to marry his only son and eldest daughter to children of the Royalist Humble Ward, who had been created Baron Ward of Birmingham in 1644 because of his marriage to the Baroness Dudley. Brereton had taken Dudley Castle (in Staffordshire, overlooking the estates in Worcestershire) in 1646 and either then or later promised Ward that he would be free from sequestration. The county committee was to say later that Brereton arranged a Parliamentary order to this effect only in 1648 " on contracting for the marriage of his daughter with Lord Ward's son ". In the sixteen-fifties was to come the marriage of Brereton's heir Thomas with the youngest Ward daughter. The story has both a pitiful and an ironical twist, for Thomas Brereton and his wife had no children, and the Brereton daughters fought Thomas's assignee for the Brereton property. The irony lies in the sequence of opportunistic weddings: Ward was able to marry the future Baroness Dudley only because his father, a wealthy London goldsmith, agreed to pay some of Lord Dudley's debts; after the civil war, Ward was glad to accept the help of Brereton in becoming free of sequestration, available probably only with the marriage alliances. Since Ward became sheriff of Staffordshire in 1658 and 1659, it would appear that the connections with Brereton had not harmed him. But the more traditional gentry of Cheshire would probably not favour them.²

Events at Lyme during the week before the election make it clear that more was involved in the dropping of Bradshaw's name from the sheriff's slate than Bridge's disfavour or the gentry's

¹ CAM, ii. 1354-5.
² CCC, pp. 1124, 2779-80; The Complete Peerage; Sydney Grazebrook, " The Barons of Dudley", Collections for a History of Staffordshire, vol. ix (1888), pt. 2. For Brereton's Irish land adventure, see CSP, Ireland, 1647-1660, pp. 490, 492, 510, and Adventurers for Land, 1642-1659, pp. 4-5, 290-300. A shaky financial position is possibly indicated by Brereton's selling some of these old nunnery lands around Chester in 1654 (Ormerod, ii. 822-3).
opposition to the President's republicanism or radicalism. Peter Brooke was at Lyme managing Legh's political affairs, and Edward Hyde was also present. Hyde had attended the Major-General's meeting at Middlewich for one day, probably to make a prudent appearance and discover what he could about election plans. It had doubtless come as a great surprise to Hyde to find himself included in Bridge's slate. Brooke had for some time been uncertain as to Bradshaw's readiness to serve if elected and had written the Judge of his misgivings. Henry Bradshaw, managing his brother's candidacy, went to Lyme on the 14th or 15th with the answer hoping to persuade Brooke to include the President in his plans, knowing that the Brooke-Legh-Egerton forces would probably prevail. In a letter to his brother after the election, Henry wrote that Brooke.

twise redd over the conference and seemed to approve of your answere, but questioned whether it were discretion for the Countrey to make Eleccion of you, lest it should be prejudicial unto you, but after I hadd showed him that parte of your lettre, which did declare your resolucion in case of a free Eleccion, he seemed well satisfied, protestinge he would with all his might vote for you.

Henry told Hyde the same day at Lyme that in case of a free election, Bradshaw would not "desert them", but Hyde, more openly antagonistic than Brooke, countered with the statement that a friend of his, a great "Honorer" of the Judge (it was assumed that Henry Brooke, the head of the house and 1654 M.P. was meant) had told him that Bradshaw had declined the county's nomination before and would do it again. Henry Bradshaw was sure that Hyde "freelie vented" this rumour that Bradshaw would decline the election; Henry left Lyme having "then well perceived both he and his sfrerinitie would use all meanes they could to mislead the Countrey". 1

On the days when the Major-General was having his meeting at Middlewich and Brooke and Hyde were managing affairs at Lyme, the sheriff Philip Egerton was visiting his many estates around Egerton in Malpas parish in southwestern Cheshire. Dr. Denton was also staying in this vicinity with Richard Alport of

1 All the details about the Brooke-Hyde management and the election come from this letter of 6 September. It is recorded in Henry's letter book, which was acquired by the Bodleian Library with the Watson MSS. and is now MS. Top. Cheshire e. 3. Abbreviations and initials have been expanded.
Overton who had formerly been married to a sister of Sir Ralph Verney and was now married to Denton's step-daughter. In the letter of the 15th already mentioned, Denton wrote that "the High Sheriff hath been here these 2 daies, and we goe to his house on Tuesday sennight, the Knights will be chosen on Wednesday next and then you shall heare more". What are the implications of this sentence? The word "we" is the problem. Does Denton mean only himself or does he include his wife, or the Alports, or the neighbouring gentry? The last seems the most logical, for the letter is very political, and we know that Egerton was canvassing for his slate. It is unlikely that he would devote the night before the election to entertaining a medical doctor from London.

What people might Egerton have seen in Malpas with an interest in the election? The greatest landowners at this time appear to have been Egerton himself and the old man of Cheshire politics, the Royalist Robert, Lord Cholmondeley, the M.P. of 1625.1 Lord Cholmondeley, recently turned seventy-two, had been rewarded for his efforts in the cause of King Charles by being created Earl of Leinster (Irish peerage) in 1646. After the war Lord Cholmondeley had compounded for the unusually large sum of £7,742 and retired to Bickley Hall in the same parish. But it is unlikely that the fine of "one tenth" had ruined him, for he "sumptuously repaired" the chapel at Cholmondeley House in 1652 and bought the rest of Bulkeley manor before his death in 1659.2

Are there other grounds for thinking that Egerton in working for his slate was drawing on the power of the Cholmondeleys who enjoyed a county member in every generation for over two centuries? One should remember what Worsley had said of him: "a person, whose pleasure and delight is onely in those, who I verilie believe are the most dangerous enemiees wee have in these contyees... I have some ground to believe he is one, that was

1 The huge holdings formerly belonging to the Breretons of Malpas had been squandered by Richard Egerton of Ridley and then confiscated in the act of November 1652. On the other holdings see Daniel and Samuel Lysons, Magna Britannia, vol. ii, pt. 2 (London, 1810), 675-85.
2 Ormerod, ii. 630, 634, 638; Lysons, pp. 681-2.
privy to the last designe." Egerton's main seats were at Egerton, about a mile from Cholmondeley, and Oulton, only five miles from Vale Royal, the establishment of Thomas Cholmondeley, the earl's nephew. Just as Lord Cholmondeley exercised great power before the civil wars, so Thomas would enjoy political success after the Restoration. He was sheriff in 1660 and 1661 and a county member in 1670 following Peter Venables's death. We know that both Egerton and Thomas Cholmondeley worked for the Brooke-Legh forces against Bradshaw in 1659. Although Lord Cholmondeley could not as a Royalist directly participate in the 1656 election, his nephew Thomas was under no such prescription.1

Either one or two important meetings occurred the evening before the election. Dr. Denton's letter indicates a gathering at the sheriff's "house", while Henry Bradshaw's letter reports on a meeting at Chester. It is probable that Egerton had a house in Chester and that he would want to be in town that night, though Denton might have been referring to Oulton Hall, the usual residence, Egerton Hall, or Broxton Hall, purchased by Egerton about this time. These three possibilities would have been about sixteen, fifteen, or ten miles from Chester respectively. But in all likelihood the sheriff's meeting was the same as that outlined in Henry's letter: "The Gentleman Confederates hadd a consultacion togetheer upon Tuesday night att Chester, and agayne next morninge before they went to the Hall to both which I was willinglie a stranger, yet upon strict inquiry heard that they agreed to ioyne all their fforces togetheer for those 4 they afterwards voted ffor."

The four successful candidates were Sir George Booth, Thomas Marbury, Richard Legh and Peter Brooke. Thus, after the

1 Thomas's mother, living at Vale Royal, was Elizabeth Minshull Cholmondeley, Egerton's cousin. The sheriff's first son John, born in May 1656, took for his first wife Mary, the daughter of Thomas Cholmondeley, and for his second the daughter of a later Lord Cholmondeley. Egerton and Thomas Cholmondeley sat for the county (as "Tories") in 1685. Perhaps the tag "then you shall hear more" in Denton's letter is significant. He was writing to Sir Ralph Verney who had been imprisoned the previous summer as a suspected Royalist. Would it not be likely that Verney wanted to know if the "royalist" gentry in Cheshire were making a comeback?
combination of personal and official reasons led to dropping Bradshaw from their plans, the "Gentleman Confederates" decided to include Booth, who had been returned in second place after Bradshaw in 1654. The Booths had been "rising" since 1400 and, continuing to buy land throughout the period, now apparently controlled in East Cheshire much of what the Brookes and Leghs did not, their interest concentrated along the river Bollin for about ten miles. Booth's first wife had been the daughter of the Earl of Lincoln and his second was the daughter of the Earl of Stamford. Clarendon was to write that he "was a person of the best fortune and interest in Cheshire, and for the memory of his grandfather of absolute power with the presbyterians".

Booth's candidacy was probably meant in part to mollify Bradshaw and perhaps Brereton, both of whom had long-standing ties with the family of their erstwhile Parliamentary ally. The homes of both men and many of Brereton's estates lay within the area of Booth's influence. Brereton had been married to Booth's Aunt Susan from 1623 to her death in 1637 and as commander of the Parliamentary forces in Cheshire had worked on many occasions with the young Colonel George Booth in the civil war. But it is possible that Brereton and Booth were at odds, since Booth's grandfather (who died in 1652) had campaigned for the county nomination which Brereton won to the Short Parliament, and Booth himself had wanted the Newton place in 1642 which went to Brereton's friend William Ashhurst. Both of the Booths and Brereton were on the county committee in 1645 when Duckenfield reported "sad division between Sir William Brereton and the rest of our deputy lieutenants and officers". R. N. Dore has written that the other leaders "complained that he did not distribute the pay assigned from London equitably, that he used their forces outside the

1 Earwaker, i. 52-53, 60, 126; Ormerod, i. 530. 2 Rebellion, xvi. 26.
3 CSPD, 1639-1640, p. 590; Newton, The House of Lyme, p. 175.
4 Letter Books . . . of Sir Samuel Luke, pp. 505-6. This had something to do with Brereton's desire for more sacrifices when even he admitted that "Cheshire . . . [was] wholly exhausted" (ibid. p. 526). But the year before, Duckenfield had complained to Fairfax that raising men was difficult, partly because the "Gentlemen" kept them hard at work (The Palatine Note-Book, iii (1883), 193-4).
county, had secret channels of information and influence in London and Westminster and employed low-born men in positions of importance." Dore also says that Brereton fell out with the Booths over a grant to Colonel John Booth, a son of old Sir George, of much of North Cheshire with which to maintain his garrison at Warrington. Brereton accused John Booth of Royalist conspiracy as early as 1645. After 1646 George Booth had been the other county member with Brereton, but Booth's exclusion in 1648 by those who allowed his colleague to rise even higher was doubtless a bitter pill. On the other hand Brereton had treated the Booths' town of Warrington rather gently in the civil war, and when Brereton's son died without heirs in the sixteen-seventies he left his estates to Booth's brother Nathaniel.

The ties of Booth and Bradshaw apparently admit of no ambiguity. Booth's grandfather had placed Bradshaw's father under a great obligation, but the details are not known. The respect which Bradshaw had for the old man was shown in 1650 and 1651, when the Council of State which he headed addressed several letters to Sir George. Everyone knew that John Booth was involved in Royalist plots, but for a long time the Council allowed Sir George to "take recognizance" of his erring son. At the time of Booth's Presbyterian-Royalist rising in the summer of 1659, some of Booth's men plundered Henry Bradshaw's house. The awe in which Booth was held is evidenced by Henry's action. He merely wrote to Booth telling him about the incident and repeating his obligations to Booth and his grandfather. Two days later he wrote to warn him of the approaching Parliamentary army and added, "Be pleased to take notice that our county and Lancashire are the onelie disturbing unsettled ones".

Booth might also have been the "popular" candidate to replace the well-liked Bradshaw. We know that Booth's grandfather was generous with his tenants: in 1642 he offered life estates to the survivors of his men with life estates killed in the

2 VCH Lancaster, iii. 306; Ormerod (old edition), iii. 324-7.
4 Ormerod, i. 525, 531.
Parliament's service, and in 1651 Bradshaw and the Council acknowledged his promise to "bestow gratis a life in their estate to those interested who survive". Young Sir George's being chosen in 1654 to head the committee arbitrating between landlords and tenants probably indicated that the grandson shared some of the popular good will which his grandfather enjoyed.¹

It has been implied that the Gentleman Confederates enlisted Booth, but he possibly took the initiative himself, hoping for a "free parliament", his rallying cry of 1659. Why should not he, only thirty-four, rich, and talented, return to the county seat which had been taken from him at Pride's Purge? Presbyterians were manifestly more favoured in the summer of 1656 than in the winter of 1648, so why not see if the Cromwellians were strong enough now to allow unfettered Parliaments? Regardless of the original initiative, it seems certain that Booth's acceptance of the nomination meant that these thoughts were in his mind.²

Brereton was unfortunate in the place of the election, for he and the city of Chester had been feuding and litigating for a generation concerning the tax status and privileges of the lands of the dissolved Nunnery there which had come to his family. Sir William, apparently a fierce and proud competitor in every way, had then compounded the ill will by attempting to raise troops for Parliament there in 1642. The very Royalist city had

² J. R. Jones ("Booth's Rising of 1659," Bulletin, xxxix (1956-7), 432) wrote that "in the extent of his influence, estates and wealth his family stood second only to the Stanleys". Also, by 1656 he had completed his building and re-modelling tasks at Dunham Massey, including a whole southern wing and a chapel (John Swarbrick, "Dunham Massey Hall", Antiquarian Society, xlii (1925), 53-80). On Presbyterians and Cromwellian parliaments see George R. Abernathy, The English Presbyterians and the Stuart Restoration, 1648-1663 (Philadelphia, 1965), pp. 20-22. Booth's initiative is possibly indicated in a report to Hyde in October which referred to Booth as one of the most consider- able of "our party" and erroneously thought that he had been excluded from the parliament (Calendar of Clarendon State Papers, iii (ed. W. D. Macray, Oxford, 1876), 189). It is significant that Booth's manifesto of August 1659 blasted the failure of the restored Rump to include the pre-1648 members but omitted any reference to the Cromwellian parliaments (Atkinson, pp. 185-6).
taken him in custody briefly on that occasion. Once free, he acted (in the eyes of reporters in the town) as if thirsting for revenge. The deepest feelings came, of course, during the years when Brereton laid siege to the town. Long before the inhabitants (including by this time many Royalists from all over Cheshire) were reduced to a starvation diet, they had "plundered and plucked downe" and burned Brereton's Nuns' House. Between the surrender of the city in February 1646 and the election ten years later, thousands of Chester inhabitants had died during intermittent attacks of the plague, mainly in 1647. This they blamed on the siege years and thus probably on Brereton. Now the election inside the Castle would overlook the Nuns' Gardens, and those who needed to be reminded to hate would be.1

Henry Bradshaw's letter gives us our best account of the election, but its ambiguities make it difficult to relate Wednesday's sequence of events with assurance. The Gentleman Confederates met before going to the Castle, and Henry Bradshaw and Brereton apparently rode over together from East Cheshire. On the outskirts of Chester Brereton took offence at a suggestion from some of Bradshaw's friends that the Judge's forces should help Brereton. The election began in the shire hall, a venerable and grand structure approximately 95 feet by 45 feet in dimension.2 It would appear that after one person, probably Booth, was declared elected, perhaps a majority shouted their preference for Bradshaw while many announced for Brereton. A poll was


2 Lysons, pp. 455-6, 569; Ormerod (old edition), i. 158.
demanded, but as the sheriff had his own plans for the outcome, the court was adjourned to the large yard outside where again the supporters of Bradshaw and Brereton demanded a poll. Probably a majority of those present including most of the voters of the four final victors were for Bradshaw while fewer than half favoured Brereton. The Judge's supporters refused to be quieted until Henry Bradshaw urged them to desist, an action which he explained later in terms of saving Sir William's honour after his brother's had already been "promoted". At some point the sheriff declared the Confederates' slate of Booth, Mbury, Legh, and Brooke elected; this resulted in further complaints from the crowd, and so several of Egerton's group, including Edward Hyde, made speeches hoping to show themselves friendly to the Judge. They apparently used the excuse that his election could only be harmful to Bradshaw.

But let Henry give us his own slightly confusing account:

... I do perceive you have a Hint of our late intended eleccion, the manageing whereof did not a little trouble me, yet did I not hold it safe further to discover my selfe then to testifie my dissentinge from both Sheriffe and his favorites in his most apparent illegall proceedinges: which was to his and their faces both in the Hall and upon the comon excepted against and generallie complained of. It was the indeavor of some of your friends which more tried Sir William Brereton when we were come to fllookersbrooke [a suburb of Chester] to draw Sir William Brereton's friends (which were inconsiderable fewe) and yours (which were a great Number of substantal men), to ioyne together so to advance him and oppose the 4 Nominated Gentlemen, a great Number of whose voters if not the greater halfe (besides the fformer) were also for you but not for him, as did undeniable appear by their second hand and free vote for you [,] both in the Shire hall and upon the Comon, you beinge in both places Nominated by the people of their accord, and without any direction observed, which I sawe was much displeasing to them in the chaire, and some others, but the maioritie of the people continued crying opp your name and requireinge the poll which was denied: But the forementioned indeavor was by me pacified, because I was verie sure it could not possiblie be brought about, for Sir William's honor att that tyme [,] and yours was evidintlie promoted, although my neighbor Edward Hyde would have perswaded the people otherwais which whilst he was speakinge he heard of from me.... [The Gentleman Confederates voted for their slate], which when they hadd (as no doubt they thought) prevailed in, heareinge howe unsatisfied and discontented the Generaltie of ffreeholders and some Gentlemen were, their Grandees and some others of the Gange smoothed opp the matter with giveinge seeminge (but unsatisfactorie) plausible reports of and towards you: and some of them said they would by their lettre give you a respective account of their acknowledgements then transactinge, which I dare vouch they never can, and that some of them did never so fully unmaske themselves, and if right hadd been done they
would further have been laid open. I stood upon the ground with many other
(good men I hope) until the crowd returned into the city, and since then have
never seen nor heard from any of them:.

I am persuaded our country will not stir but suffer themselves to be thus
deprived and trampled upon, and I doubt Sir William Brereton can not [can?]
because it is thought he would have lost it by the poll: I shall by the first trusty
messenger let you know whom I have observed to be your perfect enemies. 
Sir George Booth sent me half a buck yesterday and is now at Dunham.

It is thus clear that Bradshaw and Brereton had retained considerable popularity. All did not agree that Brereton would have
lost the poll. In a volume of Brereton's manuscript collections
there is a draft of a probably unsent petition to parliament, part
of which is as follows:

The humble petition of divers freeholders in the county of Chester in the name
of themselves and many hundreds of freeholders of the same county, sheweth,
that whereas at the late general assembly of freeholders for that county, held
the 20th of August last at the castle of Chester, for the electing of foure knights
to serve in this present parliament for the said county [Sir William Brereton was
elected] by the greater number of freeholders, and such as had voices at that
election as wee conceive, wherein yet finding opposition from Phillip Egerton,
esq., high sheriff of that county and others, his complices engaged in his
designe urging to have others chosen and exclude the said Sir William Brereton
from being elected. Your petitioners for clearing the truth and asserting their
election of him did several times by themselves and other freeholders of the
same county demand and earnestly press the said sheriff for the poll,
nevertheless the said sheriff in pursuance of his said design wilfully refused and
would not grant the poll, but hath made returne of knights to serve for the
same county, omyting the said Sir William Brereton, though he was duly
elected as aforesaid.

Thus did the sheriff, appointed by Cromwell for both 1655 and
1656, work to aid the traditional gentry.

One can only comment on the controversy concerning the
effects of the new county franchise under the instrument of
government, which allowed those worth £200 in real or personal
property to vote. In many cases this change resulted in a rather
motley collection of people at the polls, and we know that many
Quakers voted in the 1659 Cheshire election for Bradshaw to the

1 Printed in Croston, p. 157. Mr. Dore has kindly informed me that the
volume referred to by Croston is the one in the Chester Public Library described
in the appendix to his "Early Life" article (sup. p. 414 n. 1). He has also related to
me the gist of the two other 1656 references in the volume, which make it clear
that there was a feeling on the part of some that Brereton had been cheated.
dismay of Brooke and Mainwaring, but in 1656 the reports have an almost sixteenth-century ring. If the franchise resulted in a sizeable increase in voters, why would the sheriff have tried to hold the election in the old hall? Of course an early packing of the hall by the supporters of the "Gentleman Confederates" might have been part of Egerton's plan and his "apparent illegall proceedinges". But Henry's letter mentions only that "the Generalitie of freeholders and some Gentlemen" were for Bradshaw. I find it difficult, however, to believe that Bradshaw could have found such pronounced and openly-voiced support from pre-Instrument type voters and hard to understand why the "Gentlemen" would have gone to such lengths to pacify the crowd unless the electorate had been noticeably increased. Brereton had been elected three times under the old franchise, but even the last election, to the Long Parliament in 1640, had been some years before his wartime radicalism had emerged. The petition in 1656 for Brereton does mention the "freeholders, and such as had voyces at that Election". I suspect that much of the support for Bradshaw and Brereton came from a newly enfranchised group which had profited from the revolution, a group which could perhaps be called in more modern terms a middle or even lower middle class situated in such places as Stockport, Congleton, Macclesfield, Nantwich, and even Chester itself.

One of the more important implications of Henry Bradshaw's summary is that the election was a "free" one. Bridge was still in Lancashire, and no reference is made to the army troop or Croxton's castle guard, which the Major-General had mentioned in his letter of 15 August. There is, indeed, no mention of even a letter from Westminster read aloud to warn people about Bradshaw, which Ludlow thought he remembered. We have seen that the letter to the Verneys referred to such a message a week or so before the election, but this would seem to fall under the head of normal influence. It appears, then, that the effective block to Bradshaw's election was the sheriff's refusal of the poll. But Egerton had been working for weeks for his own slate, and since Brereton was also denied the poll, it is likely that the "Sheriff and his favourites" were more interested in defeating those with radical tendencies than those whom Cromwell
specifically distrusted. There remains the possibility that Egerton was acting on orders from Bridge, but Henry Bradshaw’s report that the nomination of his brother “was much displeasing to them in the chaire, and some others” would seem to indicate an unofficial annoyance. The short duration of Bridge’s visit to Cheshire points to the probability that he was not only impressed by, but willing to acquiesce in, the arrangements of the Brooke-Legh-Egerton forces. The fact that much of the later exclusion was based on reports of the major-generals and the fact that none of the Cheshire M.P.s was excluded point to this same conclusion.

Also interesting is the implication that Bradshaw had decided to participate actively in this parliament rather than make gestures of defiance upon leaving as in 1654. If, as seems likely, other republicans felt this same determination to wield influence from within rather than from without (shown especially in the second session in 1658 and in Richard Cromwell’s Parliament in 1659), the action of the Council in excluding many of them in 1656 becomes more understandable.\(^1\) Allied to Bradshaw’s attitude is the intimation that the county did not want to waste a member for purposes of gesture. It does not seem that any of the four elected in 1654 (Bradshaw, Booth, Colonel Henry Brooke and John Crewe of Utkinton) took an active part in that parliament. The mood of the county now, it seems, called for a testing of Cromwell’s intentions if not for active participation. Mainwaring recorded in his diary that on 4 September “my selfe and most of the rest of the gentry mette the foure parliament men for this county at Knottesford”. Booth probably would not have absented himself in 1656 if there had not been an exclusion. Legh, Brooke and Marbury remained, and the latter two were among the twenty-nine who voted on 29 September in favour of bringing in those excluded, while Brooke spoke in favour of them in December.\(^2\) As they were still in London the following April, one presumes that they were waiting on the outcome of the

\(^1\) Sir Arthur Haselrig appears to have been reluctant in 1654 and eager in 1656 (cf. CSPD, 1654, p. 286, with TSP, v. 296).

\(^2\) Bodl. MS. Tanner 52, pp. 166, 170; Diary of Thomas Burton (4 vols., London, 1828), i. 190, 194.
Humble Petition and hoping that Cromwell would accept the Crown. Brooke's enthusiasm for service perhaps went too far in the next election, for Richard's Parliament, when he vowed that he would spend £1,000 and defray the expenses of any supporter. Considering the similarity in many ways of the 1654 and 1656 M.P.s in Cheshire, we are forced to the conclusion that the coming of age of Legh in 1655 had more to do with the changes than the introduction of the major-generals in that year. This interpretation is not damaged by the similarity of the 1656 and 1659 elections, the latter of which even Ludlow admitted to be "free".

Are the families represented in the 1656 election of traditional parliamentary character? Legh's grandfather had sat for the county in 1601; Brooke's much older half-brother had sat for Chester in 1597; Booth's father had sat for the county in 1624. The most the Marburys could claim was the office of sheriff in 1621. Brereton had sat in all parliaments from 1628 to 1653. The unanswerable question is the degree of participation of other Parliamentary families. It will be remembered that the Instrument of Government excluded from voting or being elected for the first four triennial parliaments those who had acted against the Parliament since 1641 (unless their affections had obviously changed). Most Royalists could not, therefore, be seen at the election. But this did not mean that others eligible to vote but under their influence could not participate. The only confiscation of a former M.P.'s estates had been that of Sir Thomas Aston of Aston, the county member with Brereton for the Short Parliament and Royalist commander who died in 1645. Many Cheshire Royalists had been forced to compound, and some of the fines had been severe in their consequences, but

---

1 Letter from Henry Bradshaw to Legh, 10 April 1657 (Rylands Library, Legh Muniments, Filing Box 64).
2 Newton, The House of Lyme, p. 199. Brooke discloses some of his attitudes in a speech against the Quakers and in arguing for the settling of an income of £500 on the Earl of Derby (Burton, i. 171; ii. 80).
3 W. Duncombe Pink's unpublished biographical notes on the members of the Tudor and Stuart Parliaments, in the Rylands Library (hereafter Pink MSS.).
4 Firth and Rait, ii. 623; Ormerod, i. 723-4. Aston's son was only sixteen years old in 1656.
the princely power of such families as the Venables, Barons of Kinderton, or the Cholmondeleys, was probably not substantially reduced. Lord Cholmondeley and Peter Venables, M.P. in 1640 and 1661, were both great-uncles of Richard Legh. Some Royalists, no doubt, were stepping very warily in 1656 as a number of them, including Venables, had been imprisoned during the 1655 risings. Among them was Sir Richard Grosvenor of Eaton, a fairly close cousin of Legh and son of the county member for 1621, 1626 and 1628; he had been seriously in debt for years and harassed to the extent of seeking refuge in a cottage on his estate. Although the estates were reportedly worth £3,000 a year to his son in 1660, the heirs were not able to regain the county membership in the seventeenth century. His son Roger, the son-in-law of Sir Thomas Middleton, worked for the Legh-Brooke slate in 1659, and one could easily view Richard Legh in 1656 as the young front for the resurgent Royalists.

Some old Parliamentary families were definitely involved behind the scenes in 1656. We have seen that Thomas Brereton of Ashley, the son of a Royalist forced to compound, had served as J.P. in the sixteen-fifties and had participated in one of the early conferences for nominating the 1656 M.P.s. He was the grandson of the county member for 1624, and his family was a younger branch of the Royalist Breretons of Brereton who had supplied a member in 1614 and 1621. Roger Wilbraham of Dorfold, also

1 Venables's situation is difficult to ascertain. He had compounded for £6,150, the only Cheshire figure over £2,500 besides Lord Cholmondeley's. But while the latter's estates do not appear to have been troubled after the fine (CAM, ii. 729), the last entry for Venables in the CAM (i. 433) indicates that the estates were to be sequestered for not paying his assessment. They had been listed as sequestered in April 1648 (CCC, p. 801). He had originally been assessed at £2,000, indicating at a rate of one-twentieth an estate of £40,000, while Lord Cholmondeley, assessed at £4,000, was thus reputed to be worth £80,000. My feeling is that Venables was enjoying his estates by 1656 (cf. CSPD, 1654, p. 303), keeping out of sight following his imprisonment of 1655, and supporting Legh indirectly. But see CCC, p. 1184, for a suggestion that he lost his estates in 1651.

2 Ormerod, ii. 831, 836-7; Croston, pp. 321-2, 324, 327; Hanshall, p. 36; Pink MSS.; CCC, pp. 1185-7. His grandson Thomas, who succeeded him in 1664, sat five times for the city of Chester at the end of the century.

3 Pink MSS. Mainwaring's Diary shows one meeting of the Royalist branches of the Breretons earlier in the year.
at the 25 July nominating conference, probably represented the elder branch of Nantwich which had furnished a 1614 member. Mainwaring was also closely involved with all the branches of the Wilbrahams, including the Royalist branch of Woodhay.¹

The inference that many Royalist families were indirectly represented in the 1656 election, through the relations of the sheriff, the successful candidates, Mainwaring, Hyde, and the conferees of 25 July, is strengthened when one considers the sides drawn in the 1659 election in which again the Legh-Brooke forces were opposing Bradshaw. This time, however, there were only two places, and Legh quickly won the first. Then Brooke and Bradshaw settled down to a three days' contest over the other, finally resolved when the sheriff, now a Bradshaw ally, moved the election to Congleton which was the centre of the Judge's influence.² Henry Bradshaw, providing his brother with another election summary, wrote that

... I observed at Chester and Congleton... that at the former place there did appear against us Lord Kilmurrey and Lord Brereton [of Brereton, the Royalist], Roger Grosvenor, Thomas Mainwaring, Philip Egerton, Henrie Brooke, Thomas Cholmondeley, yonge Mr. Delves, William Massie, John Arderne,—lea and Dr. Bentley, and all but the first and last at Congleton and of them Grosvenor, Man­waring, Egerton and Arderne of the Quorum: promoters and assistantes domi Lord Savage, Lord Bridgewater, Thomas Brereton and Edward Hyde.³

The "Rising" of Sir George Booth in August 1659 provides other evidence of the attitudes of some of our actors. Legh, who had been named on a Royalist exile's list of English supporters as

¹ Ormerod, iii. 55, 345-6; Mainwaring Diary.
² Newton, The House of Lyme, pp. 199-202, prints some interesting documents concerning this election.
³ Letter dated 24 January 1659, in Bodl. MS. Top. Cheshire e. 3. Also bearing on the 1656 election is Henry's earlier remark in this letter about Legh and Brooke: "whatever they or either of them pretend, they are no frends to you nor me." This letter, the Legh papers, and Sir George Booth's diary, partially transcribed in B.M. Harleian MS. 1929, appear to be the chief sources for the 1659 election. One of the Lyme documents shows that Mainwaring was perhaps the most aggressive supporter of Brooke in this election. Booth wrote that "the most part of the auncient gentry stood for Mr. Leigh of Lime and Mr. Peter Brookes in opposition of the later other Justices stood for the Judge Jo Bradshaw". The reason no doubt was partly due to Bradshaw's insistence that Quakers be allowed to vote. Mainwaring and Bradshaw exchanged rather sharp letters after the election.
early as mid-1658, was imprisoned in Yorkshire in May, precluding his participation. Joining notably with Booth were Henry and Peter Brooke and Marbury. The list of prisoners taken included the name of Philip Egerton.

Many of the 1656 participants were received with favour at the Restoration. Legh and Mainwaring were intended Knights of the Royal Oak, a thwarted project of 1660 to recognize loyalty and wealth. Brooke, Egerton and Arderne were knighted; Henry Brooke, Mainwaring and Thomas Stanley were created baronets; Booth received a barony, and Legh bought one. Mainwaring received several profitable offices from Charles II. The lists of post-Restoration Deputy-Lieutenants include Legh, Egerton, Henry and Peter Brooke, Marbury, and Thomas Brereton.

Perhaps other conclusions can be drawn from the Cheshire story. The gentry who began to appear on the committees and peace commissions after the second civil war mostly came from the western and central regions of Cheshire, areas not so immediately and ardently Parliamentarian as the easternmost region had

---

1 A list of Royalists for each county was included in Colonel Roger Whitley's notebook, written at Bruges in 1658 before Cromwell's death. This book is Rylands Library, Mainwaring MSS., Book 24. Mainwaring's eldest son married Whitley's eldest daughter in 1676. For a discussion of the notebook see J. R. Jones, "Booth's Rising", passim.

2 Newton, The House of Lyme, p. 204.

3 Ormerod, i. lxv-lxvi.

4 Magrath, p. 510; Pink MSS.; Earwaker, i. 475; ii. 599; Croston, p. 383; William Beamont, "The Fee of Makerfield; with an account of some of its Lords, the Barons of Newton", Historic Society, xxiv (1871-2), 81-130; xxv (1872-3), 55-112; VCH Lancaster, iv. 134. Legh had been buying in Newton since at least 1655 (ibid. i. 375).

5 Rylands English MS. 716.

6 Sir Philip Lucy Egerton, "Some Remarks on the Lord Lieutenants of the County Palatine of Chester from the Restoration to 1690", Historic Society, ii (1849), 126. Something should be said of this group's later connection with parliament. Booth and Mainwaring sat for the county in the 1660 convention. Booth's son Henry was elected to fill a vacancy in 1678 and sat in the Exclusion Parliaments (styled "Whig"). Egerton was elected to the first of these and in 1685 ("Tory"). Mainwaring's son John ("Whig") sat in six successive parliaments from 1689 to 1702. W. Duncombe Pink and A. B. Beavan, "Parliamentary Representation of Cheshire", Local Gleanings, i (1879-80), 371-81, 405-20, 458-71.
been.\(^1\) It is likely that the people whom Worsley reported as anxious to "transport" the sixty or so disaffected came from this group and from the other new leaders of Chester, Nantwich, Congleton, and other towns. It seems reasonable to expect the people from Royalist areas possessed of sufficient property and family to have claims on greater social recognition to endeavour to perpetuate a situation freed of many disadvantages. Such were the Malbons of Bradeley, near Nantwich, of an ancient yeoman family, who supplied the war diarist Thomas Malbon, a former steward to Sir Ranulph Crewe of Crewe and a commissioner in Nantwich during the civil wars. His sons George and Thomas were officers in the regiments formed in 1650 and militia commissioners in the Protectorate. Ormerod reported, however, that the arms of the family were disallowed by Dugdale in 1664.\(^2\) Worsley, of a rising Manchester family, worked hard for a moral revolution and religious tolerance.\(^3\) Thus, in Cheshire it appears that the predominant military party of the early Protectorate attempted to effect its work by using major-generals in connection with minor gentry.

This, as we have seen, does not seem to have been Bridge's outlook. The people he nominated were of a traditional county gentry aspect, gentry who had been for Parliament and who were willing to serve as Cromwellian J.P.s, commissioners, or sheriffs

\(^1\) Comparison of lists already noted with family articles in Ormerod. Examples would appear to be the Alderseys of Spurstow and Chester (on whom see C. G. O. Bridgeman, A Genealogical Account of the Family of Aldersey [London, 1899]), the Glegges of Gayton, the Glegges of Grange, the Greenes of Poulton Lancelyn, the Gregges of Hapsford, and the Manleys of Manley. Although old families, they achieved, I believe, more prominence than they had enjoyed before.

\(^2\) Malbon and Burghall, p. xxii; Ormerod, iii. 319. But the Malbons had been styled "gentlemen" for over a generation and had paid a fine in 1631 for refusing knighthood. The Malbons are not listed in the 1664 disclaimer list printed by J. Paul Rylands, "Disclaimers at the Heralds' Visitations", Historic Society, xliii (1891), 63-90, but the following note is in one edition of this visitation: "No proofe made of these arms" (Cheshire Visitation Pedigrees 1663, ed. Arthur Adams (Harleian Society, vol. xciii, 1941), p. 75). On the Malbon family see the introduction to Malbon and Burghall; James Hall, A History of the Town and Parish of Nantwich (Nantwich, 1883), pp. 483-6; and the Cheshire Sheaf, xxi (1924), 75-76.

\(^3\) The Quakers reported him "very lovinge" and willing to "take especiall care to protect us" (Swarthmore MSS., i. 1).
but who tended to be intolerant, very conservative, and not at all willing to transport their royalist friends and relatives.

But this compromise with tradition was not sufficient. For these wealthy Cromwellians were not willing to contest parliament places with a group, based on even greater wealth, on which the gentry as a whole had agreed. That Cromwell was in favour of this situation seems clear by his appointing Egerton to two terms as sheriff and appointing Mainwaring in December of 1656. It is clear from Mainwaring's diary that life in the county, at least for the ruling class, was continuing on a level of litigation, bowling, dining, and magisterial function remindful of older days. Cromwell knew that the ordinary contacts of gentry life would tend gradually to bring the moderates into at least acceptance of his regime if a good measure of freedom and prosperity could be assured. The knowledge that Royalist sons were participating in the election and the implication that their relatives were also must have made the Protector think, for a moment at least, that in Cheshire he was succeeding.