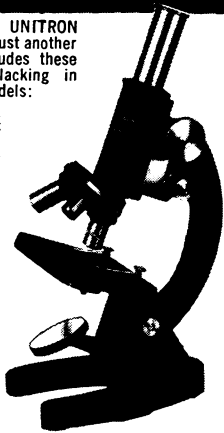


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SOCIOLOGY

Puritans Against Sex? No, Says Sociologist

► THE MASSACHUSETTS BAY Puritans were not anti-sex. As long as it was in its place, they had a healthy, matter of fact attitude toward it.

The place of sex, said Dr. Joseph Botond-Blazek, a social scientist who wrote a doctoral dissertation on the subject for the University of California at Los Angeles history department, was within the boundaries of sanctified wedlock where it was viewed as God's way of perpetuating humanity.

"But exactly because sex had such a high and even exalted function, it was liable to 'base corruptions' which not only threatened the this-worldly welfare and the after-life salvation of the sinner but also endangered the covenanted community," Dr. Botond-Blazek wrote.

He included among his research materials private letters and diaries of Puritans.

His aim was to "probe sympathetically into the Puritan mind and try to understand from their viewpoint why they felt justified and even obligated to be their brothers' keeper and to enforce 'the good life' on each other and the non-church members by legal means."

In what is believed to be the first systematic study of the Puritans' sex attitudes, Dr. Botond-Blazek also examined sermons, laws and court records of divorce, non-capital and capital cases. Punishable offenses included premarital sexual relations and even suspicious company-keeping.

Dr. Botond-Blazek, now an assistant professor in the department of social sciences at California State Polytechnic College in Pomona, concluded that Puritans felt any moral breach endangered their community — and this they could not risk.

"The tightly-knit covenanted community," he wrote, "was in their view essential in order to achieve their main purposes: the erection of the City of God in the hostile wilderness of the American continent."

• Science News Letter, 85:20 Jan. 11, 1964

ZOOLOGY

Deer Hunters Aid Science In Search for Infection

► MICHIGAN DEER HUNTERS have been combining the pleasure of the hunt with aiding scientists in their search for infected deer herds.

The hunters were praised for their outstanding cooperation by Dr. Dominic L. DeGiusti of Wayne State University, Detroit, who reported his findings on the ten-year study to the American Society of Parasitologists meeting in Chicago.

Of 836 heads of deer examined, 436, or 56.4% had an infection in the thin membranes (meninges) covering the brain and spinal cord. The infection rate was somewhat higher among females than in males, but the rate of infection among all the deer has increased since the study began in 1953.

• Science News Letter, 85:20 Jan. 11, 1964

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