

NICHOLAS MURFORD, YARMOUTH SALT-PRODUCER

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SUMMARY

Salt was essential to Yarmouth's herring curing industry and this dependence, especially when imports were blocked by war, encouraged both local attempts at manufacture and schemes for the monopolisation of the supply by speculators licensed by the Crown. Nicholas Murford's attempts to make salt at Cobholm by Yarmouth and the opposition of other patentees are described. His grandiose scheme involving a monopoly of salt importation from Berwick to Southampton came to nothing, however, and Thomas Horth, another Yarmouth entrepreneur, secured the patent. Murford's career was finished and his saltworks, incorporated in 1636, was closed down three years later.

Salt was of vital importance to Yarmouth's economy since, without adequate supplies, the port's fishing industry could collapse. However, white salt was produced in north-eastern England, at the Shields, Scottish salt was available and foreign sources could be tapped. Bay salt, from the Bay of Bourgneuf, and Spanish salt, regarded by the fishermen as of the highest quality, could be secured. Yarmouth's need for salt was increasing. In the late 1550s, it imported over 700 weys of foreign salt; by 1605-1606, it brought in over 1,000 weys of Spanish (Iberian) salt alone. By 1577, it was claimed the port needed 2,000 weys of salt per year, a figure that had allegedly grown, by the 1630s, to 8,000 weys for 'sea uses' alone, which was 'almost certainly an exaggerated figure'. Nonetheless, Yarmouth's need for salt was obvious. Furthermore, dependence on substantial foreign supplies was dangerous since such imports could be blocked by civil unrest or war. Salt would become scarce and prices would rise. Indeed, between 1544 and 1562, prices doubled and by the mid 1580s, had doubled again.¹ It is hardly surprising that local entrepreneurs attempted to produce salt.

In 1582, two Yarmouth citizens acquired a patent for salt manufacture but nothing came of it. A year later, William Harborne, whose son gained fame as England's first ambassador to Turkey, 'obtained a monopoly' of salt manufacture at Yarmouth. Any importation of white salt was also prohibited. Harborne was a man of some standing in the port, becoming a common councilman in 1549 and twice serving as bailiff, in 1557 and 1572. Chosen a burgess for Yarmouth in the Parliament of 1576, his election was later rescinded. Harborne's refined salt, however, was not suitable for salting herrings and the salt he produced at his pans in Walberswick was of little value. In 1586, another prospective producer, Thomas Wilkes, gained a patent for manufacture at King's Lynn, Boston and Hull. His patent, however, aroused opposition, especially from the merchants of King's Lynn, who forecast a doubling of the price of salt should his patent succeed. William Harborne, meanwhile, had died in 1588 and, upon his return from Turkey, his son William, who settled at Mundham, Norfolk, eventually tried to either revive his father's patent or win a new patent for himself in 1597. He wanted a patent for 'making salt upon salt' (refined salt) in Norfolk and claimed he had already erected houses and pans for salt production at Yarmouth and had purchased the other equipment necessary for manufacture. He sought the exclusive right to produce salt for Yarmouth, King's Lynn and Norfolk and demanded, too, a ban on any import of foreign salt. His patent, he claimed, would be of great value to the realm.²

Lord Burghley notified Yarmouth of Harborne's scheme and the port quickly made clear its strong opposition to any ban on the importation of foreign salt. Yarmouth's corporation did

not oppose Harborne's plans to make salt; indeed, it hoped he would produce quality salt that could be bought at reasonable prices but Yarmouth was steadfast in demanding its right to procure its salt 'in all places which they used and accustomed' before Harborne's patent was awarded. For his part, Harborne claimed that, without a ban on importation, his plans for salt production would fail. Indeed, he went so far as to claim that all Yarmouth wanted was control over his works.³

Harborne heartily defended his demand for a ban on foreign salt. Imports could be easily blocked by war. Furthermore, there were many advantages to local production. Yarmouth's fishing fleets could be readily supplied; recent Dutch settlers in Yarmouth could be profitably employed. His works could be easily extended along the shore and, so he claimed, his production might successfully challenge Scottish producers. Yarmouth would profit; its merchants could compete with the Dutch carrying trade in salt. Harborne welcomed an inspection of his works and even urged that his patent include a provision whereby the Crown, should salt prices rise without cause, could reduce the price.⁴ But Harborne's efforts, it seems, were of little significance and his patent was later revoked. His attempt, however, foreshadowed the activities of two other Yarmouth residents, Nicholas Murford and alderman Thomas Horth, in the 1630s.⁵

Nicholas Murford's origins are obscure. However, in November 1626, Murford, formerly of Aldeburgh and a rope maker, petitioned Yarmouth's assembly for a lease of grounds 'without the southgates' where he intended to erect houses for his rope-making business. He was turned down but, some nine months later in August 1627, he tried again and, after a committee reviewed his proposal, permission was finally granted in May 1628.⁶ Murford apparently prospered in his trade and in February 1630 was admitted a free burgess of the port. Subsequently, in early June 1631, he sought assembly approval for an eight year 'lease . . . of the grounds without the Southgates' on which he intended to build a 'stovehouse with other houses' and additional facilities for his rope-making. His plan was rejected although the assembly agreed that he could continue on his present site for his customary 20s. annual rent.⁷

Why Murford's request was rejected remains a mystery. It seems very unlikely that his proposal had anything to do with an attempted acquisition of the property of another Yarmouth freeman and merchant, Samuel Doubleday, who, three years earlier, had acquired a lease on ground 'beyond the haven's mouth' for salt production.⁸ However, Murford's thoughts may have already been turning to the possibility of making salt at Yarmouth. By the late 1620s and early 1630s, thanks to war with Spain and France, Yarmouth was finding it hard to secure its needed supplies of foreign salt.

Indeed, Yarmouth's concern over salt supplies for its fishing fleets had already come to the Privy Council's attention. In late September 1630, months before peace was made with Spain, Yarmouth's assembly petitioned the Council to block the export of English salt overseas.⁹ Other ports joined Yarmouth and the Council acted, barring the export of English salt in December.¹⁰ Six months later, however, an even greater threat to Yarmouth's salt supplies emerged.

In June 1631, the assembly was 'credibly informed' that a group of 'grand projectors' were seeking a monopoly on the manufacture and sale of English salt 'so as no other salt shall [be] brought into the land or used therein but salt made in England'. And Yarmouth knew what such a patent would mean. Foreign salt would be, if obtainable at all, extremely expensive; prices for salt, already high in the assembly's estimation, would rise even further. The recent war had driven prices up; a wey of English salt cost around 26s. 8d., French salt was priced at 30s. to 40s. per wey while the best Spanish or Iberian salt had already reached 60s. the wey. Peace with Spain had led Yarmouth to hope it would be readily 'served with all such sorts of

salt again' but a salt monopoly would wreck such expectations. The worried assembly promptly sent off a delegation to London to make clear the port's opposition to such a monopoly.¹¹

Yarmouth's fears, at least in 1631, proved groundless but, by late 1634 and through 1635, it found itself engaged in a futile effort to block the speculators who sought the salt monopoly. They had won a patent for salt manufacture in Ireland in 1627 and, despite their failure there, their promises of an England free from dependence on foreign salt and high profits for the Crown overcame the repeated objections of Yarmouth and its fishermen, the fishermen of Norfolk and Suffolk and of the fishmongers and salt merchants of London. Their efforts were in vain. In late December 1635, the salt patent was awarded to the projectors by the King.¹² The patent had been, and would be, of grave and continuing interest to Yarmouth's assembly, fishermen and merchants. It was also of great interest to Nicholas Murford, rope maker of Yarmouth.

Murford had, probably in the early 1630s, turned his attention to salt making and had, in 1632, obtained a patent from the King for the production of salt. He and his partner, Christopher Hanworth, had received £600 from William Sandys 'to be used in salt work'. And, like Yarmouth, its fishermen and their allies, Murford was upset at the prospect of another salt patent. To protect his rights, he reminded the King of his patent and claimed that his experiments had already shown that he could make better salt at less cost than his northern competitors. Murford and Hanworth had already spent £5,000 setting up salt works at Yarmouth. He also had his own proposition for the King. Charles I should become the sole trader of salt in England, Scotland and Ireland. Murford's works could deliver the salt at such a low cost that the King could sell it at 10s. profit per wey and, since Murford estimated some 80,000 weys of salt were used annually, the royal profit would be substantial indeed. The salt makers of Scotland and Newcastle could either be included or go out of business as Murford increased production. To further tempt the King, Murford predicted annual profits of at least £40,000 to £50,000 from his plan.¹³

Given Charles' financial anxieties, it is not surprising that Murford's offer won his attention. For the 'grand projectors', however, it was just another obstacle in their quest for the patent. Their response to Murford was prompt; they informed the King that they had already brought many salt makers at the Shields into their company and promised that by the following autumn they would be paying the King 'upon every wey of salt' they produced and sold. They were surprised by Murford's offer which 'pretended to be more beneficial' to the King but, given their already great expenses, they wanted royal permission to continue with their undertaking. Murford could do what he liked; they even promised to 'resign their undertaking' should his scheme prove to be more advantageous to the King.¹⁴

The committee of trade took Murford's proposal seriously and even considered restraining salt production 'in England or Scotland after the way of Murford's invention'. Murford could be sent off to 'the western parts of England and Wales' to choose sites for salt manufacture that would serve Ireland. A production goal of 60,000 weys per year was thought feasible, once saltworks had been built and production begun. Salt could be exported to Ireland providing additional royal revenue.¹⁵ But such suggestions proved impracticable and, in the end, Murford's proposal was abandoned. The new patentees, the Saltmakers of the North and South Shields, got their patent. Unlike Yarmouth, however, Murford did win something from the affair. The new patent specifically exempted 'the works of Nicholas Murford and Christopher Hanworth' from the authority of the new company although the King promised he would try to bring Murford and his partner 'to a conformity to the government of this society'.¹⁶ And to Murford's discomfort, the King tried to keep his promise.

Murford, however, would not buckle under royal pressure even though he was threatened with a *quo warranto* against his patent. He took the offensive; his 'saltmakers of Great Yarmouth' petitioned the Crown against any increase in the price of coal, needed for salt production, posed by the prospect of the King's agreement to limit 'the buying and shipping of any coals from Newcastle', the result of another of the monopolies that flourished in Charles' reign.¹⁷ In April 1636, Murford reminded the King of his patent and of the excellent quality of his salt, manifestly better than anything the patentees could provide. Furthermore, his salt had a unique advantage: it could be produced in the ports that used it. His great expenses in building his works at Yarmouth had paid off; he had shown that his innovation in salt making worked. He recalled his interview with the King, at royal command, in February 1635 when, despite Murford's misgivings over doing business with the state which could 'embroil or ruin' him, he had accepted the King's command to 'rely on his royal word'. Murford's works had been inspected by a royal surveyor and a charter of incorporation prepared in May 1636. The Society of Yarmouth Salters had begun. Murford still hoped, despite the actions of the patentees of the North and South Shields, that his Yarmouth works 'may be forever free' given the money and work already expended in perfecting his 'invention'. Murford only wanted more time so that other saltworks based on his discovery could be established in England.¹⁸ Events certainly kept Murford's enterprise in favour.

Yarmouth, as Leonard Holmes alleged in 1636, was having great difficulty in securing salt. The patentees at the Shields were having trouble; prices were rising and, by late 1636, it was becoming increasingly clear that they could not meet their obligations.¹⁹ Thus, in mid-January 1637, the King intervened to expand Murford's operations. A number of Norfolk land owners, including William Paston and Sir John Wentworth, held marshlands judged necessary to the salt making of Murford and Hanworth. Such lands, near Yarmouth, 'and all other of like nature (by opinion of our learned counsel)' belonged to the King who needed the land for salt production and would grant it to Murford and his partner who were, the King assured the landowners, ready to make some payment. However, if a prompt settlement was not made, the King would employ 'the power of our right, least the service, and the general good intended hereby do suffer prejudice'.²⁰

The landowners must have been shocked; they were certainly opposed to the King's blatant attack on their property rights. Wentworth and Paston protested that the land in question was their 'proper inheritance' and, if lost, would greatly harm the inhabitants of Great Yarmouth who would lose valuable pasture 'without which they cannot subsist.' The land was not 'overflowed by the sea' and, if turned over to salt production, adjacent land, described as 'sterile and upland grounds' would become unprofitable without 'the benefit of these marsh grounds.' The King should appoint a commission of local 'persons of quality' to investigate the land which was unsuitable for salt production and to consider the damage that Yarmouth and its inhabitants would suffer should the land be lost. 'And in the meantime,' they continued, the marshes should not 'be disturbed by power of any former directions'. The King ordered the Privy Council to study the matter; nothing more was apparently heard of this remarkable proposal.²¹

The King's endeavour to secure marshland for Murford's use presumably coincided with Murford's efforts to expand salt production at Yarmouth. In a letter to one of his undertakers, Murford recalled the history of his works and explained and defended his manufacturing process. He was, of course, determined to put the best interpretation on his activities. After many experiments, he discovered a way to produce salt that was superior to any salt made at the Shields or in Scotland. His was a less expensive method, using far less 'coals, pans &c.' He procured a patent and, apparently with Hanworth's help, built a saltworks 'near Yarmouth upon the isle

of Cobholme' where he developed a twenty-four acre site complete with suitable channels, cisterns, ponds 'and many other works for receiving, finding, purifying, separating & evaporating sea water whereof we make salt without fuel & do also thereby make & preserve brine to make salt with fuel'. Buildings, 'boiling pans & many other instruments & engines' were added at a total cost, to Murford and his partner, of £10,000 to £11,000. All this was accomplished despite everyone's doubts about his project.

In 1634, however, Murford's fortunes changed. The King interviewed him and, intrigued by Murford's claims, ordered his surveyor, Sir Charles Harbord, to investigate the salt works. Harbord was favourably impressed and the King decided to back Murford's scheme. His salt works could conceivably supply England, possibly even Ireland. Navigation would be increased, the fishing industry encouraged, the poor set on work, the 'capital stock' of England increased and freedom from dependence on foreign salt supplies ensured.

Murford admitted that there were objections to his process. The salt works were on marsh-grounds 'subject to present inundation'. A series of high banks, however, provided ample protection. Given experience at Newcastle, at the Shields, it was suggested that Murford's 'boiling pans are a great & uncertain charge'. Murford, however, used 'not above half or $\frac{1}{3}$ part of pans' to produce the same amount of salt made at Newcastle but, more significantly, Murford's process relied upon the sun to prepare his salt. What if the weather was unfavourable? Murford pointed out that if the summer months were good for corn, they were equally as good for his salt. His works made 'salt by the sun, & air, without fuel to any degree of whiteness & bigness' as many witnesses who either used his salt or saw it being made could testify; in addition, he proudly asserted, large amounts of salt were produced given the small area of ground actually employed. The basis for Murford's process was 'making brine which we boil to white salt'. Production revolved around the weather; only one fair month from May through August was needed to make enough brine to supply his works for a year. Indeed, he even claimed that March, April and September were often good enough to make 'all, or the greatest part of our proportion'. Brine was easily stored, lasted for years and remained suitable for salt making; he even asserted stored brine was often better.

Murford claimed his works at Cobholm had been operating since 1633. But it seems very likely his claim was exaggerated. He probably had begun his experiments in salt production then and, by 1636-1637, he believed they had worked. The weather, upon which his scheme depended, had been mixed, dry and wet, in both summer and winter, but salt had been made. His works, however, had only been expanded last April [1636? 1637?] when his new salt works were started. They were ready; all 'the ground works, pans [and] channels' were in place, the pans and houses were operating. Coal supplies were a problem and some coal, used to turn brine into salt, was required. His charter, he believed, exempted him from the imposition on coal; poor quality coal and uncertain deliveries were a greater worry.

There were, of course, 'The Saltmakers of the South and North Shields' whose history Murford briefly reviewed. Those patentees had promised the King immediate profits and had argued that it would take Murford a long time before he 'should have made any quantity of works', which convinced the King to grant them the patent. However, Murford was specifically exempted from their jurisdiction. He was confident of his charter's protection and had been urged by the King both to expand his works and 'to associate others with us by way of corporation'. His company, called 'his Majesty's design of saltmaking' was the result. Indeed, no sooner had the charter been sealed, than the King directed Murford and his agents to discover new and 'proper grounds for the making of works, acquiring of fuel &c. in proper ports' suitable to

supply salt to western England and Ireland. It had taken a year and considerable expense but Murford and his agents had discovered a 'good quantity of proper lands' for salt production. Coal mines had been found and purchased; other 'lands & fuels upon portable salt rivers' had been obtained. Indeed, Murford claimed he had spent most of the past three or four years obeying the King's commands.²²

Yarmouth, too, felt the impact of the increased activity on Cobholm Island. By late April 1637, the assembly had discovered that 'a great number of poor persons' were arriving to work building salt pans and sought accommodation in the port. Worst of all, they might as well 'in time prove chargeable' to Yarmouth. Aldermen and constables were ordered to inspect their wards and warn citizens not to rent rooms to such folk who could become a charge on the town. Other difficulties arose as well. Vessels, with cargoes for Murford's works, were loading and unloading 'on the west side of the haven [at Cobholm or Southtown] . . . which is contrary to the liberties' of Yarmouth. The assembly appointed a committee to consult with Murford to ensure his ships stopped using the west side, docked within Yarmouth's jurisdiction and paid its port duties. The committee, however, proved surprisingly dilatory since the same complaint was raised in January 1639.²³

For Murford, the years 1637 and 1638 must have been the best of his career. His works were being expanded, he enjoyed the King's support and his company flourished. Early in 1638, he approached two original members of his company, the courtier Endymion Porter and Edward Nicholas, clerk to the Privy Council and Admiralty secretary, following a meeting of his company at Arundel House, London. Had Porter and Nicholas attended, as Lord Maltravers, the company governor had expected, they would have been made assistants in the company and asked to invest in a new salt works, to be built 'near the Thames' to supply the London market.²⁴ But a new works for London was not all Murford had on his mind.

By the summer of 1638, the patentees of the North and South Shields were foundering. Salt was scarce and expensive; they had not met their obligations to the King, dissension racked their ranks. Murford seized his chance and, in a presentation before the King and Privy Council in July 1638, he offered to pay the King £10,000 a year for ten years for the right to monopolize the importation of foreign salt into the ports of eastern England. Only 8,000 weys of Scottish salt, paying 10s. on each wey to the King could be imported into England and production at the Shields could continue as long as the Shields' patentees 'pay the rates reserved' to the King 'upon delivery of their salt and that the same may be in part of Murford's rent'. The King and Council accepted the offer but Murford was ordered to attend them again on 29 July to 'present good security' that he could perform what he promised. In the interim, Murford would meet with Lord Treasurer Juxon to appoint collectors who would ensure that no foreign salt was sold contrary to Murford's proposal and to also investigate his charges that the present patentees were selling salt at excessive prices.²⁵ However, when Murford met the Council again, another competitor, of greater ambitions for the salt trade, had emerged.

Thomas Horth, alderman of Yarmouth and merchant both there and in London, and his allies made their proposal for the contract on imported salt. However, Murford was presumably still the front-runner since the King and Council turned consideration of the security he had offered to treasurer Juxon and Cottington, the chancellor of the exchequer, for their review. If they found Murford's security acceptable, the farm on imported salt would be Murford's.²⁶ But it was not to be. Horth and his group had greater financial reserves and could offer better security than Murford could provide. Murford kept trying; he petitioned the King again on 1 October but by the end of the month, Horth's group had all but won. And Horth was going further;

he wanted the salt patent for the North and South Shields as well. Great Yarmouth, London, Southampton, Weymouth, the Cinque Ports and Lewes raised vociferous objections but to no avail. Yarmouth got the news late in October about a week before Horth appeared before the assembly to invite the town to become a partner in his forthcoming salt patent, a patent he was finally granted in mid-December 1638.²⁷

The salt works at Yarmouth continued in operation but in May 1639, Horth's company began exerting pressure. Sir John Wentworth, a local justice of the peace, was ordered by the Privy Council to see to it that all salt manufacturers and traders 'conform themselves to such orders & constitutions' of Horth's company and to pledge they would pay the King's fees on salt. If they refused, they would face the Council. Nicholas Murford was singled out for his refractoriness; he had refused all orders and payments demanded by Horth's company. Wentworth suffered through a stormy interview with Murford who refused to give security to attend the Council and, instead, flourished 'his Majesty's letters patent under the Great Seal of England' for his invention and the King's 'letter of corporation' to Murford and his associates 'whereof he [Murford] straitly' commanded Wentworth to assist him in the manufacture and sale of his salt and to defend him from Horth's orders. The confused Wentworth promptly sought further instructions from the Council.²⁸

Murford had only postponed the inevitable. By December 1639, his career as a saltmaker was coming to an end. Horth's 'Company of Salters of South and North Shields' petitioned the Council, claiming that Murford and one of his partners, one Smith Wilkinson, already in Council custody, had persistently refused to pay the King's duty on white salt which they were legally bound to pay. Even worse, Murford was a leading agitator against Horth's company which greatly disturbed the King's service. Murford must pay all he owed since Christmas 1638 and guarantee, for himself and his partners, payment of future duties. Murford refused the Council's first summons, pleading illness and infirmity, but the Council would brook no excuses. When he finally attended, 'and no such sickness or infirmity appeared', a Council clerk wryly noted, Murford could not answer the charges and joined Wilkinson in Council custody. They would only be released if they 'conformed themselves' or gave 'better satisfaction'. The Council's patience, however, was clearly exhausted. Murford was also ordered to give the Council the names of all his employees at the works near Yarmouth so they could be warned 'to desist from working'; if they refused, they would be arrested.²⁹ Murford's career as a saltmaker was over; his works were apparently shut down. He had produced some salt, at least £300 worth, a figure given during a quarrel between Horth and a former colleague, John Duke, in 1640. As for Murford, a terse entry in the assembly books noting his death in April 1641 ended assembly interest. It was concerned since Murford had built some houses 'without the south gates'; nothing was said about the fate of his salt works.³⁰

Nicholas Murford enjoyed a meteoric career at Great Yarmouth. He had arrived as a rope maker in 1626; a decade later, his entrepreneurial skills had made him a serious competitor for a farm on salt imports that would have given him a monopoly over foreign salt importation from Berwick to Southampton. Indeed, there was even the prospect of supplying salt for western England and Ireland. Admittedly, only England's need for salt and the King's need for revenue made such a story possible but it is to Murford's credit that he seized the opportunity. Experimenting in his Cobholm Island works, Murford settled on evaporation as his method of salt production and, no doubt, exaggerated his success. Nevertheless, with the failure of the first patentees, Murford's scheme offered a possible alternative to the Crown which encouraged the expansion of his works and granted him, in addition to his earlier patent for salt making, letters of incorporation. However, Murford's fall was even more rapid. Another entrepreneur of Great

Yarmouth, Thomas Horth, promised more, took over the Shields' patent and, within a year, ruined Murford as well. Murford's story is an intriguing one. A skilled artisan and nothing more, he won the attention of the Crown and formed a company that involved peers and courtiers alike. Indeed, there was a chance that this former rope maker would dominate the English salt industry. He had truly come a long way in a brief career.³¹

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1. A.R. Michell, 'The port and town of Great Yarmouth . . . 1550-1714', unpublished Ph.D dissertation, Cambridge University, 1978, 71, 174-175, 176, 180; T.S. Willan, *Studies in Elizabethan Foreign Trade*, Manchester, 1959, 73-74; Robert Tittler, 'The English Fishing Industry in the Sixteenth Century: the Case of Great Yarmouth', *Albion*, vol.9, 1977, 49, 50, 56-57.
2. Wilke's patent was later held by John Smith, Robert Anderson and Robert Bowes and aroused considerable opposition in the Parliament of 1601. N.J. Williams, *The Maritime Trade of the East Anglian Ports, 1550-1590*, Oxford, 1988, 109, 130-131, 175; Edward Hughes, *Studies in Administration and Finance, 1558-1825*, Manchester, 1934, 46, 47, 56, 62-63, 65, 73; Tittler, 'The English Fishing Industry', *Albion*, 9, 1977, 57; A. Hassell Smith, *County and Court, Government and Politics in Norfolk*, Oxford, 1974, 19-20; S.A. Skilliter, *William Harborne and the Trade with Turkey, 1578-1582*, London, 1977, 34-35; 'William Harborne', *Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. viii, 1200-1201; Harborough's [Harborne] petition, n.d., 1597?, British Library, Lansdown MSS 86, fols. 182, 183; *A Calendar of the Freeman of Great Yarmouth, 1429-1800*, Norwich, 1910, 47.
3. Bailiffs of Gt. Yarmouth to Lord Burghley, 27 Feb. 1597, Wm. Harborough [Harborne] to the same, 8 March 1597, BL, Lansdown MSS 86, fols. 14, 16.
4. 'The answer to the suit that requires the bringing in of white salt . . .', BL, Lansdown MSS 86, n.d., fols. 181, 181v.
5. For additional information on salt monopolies and efforts to encourage production, see Edward Hughes, 'The English Monopoly of Salt in the Years 1563-71', *EHR*, 40, 1925, 334-350; Hughes, *Studies in Administration and Finance*, 73 & n.265. The salt monopoly that developed in Charles I's reign, and closely involved Horth, is also briefly discussed in W.H. Price, *The English Patents of Monopoly*, Cambridge, USA, 1913, 113-116.
6. GY, Assembly Bk, Y/C 19/6, fols. 48, 71v, 98v. The references preceded by Y/C are among the Great Yarmouth borough archives. The assembly book, Y/C 19/6, is at Yarmouth Town Hall. Other documents are at the Norfolk Record Office, Norwich. The entry for Nicholas Murford in the *Dictionary of National Biography* confuses Nicholas Murford, father and son. The son was a merchant of King's Lynn and a minor poet who flourished in the years between 1638 and 1650. 'Nicholas Murford', *D.N.B.*, xiii, 1227-1228.
7. GY, Assembly Bk, Y/C 19/6, fols. 147v, 194.
8. GY, Assembly Bk, Y/C 19/6, f. 103.
9. GY, Assembly Bk, Y/C 19/6, fols. 169, 175v.
10. GY, Assembly Bk, Y/C 19/6, fols. 179v, 181v; *APC, 1630-1631*, vol. 46, 8 Dec. 1630, 145-146.
11. GY, Assembly Bk, Y/C 19/6, f. 192.
12. The 'projectors' included, among others, Sir Richard Brooke, Sir William Lambton, Sir William Bellasis and Sir Nicholas Tempest. PRO, n.d., 1631, 1634?, SP 16/206:61; 16/279:69 n.d. May 1635, 16/289:107, 108, 109; n.d. 1635?, 16/308:10; 24? Nov. 1635, 16/302:69, 71, 72, 73; GY, Bk. of Entries, Y/C 18/6, fols. 159v-160, 161, 171v, 172; GY, Assembly Bk, Y/C 19/6, fols. 318, 319, 325, 328, 338, 338v, 339, 340; *CPSD 1635*, 589; Hughes, *Studies in Administration and Finance*, 84-85, 88. For a list of the members of the Patentees of the North and South Shields, and the patent, see Cecil T. Carr, ed., *Select Charters of Trading Companies, 1530-1707*, reprint ed., New York, 1970, 142-160.
13. PRO, 5 Feb. 1635, SP 16/283:13; *CSPD 1625-1649*, 484; Murford to the King, 17 March 1635, PRO, SP 16/285:18.
14. 'Petition of Sir Richard Brooke . . . and the rest of the propounders of the salt business' to the King, n.d. 1635?, PRO, SP 16/308:13.
15. *CSPD 1635-1636*, 44.
16. *CSPD 1635*, 589; GY, Bk of Entries, Y/C 18/6, fols. 154v-155, 173v, 174.
17. *CSPD 1635-1636*, 42; the petition of the 'saltmakers of Great Yarmouth' to the King, 1639? (a more likely date is 1635-36), PRO, SP 16/438:58. Murford was not the only one under fire. Leonard Holmes, a Yarmouth merchant who customarily imported foreign salt for further refining and local use, had his appeal for a license to import 30 wags of foreign salt summarily rejected. *CSPD 1636-1637*, 303.
18. Nicholas Murford to the King, 19 April 1636, PRO, SP 16/319:3; Hughes, *Studies in Administration and Finance*, 100, which identifies Edmund Sheffield, earl of Mulgrave, as its first governor. The charter of incorporation for Murford's company, known as the Society of Saltmakers of Great Yarmouth, is in Carr, *Select Charters*, 148-160.

19. *CSPD 1636-1637*, 303; Price, *English Patents*, 114.
20. The King to Sir John Wentworth, William Paston, William Heveningham and ? Godsalve, 18 Jan. 1637, PRO, SP 16/344:35.
21. The petition of Sir John Wentworth and William Paston to the King, 22 Feb. 1637, PRO, SP 16/347:80.
22. [Nicholas Murford] to Mr Sherwood, n.d., [1636, 1637?], PRO, SP 16/377:84.
23. GY, Assembly Bk, Y/C 19/6, fols.381v, 389, 430v; Michell, 'Port and Town of Great Yarmouth', 178.
24. Murford to Porter, the same to Nicholas, 9, 11 Jan. 1638, PRO, SP 16/378: 35, 54. Maltravers, later earl of Arundel, was, like Porter and Nicholas, an original member of Murford's company, and had also been engaged in the syndicate for the draining of the Great Level and held a share in the patent for the minting of farthing tokens. Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558-1641*, Oxford, 1965, 355, 440; 'Henry Frederick Howard, third earl of Arundel', *D.N.B.*, x, 38. Other courtiers who were original members of Murford's company included Sir William Howard, Sir Francis Crane, Christopher Wandesford, Sir Francis Wortley and the King's surveyor, Sir Charles Harbord. Carr, *Select Charters*, 149.
25. *P.C. Registers*, facsimile ed., vol.iii, 1 March-9 Aug. 1638, 15 July 1638, 330; Hughes, *Studies in Administration and Finance*, 104.
26. *P.C. Registers*, facsimile ed., vol.iii, 1 March-9 Aug. 1638, 29 July 1638, 358.
27. Yarmouth, after a quick study turned Horth's proposition down. PRO, Chancery MSS C.2, Chas.I/H17/19; PRO 1 Oct. 1638, SP 16/400:4; Order of the King in Council, 19 Dec. 1638, PRO, SP 16/404:101; HMC, *MSS of the Rye and Hereford Corporations*, 205-206, 207; *P.C. Registers*, facsimile ed., vol.iv, 12 Aug.-29 Dec. 1638, 1, 9, 19 Dec. 1638, 587, 595-596, 611; GY, Assembly Bk, Y/C 19/6, fols.420, 421v, 423, 427, 427v, 428, 430v; Price, *English Patents*, 115; Hughes, *Studies in Administration and Finance*, 104-106. The charter for Horth's company, the South and North Shields Saltmakers, is found in Carr, *Select Charters*, 167-172. William Buttolph and Robert Seaman, both merchants of Yarmouth, were among the original members of the company.
28. Sir John Wentworth to the Privy Council, 11 May 1639, PRO, SP 16/420:140.
29. *P.C. Registers*, facsimile ed., vol.viii, 1 Nov. 1639-24 Jan. 1640, 13 Dec. 1639, 177-178.
30. PRO, [June] 1640, SP 16/458:103; GY, Assembly Bk, Y/C 19/6, f.480.
31. In 1654, Murford's children, his sons Nicholas and Ephraim, and daughters Elizabeth and Judith, petitioned to the Committee for Petitions for 'relief in respect of their father's losses about salt works' in Charles I's reign. The petition was dismissed. *CSPD 1655*, 288, 289.