

# RHODE ISLAND HISTORY

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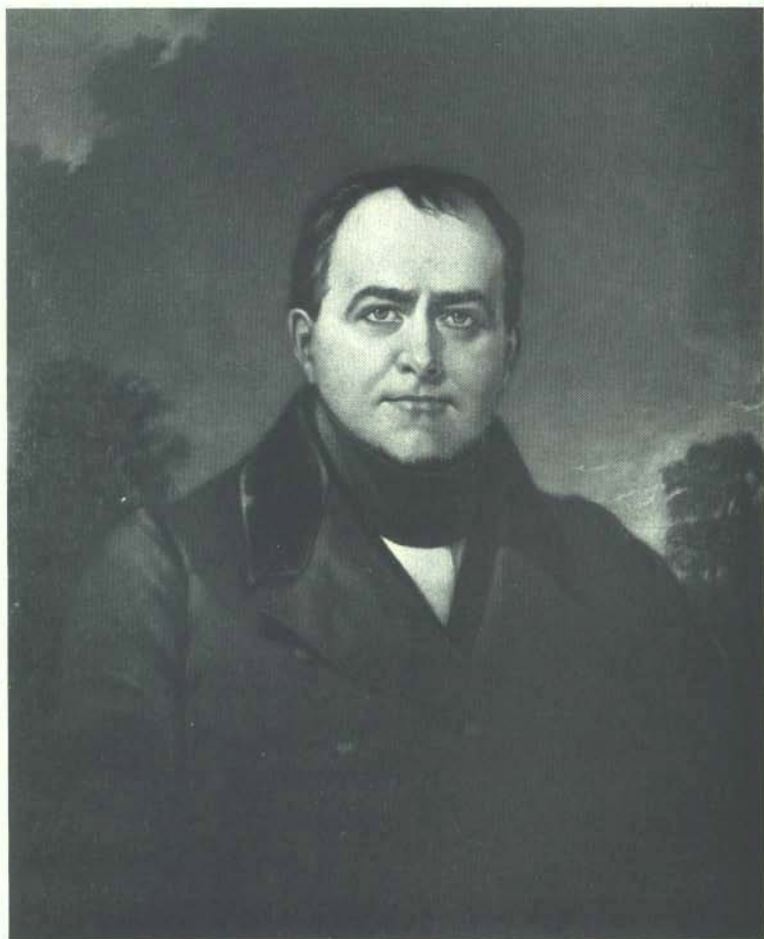
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THOMAS WILSON DORR (1805-1854)

*Engraved by Warner from a daguerreotype*

*Rhode Island Historical Society Collections*

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*ISSUED QUARTERLY AT PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND*

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
THOMAS WILSON DORR . . . . .	Cover
THE ISSUES OF THE DORR WAR	
by John Bell Rae . . . . .	33
THE REVOLUTIONARY CORRESPONDENCE OF NATHANAEL GREENE AND JOHN ADAMS	
by Bernhard Knollenberg . . . . .	45
A RHODE ISLANDER GOES WEST TO INDIANA	
<i>Continued from Rhode Island History, Vol. 1, p. 31</i>	
<i>Communicated by George A. White, Jr.</i> . . . . .	56
ROGER WILLIAMS: LEADER OF DEMOCRACY	
<i>Reviewed by Clarence E. Sherman</i> . . . . .	63
TREASURER'S REPORT . . . . .	Inside Back Cover
NEWS-NOTES . . . . .	Back Cover

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VOL. 1                      APRIL 1942                      NO. 2

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## The Issues of the Dorr War

By JOHN BELL RAE\*

In looking back at the Dorr War after the lapse of a century, when the violent feelings have been pretty well erased and the issues which caused the upheaval have, if not forgotten, become somewhat clouded, it is extremely easy to regard the whole thing as a performance closely resembling a fantastic comic opera. The military operations were ludicrous. Dorr tried to capture the State Arsenal with cannon that wouldn't fire, the state militia stormed a rebel position defended only by a solitary cow, and the one man killed was an innocent bystander in Massachusetts. Few people in Rhode Island really wanted to fight over the matters at stake, and at the height of the excitement the General Assembly was taking steps to concede much of what the rebels were demanding. Nevertheless, the upheaval of 1842 was a serious enough matter; its causes went deep into the structure of Rhode Island life, and its consequences have affected the political life of the state ever since.

The controversy originated in the colonial charter granted to Rhode Island by King Charles II in 1663, by

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which Rhode Island was organized, as were most of the American colonies, in the form of a chartered company, with a Governor, Deputy Governor, ten Assistants, and a body of deputies chosen by the freemen of the company, or colony. The two points responsible for the Dorr outbreak were the definition of freemen and the apportionment of the deputies. On the first the charter said nothing; it gave the General Assembly full power to admit as freemen such persons as it saw fit. It was not until the early eighteenth century that a freehold qualification was established, and the value of the required freehold was altered from time to time in order to keep pace with the vagaries of colonial currency, until in 1798 it was stabilized at \$134. On the second point the charter was far more specific; it stipulated that not more than six of the deputies should be chosen from Newport, four each from Providence, Portsmouth, and Warwick, and two each from any other town or city that the Assembly might create. The Dorrists raised other objections—for example, the charter failed to provide for an independent judiciary—but they were brought up simply to strengthen the argument for constitutional change and not because they were the source of any marked grievances.

There was no difficulty during the colonial period, nor for some time thereafter. The charter, as the Dorrists themselves admitted, was a very liberal document for its time, and its governmental provisions were admirably suited to the commercial-agricultural society of eighteenth century Rhode Island. So satisfactory was it, indeed, that when independence came it was continued in force by general consent, in spite of some misgivings about governing a free American state by a document received from a British king. What finally produced genuine and tangible discontent was the industrialization of Rhode Island in the early part of the nineteenth century. As the state turned its energies more and more to manufacturing, the non-landholding part of the population increased steadily until by 1840, just before the Dorr War, it constituted a clear majority of the

whole.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the industrial growth took place almost entirely in northern Rhode Island, which meant that Providence County forged away ahead of the rest of the state in wealth and population. By 1840 the city of Providence alone contained one-fifth of the inhabitants of Rhode Island. But the representation in the General Assembly remained as it had been fixed in 1663, out of all relationship to the new conditions that had come into existence. Thus political domination was in the hands, not merely of a minority of the whole people, but of a minority of the freeholders themselves.<sup>2</sup>

The first important attempt at political reform came in the early 1820's and culminated in the calling of a constitutional convention in 1824, which drew up a document embodying some mild readjustments in representation, only to see it rejected by the voters. Five years later a petition to the legislature asking for extension of the suffrage was turned over to a committee headed by Benjamin Hazard of Newport, a survivor of die-hard Federalism, and was dismissed in extremely arrogant terms. After that the agitation was kept alive by a workingmen's organization similar to the Workingmen's Parties that existed in other states at this time, until once again it began to attract wider support. By the end of 1833 the reformers felt sufficiently strong to enter state politics as an organized group known as the Constitutional Party.

At this point Thomas W. Dorr entered the picture. He was a young man of good family and excellent education, whose position in Rhode Island society would normally have placed him on the conservative side. He had, how-

<sup>1</sup>The highest number of votes cast in any election under the charter was something over 8500. The vote on the Freemen's Constitution in March, 1842, with a broader but still limited suffrage, was 16,702. The Dorr party estimated the total number of adult white male citizens at about 23,000, a reasonable estimate in a total population of 108,000.

<sup>2</sup>In 1840 nineteen towns with a total population of 30,818 elected 38 of the 72 members of the House of Representatives. The number of freeholders in these towns was about 3500.



## The Four Traitors,\*

Who most infamously sold themselves to the Dorrites, for Office and Political Power.

Let us not reward Traitors, but with just indignation abandon them as "Scape-Goats," to their destiny—forever.



Charles Jackson. Samuel F. Man. James F. Simmons. Lemuel H. Arnold.  
Providence. Cumberland. Johnston. South Kingstown.

"O, heaven, that such companions thou'dst unfold;  
And put in every honest hand a whip  
To lash the rascals naked through the world"

This cartoon offers a striking illustration of the intensity of feeling aroused by the Dorr War. The four men involved were all prominent Whigs and during the rebellion had been identified with the Law and Order Party—in fact, Simmons as United States Senator had been an effective spokesman in Washington for the charter government and Arnold had been a member of the special Governor's Council created to assist in handling the crisis of 1842. In 1845 they became instrumental in effecting Dorr's release from prison, Jackson being elected governor on a "Liberation" ticket. Their motive was not love for Dorr or his cause, but a realization that Dorr in prison had much more popular appeal than he would have out of it and that if he died there—which his poor health made more than likely—the resultant public indignation would recoil disastrously upon the Whigs. Most of their associates were far too bitter in their hatred of Dorr to appreciate this calculation of political expediency—hence the "Four Traitors."

ever, a strongly idealistic streak in his nature, which appeared in his championship of such causes as abolition, bank regulation, and public education as well as in his advocacy of constitutional reform. Of his intellectual ability and dominating personality there can be no question; he invariably became the accepted leader and directing genius of whatever movement he associated himself with. He had two major weaknesses, however, which ultimately led him to disaster. He persistently overrated his own strength and underrated that of his opponents, and his mind had a doctrinaire stubbornness that made him unwilling to compromise or to consider any point of view but his own.

The appearance of the Constitutional Party alarmed the General Assembly sufficiently to induce it to call a constitutional convention in 1834, restricted to freeholders and calculated to accomplish as little as possible. The meetings of this body were marked principally by acrimonious clashes between Dorr and Benjamin Hazard, with the Newporter accusing his antagonist of committing sacrilege against the founding fathers of Rhode Island by suggesting that their institutions could possibly be improved upon. After a few fruitless sessions the convention simply faded out of existence without even the formality of adjournment. The Constitutional Party then struggled along ineffectually until 1837, unable to arouse any interest even among the non-freeholders.

So far there had been nothing more than preliminary stirrings of discontent with the existing political order, without enough force behind them to make any serious impression on the life of the state. Under the surface, however, pressure for reform was increasing, and the presidential election of 1840 touched off the explosion. First of all, the fanfare of that campaign seems at last to have awakened the non-freeholders to the unpleasant fact that they, free American citizens, were denied the right to vote; and secondly, the overwhelming Whig victory convinced a good many Democratic leaders that their party's only hope lay in extension of the suffrage. It was not just a coincidence that the Rhode Island Suffrage Association appeared



shortly after the election, with a membership far exceeding in both numbers and zeal that of any previous reform organization and a program demanding an end of the charter and the freehold qualification, with an undisguised suggestion even then that the sovereign people could adopt their own constitution if they wanted to.

In the face of this unexpected storm, the General Assembly resorted to the Fabian tactics that had been so successful in 1834. In February, 1841, it called a convention of freeholders for the following November, obviously in the hope that by then the agitation would have subsided and the convention would be able to duplicate the performance of its futile predecessor. But 1841 was not 1834. The suffrage men contemptuously repudiated the proposed convention and went straight ahead with their own plans. To keep public interest at a peak, gigantic parades and mass meetings were staged, with bands and banners, feasting and oratory. From these gatherings came a series of resolutions which led to the summoning, entirely without legal authority, of a "People's Convention" to meet in October, 1841, and draw up for the people of Rhode Island their own constitution.

Yet, while they were thus preparing to defy established authority, the suffrage leaders did not give up trying to persuade the General Assembly to give way. They met with no success whatever. The climax of their efforts came in May, 1841, when Samuel Y. Atwell introduced a bill drafted by Dorr which would have allowed the delegates to the November convention to be elected by all adult male citizens of the United States who had resided in Rhode Island for two years and in their towns for three months. The same group was to be eligible to vote on the ratification of any constitution that might be proposed. Atwell fought hard for the measure, pointing out that the only alternative open to the people might well be a resort to violence, but he was beaten by a vote of fifty-two to ten.

There was, therefore, not the slightest sign of compromise in the political atmosphere when the time came for the People's Convention to assemble. Considering that this

body was proposing to give Rhode Island a new constitution whether the existing government liked it or not, its sessions were surprisingly placid, perhaps because few people really believed that the gathering would do anything more than air the controversy all over again and perhaps pass a few more resolutions. The members, however, were completely in earnest about their work. In about three weeks they produced the "People's Constitution," a document which, of course, contained all the reforms the Suffrage Party had been clamoring for. Its specific provisions are not especially important, since they were not the cause of the subsequent conflict. That arose from the stipulation that the constitution should be submitted to the people who would be entitled to vote under its terms, and if ratified by them, should be declared to be in effect as the fundamental law of Rhode Island.

This referendum, held at the end of December, showed something over 13,000 votes for ratification, which according to the Suffrage Party, was a clear majority of the people of Rhode Island—i.e., of the adult white male citizens. There is no way of verifying this claim, since the ballots were never counted by anyone else. All that can be said is that, since there was no legal control over the voting, the opportunities for both honest error and fraud were extensive, and, if the estimate that the total eligible electorate numbered 23,000 is accepted, the margin of safety was slender. However, the People's Convention was satisfied; at a final session in mid-January it announced that the constitution had been adopted by a majority of the people and was now in force.

Here was the real issue of the Dorr War. The Suffrage Party maintained that the Revolution had transferred sovereignty from the British Crown to the people of Rhode Island and that the people had the right to exercise that sovereignty by adopting a constitution whenever and in whatever manner they saw fit. The consent of the established governmental authorities to this process was not in the least necessary. The people were free to act entirely by themselves, and, once they had expressed their will, their



decision was to be accepted quietly and without question. It sounded very plausible in theory, but in practice the doctrine was open to serious objections. It ignored the very vital fact that constitutions are intended to protect minorities just as much as to carry out the desires of the majority. If the majority was all that mattered here would be no need for a constitution—indeed, it would be utterly meaningless, since any constitution that might be adopted could be replaced as arbitrarily as the Dorrites proposed to replace the charter. Moreover, the doctrine that the sovereign people can change their institutions at any time by simply signifying their desires could be, as President Wayland of Brown pointed out, extremely dangerous in the hands of unscrupulous individuals. All that would be necessary to seize control of a government would be to hold one of these informal plebiscites, declare that a majority had been secured, and muster a sufficient armed force to make the claim good.

The full implications of this theory did not become apparent immediately after the proclamation that the People's Constitution was in effect, because it still remained to be seen what reactions would come from the General Assembly and the Freeholders' Convention. In the legislature attempts were made by Atwell and others to have the People's Constitution formally adopted, or at least resubmitted to the voters in a legally authorized referendum, but they were overwhelmingly defeated. The Freeholders' Convention, however, was more deeply impressed with the need for doing something. It had met in November, still resolutely against extension of the suffrage but vaguely disturbed by the evident change in the political atmosphere, and, after a month of indecision, it had adjourned until February to await developments. Apparently the December balloting, unofficial and dubious as it had been, had convinced the delegates that the citadel of freehold suffrage could no longer be defended; when the gathering resumed operations in February, 1842, it turned out with amazing celerity a constitution, the Freeman's Constitution, remarkably similar to the document produced by Dorr's adherents.

It was a little less liberal than the People's Constitution, in that it retained the landholding qualification for naturalized citizens and its provisions for redistribution of the legislature were weighted rather more heavily in favor of the small towns, but the differences were trivial. Essentially, the opposition of the freeholders to political reform in Rhode Island had collapsed.

Unfortunately, the long controversy had aroused feelings that could not be quieted overnight. Had the legislature or the Freeman's Convention given any hint of a willingness to make concessions a little earlier, the troubles of 1842 could easily have been forestalled, but in February it was too late. The Dorr faction would not accept the Freeman's Constitution. It could not very well deny that the sovereign people of Rhode Island could adopt a constitution in March to replace the one they had adopted in January—one of the awkward features of the Dorr theory—but it could and did insist that this document was inferior to the People's Constitution and therefore should be rejected. Dorr's following was still potent enough to achieve this end; the Freeman's Constitution was turned down by a vote of 8013 to 8689.

This victory was the apex of Dorr's power; it was also his most serious blunder. Up to this time the Suffrage Party had had an excellent case. It had been asking redress of genuine grievances, and its threat to change the government of the state by a direct appeal to the people could be justified by the obstinate refusal of the freeholders to surrender an iota of their privileges. Now the threat had finally taken effect and had wrung from the freemen a constitution granting most of the desired reforms. If Dorr had had more sense of political expediency, he would have let the Freeman's Constitution go into effect and concentrated thereafter on getting control of the new government by means of the liberalized suffrage. His decision to insist upon carrying out his own doctrines cost him the bulk of his popular support, because in the sober second thoughts following the defeat of the Freeman's Constitution, the people of Rhode Island saw what only a few of them had perceived earlier,



that the People's Constitution could hardly be put into effect without forcibly overthrowing the charter government. It was one thing to march in a suffrage parade, but quite another to take part in a rebellion, and when in mid-April President Tyler indicated that, although he would not interfere in Rhode Island's domestic affairs unless it became absolutely necessary, he would support the existing government in the event of violence breaking out, Dorr's adherents fell away perceptibly. For Dorr and those who stayed with him, the course they had chosen had to be followed to its conclusion. In the face of the so-called "Algerine Law," which imposed severe penalties for participating in unauthorized elections or taking office in an unauthorized government, an election was held under the People's Constitution on April 18, 1842, Dorr being chosen governor without opposition. On May 3 the inaugural ceremonies were held, on a dismal day in an unfinished foundry on Dorrance Street, with the rain leaking through the roof on the would-be builders of a new government. Strangely enough, the charter authorities made no attempt to interfere, probably through unwillingness to precipitate a clash of whose outcome they were still uncertain. Their inaction was so marked that it seemed perfectly feasible for the People's Government to take possession of the State House and archives in Providence, a step which might have given it a better claim to recognition as the legal government of Rhode Island. However, in spite of Dorr's urgings, the Foundry Legislature refused to sanction any vigorous action. It frittered away three days in meaningless trivialities and then disbanded, whereupon the old government recovered its position unopposed.

Rhode Island by this time was split into two groups based on the local issue, the Suffrage Party and the "Law and Order" Party. Each counted both Whigs and Democrats in its ranks, but in general the Whigs, as one would expect, favored Law and Order, while the Suffrage Party had a strongly Democratic complexion. There was, in consequence, a tendency outside Rhode Island to interpret the controversy in the simple terms of a Whig-Democratic

battle for control of the state and to take sides accordingly. When his legislature disbanded, Dorr left the state in an endeavor to repair his declining fortunes at home by appealing to his sympathizers elsewhere, principally in Washington and New York. In Washington he received little but kind words from the Democrats in Congress, mainly because the Southerners disliked his extreme theory of popular sovereignty, which, if applied in their own states, would weaken the domination of the planter class. In New York, on the other hand, Tammany Hall gave Dorr glowing assurances of support in the event that Federal troops were used against him.

Fortified by this promise, he returned to Rhode Island to try, by force if necessary, to establish the People's Constitution. He failed completely. Only a few rabid partisans stood by him, first in the abortive attack on the State Arsenal in Providence on the night of May 17, and a month later in the gathering of the suffrage forces at Chepachet, a weak, disorganized, and dispirited assemblage, which produced a wholly unwarranted panic among the law-abiding citizenry but which disintegrated even before the state troops moved against it. In his own eyes Dorr was not engaged in rebellion. He believed firmly, and he continued to believe to the end of his days, that the People's Constitution had been legally adopted and that he was the rightful Governor of Rhode Island.

This attitude was responsible for the last great mistake of the Suffrage Party. The freeholders had finally acquired wisdom, and even although they had triumphed over Dorr, they realized that the future peace of the state called for a more liberal form of government. In June, 1842, the General Assembly called a new constitutional convention, this time with full recognition of the principle of extended suffrage. The Suffrage Party might have got control of this body, since it could count on the votes of a good many people who sympathized with Dorr's objectives but not with the idea of attaining them by force. Instead, following the advice of its leader, then in exile in New Hampshire, the party decided to remain completely aloof, on the ground



that Rhode Island already had a constitution. The new convention, consequently, was exclusively a Law and Order affair, with the result that its handiwork, the present constitution of Rhode Island, closely resembled the Freeman's Constitution of the preceding February. The suffrage provisions were approximately the same; where the conservative influence made itself felt was in the organization of the new State Senate on the basis of one senator to each city and town, an arrangement which effectively preserved the small-town domination that had grown up under the charter. Even after this constitution had been duly ratified by the expanded electorate, Dorr and some of his adherents refused to recognize its validity because it had been approved only by a majority of those voting and not by a majority of the whole people. It was a hopeless last-ditch stand. For all practical purposes the contest ended with the adoption of the new constitution, except for the final flurry of excitement involved in the trial, conviction, and subsequent liberation of Dorr himself.

Dorr's failure to establish the People's Constitution should not obscure the fact that his movement did actually achieve its basic objectives except in the matter of reapportionment of the state legislature. That Rhode Island was brought to the verge of civil war in the process was a regrettable and unnecessary feature for which both sides were about equally to blame. The dispute could easily have been settled short of that point; since it was not, it was just as well that Dorr lost. If he had succeeded, his theory of direct popular action might have gained enough prestige to find a place in American political thought, and it is difficult to see how it could have contributed anything but instability to the democratic process of government. What he was invoking was, fundamentally, the right of revolution, and conditions in Rhode Island in 1842 were far from requiring so drastic a remedy.

## The Revolutionary Correspondence of Nathanael Greene and John Adams

by BERNHARD KNOLLENBERG<sup>1</sup>

For twelve years I have been reading every letter I can find bearing on the American Revolution, written between October, 1773, when word of the new British Tea Act reached America, and May, 1778, when Congress learned of the signing of the French Alliance. Among these letters, in military affairs, the correspondence of Nathanael Greene<sup>2</sup> and John Adams<sup>3</sup> during the critical years of 1776 and 1777 is outstanding.

Throughout the period of the correspondence Greene is known to have enjoyed Washington's special friendship and confidence. Again and again the views expressed bluntly, even vehemently, by Greene in his letters to Adams were, at about the same time, hinted or expressed with more reserve by Washington in his letters to others. Considering the relationship between Greene and Washington, I think that Washington probably encouraged the correspondence as a means of bringing views, which he shared, forcefully to Adams' attention.

The correspondence numbers 21 letters in all, but three of these have never come to light. Of the 18 letters which have been located, four have not been published previously, and in many of the remaining letters certain portions, large and small, were omitted when they were printed.

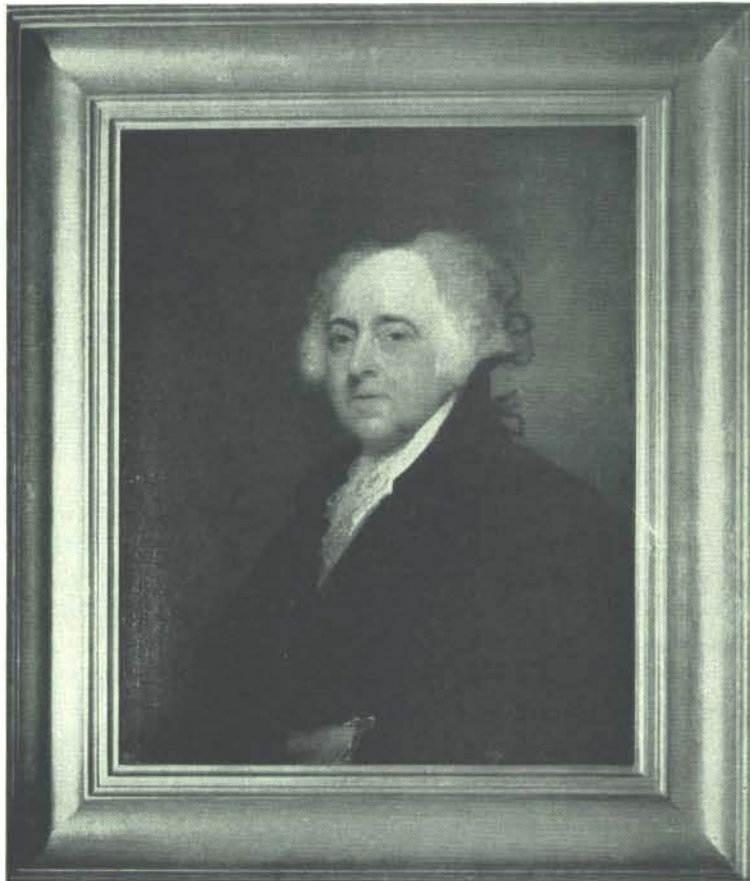
<sup>1</sup>Mr. Knollenberg is librarian of Yale University. Before assuming that post he was a prominent New York lawyer. He is the author of *Washington and the Revolution; A Reappraisal, Gates, Conway, and The Continental Congress* (New York, 1940). Mr. Knollenberg discussed the Greene-Adams correspondence at a meeting of the Rhode Island Historical Society in 1941.

<sup>2</sup>Nathanael Greene (1742-1786), born at Potowomut in Warwick, R. I., where his father and brothers operated a forge and grist mill. He was appointed to command the Rhode Island troops in May, 1775, and six weeks later was appointed a junior brigadier general by the Continental Congress.

<sup>3</sup>John Adams (1735-1826), delegate from Massachusetts to the Continental Congress, and second president of the U. S. At the time of the correspondence he was regarded as the outstanding New England member of Congress, and during part of the time he was chairman of the Congressional Board of War and Ordnance.



To a citizen of the 20th Century, one of the most striking aspects of the correspondence of the American Revolution is the freedom with which military officers corresponded with members of Congress and other civilians about military affairs. Matters which military censorship and present codes of ethics would exclude from comment were then discussed with the utmost candor in Great Britain and



PRESIDENT JOHN ADAMS, AGE 65, BY GILBERT STUART  
*Courtesy of Adams Memorial Society*

America alike. It goes without saying that Greene's ethics in opening a correspondence on military affairs with Congressman Adams are to be judged by 18th, not 20th, Century standards.

I have found no record of when the two men became acquainted. Presumably they met when Adams returned to his home in Braintree, Massachusetts, during an adjournment of Congress in August, 1775.

Greene, at the opening of the first series of letters on May 26, 1776,<sup>4</sup> was stationed near New York City. Adams replied promptly, but the letter has been lost. Greene wrote again on June 2, 1776<sup>5</sup> and Adams replied on June 22, 1776.<sup>6</sup> Letters were exchanged once more, Greene writing on July 14, 1776<sup>7</sup> and Adams on August 4, 1776.<sup>8</sup> Thereupon this section of the correspondence was terminated, possibly by heavy demand on Greene's time after the severe American defeat at the Battle of Long Island on August 27.

At any rate, the correspondence was resumed, by Greene, on March 3, 1777, with a letter<sup>9</sup> in which he comments adversely on Congress's action in the Lee<sup>10</sup> affair and in recently passing over Arnold<sup>11</sup> in the promotion of general officers.

Perhaps nothing has more frequently been quoted to prove the alleged lack of judgment, of Adams in particular and of the Continental Congress in general, than Adams'

<sup>4</sup>Published in full in George Washington Greene's *Life of Nathanael Greene* (New York, 1871), II, 420-21, hereinafter cited as *Greene's Greene*. To conserve paper, letters which have been printed substantially in full elsewhere are not reprinted here.

<sup>5</sup>*Greene's Greene*, II, 421-25.

<sup>6</sup>Published in *The Works of John Adams*, Charles Francis Adams, ed. (Boston, 1850-56), IX, 402-5, hereinafter cited as *Adams's Works*.

<sup>7</sup>*Greene's Greene*, II, 425-27.

<sup>8</sup>*Adams's Works*, I, 251-53.

<sup>9</sup>*Greene's Greene*, I, 334-39.

<sup>10</sup>Charles Lee (1731-1782), major general, was at this time a prisoner of Howe at New York. He had written to Congress, asking that a committee be sent to confer with him and the Howes. Congress declined to do so, and Greene objected, saying it would do no harm, no matter what Lee's designs might be.

<sup>11</sup>Benedict Arnold (1741-1801), the traitor. On February 19, 1777, Congress promoted five brigadiers to major generals, all of them juniors in rank to Arnold. Arnold was furious, Washington objected, but Congress explained that Connecticut



suggestion, in his reply of March 9, 1777,<sup>12</sup> that the general officers be elected annually. If Adams had meant to suggest the advisability of Congress electing an entirely new set of general officers each year, this would, indeed, have been a foolish conception. But this was not what Adams suggested. Greene had stated, in his letter of June 2, 1776, that he, or any other officer who set any value on his honor, must resign if a junior were promoted over him. Adams' suggestion was obviously directed towards that particular point. By establishing in advance that there was to be a re-consideration of the appointment of general officers each year, Congress (which was the executive as well as the legislature) could drop or demote a general officer without humiliating him unduly.

In the light of Greene's remark, Adams' suggestion was sensible, which Greene himself seems to have recognized, since in his succeeding letters to Adams he made no further mention of the point.

Greene wrote to Adams again on April 5, 1777. Part of the letter has been printed previously;<sup>13</sup> the rest is printed here for the first time:

General Schuyler<sup>14</sup> is going to Congress armed with the imperial cohorts of N. York to support the assertion that the northern operations depend entirely upon his being continued in command. A dispassionate inquiry perhaps may convince you of his insolence. If not, it will afford you an opportunity to convince the state of N. York that the salvation of North America don't depend on the political sentiments of Albany county. General Schuyler thinks with me that it will be exceeding difficult if not totally impossible for the enemy to penetrate by the way of Ticonderoga. He also thinks if the enemy push up the North River it will afford us the finest opportunity to ruin them we can wish, not withstanding it may prove distressing to that state.

already had two major generals. It was one of the first events embittering Arnold toward the Congress.

<sup>12</sup> Adams' *Works*, I, 260-64, where the first paragraph is omitted. This paragraph reads: "I had last evening the pleasure of yours of March 3 by your brother to whom in his business in this place I shall give all the assistance in my power. In whose favor the ballance of letters lies, I can't say; but if I am in debt in point of numbers it must be because some of my remittances have miscarried."

<sup>13</sup> Greene's *Greene*, I, 360-62, for the first two paragraphs; the last two are from the original in private hands.

<sup>14</sup> Philip John Schuyler (1733-1804), major general. Horatio Gates had just superseded him as commander of the Northern Department.

I am more and more alarmed every day of my life at the local preparations making in the several States for their own defence, in such a situation as we are in, surrounded with imaginary and real grievances,—claims made by one State, and refused by another. Men at the head of affairs full of caprice and humours, poisoned with little prejudices, and conceited of their own importance, can easily throw the whole empire into a convulsion, unless there is some reasonable check provided to silence those little differences in their infancy. Human nature is capable of those ebullitions of folly, and prudence dictates the necessity of providing against them. It is my opinion, there ought not to be any standing troops but what are on the Continental establishment.

Believe me to be, with sentiments of regard, your most obedient, and very humble servant,

N. Greene

On April 13, 1777,<sup>15</sup> Greene again wrote Adams. Two later letters from Greene to Adams, about to be quoted, indicate that Adams answered Greene's letters of April 5 and 13; the Adams letters have never been found, however.

On May 2 and on May 7,<sup>16</sup> Greene wrote Adams as follows:

Morris Town, May 2d, 1777

Dear Sir

Your favor of April 22d came to hand a few days since. General Lincoln<sup>17</sup> is deservedly acquitted from any blame [for his defeat on April 13]. It is as you observe impossible to guard against the intrigues of the Tories and the negligence of the militia. However I hope with you that few such surprises will take place.

I most sincerely lament the great inattention and indifference that appears among the troops in general about the recruiting the army. I have in hopes that a better spirit will prevail soon. If not I hope that drafting from the militia and exempting all those from the militia service that procure a recruit will go near to fill the army. If not we must supply the defect by more vigilance, activity and spirit.

The monuments you are erecting to the memory of the great heroes Warren,<sup>18</sup> Montgomery,<sup>19</sup> and Mercer<sup>20</sup> will be a pleasing circumstance to the army in general, and, at the same time, a piece of justice due to the bravery of the unfortunate generals. These things are attended with but

<sup>15</sup> Substantially complete in Greene's *Greene*, I, 362-63.

<sup>16</sup> These two letters are in private hands.

<sup>17</sup> Benjamin Lincoln (1733-1810), major general.

<sup>18</sup> Joseph Warren (1741-1775), major general, killed at Breed's Hill.

<sup>19</sup> Richard Montgomery (1738-1775), brigadier general, killed at Quebec.

<sup>20</sup> Hugh Mercer (c. 1725-1777), brigadier general, fatally wounded at Battle of Princeton.



little expense, and have great influence. I would beg leave to propose another species of honor to animate the living to great and worthy actions. Patriotism is a glorious principle, but never refuse her the necessary aids. Let a number of medals be struck, of different figures emblematical of great actions, with a motto expressive of the same. These medals to be presented by the Congress to such of the officers as shall perform some great and noble act,—specified by some previous resolution for that purpose,—the officer that claims it to wear it as a mark of distinction due to his merit. These will be a species of honours attended with no expense, and at the same time have great influence. They will also serve to fix the honours of the army, dependent upon the dignity of Congress; and I conceive it an object of great importance to unite the wishes of the army with the views of Congress.

Doctor Lennard<sup>21</sup> of Connecticut who was chaplain to the artillery last campaign offers his service again in the artillery department. There will be several regiments this year. They are commonly detach'd to different brigades and divisions of the army. The doctor thinks he can serve the whole. But he cannot think of engaging in the service unless there is a more ample provision made than at present. If the doctor would answer for the three regiments he would merit some extraordinary allowance. He thinks his services will deserve the pay of a Lt Col of the train. If any man deserves it the doctor does. He engaged early in the army and has been indefatigable in the duties of his station. In a word he has done every thing in his power both in and out of his line of duty to promote the good of the service. The clergy are most certainly useful and necessary in the army and ought to be decently provided for. It is General Knoxes<sup>22</sup> opinion and wish that the doctor may be appointed to the office of chaplain for the whole artillery of this division of the army. You will please to consider of the propriety of the measure.

I concur with you in sentiment as to the propriety and necessity of taxation. Had this measure been adopted in N. E. instead of attempting to regulate the prices of things it would have had a much better effect. You may rely on the army in general and me in particular doing every thing in our power to aid and assist the Congress in carrying into execution every necessary resolve as far as our influence extends.

The enemy have destroyed our stores at Danbury in Connecticut—for once give them credit for a bold manœuvre. I think they have paid dear for the attempt. It is supposed their loss in killed, wounded and prisoners cannot be less than 600.

<sup>21</sup> Abiel Leonard (1740-1777) of Woodstock, Connecticut; Harvard College (1759), A.B., A.M.; Princeton (1777), D.D.; chaplain at the siege of Boston with General Putnam's 3rd Regiment, with Colonel Durkee's regiment at New York in April, 1776, at Bergen Heights and Paulus Hook until mid-September, and later at Fort Lee and with Washington through New Jersey where he engaged in the battles of Trenton and Princeton.

<sup>22</sup> Henry Knox (1750-1806), major general and secretary of war. At the time of this letter he was a brigadier general in charge of the artillery.

I observe by Dr. Lee's<sup>23</sup> letter to his brother that Burgoyne<sup>24</sup> is to attack Boston. The troops remaining so long at Newport seems to favor this opinion,—time only can unfold their future intentions. I observe, by some late resolves of Congress, they are in fear for Ticonderoga. If Carleton<sup>25</sup> comes over the lakes with a view of penetrating into the country, General Howe<sup>26</sup> must be bound up the North [Hudson] River, notwithstanding all his threats and preparations for Philadelphia.

Pray have a little patience with us here. I know you are tired of enquiring after news from this army. I hope soon to be in a condition to make some movement.

Yours sincerely,  
N. Greene.

\* \* \* \* \*

Bound Brook, May 7th, 1777

Dear Sir

Yours of the 27th of April I am to acknowledge. I cannot concur with you in sentiment because the enemy did not go to Philadelphia last December that they had no intention then or since of going there. I am of opinion if the Enemy could have got over the Delaware immediately after our Army crossed it, it would have been agreeable to their wishes. Had they effected it before the junction of our forces under General Lee and General Gates<sup>27</sup> the consequences might have been disagreeable. The attempt was dangerous, the chains of communication from Brunswick being very extensive for the number of their troops to maintain, and yet I cannot think at bottom they had much to fear from Pennsylvania or New Jersey.

General Howe has lost the most favorable opportunity this spring of destroying us, perhaps that he will have. Had he marched for Philadelphia as soon as the season opened, he might have performed it with less than one half the force necessary to accomplish it now. Such a stroke before the formation of our army, might have given us a deadly wound—by retarding our preparations for some months, increasing the tory position and depriving us of many valuable stores.

You say your opinion is of no consequence to the continent, and you are happy that it is not. You add, had you conceived the conduct of our army, or the defence against the operations of the enemy, depended in any degree upon you, you should not have contented yourself with such vague conjectures. I am at a loss to conceive your meaning. Are not the military

<sup>23</sup> Arthur Lee, M.D. (1740-1792), named in October, 1776, one of three commissioners to negotiate a treaty with France.

<sup>24</sup> John Burgoyne (1722-1792), British general commanding the forces based on Canada.

<sup>25</sup> Guy Carleton (1724-1808), first Baron Dorchester, British general.

<sup>26</sup> Viscount Sir William Howe (1729-1814), British commander in America.

<sup>27</sup> Horatio Gates (c. 1728-1806), major general, chairman of the Board of War, etc.



operations entirely under the direction of Congress? Have you not all the information that we have respecting the enemy's force and ours? Are you not acquainted with the enemy's motions, and of ours also, as early as possible? Are you not as deeply interested in the consequences of this dispute as any one man in America? Have not your constituents a right to expect you'll give your counsel in every instance when it may be useful? Would you persuade me you are insensible of the weight and influence your opinion hath in all public measures? Under all these considerations, how am I to conceive your opinion is of no consequence, and that you are happy it is not?

I readily agree with you in sentiment, that there is no one man, either in the civil or military line, that is of such mighty consequence that the liberties of America are dependent upon his will or existence. Yet there are several in both departments that America might sensibly feel the loss of at this time. If I could persuade myself that ambition was the leading principle, either in the cabinet or field, and not the common good of mankind I would have no further connexion with the dispute; for I feel the principle of humanity too forcibly to think myself justifiable to sacrifice the happiness of thousands only for the purpose of rearing up a few important characters.

I note your observations upon a certain general, that he might be of more importance to the continent if he thought himself of less. Your opinion, in this instance, is very different (if I remember right) from what it was last summer upon a similar occasion. Then you said it was necessary to think more of ourselves and things less impracticable,—this was the way to surmount difficulties. Although I wish the Congress to support their dignity in every instance, yet I hope they will carefully avoid sporting with the finer feelings of the gentlemen of the army, unless it is necessary for the good of the public or to preserve their own dignity.

You observe that prejudice, caprice, and vanity are the common offspring of all revolutions, and that I have less to fear from them than I imagine. These evils will rather increase than decrease with the confusion of the times, and they will rage in proportion as the dispute grows more or less doubtful. If you wish to establish your own authority; if you wish to give a proper tone to every State; if you wish to silence all the little factions that restless spirits may produce; if you wish to be feared abroad, and loved and respected at home,—establish your army in its full force. Nothing can give you so much authority, weight, and dignity as an army at your command, superior to all your foreign and domestic enemies. The prospect of safety will be a pleasing circumstance to the people, and conciliate and reconcile them fully to your administration. An army thus organized, government fully established in the respective States, the authority of Congress fully acknowledged by each, cannot fail of making America both easy and contented and happy at home, and loved and feared abroad. Nothing can be more mortifying and distressing to the feelings of humanity than a long continuance of the present calamities;

and more especially when we consider that, by a proper exertion, we may exterminate those hostile invaders of human happiness and the rights of mankind. Remember the long war with the United States [of the Netherlands], and the blood and treasure spent in that dispute for want of a proper exertion at first.

I have no wish to see such a large proportion of important officers in the military department in the hands of foreigners. I cannot help considering them as so many spies in our camp, ready to take their measures as their interest may direct. If foreigners are introduced, their command should not be very extensive, then the injury cannot be great, but even in this case it is an injury to America, for the multiplying officers gives us no internal strength. A good nursery of officers, taught by experience, firmly attached to the interest of the country, is a great security against foreign invaders. The only tie that we have upon foreigners, is the sentiment of honour, too slender for the happiness of a country to depend upon,—while officers created from among the people are bound, not only by the ties of honour, but by that of interest and family connexion. We, in many instances, see the force of British gold; let us not neglect to guard against its influence. I have no narrow prejudices upon this subject, neither have I any private differences with any of those gentlemen. My opinion is founded upon the general conduct of mankind.

By a spy out of Brunswick this day I am informed the enemy are making preparations to leave that place. The disaffected inhabitants are endeavoring to get houses in N York. The spy sais our friends in Brunswick have received letters from their friends at N York giving an account of the Danbury affair. They write the enemy lost 900 killed, wounded and missing. This account if true may console us in some degree for the loss of our stores. The enemy gave General Arnold the character of a devilish fighting fellow.

Yours sincerely

N. Greene.

On May 9 Adams wrote Greene:

Philadelphia May 9, 1777.

Dear Sir:

Yours of the 2nd instant came duly to hand. The Indifference of the People about recruiting the Army is a Circumstance which ought to make us consider what are the Causes of it. It is not merely the Melancholy arising from the unfortunate events of the last Campaign, but the Small Pox and above all the unhappy State of our Finances which occasion this Evil. There are other Circumstances, which are little attended to, which contribute, much more than is imagined to this unfavorable Temper in the People. The Prevalence of Dissipation, Debauchery, Gaming, Profaneness and Blasphemy, terrifies the best people upon the Continent, from trusting their sons and other Relations among so many dangerous



Snares and Temptations. Multitudes of people who would with cheerful Resignation submit their Families to the Dangers of the Sword, shudder at the Thought of exposing them, to what appears to them, the more destructive Effects of Vice and Impiety. These Ideas would be received by many with scorn. But there is not the less Solidity in them for that. It is Discipline alone that can stem the Torrent. Chaplains are of great use, I believe, and I wish Mr. Leonard might be in the Army, upon such Terms as would be agreeable to him, for there is no man for whom I have a better opinion. But there is so much difficulty in accomplishing any Thing of the Kind that I wish G. Washington would either appoint him, or recommend him to Congress.

The Utility of Medals, has ever been impressed strongly on my Mind. Pride, Ambition, and indeed what a Philosopher would call Vanity, is the strongest Passion in human Nature, and next to Religion, the most operative Motive to great Actions. Religion, or if the fine Gentlemen please, Superstition and Enthusiasm, is the greatest Incentive and whenever it has prevailed, has never failed to produce Heroism. If our N. England men were alone, and could have their own way, a great deal of this would appear. But in their present situation I fear we have little to expect from this Principle, more than the Perseverance of the People in the Camp. We ought to avail ourselves then of even the Vanity of Men. For my own Part I wish we could make a Beginning, by striking a Medal, with a platoon firing at General Arnold, on Horseback. His Horse falling dead under him, and He deliberately disentangling his feet from the Stirrups and taking his Pistols out of the Holsters, before his Retreat, on the reverse. He should be mounted on a Fresh Horse, receiving another Discharge of Musquetry, with a wound in the Neck of his Horse. This Picture alone, which I am informed is true History, if Arnold did not unfortunately belong to Connecticut, would be sufficient to make his Fortune for Life. I believe there have been few such Scenes in the World.

We have not Artists at present for such Works, and many other Difficulties would attend an Attempt to introduce Medals.

Taxation is begun in N. E. The Mass. raises 100,000 this year. The Regulation of Prices and the Embargo, are measures of which I could never see the Justice or Policy.

The Intimation in your Letter, that the Enemy lost in killed, wounded and Prisoners 600 Men, [at Danbury] surprises me much; because it exceeds by at least two thirds the largest amount that has come from any other authority. I wish our N. England Men would practice a little honest Policy for their own Interest and Honour, by transmitting to Congress and publishing in the Newspapers true dates of the actions in which they are concerned. The Truth alone would be sufficient for them, and surely they may be allowed to avail themselves of this Shield of Defence, when so many Arts of Dishonest Policy, are practiced against them.

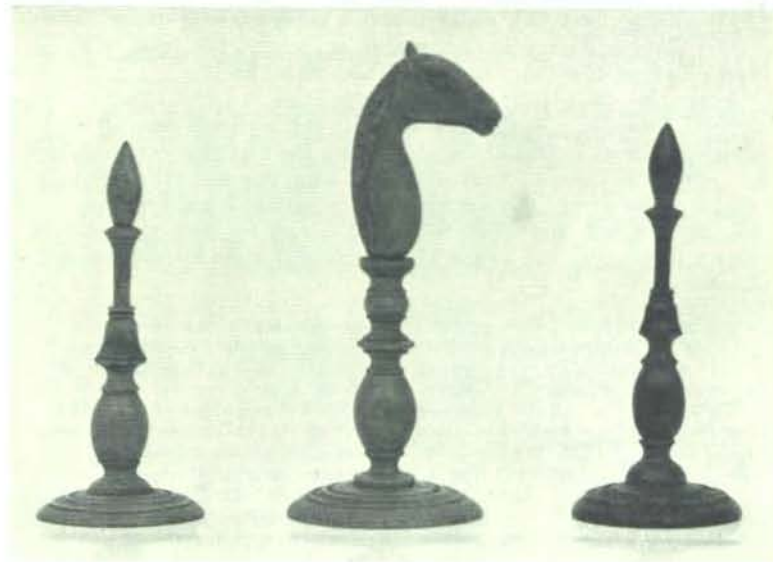
Congress was too anxious for Ti—[conderoga] I wish our Army was encamped upon some Hill, twenty miles from the Waters of the Lake, or at least ten.

We are alarmed here with frequent accounts of numerous Desertions from our Army. Is there no Remedy for this Evil. Howe is trying his Hand at Bribery. He is sending his Emissaries, all about, and scattering ministerial Gold. They despair of the effects of Force, and are now attempting Bribery and Insinuation, which are more provoking than all their Cruelties. What Effect would these have in N. England! Strachey the Secretary, is an old Partisan at Electioneering, long hackneyed in the Ways of Corruption, long a ministerial Agent, in that dirty Work and the Greatest Master of it, in the Nation. Selected for that very Purpose to be sent here. Pray don't you Generals, sometimes, practice Methods of holding up such Characters among your enemies, to the Contempt and Hatred of the Soldiery?

I find I have written a long Story. Excuse me, and believe me to be, with great Truth and Regard, your most obedient Servant.

John Adams

*(To be concluded in the next issue)*



GENERAL NATHANAEL GREENE'S CHESSMEN, USED IN CAMP

*Rhode Island Historical Society Collection*



## A Rhode Islander Goes West to Indiana (1817-1818)

Communicated by GEORGE A. WHITE, JR.

(Continued from *Rhode Island History, Volume I, No. 1, p. 31*)

Fort Harrison March 15<sup>th</sup> 1818

Dear Mother

Since my ariveal here I have written three times and not yet received an answer to either of my letters. I now begin to think that I am quite forgotten but will try once more thinking perhaps this may receive some notice from you or Father.

I have not purchased any land yet and indeed I do not know of but one half section (of one quarter of Prairie and one of Wood) that I think is cheap, for sail, it is a Location and belongs to a gentleman in NYork. I have written to him & have since been informed by Judge Coleman<sup>16</sup> that *he* has received a letter from him wishing to know if he could sell it but has not mentioned the price. When the Gentleman Doct [Orris] Crosby [of Chautauqua, N. Y.] was on here last season he offered it for 5 dollars pr acre cash which was very cheap. The situation is fine haveing Plenty of wood and water that lasts all the year upon it which is an advantage that but few quarters have about here.

A man that has a Quarter section under fence and once broak up can support himself very handsomely here for the land will rent for eight dollars pr acre or a third of the crop which for a quarter section would be a handsome income. I am afraid that some one will git it from me as there is one or two that has some talk of buying it and I not haveing sufficient cash as I suppose the terms will be cash for both quarters, and indeed they never had ought to be separated they lay so handsome together.

<sup>16</sup> John M. Coleman, born, probably in Kentucky, about 1785. About 1812 he moved to Washington County, Indiana, where he was appointed justice of the peace in 1814 and served as associate judge from November 26, 1814 to January 3, 1816. He moved to Vigo County in 1816, settling near the future site of Terre Haute. He was interested in land deals, farmed, and was the first postmaster of Terre Haute, when the post office was established there on February 11, 1818. He built the foundation of the Terre Haute courthouse in 1818. In 1820 he was elected county commissioner in Vigo County and that same year was appointed by the Legislature to locate the county seat for Parke County. He was a State senator in 1825, 1826-27, and 1827-28. About 1828 he moved to Vermillion County, where he had bought land. In 1839 he moved on to Iowa City, Iowa, serving in 1842 and 1843 as Territorial Agent of Iowa, and as secretary-treasurer in charge of the sale of lands which provided funds for the construction of the State House. He took part in other political activities in his later years.

If I only had about 1600 dollars I should have no hesitation in laying it out here for I am shure I could receive my money back in 2 years and the land would be worth 20 dollars pr Acre. Perhaps you may think I rate it heigher than would be actually the case but I am persuaded I do not. Could you see the country you would be charmed with it[,] not that I think you would be contented here but that you would admire the situation of the Prairie which they are improveing very fast and in a few years will be a perfect garden.

If I do not purchase Prairie Land perhaps it would be as well for me to enter timber Land and let it lay[;] it will be worth something by the by but not untill the Prairie gitts filled up. On the other side of the river there is good timber land near the frontier it is said. But few wish to be so near the Indians. They are frequently in at the fort painted in great stile haveing faces of five or six different colours and trimmed off with jewels in their ears nose & around their arms and legs.

Arnold Potter<sup>17</sup> was married on the 11<sup>th</sup> inst. to a miss Hall of Carlisle[,] a girl of 14 or 15 years of age and of quite a low family. I have not seen her but by description she is a very on guard disagreeable girl and no way suitable for him. I fear he has thrown himself away and am realy sorry for it as he appears to be a very fine young man. He told me he intended visiting RIsland this spring but I have since understood he has bought a farm and intends improveing it now he is married. At any rate I hope he will not take his wife on to the Eastward[,] as for our Indiana girls would not be thought much of if she is to be considered as a sample.<sup>18</sup>

In my letter to Eliza I mention we should commence keeping Bachelor hall about the 15<sup>th</sup> but not haveing things ready and Colo. Jenckes haveing now engaged a family to be here by the first of next month we have given up mooveing untill that time.

I have made an arangement to stay with Jenckes this summer or untill I git some land of my own to improve.

Do tell Father to write me respecting what I had better do and whether

<sup>17</sup> The son of Judge William and Penelope (Hazard) Potter of South Kingstown. The Judge was Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas of Washington County According to Wilkins Updike in *A History of the Episcopal Church in Narragansett, Rhode Island* (Boston, 1907), I, 272-273, Arnold Potter went to Harvard but did not graduate, and was a "man of great intelligence and enterprise." Updike also says he owned a large estate in Middlesex, Yates County, N. Y. Judge Potter was one of those who fell under the spell of the famous Jemima Wilkinson, "The Publick Universal Friend," who once sought to work a miracle by raising from the dead Susannah, a daughter of Judge Potter. In 1790, Judge Potter accompanied Jemima Wilkinson when she led a band of her disciples to the Genesee Country of New York. The Judge bought land there, and presumably it is this land which later came into the possession of Arnold Potter. Judge Potter returned to South County from New York, but fell upon evil days and finally was forced to mortgage his old home there, according to Updike. It was eventually sold to the Hon. Elisha R. Potter.

<sup>18</sup> It is interesting to see how this harsh description is changed gradually in ensuing letters.



I could buy that Prairie Land or not[;] if so I should want the funds immediately and shall wait impatiently for an answer from him.

Tell Eliza to write how things have gone on since I left and what the News is and do so yourself for every thing from that quarter will be interesting and particularly whether you are to farmit another year.

Remember me particularly to Mr Jenckes family Mr Carpenters<sup>19</sup> Uncle Thomas's<sup>20</sup> and Uncle Rose's<sup>21</sup> and all enquireing friends.

And my best Love to all our family

I am Dear mother your dutifull son

J C Packard

P S Jenckes has not received a line from any of there family but Daniel<sup>22</sup> since he left R I and my not receiveing any I think they must have miscarried.

The winter has been very severe here. The snow continued on the ground about six weeks and it was said the thermometer stood at 16 degrees below zero in Vincennes. I think however it is an exageration.

About a fortnight ago I killed a Prairie Wolf by running him down with my horse and knocking him down when I came up with him and yesterday I run another down but had nothing to kill him with so he got away after being almost beet out. It is fine fun when won [one] can get thim on the Prairie to give them a chase.

Terre Haute Ia

March 17 25

[To] Mrs Abby Packard [Endorsed] Answered April 20

\* \* \* \*

Vigo County [Indiana] 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1818

Dear Father

In my letter to my Mother last week I mentioned a half Section of Land that belonged to Doct Crosby of NYork that was for sale. Judge Coleman received instructions from him last week. The terms are 5 dols pr acre[, ] 12 hundred down and the remaining 4 hundred in one year [—]the greatist bargain that I know of. Had I the money I should certainly have bought it for I think it is as valuable a tract of land as any about here haveing both wood and water and the distance about 7 miles from Terre Haute the County seat for this Country, which was selected on Thursday last as the seat of Justice. The company<sup>23</sup> gave a donation

<sup>19</sup> Probably Willett Carpenter, a neighbor of the Packards on Boston Neck.

<sup>20</sup> Thomas Rose Congdon, an uncle of the letter writer.

<sup>21</sup> Another relative on his mother's side.

<sup>22</sup> Daniel Jenckes.

<sup>23</sup> The Terre Haute Town Company, also known as the Terre Haute Land Company, was composed of Cuthbert and Thomas Bullitt of Kentucky; Abraham Markle of Fort Harrison; Jonathan Lindley of Orange County, Indiana; and Hyacinthe Lassalle, or LeSalle or Lasselle. The company was formed by articles dated September 10, 1816. As is seen from the letter, the company offered 70 lots and \$4000, plus a piece containing eight lots for the town square and as a site for public buildings, in

of 70 town lots and 4790 dollars which is considered about 20000 dollars. There was much strife to prevent its being there and a great many offers one of which was a Quarter Section of Land and ten thousand dollars.

But to return to the land that I began about [, ] Judge Colemans instructions ware to sell it by the first of April but by some neglect he did not receive them untill last week although they ware dated the middle of Decr. As his limitation expires so soon he intends writing by this mail for other directions.

If by any means you could furnish me with the money I wish you would for the land is worth 15 dollars and if I had it I would not take 20 dols pr Acre for I should consider myself independent after it was once under fence and broak up[, ] for Land rented last year for 8 dollars pr Acre or one third the crop. I have spoken to Coleman who will give me an answer as soon as he receives one from Doct Crosby for should I get the land I should be perfectly contented and I know if you could see it you would purchase it immediately. If you can make it convenient to furnish me with the money do do it immediately so that I can be ready to meet the answer of Crosby. Perhaps he may ask all the cash in hand the next time therefore I should be glad to have sufficient to tak[e] it then for it is realy a great bargain.

I have now about six hundred dollars[; ] however I shall have to pay my board for two months out of it so that you may know how much I want. If you could get a draft on Vincennes or Louisville it would be as well as the money[, ] for it is very uncertain about the Eastern mail or perhaps James Jacobs<sup>24</sup> would buy a draft on you if you would permit me to draw. He has established himself in Vincennes.

Colonel Jenckes is now on to Vincennes getting on a family that he has hired. He gives the man twenty two dollars pr month and the woman one fifty pr week for 7 months and they find themselves.

I shall expect to see you on here this summer as Daniel Jenckes mentioned you was to start in May.

Remember me particularly to Mother and the rest of the family and

order to have the town selected as the county seat for Vigo County. The land on which the town was built was purchased of Joseph Kitchell on September 19, 1816. The Bullitts had a 2/12ths interest; Lindley, 4/12ths; Lassalle, 3/12ths; and Markle, 3/12ths. Markle divided his share into fourths, assigning one fourth to Eliakim Crosby, who is possibly a relative of Dr. Orris Crosby; one fourth each to Messrs. Harlow & Trimble; and retaining the remaining fourth for himself. Terre Haute was chosen county seat for Vigo County by a legislative act approved January 21, 1818.

<sup>24</sup> James Jacobs is apparently a son of the Henry Jacobs of New York mentioned earlier. In the Vincennes *Western Sun*, in an advertisement first appearing December 18, 1817, there is announced the opening of a "New Cheap Store" in the building formerly occupied by Bradley & Badolett, by James Jacobs, receiving supplies from New York, and handling hardware, clothes, groceries, etc. In 1818. Jacobs & LeRoy, identified as James Jacobs and Alexis LeRoy, announced by an advertisement in the same paper that they had just received salt and a keel-boat.



write me on the receipt of this that I may know what to do and believe me your dutifull

Son J C Packard

P S I have not yet received a line from home[;] neither has Jenckes except from Daniel.

Direct either to Fort Harrison or Terre Haute. There are Post offices at both places. Terre Haute is about three miles below the Fort and rather nearer here.

\* \* \* \*

Vincennes 16<sup>th</sup> April 1818

Dear Father

I received yours and Elizas by last mail. I have now purchased a half section of land for 5 dollars pr acre[,] one thousand down and the rest in one year. I have 500 in cash and 500 I have drawn a bill on Henry Jacobs NYork for. I have written to Mr Jacobs and requested him to inform you of it. The bill is twenty days after sight. I nearly wish you would forward the money on to him immediately.

The bargain is a great one[,] as Jenckes and every one thinks[,] and by your saying you would help me to a purchase I have drawn. The mail is now a closing and I have but just arived here. Is an excuse for my not writing more.

Your Dutiful Son

John

I shall write Next week.

The half Section is the South half of 2—town 11 Range 9.

Do furnish the money and write immediately.

Remember me to all the family

J-

[To] Capt Samuel Packard

[Endorsed] answered May 20

\* \* \* \*

Vigo County April 20<sup>th</sup> 1818

Dear Father

I wrote you last week in great haste from Vincennes informing you that I had bought the South half of a section 2 town 11 Range 9 W for 5 dollars pr Acre one thousand down and six hundred in one year which I have given a Mortgage for. I have paid 500 dollars and drawn a bill on Henry Jacobs 147 Pearl Street NYork for 500 which I pray may be accepted. I have written Mr J and requested him to inform you that a bill will be presented and I wish that you would if you can by any means furnish the money send it on to him or write for him to accept the bill and you would furnish the money in twenty days for the bill is drawn twenty days after sight.

I hope you will not think I am to[o] hasty and indeed I should never have thought of drawing a bill without your permission had there been any other way to have done the business and if it should not *meet* with your *approbation* do by all means secure the first payment and then I can

sell it for a handsome advance for there are a number that wanted to purchase the land but my being the first that saw the agent I secured it before them.

I have already been offered 5 quarter sections of wood . . . for the two [I bought.] They are handsomely situated on the east side of Fort Harrison Prairie 3½ miles from Terre Haute about 200 Acres of Prairie and Beautifull Bottom which may be easily cleared and 120 Acres of excellent timber with two springs and a good Shugar camp. About 5 or six Acres is under fence with [a] Big field that has been broak up that I entend planting with corn this spring. The remainder I shall do nothing with untill you come out here or I receive your advice.

I am rather affraid though that you will not visit this part of the World very soon for Jenckes received a Letter from Daniel in which his fater and he believed you had given up all idea of coming out. I am sorry to hear that you are not coming to see the Country[—]not that I should wish you to moove here for I am shure that mother and the girls would not be contented[;] the society is so different from what they have been used to for they are all common farmers from NYork with but few exceptions about here; so that the Yankees can hold up their heads in this settlement. [In] the other part of the State the settlers are from Ky. Tennessee & N Carolina princpaly who are very jealous of the Yankees.

Produce is very high and very scarce on account of the emigration. There is hardly a day but there are two or more Waggons besides boats with families ariving— Corn is up to 75cts Oats 50 Potatoes 1 dollar pr bushell. There is no wheat to be had[;] flour is 4 dols pr hund. and I do not think it will be much cheaper next year. Oxen midling size are worth from 60 to 70 dols if well broak if not about 40 to 50[;] Cows 12 to 18 dollars[;] horses about what they are with you. This country does not sute [suit] horses for I have not seen a fat horse since I have been here[;] however I believe it is oweing to there not being any english hay in the country and the feed is altogether corn. The swelling on my horses gambriel has gone all away this winter and there is nothing the matter with him only a little flesh wanting.

With respect to the price of Land—Mr Bullett<sup>25</sup> who owns the most Land of any one in the state has a list of those he wishes to sell which I have seen. The Prices are from 6 to 12 dollars and not one of them so good as that which I have bought. Mr. Harris asked from 7 to 11 and Major Markle<sup>26</sup> sold 40 Acres on the Prairie 1½ miles from THaute without fence or improvement for 30 dols pr Acre to a man that keeps the tavern at THaute.<sup>27</sup>

Markle told me yesterday I had made the best bargain that had been made since the [Government] sales. He said the land is worth 15 dollars

<sup>25</sup> Either Cuthbert or Thomas Bullitt mentioned in footnote 23.

<sup>26</sup> Major Abraham Markle of Fort Harrison, member of the Terre Haute Town Company.

<sup>27</sup> The first tavern in Terre Haute was the "Eagle and Lion." In 1817 it was kept by Henry Redford, and later by Francis Cunningham, Captain James Wasson, and James Harris. Later Samuel McQuilkin kept the "Light Horse Harry."



pr Acre. He would not take it [i.e., that price] for the other half which he owns for they ware almost the first Locations that ware laid.

The agent<sup>28</sup> has just called for me. We are now to go to the Fort for the deed to be recorded when I am to pay him the money which I thought I would not do before every thing was secure.

April 21

I went yesterday to the Fort and there ware a number that ware telling me that I had an elegant bargain[,] such a one as has not been since the sales—and then to crown all when we got to the Recorders office and took out the papers [we] found that the power of Attorney was missing—when and where he lost it the gentleman does not know but thinks he left it at the tavern in Vincennes where he took out the papers to acknowledge them before a Justice. I do not know when I have been so disappointed. However[,] it may be found[;] he writes by this mail to the tavern keeper to see if he has left it there. [Paper torn making it impossible to read a phrase.—Ed.]

Do write to Mr [Jacobs] to accept the bill if there is one presented and you will send on the money in season[,] for if the Power is found I shall send on the bill as you mentioned that if I found a place that would suit you would help me with the purchase and I have now found such a one and there was no way to accommodate but by a bill which I hope you will not think me to[o] hasty in drawing. If you knew the situation and the probable rise there will be by the emigration to this country you would heighly approve of it.

I was told by a Gentleman just from Olean Point[,] the head water of the Ohio or rather where they take [to the] water [,] that at that place there ware 400 families besides almost every place on the river there ware a great many more on their way out. I shall write Eliza next week whose letter together with yours I was very happy to receive pr last Mail being the first word I have received from home for 6 months. I hope you will write me often & remember me to all the family and believe me your dutifull son

John

I shall endeavour to give Eliza next week a particular description of every thing here.

Potters wife is not such a disagreeable woman as she was represented. She is quite a smart girl of her age[,] 14 years. I took breakfast with A Potter on my return from Vincennes. He has bought a farm from the Shakers[,] 70 acres under fence and the price is 10 dols pr acre. There is 300 acres in all[—]a cheap bargain it is said.

The season is the most Backward of any that has been known by the oldest settlers. There was ice as thick as window glass for the two mornings past. The fruit trees ware all in blossom but I think there will be none [no] fruit this season.

<sup>28</sup> Daniel W. Douglass, who was prominent in early Terre Haute land deals.

I presume my first letter must have mist for I mentioned that all our things arived here safe and nothing lost except the waggon which Jenckes brought from Greeneville[,] the place where I stopped on account of my horse and came on horse back. I live with Jenckes[;] he charges me no board. Jenckes returned with the waggon last week. I shall let you know what we are about in my next[,] not haveing any more room.

Direct to Terre Haute

Terre Haute Ia	25	Vigo County
April 21st	Single	Indiana
[To] Capt Samuel Packard		[Endorsed] answered May 20

(To be concluded in the next issue)

## Book Review

ROGER WILLIAMS: LEADER OF DEMOCRACY

*The Ground We Stand On: Some Examples  
from the History of a Political Creed.*

By John Dos Passos.

New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1941, pp. 420.

Readers of the Dos Passos from whose mind a typewriter fashioned *Manhattan Transfer*, *Three Soldiers* and *The 42d Parallel* will hardly be prepared for this, his latest publication. It is so utterly different in purpose, in tone quality and in spirit from those earlier books with which he always is associated. Absent is the belligerent cynic and the shock-seeker. Here is John Dos Passos (of all persons) earnestly applying himself to the task of writing sincere, personal history. Though surveying his materials through lenses of realism, there is no trace of the debunker. He is even respectful in his consideration of many old traditions which one would expect *the* Dos Passos to tear apart.

In the prologue, his purpose is revealed when he reminds us that in easy times, history is "sort of a monumental art. But in times of danger, we are driven to the written record by the pressing need to find answers to the riddles of today." Surely he is writing in dangerous days with many, too many, riddles still unanswered.

So he has set out to return to the antecedents of the American republic. One main trail takes him back to Roger Williams, "the first great leader of democracy in American life"; the other to Thomas Jefferson. Then follow side trips to Samuel Adams, Joel Barlow, and Hugh Henry Brackenridge.

His Sam Adams is admirable. The Dos Passos version is a blending of the qualities that made Adams incompetent as a collector of taxes but a vigorous force in stirring the imagination of a mob into motion.



Jefferson in his hands is the fine home-loving statesman, respected by all Americans who have ever paused to make his acquaintance between the covers of a book.

But it is with Roger Williams that Dos Passos and Rhode Islanders are most concerned. The author's admiration for the pioneer who "crossed an ocean, bringing the seeds of a whole civilization in his head" continually creeps through the pages, but fortunately always escapes the boiling point of hero worship. This preacher, explorer, trader and linguist is to Dos Passos no hollow idol, but a master moulder of the thoughts of men and a courageous guide of a groping people.

Though it is much the longest of the biographies in the book, it is still only a life in miniature, not a full length portrait. But I can recall no other publication which reveals so quickly to the reader a clear panorama of 17th Century England with particular reference to the relation of a violently changing old England to our own section of toddling New England.

Of course the book is not without faults. Dos Passos never could resist spicing his writing with slang, and he succumbs here. James Stuart, we are told, was "on the make"; and Sir Edward Coke tried to "frame" Raleigh. There are spots where the work is choppy. At many points it gives the reader the impression that the author one day intends to return to extend these sketches to greater length and depth. In the case of Roger Williams, especially, this reviewer earnestly hopes that he will, because the essence of a notable biography is here.

Providence Public Library.

CLARENCE E. SHERMAN

## TO THE CITIZENS OF PROVIDENCE!!!

You are requested FORTHWITH  
to repair to the

# State Arsenal and TAKE ARMS.

SAMUEL W. KING.

Governor of the State of Rhode Island.

Providence, May 17, 1842, 6 o'clock P. M.

(See page 43)

## RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### TREASURER'S REPORT

#### Income Account for the year 1941

##### Receipts

Annual Dues .....	\$4,405.25	
Dividends and Interest .....	3,274.15	
Rental of Rooms .....	150.00	
Sale of Publications .....	95.95	
State Appropriation .....	1,375.00	
State Purchase of Newspapers .....	203.94	
Sundries .....	186.05	
Total Operating Income .....		\$ 9,690.34

##### Disbursements

Salaries and Library Expenses .....	\$7,330.11	
Books and Periodicals .....	360.42	
Heat, Insurance, Ordinary Repairs .....	893.38	
Publications Committee .....	973.09	
Membership Committee .....	49.08	
Lecture Committee .....	335.24	
Total Operating Disbursements .....		\$ 9,941.32
Renovation 1941 .....		4,230.00
Purchase of Securities .....		3,152.81
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS .....		\$17,324.13
Excess of Receipts over Disbursements .....		9,872.52
Cash on hand Jan. 1, 1941 .....		1,988.75
Cash on hand Dec. 31, 1941 .....		\$11,861.27

#### BALANCE SHEET, DECEMBER 31, 1941

##### Assets:

Cash and Savings Deposit .....	\$12,264.84	
Investments .....	67,344.82	
Property .....	75,006.00	
		\$154,615.66

##### Liabilities:

Fund Reserves, less Principal deficit .....	\$154,054.94	
Income Surplus .....	560.72	
		\$154,615.66

ROBERT T. DOWNS,  
Treasurer

The accounts of the Society were audited by Alfred J. Viera under the direction of the Audit Committee, John H. Wells, Chairman.



## News—Notes of the Rhode Island Historical Society

Our plans for moving to John Brown House are progressing satisfactorily. The vaulting of both the silver-vault and wine-cellar has been reinforced with concrete; and the ceiling of the latter strengthened with metal beams. Steel shelving has been installed. The main house has been fitted with additional electrical outlets. A blower system to circulate the heat is nearing completion.

We expect to begin moving about April first. It will be a slow process, necessitating an almost complete suspension of activities of the library. We request the indulgence of our members and the public during this period of unavoidable restriction and dislocation.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Southern New England Conference of Historical Societies held its first meeting in the Cabinet, January 17th. Delegates from 11 societies attended. Loring McMillen, Director, Staten Island Historical Society, spoke on the subject, "How We Study Local History on Staten Island." On Sunday, February 1st, Dr. Rachel I. Harris Kilpatrick led a lively discussion following the reading of her paper, "Tracking Down Rhode Island Dialects." The large number of acceptances for Capt. George H. Bowdley's talk on "The Strategic Importance of Narragansett Bay in Naval History," necessitated the removal to the Picture Gallery at Faunce House, kindly loaned for the occasion by Brown University. Leonard Bacon, Pulitzer Prize Winner for Poetry, 1941, gave a reading of his own poems, Sunday, March 1st. "Science during the Revolution, with special reference to Rhode Island" was the topic chosen by I. Bernard Cohen, of Harvard University for the evening of March 24th.

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The new Constitution adopted at the Annual meeting, January 19th, has been printed and copies are available on request.

Several changes were made in the list of officers: Harris H. Bucklin was elected President, Charles B. Mackinney, a Vice President. George L. Miner became Treasurer, and the following gentlemen chairmen of Committees: H. Anthony Dyer, Membership; Charles C. Remington, Library; Albert H. Poland, Finance. The other officers and chairman of Committees kindly consented to continue their services for another year. Westcote H. Chesebrough was elected Assistant Secretary and Howard W. Wilson, Assistant Treasurer. At a subsequent meeting of the Executive Committee, William G. Roelker was elected Director and Librarian.

W. G. R.