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COMMODORE ABRAHAM WHIPPLE (1733-1819).

*Hand Colored Portrait, Rhode Island Historical Society*

*ISSUED QUARTERLY AT PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND*



Thus by inheritance and up-bringing John Brown should have been a sea captain. But life was too full; certainly the press of many activities crowded his career. Ship owner, ship builder, merchant, distiller, candle manufacturer, partner in iron works and cannon foundry, founder of the Providence Bank, adventurer in opening a great East Indies export and import business—a man of such abounding energy and wide interests could not go to sea. If John Brown had made his voyages himself he would have come home owning half the Orient. As it was, he sailed a bit in Narragansett Bay, sent his ships up and down the coast, to the West Indies, to Africa and later to the East Indies; and stayed at home to take part in the burning of the Gaspee, to defy the British tyrants, to help build Rhode Island College, of which he was treasurer for twenty-one years, to pull his weight in the leadership of the General Assembly and in the councils of the movement for independence that was to bring forth a new Republic. Meantime he made money hand over fist.

John Brown was thirty-nine years old when the critical year of 1775 came. One Wednesday in April he was sailing up the Bay from Newport with a cargo of flour. He was arrested—on orders of Captain Wallace of H.M.S. *Rose*—and spent several days in custody on Admiral Graves' flagship in Boston Harbor. Tradition has it that Brother Moses helped him get off and rode home with him on the same horse. This was on May 3. Four weeks later John put one of his vessels alongside his dock and began the work of arming her. She was the sloop *Katy*.

At its session on "the second Monday in June 1775" the General Assembly had passed a vote "that the Committee of Safety be, and they are hereby, directed to charter<sup>2</sup> two suitable Vessels, for the use of the Colony, and fit out the same in the best manner, to protect the trade of this Colony: . . . That the largest of the said vessels be manned

<sup>2</sup> A copy of this Charter is in the Moses Brown *Manuscripts*, Vol. II, Rhode Island Historical Society. This Charter reads as follows:

with eighty men, exclusive of officers; and be equipped with ten guns, four-pounders, fourteen Swivil Guns, a sufficient number of Small-Arms, and all necessary warlike stores."

The General Assembly further voted "that the following officers be, and are hereby, appointed to command the said vessels, to wit:

"Of the largest vessel,—

"Abraham Whipple, commander, with the rank and power of Commodore of both vessels. . . ."

The *Katy* sailed that same week of her charter by the Colony. On that day she dropped down Narragansett Bay and let blaze her long four-pounders at a tender of Capt. Wallace's ship *Rose*. The encounter drove the tender ashore on Conanicut Island where Capt. Whipple captured her. The fight was over in a half hour; no one was hurt on the *Katy* and two men wounded on the tender.<sup>4</sup> But the *Katy* had made history; she had fired the first authorized naval shot of the Revolution. The people of Rhode Island

Providence June 22, 1775

An Agreement between John Brown on one part and the Committe in behalf of the Colony for hireing & Fixing an armed Vessill On the other part Viz the Said John agrees to Lett to the Said Committe the Sloop Catey from the 12 Inst to the Latter part of December next at Ninty Dollars pr. mo. the Said Committe in behalf of the Colony to Resque the Said Sloop at Four Hundred pounds L. Mony to be pd. to Said John on Demand after the Loss of Said Sloop with Int. from this Day but in Case the Sloop should be Returned to the Said John She is to be in as Good order as she now is, Common ware & Tare Excepted or if the General assembly at their next setting shall chuse to purchess Said Sloop at Four Hundred pounds with Int from this Day they have Liberty So to do or to Continue her on hire as above, whatever Expens the Said John has put to Said Sloop Since begun to Fix her for the Colonys use Viz Since the 12 Inst., Excepting only for Cordage, the Said Committee is to pay the Said Int For

<sup>3</sup> *R. I. Col. Records* VII, 346-7; also *Am. Archives*, 4th ii, 1158.

<sup>4</sup> Particulars of an Action between the Diana Packet a Tender belonging to His Majesty's Ship *Rose*, and two Armed Sloops belonging to the Rebels. *Public Record Office*, Volume 485, pp. 409-413. April 1774-June 1775, Letters of Vice Admiral Samuel Graves, Esq<sup>r</sup> to Philip

Stephens Esq<sup>r</sup>, Admiralty Secretary, from the transcripts in the Library of Congress.

The 15th June 1775 about 9 o'clock AM. being ordered by Captain Wallace to proceed with the Diana Sloop, a Tender to His Majesty's Ship Rose, up the River towards Providence with a Petty Officer, eleven Men and myself, armed with Small Arms and four Swivels to reconnoitre the different Passages, having Intelligence of Armed Vessels being fitted out by the Rebels at Providence.

The 16th PM about half past 5. as I was standing off between the North end of Connecticut [Conanicut] Island and Gold [Gould] Island between two and three Leagues from the Ship, a Sloop coming down before the wind, I lay'd too to speak her—a little after six being within hail, She hail'd Us and told Us to bring too or she would sink Us immediately and directly fired a shot which we returned with our Small Arms and Swivels and kept a smart fire on both Sides for near half an hour, till by accident the Powder Chest with the remainder of the swivel Cartridges blew up—In this Sloop we saw Six Carriage Guns mounted and a great number of Men Onboard—The Ammunition for the Small Arms being near expended and another armed Vessel with Carriage Guns belonging to the Rebels joining and bringing Us between two fires, so that there was no possibility of saving the Vessel—I thought it prudent to run her ashore which I accordingly accomplished near the North end of Connecticut and got on shore with the People and part of the Small Arms—They immediately landed a number of Men from the Vessels in whale Boats who closely pursued and fired at Us—being so closely pursued and night coming on thought it necessary to separate and conceal Ourselves till a proper Opportunity offered of joining the Ship which was accomplished the next day without the loss of one Man. Mr Stevenson the Petty Officer and one Man being the only People that were hurt occasioned by the Powder Chest blowing up—During the course of the engagement the People behaved with the greatest Spirit.

Sign'd Savage Gardner, Master

Endorsed, Mr. Savage Gardner's / Account of an Action / between the Diana / Packet & a Tender / belonging to the Rose / recd by Vice Admiral Graves / the 26th June 1775 / In Vice Adml Graves's / Letter of 26 June 1775.

Letter from Deputy Governor Cooke to Capt. Wallace, see Force, 4th Series, II, 985 & R. I. C. R., VII, 338 Endorsed Nicholas Cooke Depy / Govr of Rhode Island / to / Capt. Wallace dated 14 / June recd 26th by / Vice Adml Graves / In V. A. Graves's / Lre of June 26, 1775.

Answer to above, Force, 4th Series, II, 986, & R. I. C. R., VII, 338, Endorsed Captain Jas Wallace / of H.M.S. / Rose to / Nichs Cooke Esqr / at Newport / dated 15 June recd by Vice Admiral Graves the / 26th June / In Vice Adml Graves's / Lre of 26 June 1775.

were delighted. In October the General Assembly carried out the purchase of John Brown's *Katy*.<sup>5</sup>

The allowance for hire was "Ninty Dollars per mo", beginning June 12.<sup>6</sup>

All summer Abraham Whipple sailed the *Katy* up and down Narragansett Bay, "protecting the trade of the Colony," and moving sheep and cows from Conanicut and Prudence Islands to the mainland to save them from the British. In September Whipple made a cruise to Bermuda for powder but returned empty handed; his instructions appear on page 81.

Then in December, 1775, *Katy* was sent for by the Naval Committee and Capt. Whipple sailed her to Philadelphia to become ship number 5 in the infant Navy of the United Colonies. Here she was rechristened *Providence*. Two more long-fours were added to her armament, making her a twelve-gun sloop, and Captain John Hazard of Rhode Island was given command.

For four years the little *Providence* made history. She sailed under men who drove her hard, she lived hard and fought hard. A sizable volume can be made of her four years career. Space here permits only the bare chronology.

In February the fleet under command of Commodore Esek Hopkins of Rhode Island, sailed against New Providence Island of the Bahamas, and the *Providence* did useful service in the capture of the forts and seizure of quantities of powder, shot and supplies much needed by the

<sup>5</sup> "It is voted and resolved, with the consent of Mr. John Brown, that the colony will purchase the sloop *Katy*, as she is now, with her boats, stores and appurtenances, at the rate of \$1250.

"That the said John Brown be allowed the hire of said sloop, at the price agreed upon, from the 12th day of June last, to this day, out of the general Treasury.

"And that in case the said sloop be taken or lost, before this day, that then the said John Brown shall receive out of the general Treasury the said \$1250, with interest from the said 12th day of June, in full compensation, without any allowance for hire." R. I. Col. Records, VII, 405.

<sup>6</sup> See copy of the Charter, footnote above.

Colonies. On the voyage home the heavily laden fleet off Block Island engaged with the British frigate *Glasgow* out of Newport Harbor. The fleet suffered severely and *Glasgow* retired with slight injuries. Four weeks later Captain Hazard of the *Providence* was court-martialed, found guilty of misconduct and neglect of duty, and was "broke."

Next day, May 10th, 1776, command of *Providence* was given to John Paul Jones, a young lieutenant on board the fleet's flagship *Alfred*. This was Jones' first command.

After two months of service as a troop-ship and convoy, Captain Jones put to sea and had a noteworthy service. When the *Providence* put in to Newport in October she had met two British frigates and escaped, had descended on Canso, Nova Scotia, destroyed considerable British shipping and had captured and sent in or destroyed sixteen prizes. Capt. Jones was given command of the *Alfred*; the *Providence* went to Captain Hoysted Hacker. The two vessels sailed from Newport for Cape Breton to repeat Jones' tactics of harassing the British shipping. Among several prizes taken was the British ship *Mellish*, richly laden with soldiers' clothing, a capture of great importance to the Continental Army. Twelve days out the *Providence*, leaking badly, her crew complaining, put back to Newport.

The British fleet entered Narragansett Bay and took possession of the Island of Rhode Island December 8, 1776. The American vessels under command of Commodore Esek Hopkins retired up the Providence River and were there blockaded for months. The *Providence* was the first vessel to run the blockade. Under Lieutenant Jonathan Pitcher she slipped past the fleet at 2 A. M. one morning in April, 1777, and put to sea for a cruise as far as Cape Breton. She captured one prize and returned to New Bedford. A new commander took her over, Captain John Peck Rathbun, and under him she sailed for the next two years, until the Spring of 1779. His cruises included a successful action with an English privateer off South Carolina,

and an expedition against New Providence Island, where he took the fort and prizes without firing a gun. The spoils of war included six vessels, one mounting sixteen guns, and a quantity of powder and stores of great value. This was in January, 1778. The *Providence*, with her prizes laden with stores, reached New Bedford early in March.

Captain Hoysted Hacker took her over again in May, 1779, and captured a twelve gun British brig, the *Diligent*, off Sandy Hook.

*Providence* met her fate at the hands of her own crew. She was one of the fleet which was bottled up in Penobscot Bay by a greatly superior British force, and in order to prevent her falling into the hands of the enemy she was run up the river, set on fire and blown up. A tribute from J. Fennimore Cooper in his naval history runs, "Among the vessels blown up was the *Providence* 12, one of the first cruisers ever sent to sea by the United States, and which had become noted for exploits greatly exceeding what might have been expected from her force."

#### The *Katy* in Person

No blue prints guided the builders of a Rhode Island Sloop of 1775. But from many sources come contemporary descriptions,—reference to her color, her square topsail, her two deck-pumps, her straight stem without figure-head, and many hints which give students of that particular period of maritime America a basis for reconstructing the *Katy*. From such research has come the model which is now housed in John Brown House.

Several years ago Mr. Charles G. Davis (author of many books on American sailing vessels and himself a builder of many notable ship models) became interested in the type referred to in manuscripts of the latter half of the 1700's as the "Rhode Island sloop." He worked out drawings, and built two models of the *Katy*. The Ship Model Society of Rhode Island became much interested. There ensued several years of interesting search for authentic details. Mr. Alfred S. Brownell of Providence, President of the

Ship Model Society, the late George C. Wales, Boston architect and painter, and the writer joined with Mr. Davis in the pastime. Out of the interchange came the present model, built by Mr. Brownell during three years of dexterous handicraft.

*Katy* was doubtless a typical Rhode Island built sloop. She was substantially built,—rugged, sturdy, beamy, heavy timbered and heavy sparred. The New England mariner thought little of putting out to sea in such a vessel. *Katy* sailed to the West Indies in mid-winter on what was probably her maiden voyage in February, 1775. The sloop would measure approximately sixty feet long from stem to sternpost; her breadth would be roughly twenty feet. Such tremendous beam goes far to account for the large crew the sloop carried, eighty under Whipple, seventy under Jones, nearly sixty under Rathbun.

Her after-deck rose high out of water with airy living quarters for the officers. Her single mast, hewn probably from a native pine tree, carried a huge fore-and-aft main-sail loose-footed and furling in brails. A square topsail, bent on two tapering yards that swung in old-fashioned rope slings, bellied out above her crosstrees from a sturdy topmast. "I hove my topsail to the mast," wrote Captain Hazard, "for Capt. Whipple to come up." This would clearly refer to a square topsail trimmed by his weather brace so as to be taken aback and stop his headway. Her rugged bowsprit with its long jib-boom over her full and bluff bow carried probably three headsails; a staysail from cap to stem, a jib to her bowsprit and a jib-topsail to her jib-boom end. Her stem was straight, without a figure-head; this we learn from a description in a letter to London giving intelligence of the "rebel vessels." "A black sloop without a head," the British writer put it. This was not remarkable one way or the other; when a vessel had a figure head, common enough at the period, such characteristic was often used as a distinguishing bit of description.

That the sloop was able and a fast sailer we know. You

will see how she behaved in the dead of winter well out in the Atlantic playing rebel tag with British ships. Captain John Paul Jones exulted in her showing a clean pair of heels to a much bigger enemy frigate. "Our 'hair-breadth 'scape,' and the saucy manner of making it, must have mortified him not a little," Jones wrote to Admiral Hopkins.

It is a pity we have no contemporary drawing of the little *Katy*. Our knowledge of her comes from allusions, from scraps of manuscript written by her commanders and her crew, from contemporary descriptions and from a rare sketch or two of vessels of her time together with average dimensions of body plan, spars and sails culled from various sources of the period. The ship builders of the colonies did not build from models; rarely do we find records of detailed drawings, and then I think only in the case of ships of considerable importance, like the frigates *Providence* and *Warren* built in Providence in 1776 for the Continental fleet. Occasionally there comes to light a rather complete document of instructions commissioning the building of a vessel according to the owner's description. Such a document is of great interest to one who loves ships; old Christopher Champlin, doughty Rhode Island merchant of 1773, left one such description among his papers.

Those who find pleasure in the lines and model of a vessel will enjoy the plans and the photographs of the *Katy* as reconstructed and carefully prepared by ardent students of maritime history; these plans may be seen at the John Brown House.

#### Instructions to Capt. Whipple Cmmd<sup>r</sup> of the Sloop *Katy*.\*

By the Committee appointed by the General Assembly of the Colony of Rhode Island & Providence Plantations to act during the Recess of the General Assembly.

Instructions to be observed by Captain Abraham Whipple—Commander of the Sloop *Katy* in the Service of the said Colony.

\* MS. in *R. I. H. S.*, see page 103.

You are to embrace the First suitable Wind & Weather and proceed immediately with the said Sloop, and the Officers and Men to her belonging under your Command, off Sandy-Hook, and there cruise Fourteen Days for the Packet expected from England at New-York with the Ministerial Dispatches, the Mail &c—During the Cruise off Sandy-Hook you are to speak with no Vessel unless it appears probable to you that she is the Packet.—If you are so fortunate as to meet her you are to take all the Letters out of her, land them at South-Hampton and send them by Express to the Deputy-Governor in this Town.—You are also to take out of her all the Arms Ammunition and warlike Stores she may have on board, and light Sails if you shall have Occasion for them for the said Sloop's Use, and then dismiss the said Packet to pursue her Voyage. In Case she makes any Resistance you are to take her by Force.

After taking the Packet, or the Expiration of the said Fourteen Days, you are immediately to proceed to the Island of Bermuda to possess yourself of a Quantity of Powder, in a Magazine upon the said Island, and to take the same on board your said Sloop, and immediately return therewith.—In conducting this Enterprise every Thing is submitted to your Judgment and Discretion with Respect to the most prudent Measures to be taken to become Masters of the Powder—We only recommend to you to effect it, if possible, without desiring any other Assistance from the Inhabitants than being piloted in, and having a Guide to the Magazine; and of Course you will make no Use of General Washington's Address to the Inhabitants unless it be absolutely necessary.

At the Request of the Committee I have hereunto set my Hand and Seal at Providence this Eleventh Day of September A. D. 1775.

[Signed]

Nicho<sup>ls</sup> Cooke Chairman

[Endorsed]

Instructions to Capt. Whipple  
Comm<sup>r</sup> of the Sloop Katy

## The Development of The Neck

A Chronicle of the East Side of Providence

by JOHN HUTCHINS CADY, F.A.I.A.

(Continued from *Rhode Island History*, Volume II, No. 1, p. 36)

### CHAPTER II. 1676-1720

During the first forty years after its settlement Providence had been exclusively a community of planters. This was only natural, since food was the first consideration and the main supply could be obtained only from the soil.<sup>1</sup> The reconstruction period after the Indian attack in 1676 marked the beginning of a commercial and industrial development. Shops were opened in the town in which farming tools, building materials, food, and clothing could be obtained. In addition to the grist mill and tannery, both of which were rebuilt, a saw mill and an iron works were established.

A ferry was put in operation across Seekonk river in 1679 at Narrow passage for the accommodation of traffic over Indian trails to Boston and Plymouth. A franchise was granted to Captain Andrew Edmunds for that purpose by the town, as well as two acres of land whereon to build a house by the landing, where Red Bridge now stands.<sup>2</sup> Four years later the town surveyors were directed "with all convenient speede" to "state a highway" to the ferry.<sup>3</sup> This extended from the Towne street to Seekonk river, following approximately the lines of the present Meeting, Hope, Angell, South Angell and East River streets.

Although the waters of Narragansett bay had been used since the earliest years of the colony for traffic with Portsmouth and Newport, and for the occasional transportation

<sup>1</sup> Edward Field, *State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations at the End of the Century: A History* (Boston, 1902), hereafter Field, II, 389.

<sup>2</sup> *E. R. P.*, VIII, 44.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

of supplies and materials from other colonies, the potential resources of the sea were not at first evaluated as an asset to Providence. The sea trade, which was destined to become an important factor in the later development of the town, had its origin shortly after the settlement had been rebuilt. In 1680 Elder Pardon Tillinghast, who had moved from the north end of the town<sup>4</sup> to a lot north of the present Transit Street originally owned by Hugh Bewitt, was granted "a Little Spott of Land (against his dwelling place above high water mark) of Twenty ffoott Square, for ye building himshelfe A store house, with ye prieveledge of A whorfe Alsoe."<sup>5</sup> This was the first wharf built in the town; before the end of the century others were erected along the water front as far north as the present Market Square by certain townspeople who foresaw more profits to be made from seafaring than from farming. Among their number were Arthur Fenner and his son-in-law Gideon Crawford, whose wharves and shops adjoined one another just south of the present Crawford Street. Captain Fenner, a former lieutenant in Oliver Cromwell's army, settled in Providence about 1647 and was town treasurer 1672-73. He erected two houses, one on a large estate near Seekonk river<sup>6</sup> and the other in the present city of Cranston.<sup>7</sup> Crawford arrived in Providence in 1670, bought the John Field lot and built a house where the Old Stone Bank stands. Others who entered seafaring trade were Thomas Harris, Samuel Winsor, Samuel Whipple, Thomas Hopkins, Zachariah Field, Providence Williams, Peter Place, Ephraim Pray, and John Whipple, Jr. By the end of the century a trade was maintained to the West Indies and other colonies.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> See page 31, Chapter I, Jan., '43.

<sup>5</sup> *E. R. P.*, VIII, 62.

<sup>6</sup> Gertrude S. Kimball, *Providence in Colonial Times* (Boston, 1912). hereafter Kimball, p. 80. The house was located near the present Governor Street.

<sup>7</sup> *Early R. I. Houses*, p. 24.

<sup>8</sup> Field, II, 395.

In view of the increasing development along the water front by private owners, the town determined to reserve certain of its water rights. Accordingly, in 1681, it was voted "that there shall be a sufficient highway kept for ye Townes use of three poles wide from the Towne street to ye water side, that ye Towne may if they see Cause [which they never did] sett up a warfe at ye End of it".<sup>9</sup> The location selected was opposite Weybosset Point, near the eastern end of the bridge which formerly had spanned the river there.<sup>10</sup> The Towne street was becoming so heavily traveled that in the same year the General Assembly enacted the first traffic regulation, forbidding riding "a gallup on horse, gelding or mare, in the street lying against the great river . . . between the land of Pardon Tillinghast, and the northerly corner of John Whipple, Sen'r, where his dwelling house stands" in the north end under penalty of a fine of five shillings for each offense.<sup>11</sup>

In order to provide access to the farms located in the northerly part of the Neck the town "stated" several roads during this period (see map opp. page 86), by which action certain cartways or trails which already were in general use were established or "rectified." One of the earliest of these was the Common Road to Pawtucket which provided intercourse with Blackstone Valley. The year of its origin is unknown but it was referred to in 1684 as "ye ancient & Comon Road."<sup>12</sup> The town surveyor was directed in that same year "in sum Convenient time [to] state ye Highway from the head of the lane Called Dexters lane [Olney Street] & so through the great swampe from ye said lane to runn at the place called ye first opening;"<sup>13</sup> Morris Avenue is its present name. And in town meeting, 1685, it was "Ordred that a highway shall be & Remaine from the Lane

<sup>9</sup> *E. R. P.*, VIII, 106.

<sup>10</sup> See page 34, Chapter I, Jan., '43.

<sup>11</sup> *R. I. C. R.*, III, 105.

<sup>12</sup> *E. R. P.*, VIII, 138.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 142.



called Hearntons lane Eastward through the place called the second opening in ye great swampe & so to ye salt water about ye poynt called Swann poynt;"<sup>14</sup> this highway is now Rochambeau Avenue from North Main Street as far as Blackstone Boulevard, from which point northeastward it is known as the Old Road on property of Swan Point Cemetery.

A highway was ordered in 1683 "from ye Towne up into ye Countrey through Loquasquusuck woodes"<sup>15</sup> which branched northwesterly, at the present Branch Avenue, from the Common Road to Pawtucket, followed Smithfield Avenue through Pawtucket, and continued on the lines of Cobble Hill Road and Louisquisset Pike in Lincoln. A road to "Wanskuck meadow" was stated in 1685, following Branch Avenue westerly from Smithfield Avenue.<sup>16</sup>

As Providence increased in size and importance more strangers had occasion to visit the town, and it became necessary to provide for their comfort and entertainment. In the earliest days the only lodgings available for visitors were in private houses and, as the accommodations of few of those houses exceeded two rooms, the guest quarters were neither sumptuous nor particularly private. The first tavern on the Towne street of which there is record was the one opened by John Whipple in 1674,<sup>17</sup> halfway up Constitution Hill. This was followed by another, immediately north of the home lots, maintained by Epenetus Olney. In a more secluded spot some distance to the north (Abbott Street) Roger Mowry had for some years conducted an "ordinaire"<sup>18</sup> in a house, erected in 1653, which survived until about 1900.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, 139, 149. Benjamin Hearnton was owner of meadow and swamp land through which the lane ran.

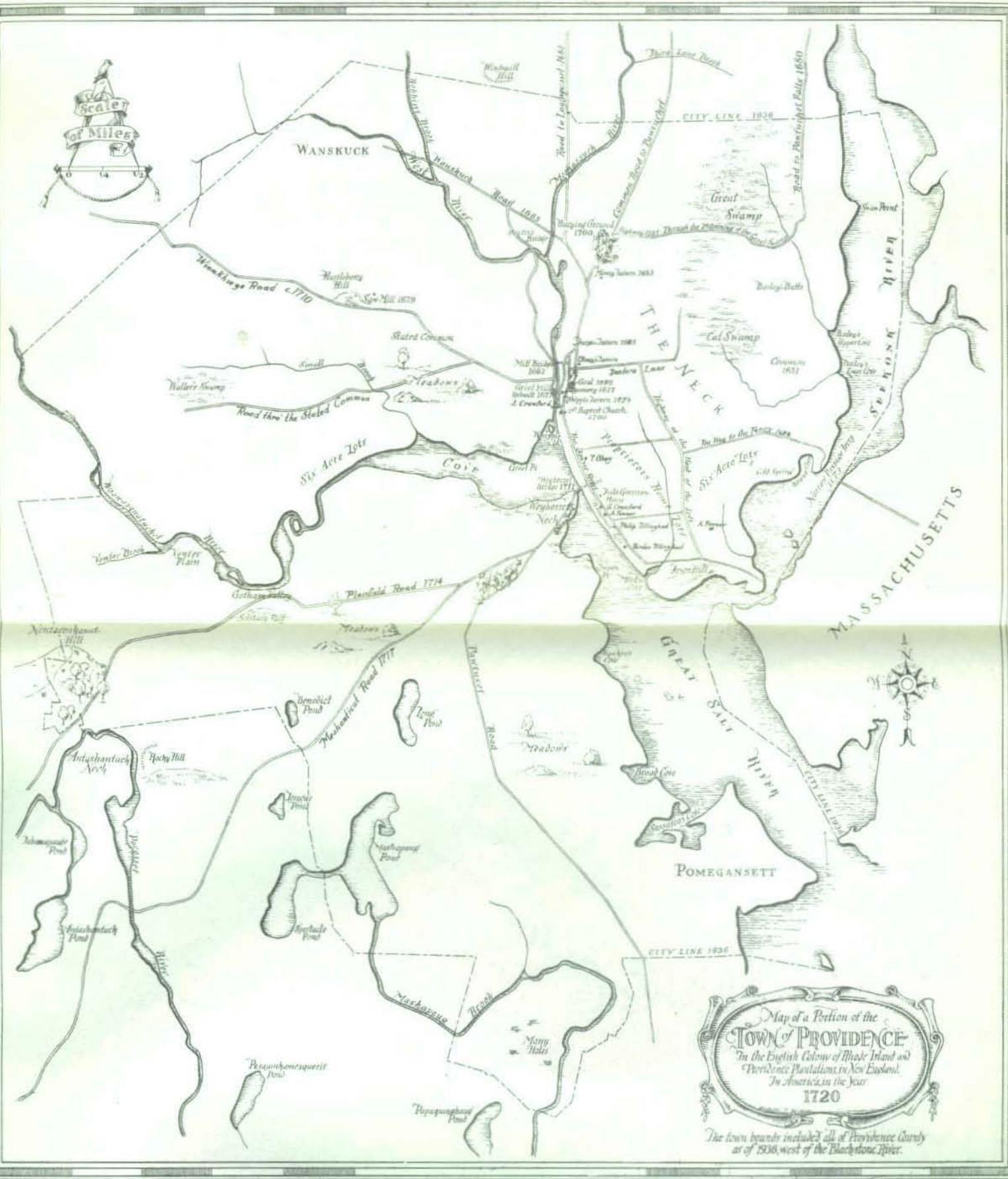
<sup>15</sup> *E. R. P.*, VIII, 132.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, 159.

<sup>17</sup> *E. R. P.*, IV, 8.

<sup>18</sup> *E. R. P.*, II, 22.

<sup>19</sup> See page 27, Chapter I, Jan., '43.



Map of a Portion of the  
**TOWN OF PROVIDENCE**  
 In the English Colony of Rhode Island and  
 Providence Plantations in New England  
 In America in the Year  
 1720

The town bounds included all of Providence County  
 as of 1836, west of the Blackstone River.

Towards the end of the century public houses were becoming more numerous and more commodious. One of these was built by Epenetus Olney, replacing his former tavern which had been destroyed by the Indians. It stood for many years and was the rendezvous for travelers over the Common Road to Pawtucket. The town stocks were erected on Dexter's lane, adjoining the tavern,<sup>20</sup> and, close by, a blacksmith shop was established by John Olney in 1699.<sup>21</sup> Another tavern, opened 1685 by William Turpin a short distance north of Olney's, within the present Carleton Davis Boulevard, was maintained for several generations and was used at times for sessions of the General Assembly and town meetings.<sup>22</sup>

The houses erected after the burning of the town in 1676 retained the general characteristics of those of the earlier period<sup>23</sup> but usually were of somewhat greater size. In addition to the "hall" the first floor included a kitchen, set in a rear leanto, and one or more bed rooms. Some of the houses had a full second story in which the chambers were located. The stone end chimney was wider than that of the earlier houses; it contained fireplaces for the "hall" and kitchen and sometimes included another in the second story. The Eleazer Arnold house<sup>24</sup> in Saylesville and the Thomas Clemence<sup>25</sup> house in Johnston are surviving examples of dwellings of that period.

The 17th century closed with three public undertakings. The first jail was built on the Towne street, about 400 feet south of Dexter's lane.<sup>26</sup> The first church edifice was built for the Baptist society by Elder Pardon Tillinghast at the

<sup>20</sup> *E. R. P.*, VIII, 142.

<sup>21</sup> *E. R. P.*, XI, 49.

<sup>22</sup> Staples, p. 602; *E. R. P.*, XIII, 9.

<sup>23</sup> See page 28, Chapter I, Jan., '43.

<sup>24</sup> *Early R. I. Houses*, p. 41.

<sup>25</sup> Cady: "The Thomas Clemence House," *R. I. H. S. C.*, XXXIV, p. 65.

<sup>26</sup> Staples, p. 179. The location was between the present North Main and Benefit streets, near their junction.

present corner of North Main and Smith streets; though humble in character, being "in the shape of a haycap, with a fireplace in the middle, the smoke escaping from a hole in the roof,"<sup>27</sup> this building was the forerunner of the present First Baptist Meeting House. Finally, a tract of common land was ordered "for the use of millitary affairs for training of souldiers & ctr; & also to a place to be for the use of Buireing of the dead,"<sup>28</sup> this being the origin of the North Burial Ground.

When the 18th century opened the colony of Rhode Island was composed of nine corporate towns whose relative standing in wealth may be inferred by the proportioning of a colony tax of £400 in 1701, as follows: Newport £112 10s, Providence £65, Kingstown £61 10s, Westerly £24, Warwick £23, Portsmouth £20, Jamestown £19, [East] Greenwich £13, and New Shoreham £12.<sup>29</sup> Newport's high rating was due to the sea trade in which her townspeople had engaged from the early years of the settlement. Providence, still principally a farming community, was just awakening to a realization of the potential resources of the sea.

By act of the General Assembly in 1703 the colony was divided into two counties designated, respectively, Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, each having two inferior courts of common pleas.<sup>30</sup> Rhode Island County included Newport and Portsmouth on the island of Rhode Island, New Shoreham on Block Island, Jamestown on Conanicut Island, and the other islands in Narragansett bay. The county of Providence Plantations comprised the mainland towns of Providence, Warwick, East Greenwich, Kingstown, and Westerly.

Providence, at that time, had about 1200 inhabitants. Although the seafaring activities had effected a commercial

<sup>27</sup> Kimball, p. 132.

<sup>28</sup> *E. R. P.*, XVIII, 2.

<sup>29</sup> *R. I. C. R.*, III, 426.

<sup>30</sup> *R. I. C. R.*, III, 477-479.

growth in the southern part of the town the industrial center continued, for the time being, in the north end. In 1704 William Edmunds opened a blacksmith shop and William Smith opened a weaver's shop,<sup>31</sup> both located near the Olney tavern which stood at the present corner of North Main and Olney streets. In 1706 land was granted to Richard Arnold and John Smith on the east side of Mos-hassuck river, below the grist mill, for setting up a saw mill.<sup>32</sup>

Most of the inhabitants lived in dwellings on the east side of the Towne street. The wharves and warehouses of the sea merchants were conveniently located opposite their houses on the water front. The farmers, on the other hand, were obliged to cross the river to reach their meadows and grazing lands beyond Weybosset Point; some of them already had erected dwellings on their farms. A bridge had been erected in 1660 where Market Square is now but had not long survived.<sup>33</sup> The only public land designated between the Towne street and the water front was a highway (page 85) stated in 1681, which practically coincided with the portion of the present Market Square between the School of Design auditorium and the Market Building. The farmers crossed the river in boats and canoes and sometimes made use of a ford (from the present Steeple Street to Washington Row) through which they rode on horseback or drove their carts. In the summer of 1704 the Town Council took steps to remedy those primitive conditions in two ways; first, by designating a portion of the waterfront as common land and, second, by initiating a movement for a new bridge across the river.

The problem of the water rights arose as a result of the increasing number of requests for warehouse lots. The purchasers and proprietors gave warning "how greatly detrementall it will proove & be unto the Towne if so there

<sup>31</sup> *E. R. P.*, XI, 79-80.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, XI, 102.

<sup>33</sup> See page 35, Chapter I, Jan., '43.

should be a grant of waere house lotts all along the Salt Water by the Towne Streete, by reason that People thereby would be so much obstructed of Recourse to and from the Waterside as they have Continuall ocation for; . . . because there is so Constant a Passing to & from the Towne side to Wayboysett side Cross the Water & from Wayboysett side to the Towne with Cannooes & Boates, Rideing & Carting & Swimming over of Cattell from side to side; & the Streame often times Running so swift, & many times Rough Water by Reason of stormy Winds, whereby neither Cannooes Boates nor Cattell swimming can make any Certaine place to land, but must land where they can git on shore, which if the land by the shore were appropriated it would hinder any landing & so damage accrew."<sup>34</sup> Accordingly, it was ordered that all of the land between the Towne street and the salt water from Thomas Field's home lot (near Crawford Street) northward to Thomas Olney's home lot (near the railroad viaduct), as well as the shore above Weybosset Neck, should "be & Continually Remaine in Comon." The area defined was bounded, roughly, by the present Crawford, South Main, North Main, and Steeple streets, Memorial Square, Exchange Place, Dorrance and Dyer streets, and Crawford Bridge. While it is a matter of record that the major part of the area so designated has not "continually remained in common" the town's order undoubtedly prevailed so long as the river was forded by carts and swum by cattle and, therefore, fulfilled its purpose.

The Town Council appointed Gideon Crawford and Joseph Whipple a committee "to Enquire of the inhabitants of Providence, & also of other Persons Elsewhere in the Country to see what they will Contribute to the building of a Bridge, from the Towne side of the salt water . . . . be-gining against ye west End of the lott whereon Daniell Abbott his dwelling house standeth [the site of the present Providence Washington building], & so cross the water

<sup>34</sup> *E. R. P.*, XI, 88.

unto the hill called Wayboset"<sup>35</sup> which covered the area between the present Turks Head and the Arcade. Several years were required to finance the project but by 1711 a sufficient sum of money had been raised to warrant its undertaking. The General Assembly sanctioned the proceeding in that year and granted £200 out of the general treasury towards the construction of the bridge at Weybosset and of two others spanning Pawtucket (Blackstone) and Pawtuxet rivers, respectively.<sup>36</sup>

Weybosset Bridge and its approaches, which were backed up with earth, extended from the north side of the present Market Building to Turks Head. It was about 14 feet wide, having one section constructed in such a way that it could be moved to permit the passage of boats into the cove. The bridge was carried away by a freshet and was rebuilt, about 1719, at the expense of the town.<sup>37</sup>

With the completion of the three bridges traffic was greatly facilitated on the main road which ran through the colony from Pawtucket river to Pawcatuck river, over which was the principal part of the travel between Massachusetts and New York.<sup>38</sup> This road followed the lines of the present Main Street in Pawtucket; North Main Street, Market Square, Weybosset Street, and Broad Street in Providence; Broad Street in Cranston; and the Post Road in Warwick, East Greenwich, North Kingstown, South Kingstown, Charlestown, and Westerly.

In 1712 the town granted to Nathaniel Brown of Rehoboth, a newcomer to Providence, "halfe one acre of land lieing on Waybosset Neck betweene Mr. Waterman his Marsh & the salt water; the which he might have the use of for building of vessels thereon."<sup>39</sup> The site was near the present corner of Pine and Orange streets. The advent of

<sup>35</sup> *E. R. P.*, XI, 91.

<sup>36</sup> *R. I. C. R.*, IV, 118.

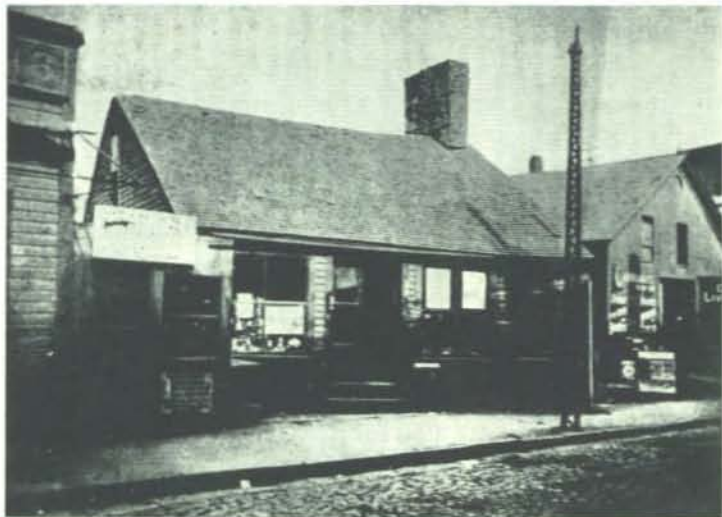
<sup>37</sup> Staples, p. 198.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 187.

<sup>39</sup> *E. R. P.*, XI, 158.

ship building was a distinct step in the early maritime history of the town.

The commencement of the importation of brick at the turn of the century initiated a change in dwelling house design to the style commonly identified as Colonial. While end-chimney houses (page 87) were not uncommon during the transition period brick gradually superseded field stone



JONES-CRAWFORD HOUSE (c. 1710)

for their chimneys and fireplaces. An example was the dwelling built by Zachariah Jones about 1710, purchased shortly afterwards by Captain John Crawford, which stood until the year 1898 on the part of Mill Street now incorporated in Schley Square.<sup>40</sup> Except for the use of brick this house followed closely the earlier type of design and construction, even to the use of the ancient summer beam.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>40</sup> The square was given its name by City Council resolution, May 6, 1926, in honor of Rear Admiral Winfield Scott Schley who defeated the Spaniards off Santiago, Cuba, July 3, 1898.

<sup>41</sup> *Early R. I. Houses*, p. 52.

The first departure from the end-chimney plan was the 2½-story house with two rooms on a floor, separated by a small stairway hall and a large central chimney. Each room had a fireplace, but not of a size comparable to those of the earlier period. The next step was to build a wing or leanto at the rear with another fireplace installed in the chimney. The natural sequence was a rectangular house with five rooms on a floor and a large central chimney with fireplaces



PHILIP TILLINGHAST HOUSE (c. 1710)

in the principal rooms. This plan was followed in the dwelling erected by Philip Tillinghast (c. 1710) which stood until recent years on South Main Street. The orderly arrangement of windows, and the use of classic mouldings and other details at the entrance and cornice, are Colonial characteristics.

As farms became established at spots somewhat remote from the compact part of the town it became necessary to lay out more roads over which farm products could be transported to market. One of these started from Moshassuck river, in the northerly part of the Neck, and followed the lines of the present Chalkstone Avenue westerly through the "stated common"<sup>42</sup> to a point near Mount Pleasant Avenue. A branch from that road, identified as the road to Wionkhiege, was laid out on the lines of Douglas Avenue, Eaton Street, Smith Street, and Putnam Avenue to Smithfield.<sup>43</sup> Another, leading to Plainfield, Connecticut, was laid out in 1714, branching from the Pawtuxet Road at the present junction of Broad and Weybosset streets and followed Weybosset, Westminster and Plainfield streets.<sup>44</sup> A branch of that road "towards Mashantatuck" was ordered in 1717,<sup>45</sup> this being the origin of Cranston Street (see map opp. page 86).

The taverns, most of which were located in the north end of the town, had increased in number to thirteen by 1717. The tavern keepers licensed in that year included William Harris, William Turpin, James Olney, Benjamin Potter, John House, Samuel Irons, William Edmunds, James Arnold, Othniel Gorton, John Potter, John Sayles, John

<sup>42</sup>The "stated common" was a large tract of land, north of Woonasquatucket river, ordered in town meeting, 1658, "perpetually to lye & be in Comon" (*E. R. P.*, VIII, 157). That order did not hinder the town from disposing of the land to private interests as opportunities arose. The date of the road's origin is uncertain, but it was identified in 1728 as "the Road that Leads from Providence Town Through the stated Common westward" (*E. R. P.*, IX, 53).

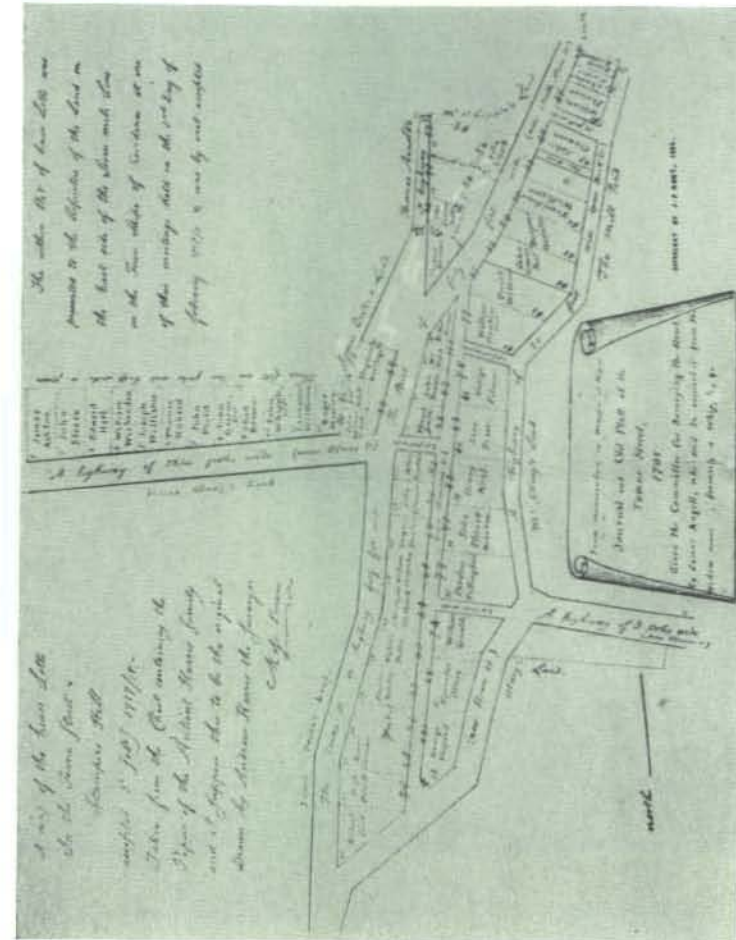
<sup>43</sup>*E. R. P.*, V, 140; XI, 76, 110. The road was first proposed in 1701 and was still being agitated in 1706; it probably was laid out soon after that date.

<sup>44</sup>*E. R. P.*, XI, 140, 145; Plats of Streets and Highways in the Town of Providence (on file in City Hall), hereafter Plats of Highways, I, 12.

<sup>45</sup>*E. R. P.*, IX, 22.

Guile, and Thomas Parker.<sup>46</sup> Near the Olney tavern (page 89) a town pound was put up in 1717.<sup>47</sup>

In 1718, 50 house lots were platted in the north end of the town, averaging about 5000 square feet per lot, and



<sup>46</sup>*E. R. P.*, XII, 58.

<sup>47</sup>*E. R. P.*, XIII, 9.

were allocated individually to the proprietors or their assigns. The area so platted included a row of 12 lots (on the south side of the present Olney Street) north of and adjacent to the northernmost home lot of the 1638 division<sup>48</sup> and 38 lots within the area now bounded by North Main, Charles, Bark, and Hewes streets.<sup>49</sup> "A street twenty foot wide over Stampers Hill" was recorded on the plat, later known as Stampers Street. It ran midway between the present North Main and Bark streets and became a part of Carleton Davis Boulevard<sup>50</sup> in 1931 (see map, page 95). Also included in the second division were lands on the southerly and easterly side of Weybosset Street.<sup>51</sup>

The first setting off of land for highway purposes within the confines of the original proprietors' lots was Rosemary Lane. This was laid out in 1720 from a point on the Towne street nearly opposite Weybosset Bridge and extended up the hillside through a portion of the Chad Brown lot<sup>52</sup> as far as the present Benefit Street. Later it was known, successively, as Presbyterian Lane, Hanover Street and, finally, College Street.

<sup>48</sup> See page 26, Chapter I, Jan., '43.

<sup>49</sup> Plats of Highways, I, 12; A map of the house Lotts in the Towne Street, Stampers Hill, accepted 3d Febr'y 1717-18 (on file in City Hall and reproduced on page 95); Cady: "The Divisions of the Home Lots of Providence," *R. I. H. S. C.* XXXI, 101.

<sup>50</sup> Capt. J. Carleton Davis of Providence, in whose memory the boulevard was named, was an officer in the 26th Division, A.E.F., in World War I.

<sup>51</sup> Staples p. 37.

<sup>52</sup> See page 32, Chapter I, Jan., '43.

*(To be continued)*



ROBERT RICH, (1587-1658), SECOND EARL OF WARWICK, FOR WHOM THE TOWN OF WARWICK WAS NAMED. HE WAS CONSTITUTED BY PARLIAMENT IN 1643, GOVERNOUR IN CHIEFE AND LORD HIGH ADMIRALL OF THE ENGLISH PLANTATIONS IN AMERICA.

*Portrait in oil by Sir Anthony Van Dyck, c. 1637.*

*Courtesy of Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut*



## The Society's Original Manuscripts\*

### Capt. Robert Keayne's Note Books

By RICHARD LEBARON BOWEN

The vaults of the Rhode Island Historical Society contain many irreplaceable and priceless original manuscripts, the detailed contents of which are generally unknown. These unpublished manuscripts contain important historical source material that can add to, and perhaps even change, some of the early New England history as now written.

Capt. Robert Keayne, citizen and merchant tailor of London, came to New England in the *Defence*, in 1635. He settled at Boston<sup>1</sup>, after a short stay at Lynn, and with his wife was admitted to the church in 1636. He carried on a large business and left a great estate. In the Anne Hutchinson religious troubles when so many people were disarmed, including those who left Boston to found Rhode Island, all were ordered to deliver their arms at his house before 30 Nov. 1637.

He was a brother-in-law of Rev. John Wilson, having married Ann, sister of Elizabeth who married John Wilson, both daughters of Sir John Mansfield<sup>2</sup>, Master of the Minories, and Queen's Surveyor.

Robert Keayne was in the habit of making elaborate notes of the sermons preached by Rev. John Cotton and Rev. John Wilson, and also of what took place in certain of the church meetings. These notes were contained in at least three known books.

The third of his manuscript note books, the first entry dated 4 (?) Feb. 1643, and the last entry 19 Apr. 1646, referred to in 2 *Proc. Mass. Hist. Soc.*, vol. V (1889-1890), p. 435, is in the possession of the Rhode Island Historical Society. This book contains 482 closely written pages 7½" x 5¾", by 1½" thick, bound in the original leather covers, on one of which are still attached halves of the two original brass clasps.

On the *recto* of the fly leaf is written: "Robert Keayne of Bost: New England his Book 1643—, Price<sup>3</sup> 6<sup>s</sup>." On the inside of the cover is written

\*These original manuscript documents are the Society's most valuable possessions. Only a few of them have been published, and the rest are generally unknown. Through the years research scholars have worked on many of them and have acquired a special knowledge of some, and a general knowledge of others. It is proposed to publish a series of articles briefly describing these various documents. Mr. Bowen has kindly consented to start off the series, which begins in this number—Ed.

<sup>1</sup> He lived opposite the old market place (old State House lot) on the South corner of Washington and State Streets [Shaw's *Hist. of Boston*, p. 117]. In his will he left a legacy of £300 towards the building of a Boston Town house.

<sup>2</sup> *New England Historical & Genealogical REGISTER*, vol. VI, p. 156.

<sup>3</sup> This represents the purchase price paid for the blank note book.

"Goodm: Munninge."<sup>4</sup> This book was in the possession of Dr. Thomas H. Webb and exhibited by him at a meeting of the Massachusetts Historical Society held in 1865. On a slip of paper pasted in the front of the book is the following memorandum, written by A. A. Folsom, dated 26 November 1894:

"This volume *appears*<sup>5</sup> to contain the substance of expository discourses delivered on Lord's Day afternoons in Boston by Rev. Mr. [John] Cotton from 1643 to 1646, with an occasional case of church discipline; the substance also of lectures by Rev. Mr. [John] Wilson, 1645, and a lecture by Rev. Mr. [Thomas] Cobbet [Teacher of the church at Lynn in 1652] at Boston, N. E., M<sup>o</sup> 5, 13, 1645."

Not only has this third note book of Keayne's never been transcribed, but also it probably has never been completely read, and must contain source historical material of importance, for Keayne was a rambling writer and had a "news instinct" unequalled by any other early New England writer, as is so well illustrated by his will, which is undoubtedly the most voluminous early one on record, containing 158 manuscript pages, — the "last will & testement of me. Robert Keayne, all of it written with my owne hands & begun by me mo: 6:1:1653 comonly August — finished 15 December 1653." In this will, besides directing the disposal of his property, he rambles on with discussions of his own religious opinions, and explanation of his riches, his private life, the affairs of the Town of Boston, etc. A truly remarkable document, containing more historical source material than is found in any other early *Will* recorded. This document is printed verbatim in the *Report of the Record Commissioners*, Boston, vol. X (1886), pp. 1 to 54.

The second manuscript note book, commencing 23 Nov. 1639, is in the possession of the Massachusetts Historical Society. The second and

<sup>4</sup> Probably the Edmund Munnings, age 40, who came to New England in 1635, in the *Abigail*, Robert Hackwell, master, bringing with him his wife Mary, age 30 years, daughters Mary and Anna, and son Mahalaleel, respectively, 9, 6, and 3 years of age. Goody Munnings, his wife, was admitted to the Dorchester church 16 Apr. 1641. He settled in Dorchester where he had grants of land in 1641, among them "Moon Island." This island is named on the Dorchester Records, in 1637 and 1638, "Munnings Moone." It is no longer an island, having about 1883 been joined to Squantum by an artificial isthmus, in connection with the great Boston sewer. He had three sons baptized in Dorchester, bearing the singular names of *Hopetill*, b. 5 Apr. 1637; *Return*, b. 7 Sept. 1640, and *Takeheed*, b. 20 Oct. 1642,—the last child [*Savage*].

Edmund Munnings returned to England. Henry F. Waters found his will in England, where, as "of Denge, co. Essex, the unprofitable servant of God" he d. in 1667. Bequests are made to *Hopetill*, *Return* and *Takeheed*. His wife *Markiet*, besides £10, was left the household goods which her father gave her,—"one bed, one table, cubbord, one quite (*sic*) chest, one brass pot, one dripping pan and four little platters" [*Carr*, 95] [*REGISTER*, vol. XXVII], pp. 378, 9].

<sup>5</sup> The italics are the writer's.

third volumes correspond in description almost exactly — quarto volumes of about 484 closely written pages, bound in original leather, etc. See 2 *Proc. Mass. Hist. Soc.*, vol. V. (1889-1890), p. 435.

The first and earliest manuscript note book, commencing in 1638, whereabouts unknown in 1888, was copied by Ezra Stiles in 1771 when he was minister at Newport, Rhode Island. This Stiles MS. copy is now among the papers of President Stiles in the Library of Yale University, inscribed: "Account of the MS. from which I transcribed the following accounts of M<sup>rs</sup> Hutchinson & M<sup>r</sup> Lenthal<sup>o</sup>. By Ezra Stiles." The conference of the Elders of Massachusetts with Mr. Robert Lenthall, of Weymouth, was transcribed, with notes, by the Hon. J. Hammond Trumbull and printed in the *Congregational Quarterly*, vol. XIX (1877), pp. 232-248. Prof. Franklin B. Dexter, of Yale University, transcribed, with notes, the "Trial of Mrs. Anne Hutchinson" which was printed in 2 *Proc. Mass. Hist. Soc.*, vol. IV (1888), pp. 159-191. Dr. Stiles' prefatory remarks are given, parts of which are:

"This MS. in 12<sup>mo</sup>. is inscribed in the Beginning 'Robert Keyne of Boston in New England his Booke. Anno. 1638. Price 4.<sup>d</sup> I take him to have been a Brother In Law to Rev. M<sup>r</sup> Wilson, & to have written this at the Time of the Chh meeting, & from the Mouths of the Speakers; & when entering M<sup>r</sup> Wilsons Discourse, calls him *Brother Willson*."

"This MS. was found, among a Family Collection of Books & Manuscripts of the Rev. M<sup>r</sup> Wilson, first Pastor of Boston; which were lodged at length in the Family of Low at Warren or Barrington in Rhode Island. These MSS. began to be dispersed about 1750 or 1760, when the Rev. Solomon Townsend<sup>r</sup> of Barrington rescued this & sundry MSS in M<sup>r</sup> Wilson's own handwriting. And he lent this to me. The Succession, &c:—

"Rev. Jn<sup>o</sup> Wilson of Boston . . . Library & MSS. descended to Rev. Jn<sup>o</sup> Wilson jun<sup>r</sup> of Medfield . . . died 1691.

Dr. Jn<sup>o</sup> Wilson of Brantree

M<sup>r</sup> Jn<sup>o</sup> Wilson Elect Pastor of Swanzy or Barrington [then in Mass.]; died in 1713 before Ordination. This bro't the Library thither. His Widow married Rev. M<sup>r</sup> Samuel Terry about 1720; & his Sister Elizabeth m. Sam. Low of Barrington. The Lib<sup>y</sup> came

<sup>6</sup> From this record the writer has extracted 1638 source data throwing important additional light on the life of Rev. Samuel Newman who settled at Rehoboth three hundred years ago this spring (1943).

<sup>7</sup> Solomon Townsend, a native of Boston, graduated at Harvard College in 1735; ordained pastor of the Congregational Church at Barrington [then in Mass.] 22 Sept. 1742; died in office 25 Dec. 1796, aged eighty years [2 *Proc. Mass. Hist. Soc.*, vol. IV, p. 161].

into M<sup>rs</sup>. Low's Hands. After her Death the MSS. were dispersed. Dr. Jn<sup>o</sup> Wilson V<sup>th</sup>., educated at Harv. Coll., settled a physician at Sherburne.

Aug. 12, 1771"

The following is from Ezra Stiles' *MS. Itinerary, October 1782*, quoted by Prof. Franklin B. Dexter, of Yale University, in 2 *Proc. Mass. Hist. Soc.*, vol. IV, pp. 161,2:

"Mrs. Eliz<sup>a</sup>. Low was the D[ughter] of D<sup>r</sup>. John Wilson, Esq., of Brantree, who was son of Rev<sup>d</sup>. Jn<sup>o</sup>. Wilson, of Medfield, the son of Rev. Jn<sup>o</sup> Wilson, first Minister of Boston. She had a brother, M<sup>r</sup> Jn<sup>o</sup>. Wilson, of Presid<sup>t</sup>. Holyoke's Class 1705, Preacher at Barrington & Pastor Elect there, who died before Ordin<sup>a</sup>. at Barrington, then Swanzy, & was buried at Rehoboth about 1720, or before [There is no record of his death or burial at Rehoboth].

"M<sup>rs</sup>. Eliz<sup>a</sup>. Wilson married M<sup>r</sup>. Sam<sup>l</sup>. Low, of Barrington [then in Mass.], a wealthy young Farmer, before 1720, & had Children from 1720 to 1730, and died, perhaps about 1735 aet.—. [Intention was filed at Barrington 31 Jan. 1735/6 for the m. of Samuel Low, of Barrington, and Isabel Green, of Warwick].

"She was a Woman of great Beauty, a fine Genius, elegant & animate composition, Purity of Language, eminent Piety, & of every Excellency. She corresponded with all the Ministers. Would have made a Bishop a better Wife than a farmer. Of good Judg<sup>t</sup>. in every Thing, only chusing a Husband. A delicate Poet.

"M<sup>r</sup>. Wilson, Pastor, Elect., &c., builded the elegant Seat where the fam<sup>y</sup> of Low & judge Mumf<sup>d</sup>, afterw<sup>d</sup> lived. M<sup>r</sup> Low bo't this Seat of M<sup>r</sup> Wilson's Heirs, as it had formerly been his father Low's."

## Book Review

RHODE ISLAND COLONIAL MONEY AND ITS COUNTERFEITING

By Richard LeBaron Bowen

*Issued from the General Court of the Society of Colonial Wars  
in the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations*

Providence, 1942. Octavo, cloth, 112+ x pp.

Few historical treatises are as interesting as this volume, which treats fully of a little-known phase of colonial history. Counterfeiting, although an imaginative and non-violent crime, is to-day in bad odor. It was not ever thus. The Indians, it seems, in early days counterfeited their own

wampum. The clipping of silver coins was not unknown among the early English colonists. When the Indian wars led the colonial governments in New England to issue bills of credit, counterfeiting reached its heyday.

War, as usual, produced inflation and the bills rapidly depreciated. The bills were unpopular and many persons felt that their governments had cheated them. It was a temptation to purchase spurious bills at half price, thus making good their losses. Furthermore, many innocently accepted counterfeit bills and had to take the loss unless they could pass them on. In consequence of these factors, it was somewhat difficult to induce grand or petit juries to act with vigor against counterfeiters.

These conditions also account for the surprising fact that many of the early counterfeiters belonged to the "best families". In Massachusetts their ranks included Peregrine White, son and namesake of the "Mayflower baby", and in Rhode Island, several members of the Greenman family, one of them a justice of the peace.

These facts and many others are deduced by Mr. Bowen from the public records and from contemporary diaries and other documents, often quoted at length and always fully referenced. To add to the interest of the volume, many fine illustrations are included, not only of Indian wampum and of various bills both genuine and counterfeit, but even of the pillory which not all the clever rascals succeeded in cheating. The unique illustrations of the 1715 bills deserve special mention, for bills were printed for this purpose from the original copper plate owned by the Rhode Island Historical Society.

The story, while most complete as regards Rhode Island, sheds new light on counterfeiting activities in colonial Massachusetts and Connecticut as well. There is a full index, and genealogies are appended of the Greenman, Lippencott, Lawton and Otis families.

The paper, binding and typography are excellent. Typographical errors are conspicuous by their absence, the only one noted being in the second footnote on page 83, where Daniel Tuttle's plan to make himself appear ingenuous is described as an ingenuous idea, but since the idea itself was an ingenious one, doubtless the otherwise careful compositors are at fault here. In these days when lack of care is so often seen in the mechanical production of the average book, the workmanship and the editing of this volume merit special praise, in addition to the scholarship and historical perspective shown by the author in the production of the text.

DONALD LINES JACOBUS

*The American Genealogist*, New Haven

## Recent Gifts to the Society

### Stephen Ira Peck Bequest

Under the will of Stephen Ira Peck, an active member of the Society for 33 years, (1910-1943), the Society was bequeathed the sum of \$1,000.00 for general purposes.

The Society is very grateful, and hopes that Mr. Peck's beneficence will inspire others to do likewise. W. G. R.

### Norman M. Isham Papers

Norman Morrison Isham, F.A.I.A., died at his home in Wickford January 1, 1943, at the age of 78. He was an active member from 1896 to 1942 when he was elected to Honorary Membership. For many years he served on the Publication Committee.

A specialist in the field of early American architecture Mr. Isham, in his researches, writings, lectures, and restorations, made vast contributions to the interpretation of Colonial and Early Republic design, of which he was nationally regarded a pre-eminent authority.

Under the terms of his will his collection of sketches, drawings, memoranda, writings and books pertaining to architecture as well as all papers and records embodying his research in relation to old buildings, were left to Commander William Davis Miller of Wakefield, R. I., and Frederick Kelly of New Haven, Conn., with the expressed wish that the same be donated to such libraries or museums which, in their opinion, would put them to best use.

It is the purpose of Messrs. Miller and Kelly to donate a considerable part of this valuable material to the Rhode Island Historical Society. J. H. C.

### Commodore Abraham Whipple Papers

Miss Kathleen Sibley Trowbridge of Leesburg, Virginia, has presented the Society with the following: Letter of Marque and Reprisal, Governor Hopkins to Captain

Whipple of the "Game Cock", 1759, Letter of Marque and Reprisal, Governor Hopkins to Captain Whipple of the "King George", 1761, and Instructions from Rhode Island Committee to Captain Whipple of the Sloop "Katy", 1775 (see page 81).

Miss Trowbridge is a great-great-great granddaughter of Commodore Abraham Whipple. W. G. R.

#### Additions to F. S. Peck Collection

Nine items relating to Thomas W. Dorr have been recently added to this collection. Chief among these is the proclamation signed by President John Tyler and sent to Rhode Island to be used, if necessary, in the suppression of the Dorr rebellion. The proclamation is undated. The date was to be filled in in Rhode Island. Fortunately, however, there was no necessity for its use. W. G. R.

#### New Publications of Interest to Rhode Island

- "Early Rehoboth Families and Events." By Richard LeBaron Bowen. *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, XCVI (July 1942), 249-270; (October 1942), 345-358.
- "Edward Greene Malbone's Self-Portraits." By Ruel P. Tolman. *Antiques*, XLII, (December 1942), 306-308.
- "Loss of the Schooner *Albert H. Willis*." By Robert H. I. Goddard, Jr. *American Neptune*, II (July 1942), 243-245.
- "Roger Williams, the Bible, and Religious Liberty." By Louis I. Newman. *Opinion*, XII (March 1942), 6-7.
- "Samuel Gorton, A Forgotten Founder of Our Liberties." By William Wager Weedon. *Bulletin*, Newport Historical Society, No. 102 (May 1942), 1-15.
- "Sullivan Dorr, An Early China Merchant." By Howard Corning. *Collections*, Essex Institute, LXXVIII (April 1942), 158-175.
- "The First Press in Providence: A Study in Social Development." By Lawrence C. Wroth. *Proceedings*, American Antiquarian Society, LI, 351-383. (William Goddard).
- "The Schooner *Lucy Evelyn*." By Robert H. I. Goddard, Jr. *American Neptune*, II, (October 1942), 327-330.
- "Weathering the Panic of '73: An Episode in Rhode Island Business History." By Zachariah Chafee, Jr. *Proceedings*, Massachusetts Historical Society, LXVI, 270-293.

#### News-Notes

Restrictions on fuel and travel, together with an unusually severe winter, tended to restrict the activities of the Society during the first quarter of 1943.

Washington's Birthday, the weather was beautiful, and the Sons of the American Revolution turned out in force for their Annual Meeting and luncheon at John Brown House. The Society of Colonial Dames in Rhode Island held their January and April meetings here, and on Flag Day, June 14, your Director addressed their organization on the topic "Rhode Island in a Clam Shell." Your Director also addressed the Esek Hopkins and Sarah Scott Hopkins Chapters, D.A.R., who held April meetings at John Brown House. In May, two large club groups held their gatherings here—the Daughters of the American Colonists met on May 13th, and the Rhode Island Field Naturalist Club on May 22. The Roger Williams Family Association, and the Mayflower Descendants held their regular meetings here during the season.

The Spring lecture program was composed of diversified subjects. On Sunday, April 11, Paul Francis Gleeson talked on the John Brown Letters and Papers, (a gift of Frederick S. Peck to the Society), on Tuesday evening, April 27, Howard Corning of the Essex Institute, Salem, Massachusetts, lectured on the Letter Books of Sullivan Dorr, and on Tuesday evening, May 18th, Professor James B. Hedges, Chairman of the History Department of Brown University, spoke on a timely topic, "Has the United States learned anything from its previous Wars?" On each of these occasions, the audience participated in a lively discussion after the lecture. This is a very gratifying sign of growing interest in local history.

Members are reminded that the heavy brick walls make John Brown House a cool and delightful place to work or study during the summer months. It is hoped that many will take advantage of the opportunity. W. G. R.



MODEL OF JOHN BROWN'S SLOOP *Katy*, AFTER SHE HAD JOINED THE INFANT AMERICAN NAVY, BEEN ARMED, AND RENAMED *Providence*.

The model, a beautiful piece of craftsmanship, was made by Alfred S. Brownell. While no authentic plans of the *Katy* exist, the details of the Rhode Island Sloop are supported by extensive research among contemporary material.

On exhibit at Rhode Island Historical Society through the courtesy of the owner, George L. Miner.