

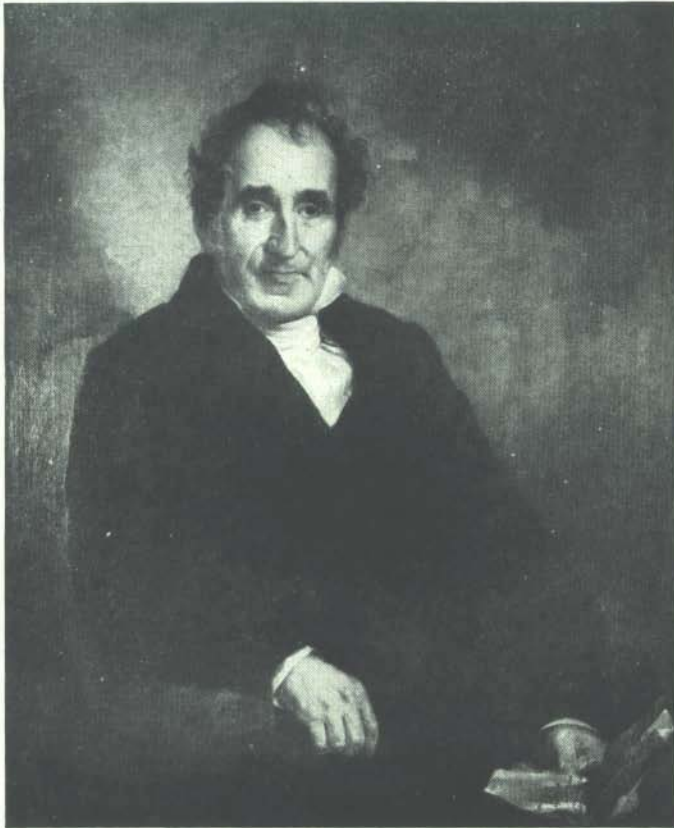
# RHODE ISLAND HISTORY

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SULLIVAN DORR (1778-1845)

AMERICAN MERCHANT IN THE CHINA TRADE, HIS RECORDS KEPT AT CANTON FROM 1799 TO 1803 ARE BELIEVED TO BE THE EARLIEST CONTINUOUS ACCOUNT STILL IN EXISTENCE OF AMERICAN PARTICIPATION IN THAT COMMERCE.

*Portrait by Charles Loring Elliott, in the possession of Providence Washington Insurance Company.*

ISSUED QUARTERLY AT PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND





While this is definitely a post-war project, plans must be made now in order that we may proceed when the time is ripe. It is impossible to form any definite estimate of the cost of these extensions, but it would seem that they could not be done for less than \$50,000.

Since additional personnel, heating, and lighting expense will be required, it is advisable to ask for an addition to our endowment fund so that we may maintain the plant without undue burden on our membership. Several gifts have already been made and others pledged for this purpose, and we hope that our members and friends will make contributions, all of which may be deducted from their income tax as gifts to an educational institution.

### An Outstanding Gift

From Hon. Frederick S. Peck of Barrington, the Society has received recently a most important gift: 10 manuscripts, among which are five autograph letters by Roger Williams. Also included in the gift are a letter written by Gregory Dexter and signed by him, Roger Williams, and Arthur Fenner, another letter signed by the same three men, two letters signed by William Harris, and the Providence Oath of Allegiance (1651/2), signed by 12 prominent early settlers of Providence.

Such a magnificent gift seldom comes to the Society, and we are deeply indebted to Mr. Peck for his generosity. That generosity has been displayed on several occasions recently, in gifts of manuscript material on John Brown and his business associates, of letters to and from Gen. Nathanael Greene and other Revolutionary War figures, and of a mass of manuscript material relating to the Peck family in early New England.

The 10 manuscripts most recently given by Mr. Peck will be discussed in detail in the next issue of *Rhode Island History*. Present indications are that two of the Williams letters have never been printed, and the same applies, apparently, to one of the letters signed by Williams, Dexter, and Fenner, and to one of the William Harris letters.

## Sullivan Dorr, China Trader

by HOWARD CORNING\*

The young man about whom I am going to talk tonight went out to China in the early days of the American trade. This trade was entirely through the port of Canton and European countries had been represented there for many years. As far as the English speaking people were concerned, it had been dominated by the great East India Company. There are plenty of detailed records of the American trade with China, commencing with the early decades of the 19th century, but here is a three years' story beginning in the last years of the 18th century, which is the earliest continuous record that I have been able to discover of an American resident in Canton, and as we follow him, the whole picture of the China trade arises before us. I think it requires imagination to picture the difficulties of trade after the independence of this country had been won. Of actual hard money, so called, there was hardly any and what there was, was in pieces of foreign denomination. I remember reading with interest, the opening entries of the Massachusetts Bank of about the time of these diaries and all the coins they had were in denominations of Great Britain, France, Spain and Portugal, with an infinitesimal collection of American dollars at the end. Then, someone discovered the trade in sea otter pelts on the Northwest coast of North America, from the mouth of the Columbia northward, beyond Vancouver Island. By offering beads and similar objects to the natives, one could obtain the skins of the sea otter which would easily bring, in good condition, twenty to twenty-five dollars each in China. This opportunity was not neglected. Later, as we shall see, the Indians wanted more and more for each skin as their wants were satisfied and of course, the slaughter of the otter diminished the supply. All this is illustrated in young Dorr's experiences and he writes in detail of the

\* This is a paper read by Mr. Corning before the Society in April, 1943. The author is curator of the Essex Institute, Salem, Mass.



great advantage of being able to buy teas for cash rather than for barter. The cash got him a higher grade tea at a cheaper price, as would be perfectly natural. He also illustrates what happened to many young men anxious to get on in the world, who went out to China, isolated themselves for a number of years and then returned to go into business at home or retire on a competence. Isolation is a fairly apt word, for they had few if any companions and no chance to amuse themselves. New England homes are full of the souvenirs of these young men. A few founded great houses based on this trade with the Far East, and the younger members of the family and their friends went out as they became of age, spent years there and then came back with what seemed, in those days, a comfortable fortune. This again is illustrated in this story. I have closed this article with his return to this country; the rest of his life was spent here in Providence and can be far better related by one of your own citizens.

Sullivan Dorr, the subject of this paper, was born in Boston, October 12, 1778. He was the tenth child and the seventh son of Ebenezer Dorr, who was the fourth in descent from Edward Dorr, the emigrant. Ebenezer was born in Roxbury the 20th of March, 1739, and died in Boston, September 29, 1809. He married first, Abigail Cunningham, January 7, 1762; she died April 10, 1798, and he then married Eliza Flink, who survived him until June 10, 1831. This second marriage occurred while Sullivan Dorr was in Canton and he refers to it several times. In 1763, after his first marriage, the father moved to Boston and as late as 1767, he was specified in the local directories as a leather dresser. Later he was called a merchant. His store was No. 27 Long Wharf, Boston. Just when Ebenezer began to interest himself in the shipping trade I haven't as yet found out but on October 19, 1772, he and Caleb Davis of Boston, as owners of the schooner *Dove*, gave sailing orders to Asa Hatch, the master. This was a voyage to Baltimore and back and, in the Davis Papers

in the Massachusetts Historical Society, there are records of Davis and Dorr doing business together as early as 1761-1765.

The next record of the Dorrs is on the Northwest Coast, where they went in the early days of the fur trade and from that it was an easy, in fact necessary, step to their trade with China. Two letter-books, an account-book, and a book of instructions for anybody who succeeded the son are in existence in Rhode Island and have been kindly lent to me to be copied. From these books comes this summary of the introduction of a young man not yet 21 years of age to the China Trade in its early days. This record of four years in Canton, starting in September 1799 and continuing until his departure for home in January 1803, is the earliest continuous record of any prolonged stay at Canton that is at present available. Young Dorr, when he went out to Canton, was a little over twenty years old and his correspondence, in the earliest days, was largely with his Father and also with the firm of J. and J. Dorr, which consisted of the older brothers Joseph, born December 2, 1767 and John, born October 2, 1770. Later he had correspondence with another brother, Andrew Cunningham Dorr, who was born August 11, 1772. The firm of Joseph and John Dorr in 1796 had an office at 10 Kilby Street, Boston.

The activities of the Dorr Family in the Pacific Ocean would make quite a story in itself but its records are scattered or destroyed. There are a log book and some letters in the Burton Historical Collection in Detroit and there are indications that at one time there were papers on the Pacific Coast but so far they have not come to light.

The records of the Boston Custom House give a list of 23 vessels in which the Dorr Family had a large interest—in fact, with the exception of five, all the vessels were registered entirely in the Dorr name. Ebenezer of this family also claimed to be the first Boston man to send a vessel to Canton.



What education young Sullivan had I have not been able to discover but he wrote a good hand and expressed himself well. I am judging from letter copy books which naturally would be written without care for details. At any rate this young man arrived in Canton before his twenty-first birthday, there to represent the family in its Pacific Ocean trade. Part of his first letter reads as follows:

It may be amusing to say that we were 31 days to St. Anthony's, 42 to the line, 76 to the Cape, St. Pauls 98 blowing hard, could not see it, made Sumatra 119 days, arrived at Malacca 157 days, the cause of our falling to leeward may be imputed to want of a good celestial observation expecting certainly to get through Sunda, thinking we might through Bali, but our reckoning put us 8 degrees to windward of where we were, which a good sexton would have corrected resorted to in proper season, I would recommend putting one in every Vessel, you may be concerned in, the expense being amply paid by enabling one to take advantage of a knowledge of the exactitude of his situation.

A casual reading of the logs of voyages in the Pacific in those years shows how much there still was to discover and chart, and Dorr in the same letter wrote home what he heard for the benefit of the captains as follows:

It has of late been thoroughly ascertained by a survey that Vandemans land<sup>1</sup> is separated from New Holland<sup>2</sup> by a strait of 100 Miles wide, and charts will be out from England soon, it is supposed that it may facilitate the [ ] passage to this a little, but probably it is not so nicely explored as to lay down every danger, therefore until a more nice examination be had would not venture that way.

Young Dorr came out to China with an agreement that he was to have 3% on the business transacted for the family plus the expenses of living in Canton. As a training for this work he had probably had three or four years in his father's and brothers' houses. I can find no reference that would lead one to think he had ever been on the Northwest Coast, though familiar enough with it, and with the men going there, from his work in the office.

The system under which business was transacted in Canton when young Dorr arrived was already developed

<sup>1</sup> Vandemans Land = Tasmania.

<sup>2</sup> New Holland = Australia.

and tested by experience with the other nations trading with China. Already the English, Dutch, French, Danes, Swedes, Spaniards and Austrians had been there. Some continued; others, like the Austrians or Imperials were about to disappear. The contempt the Chinese had for all foreigners, coupled with suspicion, led to the most stringent rules being imposed upon all foreigners as to their living quarters as well as to the methods of doing business. A vessel bringing in merchandise which it wished to sell or exchange for Chinese commodities, stopped in the first place at Macao, at the mouth of the Canton River. This was a Portuguese settlement, dating back to the 16th Century and the only place in all China where foreigners could go and be free of the stringent Chinese regulations. It was a small settlement on a peninsula of the larger Macao Island and the letters and diaries of the times show that the relaxation was more by way of comparison than any real holiday.

Having stopped at Macao and secured a *chop*, or permission to proceed up river, the ship was again stopped at Pearl River, so-called, examined again and at that place, took on a Chinese pilot. If no fault was found with the ship, she again proceeded on her way and finally came to anchor at Whampoa, 12 miles below Canton. This was the anchorage for all the ships doing business at this port and at the time of the annual market for teas, presented a brilliant and varied scene.

From Whampoa to Canton proper, communication was had by means of boats and all loading and unloading had to be done from Canton by means of lighters. Having taken his ship successfully to the Whampoa anchorage, the individual who wished to do business in Canton then had to put himself in the hands of a security merchant, so-called, for all buying and selling, by a decree of the Chinese government, was in the hands of a group of merchants known as the *Co-hong*. Dorr, in his notebook for the advice of his successor, mentions the list of the men at that time.



The reputation of the men, who from time to time formed this *Co-hong*, through all the time trade was carried on in Canton, was exceptionally high. There were occasions when losses occurred through them but that does not alter the fact that all persons who commented at all on their dealings spoke favorably of them.



FOREIGN FACTORIES AT CANTON

*From a painting in the possession of the Essex Institute, Salem, Mass.*

Having secured his merchant, the only other thing to do was to find a place to conduct his business and live. All foreigners of whatever description doing business in Canton, were forced to live on a piece of land about one quarter of a mile square, bounded by the river in front and by Thirteen Factory Street in the rear, and on one end by Hog Lane and on the other by Old China Street. Beyond these bounds, no foreigner could go. The factories themselves were on this compound, the lower story being used for storage of whatever goods the trader had on hand, while the living quarters were upstairs. In front of each factory floated the flag of the nation represented. These

houses were occupied by various people, either the owners or somebody to whom the owners leased them. In fact, captains from various ships might be in the same house. Dorr had charge of several factories that belonged to his predecessor, the rents from which he transmitted to the owner. He also later built his own factory.

No women were allowed in this compound and an international incident was nearly made out of one case where a man brought some female member of his family along to his factory. Eventually she went back to Macao. Macao was the only place where any chance for recreation or diversion could be found and that in itself was pretty limited. It was not until later years that anybody could have a boat and row up the river. While the teas were brought in and bought and sent down to Whampao to be put into the ships, the members of the various factories worked steadily and for long hours in order to despatch the vessel as quickly as possible. In the many months between, for reasons of health and rest and to escape boredom, everyone who could went to Macao, at a cost of about \$1,000, a fairly expensive jaunt for a young man just starting business.

Soon after his arrival Dorr settled down, hired a factory for \$800, admitting a man by the name of Waters for \$300 during the latter's stay. That he had any large amount of money of his own I doubt; nevertheless he writes in one of his early letters about investing "his fortune" in certain goods. He may have had two or three thousand dollars and no doubt that was a large sum in those days for a young man just entering upon a career.

On November 30, 1799, young Dorr announced the arrival of two boats belonging to his family, the *Hancock* of 205 tons and the *Dispatch* of 106 tons. The former was built in Boston in 1793. She was owned by Ebenezer, John, Joseph and Ebenezer Dorr, Jr. The *Dispatch* was built in Portland, Maine, in 1793 and was owned by Ebenezer Dorr. The two vessels brought 3060 skins which the son calculates will bring gross sales of \$26,250,



an unexpectedly good return. For the voyage back, he loads two ships with a variety of teas, a little sugar and fifty chests of cassia. He "floors" both ships with 100 boxes of china each. This was good lading as it kept the teas in the dryer part of the ship. He values the two return cargoes at \$81,225. Here also begins the first record of the variety of Chinese goods which were sent back as gifts to relatives and friends and of which traces are seen in so many New England houses at the present time. His brother Ebenezer, Jr., receives a coffee set of 84 pieces and 5 "flour" pots for \$13.50, and a table set of china of 213 pieces ciphered E. J. D., for \$70.

He was young, self reliant, confident and did not like the country nor the people with whom he did business and he writes of wanting to go home in the *Jenny*. One does not know with what illusion he went to China—but with the best outlook it was not a comfortable life. There were few traders from the United States and one can imagine the cordiality of the English and, in fact, of the representatives of other European countries, considering that it was the period of the Napoleonic Wars. When the season was on he worked day and night. (That was a practice that extended into far more civilized times in Canton.) The rest of the months were a let-down, and he was practically confined to the grounds of the foreign concession. He thought of going to Macao as many did—but he writes that it will cost him \$300 each way and house hire while there, so he did not go. He was trying to live economically but respectably and he writes as follows to justify his expenditures:

My expenses here will exceed what has ever been calculated altho I mean to live frugal, but respectably which my situation demands, I cannot yet form a just estimate not having procured furniture which will not am<sup>o</sup> to much, tho added to house hire at Macao, passage down and up, together with table expense, house utensils, which I must procure, there being no house to board at — I say all together will am<sup>t</sup> to perhaps thirteen hundred dollars, then again I shall not be under the necessity of hiring furniture when I came up from M—on my departure can sell what I have left which will lessen the expense some.

You will see hereafter I have procured about one hundred dollars worth of silver plate for my table, which when done with shall Cr you with due proportion, taking it home with me *for my family's use* they are necessarys that must be procured—I hope you wont think me extravagant, my Acct will be exhibited, and perhaps will remove any such idea.

Another aspect of the fur trade that appears in these letters is that of seal skins. These were collected in large quantities from islands in the southern hemisphere. The two places most often mentioned by Dorr are Massafuero, an island off the coast of Chile not far from Juan Fernandez and New Amsterdam, an island in the Indian Ocean in the latitude of the southern coast of Australia.

It was customary in collecting seal skins to leave a few men on an island for a year or more and then to call for the men and take them off with the skins which had been collected. I quote one of these agreements which are among the Dorr Papers; it is dated St. Pauls which is an island near New Amsterdam.

Snow Fairy at the Isle St. Pauls, Oct<sup>r</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> 1793 — Agreement between William Rogers and Ebenezer Dorr Residents of Boston in North America and Owners of the Snow Fairy on the one part and William Foster a Resident of Boston aforesaid Cooper on the Other part — That is to say the said Foster is to exert himself on the Isle of St. Pauls and Amsterdam in procuring as many seal Furrs within his power and he further Promises to perform and Obay all the Commandes of Peter Peterson from the date of this Agreement untill the Expiration of Two years unless sooner taken off by order of said Rogers and Dorr, on penalty of forfeiting One Thousand Spanish Head Dollars. And the said Rogers and Dorr do agree on their part and Obligate themselves to pay unto the said Foster Fifty Spanish Head Dollars for every Thousand of skin Furrs that he and his party with him shall procure within the above term of Two years and deliver the same to them in Good Order at the Isle Aforesaid.

In witness of this Agreement we have interchangably sett our hands and Seals the day & year first written

In presence of  
us

William Rogers for self  
Ebenezer Dorr  
William Foster

Joseph Pierpont  
& [illegible]



It was a hard life and the men were correspondingly tough. If crews from rival boats were on the same Island the ensuing quarrels and bloodshed were inevitable, or the men sold out to unscrupulous captains. There is one record of a collection of skins which spoiled because no one knew where they were until stumbled on by others—the men who collected them having disappeared. The Dorr had three men on Amsterdam Island in 1797 and an early letter of young Dorr's is to the U. S. Consul Snow at Canton complaining that a captain of another vessel came along and took the men and 12,000 skins and the Consul is to take notice and warn said men that they, the skins, are the Dorr's property.

The demand for so many furs arose from the fact that the Chinese house was unheated, consequently the rich kept warm in cold weather by wearing furs; the poor man used wadded cotton. The sea otter pelt commanded a higher price than did that of the seal. Two things I think contributed to this; first the otter skin was a much handsomer fur and, second, it was infinitely rarer. A few thousand skins was a satisfactory cargo from the Northwest Coast and they frequently brought much smaller amounts. On the other hand, 25,000 to 70,000 seal skins commonly came from the seal islands in one ship.

Practically all the trade at Canton in those days was done by barter. The skins brought to port were valued and the amount carried forward. Against this amount was set up the value of the quantity of the various teas and commodities desired at the then market price and the trade was complete. Credit was also given for 18 months. This was the only way the United States at that time could do business, for hard money in any amount was non-existent for them. Dorr's letters are constantly stating that he can buy better teas at cheaper prices for hard cash than by barter and he cites cases to prove it. The change actually began to occur under his eyes. The Napoleonic Wars threw open to the United States a tremendous carrying trade that would otherwise have been closed to them and

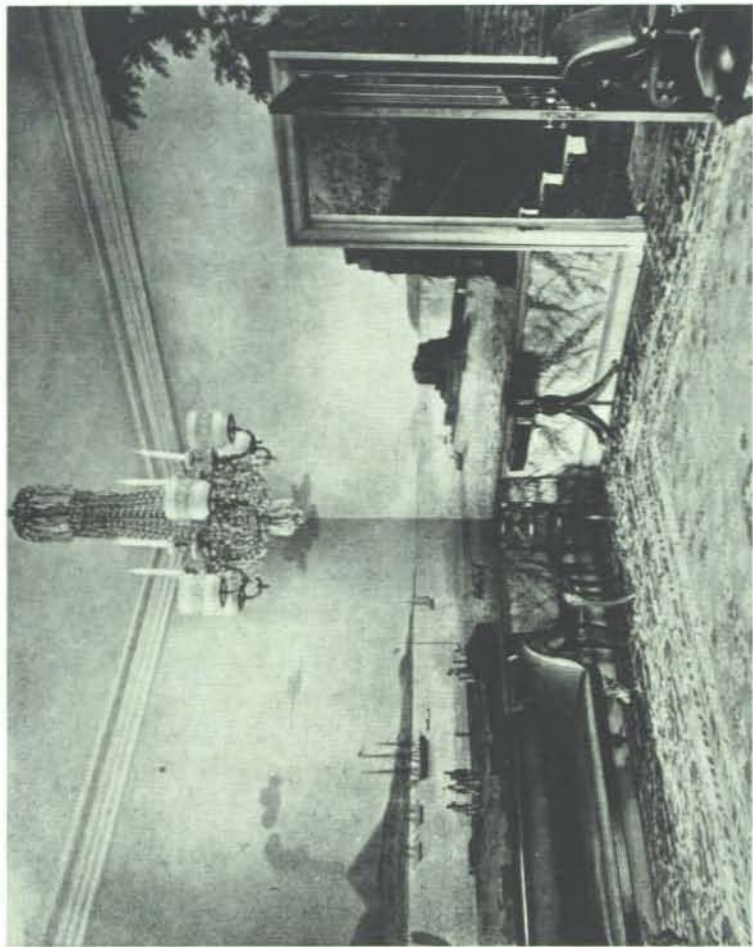
cash was much more plentiful. This was a fortunate event, particularly as far as the China trade was concerned, for the reckless destruction of seals stopped that source of supply just as had happened to the sea otter on the Northwest Coast.

One of Dorr's great tribulations for his whole residence in China was ginseng. This was a Chinese remedy for practically all ills and was a monopoly of the Emperor. The best grown came from Thibet and commanded tremendous prices, \$10,000 a picul.\* It was naturally bought only by the wealthy, little or none reaching any one else. When it was discovered that the same plant grew in America, everyone had a vision of high profits derived from dried ginseng root. Little thought was given to its preparation on which the Chinese laid great stress. It had to be smuggled ashore when it arrived and did not keep in a moist climate. Repeatedly inferior shipments were thrown overboard or sold for a small price. The climax of Dorr's trouble with ginseng came towards the end of his career, as will appear a little further on. Another of his troubles was that he did not like the captains of some of the family ships and said so. The two captains of the *Hancock* and *Dispatch*, Crocker and Brack by name, were dismissed for dishonest trading on the Northwest Coast. The trade in furs had at first been very lucrative, but with more ships arriving on the coast and a corresponding drop in the skins available, prices of skins rose. The Indians of the Northwest Coast themselves being supplied with the customary trade goods now demanded muskets and refused to trade unless paid according to their demands.

On May 11, 1798, a little over a year before Dorr arrived, John Adams had sent to the Senate the nomination of Samuel Snow of Rhode Island as a United States consul at Canton and it was consented to by the Senate on the same day. Already in Canton in 1799, the Consul and young Dorr struck up a friendship even if they had

\* Picul = 133½ Lbs.





INTERIOR OF THE SULLIVAN DORR HOUSE, CORNER OF BOWEN AND BENEFIT STREETS, PROVIDENCE. The mural by Michel Felice Corné shows the Bay of Naples.

not known each other at home. At any rate, Mr. Snow left for America in January, 1801, and appointed Dorr vice-consul in his absence. This meant more work and no pay, for the consul received no salary or fees; but it did decidedly give him standing in the community, and I seem to see a little less complaining of his lot from then on. No doubt a good deal of this absence of discontent (I can't say content) was due to his familiarity with his surroundings and a feeling that he had an opportunity to make a little money.

As I have said, living was high in Canton, particularly if one wanted to spend the slack season in Macao and the commission on the family business would never give him a fortune. This is somewhat in contrast to the highly developed China trade of later years which is more familiar to most of us. It is interesting to see that in its infancy the opportunities were not sufficiently tempting to young Dorr for him to endure the privations which he described. He somewhere reminds the family that he paid his passage out and he expected to pay it back, which would indicate that he was not merely an agent of his father and brothers. This may in part account for his frank criticism of men, ships and methods of business which appears early in his letters and lasts through the series. He knew his own mind and was not afraid to let it be known even if the family did not like it. He writes of his brother Joseph:

Joseph is doubtfull of my competency, continually reminding me of misplacing my confidence I expect. I know my business and shall conduct accordingly, I have no doubt of his friendship—I am young but value myself upon prudence tho it may be egotism, but this to you.

He had in the period after his arrival hired a house in which to live and carry on his business—this was the custom for any temporary resident—but in February 1801, all this had changed and he writes:

I live in No. 3 American Hong, the house belongs to me the building of which was and is a fine thing for me clearing this last season first cost and ground rent all to 100 D. so that it cost me only 100 D. next rent is clear again. The American flag is displayed here in front of the factories that and the nature of my office brings many to consult



with me old enough to teach me themselves, and I assure you the dignity which the consulate attaches to me makes me feel Ha! Ha! Ha!

He had a year before written:

Mr. Snow intends building an American factory the expence thereof (about 9000 D) will build 6 factorys in one Hong; letting the same in one season for nearly about prime cost; had I it in view to remain here many years & had funds certainly should build, knowing of no business bringing in more prompt and great profit.

Whether he built his own Hong or bought it, there is nothing to show. His one object, now that he felt himself established was, to use a modern phrase, "to make a killing."

February 25, 1801.

You may expect a continuance of consignments from him and me, more particularly from me when I know our markets are very good at present I esteem them otherwise and make a little or no Shipments, you must give me correct information, and when I see an opening shall adven<sup>e</sup> largely, perhaps that opening may not arrive these some years but when it does I am in hopes in one season to make my fortune, which is a very grand inducement for me to stay, together with many ships from sealing Voyages which I have certain information almost of coming to my hands each of which Vessell will bring me from 500 to 1000 profit which in a few years of itself will give me no small sum.

It now cost him \$3500 a year to live.

He asked his family to give him an opportunity to own a quarter interest in a sealer up to \$10,000. This developed into a quarter interest in the ship *Amethyst*. She was built in Salem in 1801, by Enos Briggs, a prominent shipbuilder and was reported to be a very fast sailer. She was of 270 tons burden.

At the risk of tiring with quotations, I quote his letter when he was notified of his interest in the ship; it is more or less the epitome of his stay in China. He was part owner of a ship, he had funds for loading her; he knew his own mind and when he advised that certain things be done with his money he wished compliance and he would stand the consequences.

I notice you have interested me one fourth in the *Amethyst* and made some conditions about my funds coming out in her; which circumstance as it respects being quarter owner is of no great con-

sequence but the laying my money under any condition, it will be impossible (perhaps) that I can comply Therewith; for my debts here will not admit of it, even if it did, you had no authority to lay me under such obligations for the whole of my injunctions respecting remittances, have been these, *sell my goods and remit me instantly*, not with Standing which you advised with the Old Gentlemen &c. &c. acting diametrically opposite to my wishes; Adhere to the Vulgar Adage (nevertheless true) Obey Orders or break Owners, for a contrary conduct may ruin my reputation, but as it is I consider myself one fourth owner of the *Amethyst* and perhaps may remit 10,000 Doll<sup>s</sup> worth of goods in her.

When the *Amethyst* arrived in Canton with a miscellaneous cargo the result seemed very much like the "dumping" of later years. Mr. W<sup>m</sup> Stackpole sent Madeira wine so poor it could "not command a price." Mr. Samuel Parkman sent cheeses, 250 of which were rotten and thrown away. Mr. Henry Mead, Mr. W<sup>m</sup> Hall, Mr. Levi Peirce, Mr. James Andrews and Mr. Eliphalet Hale and Richard Connor and Israel Monson all shipped ginseng and most with drafts attached which Dorr politely returned because the ginseng was of a poor quality, and he wrote a whole series of apolegetic letters condemning their shipments. On the whole he did not feel that the first voyage out of the *Amethyst* yielded any profit.

He had now too many interests to be discouraged. He was representing Messrs. J. and T. H. Perkins of Boston in their trade in Canton and also Brown and Ives, prominent merchants of Providence. He wrote Israel Thordike, wealthy merchant of Beverly who later moved to Boston, and John Heard of Ipswich, himself wealthy and father of the famous China merchant Augustine Heard. His own situation improved as opportunities offered and he wrote home after three years he was worth \$28,000 to \$38,000. He also had made up his mind that he had an understanding of the China trade and did not intend to spend his life as a resident agent. Accordingly, he writes on December 22, 1802 as follows:

Since my last, I have contracted for a Cargo of Congo Tea for the Jenny with which I shall proceed to Emden or Antwerp for my a/c



and risk, the Value of her cargo will be about 45,000 Doll<sup>s</sup> from Manqua one of the Co-Haugh to whom I pay 1 1/3 D. Cash, the remainder 18 Mo<sup>o</sup>. So you see my C<sup>r</sup> is fair here, I shall have recommendatory letters to the Dutch Company in Holland who I presume will be the purchasers of the tea; it is a fact that nothing else could be done with the Jenny. I can procure freight @ 30 and 35 Doll<sup>s</sup> p<sup>r</sup> ton; I shall allow a handsome freight for the Jenny perfectly to your satisfaction and hope to win 15,000 Doll<sup>s</sup> by this adven<sup>e</sup> besides quitting a wretched Country.

And on January 17, 1802, to Messrs. J. & T. H. Perkins:

I am now destined for the Texel and Emden in the Jenny with a cargo of Congo and Souchong Tea.

He sailed from Canton some time the first of the year and was in Antwerp in July as appears from a letter to his London agent, and he wrote Brown and Ives from Boston that he had arrived at his home town on the 18th of September, 1803.

Here end Sullivan Dorr's letter books and residence in China. October 14, 1804, he married Lydia Allen of Providence and at that time took up his residence in that city. He continued his mercantile career, becoming one of the town's leading business men. In 1813, he became a trustee of Brown University and in 1838 was elected President of the Washington Insurance Company. He died March 3, 1858, leaving a family of seven children, four men and three women to succeed him. The *Providence Journal* said at the time of his death:

No man among us enjoyed or deserved a higher reputation for the sterling qualities that make up a manly character. Inflexibly honest, courteous in his manners, kind in his feelings, he was respected by all who knew him and beloved by all who knew him well.

WANTED: *Rhode Island History*, issues of July 1941, April 1942, July 1942, July 1943.

## Pemberton of St. Albans and The Mother of Roger Williams

by G. ANDREWS MORIARTY, A.M., LL.B., F.S.A.

(Concluded from *Rhode Island History*, Volume III, p. 71)

### PEDIGREE OF PEMBERTON OF ST. ALBANS AND WILLIAMS OF LONDON.

1. Robert Pemberton of St. Albans [perhaps son of Geoffrey Pemberton]. Born about 1520-25. Buried 16 July 1578. He undoubtedly descended from the ancient and knightly house of Pemberton of Pemberton, co. Lancs. The funeral certificate of his son Roger states that his ancestors came out of Cheshire. Taxed in the Subsidies of 1565-66 and 1575/6 at St. Albans. He was probably a mercer or clothier. He, apparently, owned a capital messuage in the parish of St. Mary-le-Bow, London. Administration on his estate was granted on 30 Sept. 1578 to his widow Katherine. Married about 1550 Katherine, sister of Roger Stokes, mercer, of St. Albans, of the ancient family of St. Albans burgesses of that name.

#### Children:

- i.(?). RAPHAEL, of St. Albans, Esq.; born about 1551. Held lands in the parishes of St. Stephen's and St. Peter's. Died prior to 31 May 1610. Married Mary, sister of Anne, wife of Edward Sadler, Esq. She died 31 May 1610. No issue.
- ii.(?). ROBERT. Born about 1553. Buried 15 Dec. 1560.
2. iii. ROGER. Born about 1554/5.
- iv.(?) JOAN. Born about 1557. Buried 8 Jan. 1560/1.
- v.(?) RANDALL. Bapt. 19 March 1559/60. Buried 6 July 1561.
- vi.(?) ELLEN. Bapt. 22 Nov. 1561. Buried 7 Aug. 1578.
- vii. JOHN. Bapt. 20 June 1563. Buried 19 July 1578.
3. viii. ALICE. Bapt. 18 Feb. 1564/5.



- ix. MARY. Bapt. 1 Feb. 1566/7. Married Robert Rawlinson on 19 Sept. 1586.
- x. SARAH. Bapt. 26 Sept. 1568. Married probably Nicholas Cotchett or Jeremy Odell.
- xi.(?). FLORENCE. Buried 6 Aug. 1578.

2. ROGER<sup>2</sup> PEMBERTON (*Robert*<sup>1</sup>), of St. Albans, Esq. Born 1554/5. Buried 20 Nov. 1627 in St. Peter's Church, St. Albans. Uncle and Godfather of Roger Williams. Lord of the Manor of Wotton Shelton, co. Beds. He was a prominent burgess of St. Albans and had business interests in London. In early life he was styled "Gentleman", and later attained the higher title of "Esquire". In 1578 he was heir of his cousin, Robert Stokes, M.A., of St. Albans. In 1588 he was one of the contributors to the defense against the Spanish Armada. In 1599 he was dealing in lands in St. Albans, together with his brother-in-law James Williams of London. High Sheriff of Hertfordshire in 1619. Shortly before his death he purchased the manor of Wotton Shelton, co. Beds. Besides his extensive lands in the parishes of St. Peter's and St. Stephen's, in St. Albans, he owned a capital messuage in the parish of St. Mary-le-Bow, London, apparently inherited from his father, as well as lands in various parishes in Herts. and Beds. Will dated 13 Nov. 1624, proved 5 Dec. 1627. By his will he gave an almshouse to St. Albans for six poor widows, which, under the name of the "Pemberton Alms Houses" still functions [cf. "The Gateway at the Pemberton Almshouses, St. Albans", by S. Flint Clarkson, F.R.B.A., in *Trans. of St. Albans and Herts. Arch. and Archaeol. Soc.*, Vol. I., pt. 1 N. S.]. His inquisition post mortem was taken on 17 May 1628. His funeral certificate is in the College of Arms. His monumental brass, showing figures of himself, his wife and their children is in St. Peter's church. The inscription is now lost, but it was copied by

Chauncy, the 17th century historian of Hertfordshire. It reads as follows:

"Here lieth Roger Pemberton Esq. some time High Sheriff of this County, who by his last Will ordained six alms houses to be built near this Church for six poor Widows; and hath given out of his manor of Shelton, in the County of Bedford, thirtye pounds per annum for their maintenance. To whose pious memory Elizabeth, his loving wife, and Ralph Pemberton, their dutyfull son, Mayor of this towne, executors of his last will, have dedicated this Remembrance. He lived well and departed this life the 13th. of November 1627 in the 72nd. year of his age. Here now his body rests in expectation of a joyfull Ressurrection."

He married, license dated 6 May 1579, Elizabeth, daughter of Raffe Moore, Gent., of St. Albans. She was baptized 18 March 1564/5, and was buried in St. Peter's Church on 15 July 1645.

#### Children:

- i. JOHN, Esq. Lord of the manor of Wotton Shelton. Bapt. 15 Dec. 1583. Buried 7 Jan. 1644/5. Citizen, Grocer and Silkman of London. Member for Herts. of the Eastern Counties Association, which largely assisted financing the Parliamentary Armies in the Civil War. Married 1st. about Jan 1609/10 Catherine, daughter of William Angell, Citizen and Baker of London, who was buried on 21 March 1625; married 2ndly. Elizabeth widow of William Audley of London in 1633. Eleven children by his 1st. wife. From his eldest surviving son, John descended the Pembertons, Lords of the manor of Wotton Shelton, Co. Beds.
- ii. ELIZABETH. Bapt. 27 Dec. 1585. Died young.
- iii. ROBERT, Gent. Bapt. 23 Dec. 1586. Was of St. Albans and a Citizen and Haberdasher of London. Buried at St. Albans 29 May 1628. Will dated 25 May 1628, proved 3 July 1628. Married soon after 30 Aug. 1616 Susanna, daughter of Roger Glover, Esq., of Beweot, co. Berks., Citizen and Pewterer of London and sister of the Rev. Josse Glover, who died on the voyage to New England in 1638. Susanna was apparently buried at St. Peter's, 9 Nov. 1630. Three children of whom the second son, Robert Pemberton, a barrister, was Steward to the Dean and Chapter of Peterborough and from him descended the Peterborough Pembertons.



4. iv. RALPH. Born about 1588.
  - v. ELIZABETH. Bapt. 26 May 1590. Died young.
  - vi. TECLA. Bapt. 26 Sept. 1592. Married Robert Woolley, Gent., of St. Albans about 1610. Left issue.
3. ALICE<sup>2</sup> PEMBERTON (*Robert*<sup>1</sup>) bapt. 18 Feb. 1564/5. Died 1 Aug. 1634-26 Jan. 1634/5. Married, about 1597, James Williams, Citizen and Merchant Taylor of London. They lived in Cow Lane in St. Sepulchres-without-Newgate parish, London. Admitted to the Freedom of the Merchant Taylors Company on 7 April 1587. In 1599 he was a feoffee of his brother-in-law, Roger Pemberton, to the use of his will, and in 1610 he was one of Roger's feoffees in settling property upon Roger's son John and Catherine Angell, his bride. James Williams' will, dated 7 Sept. 1620, was proved 19 Nov. 1621. James Williams was probably a near kinsman of the Rev. Roger Williams, Vicar of St. Peter's parish in St. Albans, who died shortly before 2 Jan. 1626/7 [REGISTER, vol. 43, p. 295].

#### Children:

- i. CATHERINE. Born about 1598. Married, as his 2nd. wife, prior to 7 Sept. 1620 Ralph Wightman, Citizen and Merchant Taylor of London, who died between 27 Dec. 1628 and 9 Feb. 1628/9 [Register, vol. 43, p. 293]. Catherine married 2ndly, prior to 1 Aug. 1634 the Rev. John Davies. Issue by both husbands.
5. ii. SYDRACH. Born about 1600.
- iii. ROGER. Born about 1603. The famous founder of Providence, R. I. For his birth date see *R. I. Hist. Soc. Coll.*, vol. 28, p. 112. Died 16 Jan. 1682/3-15 March 1682/3 [*R. I. Hist. Soc. Coll.*, vol. 20, p. 59]. Elected scholar of Charterhouse 25 June 1621. Matriculated at Pembroke College Cambridge 7 July 1624, a "pensioner" [Ernst's "Roger Williams," p. 30]. B. A. January 1626/7. Chaplain to Sir William Masham at Otes in High Lever, Co. Essex 1629. Married there 15 Dec. 1629 Mary Barnard, waiting woman of Joan Altham, daughter of Lady Masham by a former husband. She was undoubtedly the Mary Barnard bapt at Worksop,

Co. Notts. in 1609, daughter of the noted Puritan divine, the Rev. Richard Barnard parson at Worksop and later at Batcombe, Co. Somerset. Her brother Masachell, a clothier of Batcombe, embarked for New England in 1635 and settled at Weymouth, Mass. William Harris writing to Capt. Dean of London on 14 Nov. 1666, mentions that he has left letters to be sent to England with "Mr. Barnard, brother of Mr. William's wife" [*R. I. Hist. Coll.*, vol. 29, p. 66]. Roger Williams and his wife embark at Bristol for New England on 1 Dec. 1630 [Ernst, p. 59]. His subsequent career is well known. While in England he joined his brother Sidrach in bringing a suit in chancery on 15 Aug. 1644 against Walter Chauncy of London and others for conspiring to defraud them, out of legacies left them by their mother Alice, with their brother Robert, her executor (Chanc. Proc. Chas. I. W 5/22. *Register*, Vol. 97, pp. 176-181). For Roger's children [cf. Austin's *Gen. Dic. of R. I.*, p. 430].

- iv. ROBERT. Born about 1610-12. Apprenticed to his brother Sydrach in the Merchant Taylors Company on 6 March 1626/27. Executor of his mother's will in 1634. Came to New England shortly before 15 Aug. 1644 having met with financial reverses in England. Bought land in Providence 27 Nov. 1644, [*Register*, vol. 97, p. 179n]. Moderator of the Providence Town Meeting on 27:10:1647 and frequently thereafter. Commissioner from Providence 16 May 1648 and Deputy 1650 [cf. Chapin's *Doc. Hist.*, vol. I]. Schoolmaster at Newport 1672 [*G. Fox Digged &c*]. General Solicitor of R. I. 1673, 1674, 1676 and in 1680. Justice of the Peace 1664, appointed by the King's Commissioners. [*R. I. Col. Rec.*, vols. I, II, and III]. He, apparently, had no family.
4. RALPH<sup>3</sup> PEMBERTON (*Roger*<sup>2</sup> *Robert*<sup>1</sup>), of St. Albans. Born about 1588. Died 9 Oct. 1644, buried 11 Oct. 1644 at St. Peter's parish, St. Albans. He was a prominent burgess of that town and was Mayor there in 1627-28. Executor of the will of his grandfather, Raffe Moore in 1624. A Member for Herts. of the Eastern Counties Association during the Civil War. Will dated 6 Oct. 1644. His Inq. P. M. was taken on 25 April 1645. Married shortly after 10 Oct. 1616 Frances, daughter of Francis Kempe,



Gent., of London Attorney of the Common Pleas. She was buried at St. Peter's 25 May 1659. [cf. Pedigree of Kempe in Vis. of London 1634, Harl. Soc., p. 26.]

Children:

- i. ELIZABETH. Bapt. 30 Nov. 1618. Died probably before 1645.
- ii. FRANCES. Bapt. 21 Aug. 1620. Died 1675. Married 28 Dec. 1644 Samuel Bedford.
6. iii. FRANCIS. Born 18 July 1624.
- iv. RALPH. Born 1626. Died 1682. Married twice and had ten children by both wives.
- v. ANNE. Born 1629. Alive 1644.

[cf. Pemberton Pedigrees, Chart. 14].

5. SYDRACH<sup>3</sup> WILLIAMS (*Alice*,<sup>2</sup> *Robert*<sup>1</sup>), Citizen and Merchant Taylor of London. Born about 1600-1603. Died shortly before 29 April 1647 at Barwick, co. York. He was a Turkey and Italian merchant. Admitted to the Freedom of the Merchant Taylors Company by patrimony on 20 Feb. 1620/1. He had various suits in equity, as set forth above, and from one of them we learn that he had been imprisoned at Milan by the Inquisition. In 1637 he was residing in Putney, co. Surrey, a suburb of London. In 1644 he joined his brother Roger in a chancery suit arising out of the maladministration of their mother's estate by their brother Robert. Administration on his estate was granted to his principal creditor on 29 April 1647. At his death he was residing in St. Olave parish, Hart Street, London. Married by license, dated 10 Oct. 1621, as of St. Gabriel's, Fenchurch St., London to Anne, widow of Francis Pinner, Grocer, of St. Michael's Querne, London. She was buried at Putney 10 July 1637.

Children (number uncertain):

- i. JAMES. Named in the will of his grandmother, Alice Williams in 1634. He may be the father of the Mr. Roger Williams, who married at Putney on 4 Aug. 1670 Mrs. Frances Jones.
- ii.(?) ROGER of Rappahannock Co. Va. He first appears in Rappahannock Co. in 1664, when he bought 200 acres on Totosky Creek and is styled "Roger Williams planter." On 3 Feb. 1671/2 he, together with his wife Joan, gave a quitclaim deed to Richard Dudley. His will, dated 26 Feb. 1674/5, was proved 2 May 1677. He names his wife and his children, Roger, Sydrach and Betty, his eldest daughter. On 2 Nov. 1677 Samuel Wills of Farnham parish, Rappahannock County, in contemplation of marriage with Joan, relict of Roger Williams, gave over certain property to Roger, son of the deceased Roger Williams, to his brother Sydach and to his sisters, Susanna and Anne. The children were to have it when they attained the age of 16 years. There was also another sister named Rebecca. [Rappahannock Co. *Records*, vol. 1656-64, p. 303; *ib.* 1668-72, p. 530; *ib.* 1677-88, pp. 168 and 282].
6. SIR FRANCIS<sup>4</sup> PEMBERTON, KNIGHT (*Ralph*,<sup>3</sup> *Roger*,<sup>2</sup> *Robert*<sup>1</sup>), Lord Chief Justice of England.<sup>5</sup> Born 18 July 1624. Died 10 June 1697. With the possible exception of Roger Williams, who was a Pemberton on the distaff side, he was most distinguished of the St. Albans Pembertons. There is a good life of the Chief Justice in the Dictionary of National Biography. The life of Chief Justice Pemberton by John, Lord Campbell, in his "*Lives of the Chief Justices*" gives him a *fair* character, which, when we consider the scurrility with which the noble author was wont to treat the lives of his predecessors on the High Bench, leads to the conclusion that the Lord Chief Justice Pemberton, in spite of certain vacillations and lack of consistent fairness under terrific pressure from the Government, was, upon the whole, a high minded and sincere Judge. Of his great learning in the law and of his devotion to his





SIR FRANCIS PEMBERTON (1624-1697) distinguished kinsman of Roger Williams. As Chief Justice of King's Bench, he held the highest honour possible for an English lawyer, Lord Chief Justice of England. He was later transferred to the office of Chief Justice of Common Pleas. Noted for his skill and courage in an age when even the judiciary were subjected to political machinations, he was also removed from this position and thus offers the unique picture of a Chief Justice of England who was twice removed from the Bench.

profession there can be no question. He lived in a corrupt and trying time, the period of the Restoration, and his career is, upon the whole, an upright and honorable one. The facts of his life may be briefly stated.

In 1630, at the age of six, he was placed in the St. Albans Grammer School, whence he proceeded to Emanuel College, Cambridge, where he received his B.A. degree in 1644. On 14 Oct. 1645 he entered the Middle Temple as a law student. Here he fell into dissolute company and wasted his estate, which resulted in his imprisonment for debt in the Fleet. Thereupon his character underwent a complete change. He applied himself, while in prison, so zealously to his legal studies that he attained great proficiency therein and succeeded in securing his release from prison upon his promise to reimburse his creditors. He was called to the Bar on 27 Nov. 1654 and thereafter his advance was rapid. In the Easter Term 1675 he was made a Sergeant and a Knight Sergeant the next year. On 30 April 1679 he was raised to King's Bench, as a Puisne Judge, but, owing to the enmity of the infamous Chief Justice Scroggs, he was removed in less than two years and returned to the Bar. Soon after at the Easter Term 1681, he attained the highest honour possible for an English lawyer by being raised to the Chief Justiceship of King's Bench, thus becoming Lord Chief Justice of England. He owed his elevation to the desire of the Government to ward off the criticism of the Opposition by the appointment of a learned and fair minded lawyer to the Chief Justiceship. While on the Bench he showed some subserviency but his principles soon reasserted themselves and the Government, which was plotting the subversion of Constitutional Government by *Quo Warranto* proceedings against the Charters of the City of London, feared his impartiality and



adherence to legal principles as a presiding magistrate. Accordingly, he was transferred to the less honourable but more lucrative office of Chief Justice of the Common Pleas. While Chief Justice of King's Bench he had presided at the trial of Fitzharris for his part in the alleged Popish Plot, and at that of the venerable Catholic Primate of Ireland, Dr. Oliver Plunket, Archbishop of Armagh, and also at that of Lord Grey of Werke for the abduction of the Lady Harriet Berkeley. He was sworn in as Chief Justice of Common Pleas on 13 Jan. 1682/3 and soon after presided at the famous state trial of Lord William Russell, for his alleged complicity in the Rye House Plot. During this noted trial he showed so much fairness and adherence to legal principles that he again incurred the distrust of the Court party, which feared that, if he presided at the trial of Col. Algernon Sydney, which was coming on, the prisoner might escape. Accordingly, he was again removed from the Bench by a supersedeas on 29 Sept. 1683 and so he offers the unique picture of a Chief Justice of England, who was twice removed from the Bench. Pemberton's great energy and grit were now to be seen, for undismayed he returned to his practice at the Bar. To all appearance his career had reached its culmination, but destiny had reserved for him his crowning achievement, that of leader in the defence of the Seven Bishops in their trial in June 1688 for seditious libel. Their acquittal in that famous case was largely due to the learning, skill and courage with which Mr. Sergeant Pemberton, at considerable personal risk, conducted the defense. The story of the trial may be read in the pages of Macaulay, who pays high tribute to Pemberton's skill and courage. After the Revolution he continued his practice at the Bar and as late as 1696 he was Counsel for Sir John Fenwick in the matter of his

attainder. He married in 1667 Anne, daughter of Sir Jeremy Whichcote, Bart., Solicitor General and died at his house in Highgate on 10 June 1697 and was buried in the church there. He had seven children and was the ancestor of the Pembertons of Trumpington, co. Cambs.

In arriving at a proper estimate of the character of the Chief Justice, the following statement by his contemporary at the Bar, Mr. Sergeant Chauncy, the learned historian of Hertfordshire, who must have known him well, is worthy of consideration:

"He was endowed with a ready Wit, and quick apprehension, which were attended with a rare memory and excellent parts, by the help of which and his own indefatigable Industry, he attained to great perfection of Judgment in the Laws of the Land \* \* \* He would not suffer any Lawyers upon Tryals before him to interrupt or banter Witnesses in their Evidence, a practice too frequently used by some counsel in bad causes to stifle truth and obstruct justice, but allowed every Person liberty to recollect his thoughts, and to speak without Fear, that the Truth might be better discovered \* \* \* No temptations of Profit or Preferment, no Threats, no Menaces of deprivation nor loss of place nor Honour, could move him to Act anything against the Laws".

With a word concerning the armorial bearings of the family I bring this extended account of Roger William's English kindred to a close. The Heralds in the Visitation of Hertfordshire for 1634 allowed to Roger Pemberton, upon what evidence is not now clear, the arms of the Lancashire family viz. "Quarterly, 1st. and 4th., Silver, a chevron between 3 buckets sable hooped and handled gold. 2nd. and 3rd., Silver 3 dragons' heads sable coupé and langued gules."

<sup>1</sup> Robert Stokes. He is undoubtedly the Robert Stokes who matriculated as a Pensioner at St. John's College, Cambridge, in the Michaelmas Term 1570. Incorporated at Oxford 1574. B.A. 1574/5; M.A. 1578. A Puritan associate of Barrow and Greenwood and was indicted with them but his life was spared (cf. Venn's *Alumni Cantabrigienses*).

<sup>2</sup> George Wightman. It may be suggested that this George Wightman was the father of George Wightman and Valentine Whitman, the two early settlers of Rhode



Island, and that this connection with Roger Williams was the cause of their emigration to that Colony. (cf. Austin's Dictionary, pp. 224, 226.)

<sup>3</sup> William Angell. It is highly probable that Thomas Angell, the early settler of Providence, who came with Roger Williams to New England and accompanied him in his flight from Massachusetts was a near kinsman of William but of a younger generation.

<sup>4</sup> Sir James Pemberton, Lord Mayor of London 1613. Both Mr. Ernst in his *Roger Williams* [pp. 15-16] and Mrs. Easton [*R. I. Hist. Soc. Coll.*, vol. 29, p. 66] state that Sir James Pemberton, Lord Mayor of London, belonged to the St. Albans family. There is no evidence that this is so. The will of James Pemberton Knt., Citizen and Alderman of London, dated 8 Sept. 1613, proved 11 Sept. 1613, names "James Pemberton my brother, Thomas Pemberton my cousin, John Pemberton his brother, Lawrence Stamynott my sister's son, Thomas his brother, Martha Prescott my niece, and James Prescott her son." He left a bequest to the poor of St. John acharies in London, "where I dwell" and to the Goldsmiths Company. He also left to the school founded by him in Egleston parish, Lancs. Executrix and residuary legatee wife Anne. [P.C.C. 83 Capell]. This will shews no connection with the St. Albans family and indicates that the testator was a native of Egleston, Co. Lancs. Any connection with our Pembertons must have been remote and his appearance as a feoffee of Roger Pemberton is apparently merely a coincidence.

<sup>5</sup> For the life of Lord Chief Justice Pemberton see *Dictionary of National Biography*; Lord Campbell's *Lives of the Chief Justices of England*, London 1874, vol. II, pp. 273-313; Mr. S. Flint Clarkson in *Trans. St. Albans and Hertfordshire Architectural and Archaeological Soc.*, vol. I, pt. i, new series.

## Book Reviews

THE PROVIDENCE OATH OF ALLEGIANCE AND ITS SIGNERS, 1651-2 By Richard LeBaron Bowen.

Contributed by Frederick S. Peck, Governor, and issued by the General Court of the Society of Colonial Wars of Rhode Island (The Rumford Press, Concord, New Hampshire, 1943). Pp. x, 92, illustrated.

This is another volume in the notable series of reprints of documents of value for the history of Rhode Island issued by the Society of Colonial Wars in the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations. With one exception, it is perhaps the most valuable of the Series, the sole exception being the same author's even more valuable monograph on Counterfeiting in Colonial Rhode Island. The other issues in the Series consist mainly of reprints of relatively short single documents, with little if any text explaining their value and significance.

Frederick Stanhope Peck, LL.D., has made the period of his governorship of the Society memorable by contributing these two publications of Mr. Bowen's to the Society's Series.

To some extent, the title of this monograph is misleading, though accurate enough so far as it goes, for what we have is really an intimate picture of the social and political life of Rhode Island in the fifth decade of the seventeenth century, here presented for the first time, with particular reference to Providence. We have not only the story of the Providence Oath of Allegiance, but also the highly interesting story of the trial of Hugh Bewitt for high treason. Through the carefully documented account of that trial, the first of its kind in New England, we have a picture

of the relations between the Towns of Providence and Warwick. Samuel Gorton, that center of trouble wherever he went, appears prominently in the events of these years, a period of his life of which little has heretofore been known.

For the genealogist, though it is perhaps out of keeping with Mr. Bowen's sound idea as to the relationship of genealogy to local history to separate that part of the book for special mention, the book is of very great value. There are over six hundred different names listed in the index. In some thirty-five pages, we have biographical and genealogical accounts of the immediate families of the twelve signers of the Oath of Allegiance, namely, Thomas Harris, William Wickenden, John Browne, Samuell Bennett, Henry Browne, Thomas Hopkins, Arthur Fenner, James Ashton, Thomas Angell, Gregory Dexter, Hugh Bewitt, and Edward Inman, with photographic reproductions of their signatures, most of which are nowhere else recorded and here appear for the first time. In addition there is an excellent two-page folding map of the Home Lots in Providence, drawn by John Hutchins Cady, F. A. I. A., showing where many of these men lived in 1650.

Without question, these men were the leaders in their community, most of them relatively young and destined to play an even larger part in Rhode Island affairs in years to come. Reasonably full accounts of a few of them had been written earlier, but of most of them and of their families, little or nothing was in print. Here we have short biographies, supported by practically every passage in the original sources in which they are mentioned.

Mr. Bowen believes, and believes rightly, that an historical work that is not fully documented is not history at all, however interesting and whatever else it may be.

He calls attention to the fact that although the source material for the history of Providence is very abundant, no attempt has been made for a hundred years to write the history of the city, and that, because of its lack of documentation, Staples' *Annals of the Town of Providence*, published in 1843, is valueless to the critical historical scholar.

In a word, this book is a valuable contribution to Rhode Island—indeed to New England—history. One fears that because the edition is small, and because it appears in a series of reprints of source material issued by the Society of Colonial Wars, its importance will be overlooked or underestimated. There is a very real danger that the genealogical material will be lost sight of.

Mr. Bowen's contribution to the *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, his book on Counterfeiting, this book, and other publications in prospect make him a person to be taken into account when living historians of New England are counted up and appraised.

Trinity College,  
Hartford, Conn.

ARTHUR ADAMS



## THE TOWN THAT SAVED A STATE, WESTERLY, by Mary Agnes Best

Westerly, Rhode Island, The Utter Company, Publishers and Printers, 1943.  
Pp. 283, inc. index. Cloth \$2.00.

This book's opening line gives one description of Westerly as "An express stop of the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad". Possibly some Rhode Island outsiders may have had this limited knowledge of the town before the coming of the automobile but they have had a pleasing surprise as they have come to know it better. And if they read this volume, they will get an added surprise at the hardships of its doughty founders and the enterprise of their descendants whose local pride has maintained and developed a thriving and well-ordered community possessing all those modern features which make an ideal New England town.

The author is true to her title "The Town That Saved a State" as she recites the trials of the early generations of settlers in the harsh struggles and controversies of that period when jurisdiction over territory between Narragansett Bay and the Pawcatuck River was claimed alternately by Massachusetts and Connecticut. For 60 years there was almost no let-up in the bitter squabble for possession. Meantime, the little Westerly colony of loyal Rhode Islanders, squeezed in between its two big land-grabbing neighbors, suffered the arrest, deporting to Boston, jailing and fining of its leading men, the destruction of houses and other property, and the general run of indignities that accompanied the plans of "men of insatiate greed".

There is hardly a prominent feature of Rhode Island colonial history in its many phases and localities, that is not touched on by the author. So the reader will find here a handy compendium (aided by a generous index) of the high points of the State's early days. The leading men of Providence, Newport, Narragansett and Warwick all come in for their share of notice in this formative period of State sovereignty. Side incidents and anecdotes of happenings and personages, characteristic of our political habits and domestic customs, stud the pages to lend fascination to the reader, while the author's own social philosophy reveals itself in many a sparkling phrase.

The book was written for the Rhode Island Tercentenary in 1936. It has now been published by a joint committee of the Westerly Historical Society and the Westerly Tercentenary Committee. It is a distinct contribution to Rhode Island historical literature and a deserved memorial to the author who unfortunately passed away during the intervening time.

GEORGE W. GARDINER

Providence, R. I.

## Some Recent Accessions

A crystal chandelier which formerly hung in the Barker home in Pawtucket has been obtained for the Society and installed in the main lecture room through the generosity of Mr. Paul C. Nicholson.

From Mr. and Mrs. Charles P. Bennis, their collection of printed and manuscript Rhode Island material, including numerous genealogical records compiled by them.

From Miss Mary M. Blumer, a collection of miscellaneous volumes, including material on Rhode Island and New England.

From Mrs. S. Hyde Cabot, Colonial money and deeds pertaining to members of the Mumford and Thornton families.

From Mrs. Earle W. Sargent, miscellaneous Rhode Island manuscripts and deeds pertaining to the Greene, Millerd, Kimball, and Carpenter families of Warwick.

From Miss Amey Thurber, miscellaneous Rhode Island manuscripts. From the author, Mr. William W. Estes, an addition to the Latham family genealogy, with index.

From Mr. G. Andrews Moriarty, *Pemberton Lineage*.

From Ethlyn Wightman Whittier, Minneapolis, Minn., Wightman Manuscript and Record Book.

From Mr. Wilbur Brown, West Barrington, *Berkshire Genealogical Notes No. 4: Marriages in New Lebanon, N. Y.*

From Mr. William A. Jackson, Librarian of the Houghton Library, Harvard University, manuscripts from the estate of George Lyman Kittredge.

From Miss Avis A. Hawkins, records of the Class of 1879, Providence English High School.

From Mr. John B. Brown, *The Thomas Creese House*, by John Perkins Brown and Eleanor Ransom.

From Hon. Theodore Francis Green, his address on the Soldiers' Vote Bill.

From Mr. Sumner W. Hinds, almanac for 1785 and a framed picture of "Tockwotton House."

From the Foster H. Townsend Estate, pictures of Rhode Island boats.

From Mr. Henry A. Greene, picture of Stephen Cushing Harris of Providence.

From the author, Percy Edward Deckard, M.D., *Genealogy of the Deckard Family*.

From Mrs. C. Oliver Iselin and Mrs. DeWolf Clarke, photographs of the Goddard and Pegram families, 1860-1890.

From Miss L. M. Coggeshall, three framed Coggeshall crests.

From Rt. Rev. James DeWolf Perry, pictures and papers of James and Hannah MacSparran.

From Mt. Vernon Ladies' Association, *Maxims of Washington*.

From Mr. Henry S. Chafee, *Jesse H. Metcalf, Citizen of Rhode Island*.

From Mrs. Walter Hidden, a portrait in oils of Wilkins Updike, painted by James Sullivan Lincoln, and a large oval mirror.



## News-Notes

### of the Rhode Island Historical Society

In the past year, 38 meetings of our own and other societies have been held at John Brown House. Seventeen of these were addressed by your director.

On Feb. 15, Dr. Carl R. Woodward, president of Rhode Island State College, spoke before the Society on "Benjamin Franklin's Adventure in Agriculture."

On March 8, Miss Margaret B. Stillwell gave an afternoon talk on "Benefit Street, North and South."

G. Andrews Moriarty addressed the Society on March 21 on "The Connection Between the New Hampshire and Maine Settlements and Those of Rhode Island in the 17th Century."

Prof. Zechariah Chafee, Jr., of Harvard Law School, spoke on "Rhode Island Court of Equity: 1741-43" at a meeting April 11.

W. G. R.

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## Imprints Survey

For some time a *Bibliography of American Imprints* has been in process of preparation at the Newberry Library, Chicago, under the auspices of the Bibliographical Society of America, with Douglas C. McMurtrie as editor-in-chief. Plans call for sectional publication of the bibliography, divided by States, and Rhode Island, for several reasons, was chosen as the first State in which the work would be done.

In *News Sheet No. 64*, issued by the Bibliographical Society on June 10, Mr. McMurtrie reported that "we have 80 per cent of the final descriptions [of Rhode Island imprints] written ready for the printer. The preliminary short title check list is completed and is being reproduced so that we can send copies to the more important libraries for checking."

Although our imprints may not be a subject of interest to many of our members, the collection is, bibliographically speaking, one of the finest features of the Society's library and one of which we may all be proud. Not in condition for general use since the Society moved from its old quarters, the collection recently has been arranged by Mr. Peter Davidson and, with the publication of the forthcoming bibliography, should provide an excellent opportunity for research scholars.

B. F. S.