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WILKINS UPDIKE (1784-1867)

AUTHOR OF *History of the Episcopal Church in Narragansett,*  
*Memoirs of the Rhode Island Bar, ETC.*

*Portrait in oil by James Lincoln Sullivan.*

*Gift of Mrs. Walter Hidden*

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ISSUED QUARTERLY AT PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

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the arts and the crafts which served society, the pursuits at which the common man earned his daily bread, and the wages received for the different types of labor.

Among the collections of the Rhode Island Historical Society are several books which reflect the life in Warwick 200 years ago. One of these belonged to Benoni Waterman, who kept a general store at Old Warwick. The precise site is unknown but there is reason to believe it stood near Wharf Street, leading from Apponaug Road to the Cove. Benoni Waterman appears to have engaged in farm operations on his own account and to have provided services for other farms in the neighborhood. He was, in fact, a "leading citizen," as active in public affairs as in his commercial ventures.

From his older brother John he acquired the Waterman homestead in Old Warwick, where he lived until his death in 1787. With another brother, Resolved, he engaged in foreign commerce. The two brothers, Captain John of Newport and Captain Resolved, were master mariners, the latter commanding their vessel, a brig.

Benoni Waterman's was a busy life. There was scarcely a time between 1740 and 1770 when he was not engaged in some public service—now as a member of the grand or petit jury, again as surveyor of highways. For more than 20 years he was a member of the Town Council, serving at times as Town Moderator. For nine years he was deputy to the colonial Assembly. Between 1742 and 1760 he was an officer of militia, as captain, major, and finally colonel of the Kent County Regiment.

Benoni married Sarah Wickes of Warwick and they had three children: Mary, John, and Benjamin.<sup>1</sup>

Benoni Waterman's fascinating book, now browned with age, records the accounts which he maintained with some 40 of his fellow citizens. These are mainly just names to

<sup>1</sup> Material on Benoni and other members of his family is gathered from *The Waterman Genealogy* (MSS.), compiled by William Henry Waterman of New Bedford, Mass., in the Society's library; from James Pierce Root, "Contributions to the History of the Waterman Family of Providence, Warwick, Etc.," in *R. I. Historical Magazine*, V, No. 2 (Oct., 1885), pp. 202-3; and from Louise Brownell Clarke, *The Greene Family of Rhode Island* (New York, 1903), pp. 181-85.

us today, except as we interpret them in the light of their accounts. Besides his brother Resolved, seven are known to have been from Warwick: Jeremiah Lippitt, town clerk for 34 years; John Lippitt, John Gereardy, Barlow Greene, Capt. Amos Lockwood, Samuel Warner, Susannah Warner, and Robert Westgate. There was also Robert Gibbs, of Providence. Among the other names more clearly defined were John Aplin, "schoolmaster;" Mr. Hunt, "the boatman;" Mr. Smith of Taunton, "boatman;" Captain Jonathan Chase, of Newport; William Wood, "mariner;" and Mr. Beeles, of Boston, "the drover."

A great variety of transactions appear in the several accounts—goods bought and sold: grains, fruits and other farm products; livestock, meat, butter and cheese; household supplies and beverages; drygoods and notions; farm tools, hardware and building supplies; firewood, powder and shot—a multitudinous list of commodities for those days of simple living.

Then, too, there is a detailed record of various service operations, of farm work such as making hay, planting corn, hoeing tobacco, and threshing barley. Men were hired for cutting wood, for carting timber, for washing and shearing sheep, for killing hogs, and for plowing. There is also a record of much weaving of different types of cloth, of making shirts and shoes, of mending cart wheels, and of tanning skins.

Let us take a look at a few typical pages. The following is from the account of John Davis. It appears that Waterman sold him salt, turnips, molasses, flax, veal, and butter, and that he and his Negro actually did work on John Davis' farm, plowing and carting, and that he hired out his mare to Mr. Davis to "wride."

9 [page] November y <sup>e</sup> 29 <sup>th</sup> 1734 D <sup>r</sup> John Davis	£- s - d
To: one peck of Solt one pound Chocolate [?]	0- 3- 3
To: one Bush <sup>ll</sup> of Turnups at 2 <sup>sh</sup> /6 <sup>d</sup> ys	0- 2- 6
To: new Soleing of one pare of y <sup>e</sup> womans Shoes:	0- 3- 0
To: the use of my mare 2 : Days : To wride	0- 7- 0
To: the wriding of my mare to y <sup>e</sup> fullingmill	0- 2- 0
To: one quart of molasses	0- 1- 3

To: one pound of flax	0- 2- 6
To: one Day & half of my self & negro plowing & Carting	1-10- 0
To: 6 <sup>lb</sup> : of Veal at 4 2/1 <sup>d</sup> pr pound ys	0- 2- 3
To: —one quart of molasses —————	0- 1- 3
To: one pound of butter at 20 <sup>d</sup> per pound	0- 1- 8
To: quart of	0- 0- 6
To one Days work of my negro & oxen & 4/3 of one day of myself all	0-13- 9
	<hr/>
	3-15-11
august the 9 <sup>th</sup> 1735 : Reconed then with <sup>mr</sup> John Davis	
and Is Due to me to Ballance acts	sh d £ 0- 4-10
august To: a persell of cabige & Squshes & Beens all	0-10-00
y <sup>e</sup> 27 <sup>th</sup> To: Cash Lent him the som of	2- 5- 0
To-56 foot of gyce [joist] after y <sup>e</sup> rate of 4 <sup>£</sup> -5 <sup>sh</sup> pr thous:	0- 5- 0
To: one pound of Candles at 20 <sup>d</sup> pr pound	0- 1- 8
To: 4 : bushell of Purtatoes at 4 <sup>sh</sup> pr bush <sup>ll</sup>	0-16- 0
To: Cash paid son	0- 2- 1
To 7 feet of wood at 14 <sup>sh</sup> pr Cord	0-12- 3
	<hr/>
	5- 0- 2
march the: 23: <sup>rd</sup> 1735/ <sup>6</sup> D <sup>r</sup> John Davis	
To: two bush <sup>ll</sup> of Rye at 7 <sup>s</sup> /6 <sup>d</sup> pr bush <sup>ll</sup>	£ 0-15- 0
To: 2 quarts of molasses at:5 <sup>s</sup> :6 <sup>d</sup> per gallon Is	0- 2- 3
november	
1736 To:2: Bush <sup>ll</sup> of Turnups at:4 <sup>s</sup> : p <sup>r</sup> bush <sup>ll</sup>	0- 8- 0
Do:—To:one Pound of Tobaco at:12 <sup>d</sup> :p <sup>r</sup> —————	0- 1- 0
Do:—To: Cash Lent you 10 <sup>s</sup> : at my house	0-10- 0
	<hr/>
	1-16- 3
To: Damage of y <sup>e</sup> mare —————	0- 2- 6
	<hr/>
	1-18- 9

Apparently something happened to the mare, for the account includes a charge for damages of 2 shillings, 6 pence. In this account, also, Waterman appears as a money lender, on a small scale, for in 1735 he loaned Davis 2 pounds, 5 shillings, and again the next year 10 shillings.

Another typical account was that of John Lippitt. Waterman pastured Lippitt's horses and cattle, sold him grain, meat and leather, and apparently tanned leather for him.

John Lippitt: D <sup>r</sup> : June and July 1737:.....	£ - s - d
Colt 2/6 To: pasturing your mare:7:weeks and yearling:8 <sup>do</sup> pr week	2- 1- 0
To: pasturing your horse 8 weeks at 3 <sup>s</sup> pr	1- 4- 0
June y <sup>e</sup> 17 <sup>th</sup> To:18 <sup>lb</sup> : of Vele at 6 <sup>d</sup> pr	0- 9- 0
1738 To one Skin for an apron	0- 2- 6
august: to: pasturing y <sup>r</sup> mare:8:weeks at: 3 <sup>s</sup> pr weeke	1- 4- 0
To: one bush <sup>ll</sup> of Corn	0- 8- 0
September To: Cured Leather Comes to	0-15- 0
To: Taning one Calf skin 2/6	0- 2- 6
To: 93:lb of Beef at 5 <sup>d</sup> pr	1-14-10
	<hr/>
	8-00-10

May:1736: To:2:Days work of my oxen at 3 <sup>s</sup> /0	£ 0- 6- 0
may y <sup>e</sup> 29: <sup>th</sup> To: 16 <sup>lb</sup> : 4/1 of Vele at 5 <sup>d</sup>	0- 6- 9
June 10 <sup>th</sup> : By: 19 <sup>lb</sup> 4/3 of Vele at 5 <sup>d</sup> pr	0- 8- 3
D <sup>o</sup> y <sup>e</sup> 19 <sup>th</sup> : By:one quarter of Vele 15 <sup>lb</sup> 4/1 at 5 <sup>d</sup>	0- 6- 4
D <sup>o</sup> y <sup>e</sup> : 29 <sup>th</sup> : By one Quarter of Vele 15 <sup>lb</sup> : at 5 <sup>d</sup>	0- 6- 3
To pasturing your old ox 7 weekes at 3 <sup>s</sup> pr week	1- 1- 0
To : y <sup>e</sup> Pasturing of your young horse: 17 2/1 D <sup>o</sup> at 3 <sup>s</sup> pr	2-12- 6
To pasturing your old mair & colt:16: D <sup>o</sup> at 3 <sup>s</sup> :pr	2- 8- 0

One of the most interesting accounts is that of Isaac Setuke, presumably an Indian, who "worked out" his bill as a general utility hand. His purchases in 1736 amounted to 8 pounds, 1 shilling and 8 pence. To pay for these, and more, he is credited with several weeks' wages, totalling 17 pounds, 6 pence.

D <sup>r</sup> Isaac Setukes: To one Days plowing at 20 <sup>s</sup>	£ 1- 0- 0
To: 6 2/1 <sup>lb</sup> of Cheese at:9: <sup>d</sup> pr	0- 4- 9
To: 5 2/1 <sup>lb</sup> of Vele: 4 2/1 <sup>d</sup>	0- 2- 0
To: 10:4/1 <sup>lb</sup> of Vele at 5 <sup>d</sup> pr	0- 4- 3
To: 11 <sup>lb</sup> 3/4 of Woll all 3 <sup>s</sup>	0-13- 9
To:2: quarts of Solt	0-00- 6
To: 7 <sup>lb</sup> 4/3 of Cheese at 8 <sup>d</sup> pr pound Comes to	0- 5- 2
To: 6: <sup>lb</sup> of Vele at 5 <sup>d</sup> pr	0- 2- 6
To: one pare of Shoes at 14 <sup>s</sup> pr	0-14- 0
To: 5: <sup>lb</sup> of Solt Pork at 11 <sup>d</sup> pr	0- 4- 7

To: 9 <sup>lb</sup> 4/1: of Cheese at 8 <sup>d</sup> pr pound Comes to:	0- 6- 2
To: one Bush <sup>ll</sup> & half of Corn at 7 <sup>s</sup> pr bush <sup>ll</sup>	0-10- 6
To: one new Sive Cask or cast Is	0-16- 6
To: one Cheese waid 15 <sup>lb</sup> 2/1 pound at 10 <sup>d</sup> pr Comes to	0-12- 6
To: 10 <sup>lb</sup> mutton at 6 <sup>d</sup> pr pound	0- 5- 0
To: 6: <sup>lb</sup> of Solt Pork at:11 <sup>d</sup> pr	0- 5- 6
To: 2 bushel of apples at 2/6	0- 5- 0
To: one Cheese waid:12 <sup>lb</sup> at 9 <sup>d</sup> pr pound	0- 9- 0

8- 1- 8

Cre: <sup>act</sup> Isaac Setuke May: 1736	£ - s - d
To: 4:Days work beating Dung & making hedg & fence:	1- 0- 0
To: washing Sheep for me one half Day	0- 2- 6
To Sheering Sheep one Day for me	0- 5- 0
By hoing my Corn in y <sup>e</sup> neck y <sup>e</sup> first time over	0- 5- 0
By two Days hoing at my house	0- 5- 0
By: two Days hoing at my house	0-10- 0
By: 3:Days mowing the first Week	£0-18- 0
By: 3 & one third D <sup>o</sup> the Second Week	1-00- 0
(Mowing 3rd-7th week)	
To: mowing abough [about] :2: Load of ma[r]sh and Rakeing it y <sup>e</sup> 8th	0-18- 0
To:5: Days mowing and making marsh & thath [thatch] y <sup>e</sup> 9 <sup>th</sup> Do	1-10- 0
To:4:Days work:Picking up:apples fencing stake & gathering in Corn:	1-00- 0
To:2: Days work: Cribing Corn & gathering D <sup>o</sup>	0-10- 0
To:2 Days giting of thath in y <sup>e</sup> neck	0-12- 0
To:1 Day killing Beefe	0- 5- 0
To:1:Day killing Hoggs at:—pr	0- 5- 0
To:2: <sup>cord</sup> & 2/1 of wood at Sammons meadow at 3 <sup>s</sup> /6 <sup>d</sup> pr cord	0- 8- 9
To:2: Days work thashing barley	0-10- 0
To: cuting one Cord & half of wood at 3 <sup>s</sup> /6 <sup>d</sup>	0- 4- 3

17-00- 6

Somewhat in similar vein is the account of John Gereardy, a weaver. Waterman appears to have engaged Gereardy to do weaving, and the latter's earnings more than paid for the supplies he purchased at the Waterman store.

June y <sup>e</sup> : 7 <sup>th</sup> : 1735 Recond then with John Gariady and Is Due to him to Ballance act <sup>s</sup>	£ - s - d
---	-----------

october y <sup>e</sup> /	
4:th 1735 / To one Cheese waid: 4 <sup>lb</sup> at 9 <sup>d</sup> pr pound:	0- 3- 0
Ditto: To: one quart of molasses	0- 1- 4 2/1
november	
y <sup>e</sup> 14: <sup>th</sup> To: Cash paid you	0- 1- 6
To: 2: Bushll of solt at 7 <sup>s</sup> pr bush <sup>ll</sup>	0-14- 0
To: 2: quarts of molasses	0- 2- 9
(do)	
feb:y <sup>e</sup> 2nd To: one bushel of Rye at 7/6 pr	0- 7- 6
may y <sup>e</sup> 18 <sup>th</sup> (do)	0- 7- 6
june y <sup>e</sup> : 2nd: To: 15 <sup>lb</sup> 4/1 Sheeps Wool at 2 <sup>s</sup> /6 <sup>d</sup> pr	1-18- 3 2/1
august y <sup>e</sup> 4 <sup>th</sup> 15 <sup>lb</sup> of Cheese at 9 <sup>d</sup> pr	0-11- 3
Ditto: To half Bush <sup>ll</sup> of Rye: 3 <sup>s</sup> :9 <sup>d</sup> Is	0- 3- 9
october To: 8 4/1 Vele at 5 <sup>d</sup> pr pound	0- 3- 6
D <sup>o</sup> To: Cash paid for you to Haynes	0- 1- 6
D <sup>o</sup> To: 9 2/1 of mutton at 5 <sup>d</sup> pr pound	0- 3-10
To: 7: <sup>lb</sup> of Tallow at 12 <sup>d</sup> pr pound	0- 7- 0

5- 9- 3

the year 1735: Cred <sup>t</sup> John Gariady	£ d
June y <sup>e</sup> 14 <sup>th</sup> : 1735/6 Reconded as above sd and Due to John Gariady	:0- 9- 4
november	
the: 8 <sup>th</sup> To: weaveing one peace of Cloth: 12 2/1 yds at: 14 <sup>d</sup> : pr yd:	0-14- 0
To: weaveing 17: yds of flanel: 9: yds Striped:2:Cullors: all:	0-18- 7
october 1736: To: Weaveing of 39 <sup>yds</sup> : of blankiting at:14 <sup>d</sup>	2- 5- 9
november 1736 To weaveing 30 yds: of flanel: 16: striped all	1-11- 9
December: To: weaveing: 12 yds of: Cotton & Lining at 12 <sup>d</sup> :	0-12- 0

6-11- 5

No two accounts are alike. Here and there are items of special interest. In the account of William Wood, "at the Great Pond," Benoni Waterman made a charge of one shilling on two different occasions for "Carrying your Corn to mill for you." He also credits Mr. Wood for his services in chopping wood "at my timber land," for splitting rails, and for carting the wood. He charges John Lippitt five shillings for "filling one Barrill of beer for you." He also

charges Wood with one gallon and a half of rum at nine shillings per gallon, and a pound of tobacco at eight pence. In the account of Resolved Waterman appears two ounces of "Indego" at 2 shillings, 6 pence per ounce. At the same time, sugar is listed at 16 pence per pound, and a barrel of molasses containing 30½ gallons, at 4 shillings, 6 pence per gallon, sells for 6 pounds, 17 shillings and 3 pence. Coffee is listed in this account at eight pence per pound.

Robert Westgate was the village carpenter; Waterman paid him 15 shillings in 1735 for making a cheese press. The following year, he hired him to make window frames, and also paid him five shillings "towards y<sup>e</sup> town Gate." In 1737 he hired him for a day's work, and also hired his apprentice, "Batty," for three days. That year, also, he purchased 600 bricks from Westgate at five shillings a hundred.

In 1738, Waterman apparently was engaged in a canvass to raise money either to build or to support a schoolhouse. He charged Philip Green 10 shillings for "Cash you Subscribed towards y<sup>e</sup> Schoolhouse," and in November of that year he paid to Samuel Stafford 14 shillings for the same purpose. Samuel Stafford was the village blacksmith, for his account includes such items as the following:

"Shewing or Seting one pare of shews on y<sup>e</sup> Little mare."

"Shewing my young mare with:4: new Shoes cone heal."

"Mending my Cart wheal with a clasp."

"Mending my Plow."

"Shewing my young mare with:2: new Shoes and seting 2 old ones behind."

Peter "Tailer" appears to have been an itinerant shoemaker. In 1736, he is credited with "making 4 pare of womans shooes at my house," 17 shillings, 6 pence. Later in the year, he is credited with "making one pare of shews for our Benne," five shillings.

According to the record, Hugh Stone was hired by Waterman April 1, 1736, for a period of six months, at four pounds per month. The account shows that Waterman charged him for "wosted Stockens," one pound, that he paid "mr. Donnison" eight shillings for "makeing y<sup>e</sup>

briches," and Catherine West 10 shillings, 6 pence for "makeing y<sup>e</sup> Shirt." He also lent him cash from time to time, on one occasion "when you's going to Shanticuck" [Meshanticut]. But for several days' lost time, the pay of the hired man was proportionally "docked."

The account of Capt. Resolved Waterman is interesting because of the frequency with which purchases of rum are charged. Apparently it was not all for the purchaser's own consumption, for some of the entries are like this one: "one quart of Rum to old Isaac, 3s-7d." This "old Isaac" was probably Isaac Setuke. Resolved Waterman may have been charitably disposed toward a penniless old toper. More likely, he was paying Isaac for services rendered—and in the latter's favorite coin.

In 1737, Benoni paid his brother John £18 for the previous year's rent of "my land and stock." Whether this was the former's place of business in Warwick or some other property, does not appear. The brothers, it seems, also engaged in the traditional Yankee habit of horsetrading, for in October, 1737, we find Benoni purchased from John "one Rone horse at £17." Other items in the account, such as "Cash paid William Rhodes & for y<sup>e</sup> freight of your molases in his Vessel," 6 pounds, 13 shillings, 4 pence, reflect the commercial relationships of the brothers.

From Mr. Smith the boatman, of Taunton, Waterman purchased building materials: 1000 shingles at 41 shillings per thousand, and 200 "Clabbords" at 16 shillings per hundred.

Waterman's activities as a tanner are suggested in the purchase of "half one Coard of Bark" at 30 shillings per cord, and also in an item in the account of "old Miah," an Indian, in 1739, "mending y<sup>e</sup> Bark Stone," 1 shilling, 6 pence.

Old Miah was hired for a variety of duties, for example, "making oven," mending cart wheels, shingling the house, "Ruffing out a yoke," mending a sled, mending a plow, whitewashing, building a stove chimney, and so forth. In January 1737, "Indian Margery" came to work for Water-

man. Also, in 1736, Meribe Lee was engaged for six weeks at seven shillings per week.

Barlow Greene, it appears, was the local medico, if we may judge from the following item in the account of Isaac Setuke, who is charged with "Cash pd barlo Green for bleeding you," 3 shillings. On one occasion, Waterman charged Barlow Greene two shillings for gelding his horse. He also pastured Greene's calves for 24 weeks during the season of 1736.

Apparently Rhode Island sheep found a market in Boston, for we find an account with "mr Beeles of Boston, Drover," of whom, Waterman noted, "I bought my Last Sheep," and makes a further memo on "13 sheep he left to take the next time at 23 shillings per Sheep," which would indicate that Waterman pastured the sheep for the drover between trips. In 1737, Waterman sold Mr. Beeles 10 sheep at 24 shillings each.

Another weaver in the village was Francis Atwood, and his wife, too, seems to have been skilled in this art. The account of "Francis Atwood or his wife" lists several jobs of weaving worsted, linen, "fulled Cloth," flannel, and "Cotten Checks."

Some of the wood from Benoni's woodlot was shipped to his brother John at Newport; the account in 1738 shows a charge of 1 pound, 5 shillings for "Carting sd wood to y<sup>e</sup> Boat Side"; also 6 pounds, 10 shillings, 6 pence for "the freight of sd wood to newp'." In the same transaction was 6 shillings, 6 pence "Cash Paid the Coarder at newp'" and 7 shillings, 3 pence "Cash Paid for the whorfage of sd wood." In John Waterman's account also appears, in 1739, the sale of seven bushels of "winter apples" at 1 shilling, 6 pence, a bushel.

One account of considerable interest is that of Adam Lowe. In October, 1733, Waterman charged him one pound for filling "two barrill of Sider." To pay for the cider, Lowe engaged to swingle flax for Waterman, 60 pounds at 4 pence per pound.

*To be continued.*

## The Merger of the Two Oldest Banks in Providence

by WILLIAM GREENE ROELKER

The stockholders of the Providence National Bank and The Blackstone Canal National Bank voted on September 26, 1945, to approve the terms of a merger of the two institutions submitted by their respective Boards of Directors on August 23. This move will bring together the two oldest banks in Providence under the name of the Providence National Bank, second oldest bank in the United States. From an historical point of view it is to be regretted that the name "Blackstone Canal," which once held such promise for the growth of Providence, will now disappear from current use and have meaning only for historians and antiquarians. The merged bank will occupy the quarters of the Providence National Bank at 100 Westminster Street, which will be extended through to Weybosset Street in order to provide enlarged space capable of caring for a business with resources in excess of \$66,000,000. The consolidated bank will have a capital of \$2,000,000, consisting of 80,000 shares of \$25 par value stock, and a surplus of \$3,250,000.

The Providence Bank<sup>1</sup> was founded October 3, 1791, in large measure as the result of the efforts of John Brown to provide banking service for Providence. Jabez Bowen, John Brown and John Jenckes, leaders in the group of merchants who had done so much to promote the growth of the Town of Providence, had attempted to establish a bank in 1784, but the time was not ripe and the project fell through. Rhode Island had to suffer from a final eruption of paper money before her people recognized the necessity of sound banking.

After the General Assembly had repealed the Legal Tender Act, the Constitution had been ratified by Rhode Island, and Congress had chartered the Bank of the United

<sup>1</sup>The Providence Bank became the Providence National Bank June 30, 1865.

States (it opened for business February 25, 1791), John Brown and his brother Moses believed that the time had come to revive the proposal to establish a bank in Providence. So John Brown and his son-in-law partner, John Francis, issued a call for a public meeting to be held in the Representatives Chamber in the Court House, at 3 P. M., June 4, 1791.

There is a gap in the record until August 14 when John Brown wrote to his brother Moses:

I am Fully of Your Opinion that now is the Time to Finance a Bank here, and I am *Exceeding Sorry* that you are Obliged to be out of Town tomorrow . . . I fully Join You that this Town must of Course be Insignificant and I may ad Miserable in point of Welth, when Compared with the Four Towns<sup>2</sup> in the Union who now have *Banks* Established [.] But by our Exurtions and Forming a Good & Substantial Foundation for the Commercial, Manufactoral, & Macanical Riseing Generation it may in time become no Inconsiderable Cappellet. But without a Spring to promote Our Young Men in Buissiness here, they must & will Continue to go to Such places as will Aid them with the Means of Buissiness. & in Short all our Welth [.] I Mean the Welth as fast as Acquired in this State [.] must be Transferred to those Other States who by their Banks promote all the Valuable Arts of Mankind

I ad no more, only that I am Your

Brother  
J B<sup>3</sup>

At the public meeting in the Court House on June 4, Welcome Arnold was elected moderator, and Olney Winsor, clerk. The proposed form of "Constitution" for the Bank was discussed and unanimously adopted. There were to be 625 shares of stock, 50 of which were reserved for the State of Rhode Island and 125 shares for the Treasurer of the United States, but they never exercised their options; 450 shares were available to the public. The subscribers were asked "to bring forward their names rolled up, specifying the number of shares they choose to be concerned, within one hour. When the time expired, the subscription

<sup>2</sup>Philadelphia, The Bank of North America, incorporated by Congress, 1781, by Pennsylvania, 1782; Boston, 1784; New York, 1784; and Baltimore, 1790. Only the Bank of New York remains today.

<sup>3</sup>Hope F. Kane and W. G. Roelker, "The Founding of the Providence Bank," *Rhode Island Historical Society Collections*, Vol. XXXIV (January, 1941), pp. 113-28. The original letters are in the Moses Brown Papers at R.I.H.S.

closed, and the Chairman [Welcome Arnold], Cyprian Sterry, John Dorrance and John Ward were chosen a Committee to count the lists of shares given in for and to settle any dispute that might arise."

"It was voted, that in case more shares were subscribed for than the Bank consisted of, all subscriptions from one to three shares would stand good [and the deduction should fall] on the larger subscriptions as equally as might be."<sup>4</sup> The lists of shares amounted to 1324. "This number far exceeding the prescribed limits, occasioned by a large Subscription from Philadelphia, New-York, Massachusetts, and various Parts of this State, obliged the Subscribers immediately to reduce the number of Shares"<sup>5</sup> in accordance with the above vote, to a total of 450.

The stockholders then proceeded to elect the following directors: John Brown, John I. Clark, Jabez Bowen, Moses Brown, Welcome Arnold, Nicholas Brown, [Jr.], Samuel Butler, Andrew Dexter, and Thomas L. Halsey. The next day the directors elected John Brown president and Olney Winsor cashier.

The *Providence Gazette and Country Journal* for October 8, 1791, carries an announcement *To the Public*.

THE BANK established in this town, on Monday last, will begin its operation, at the BANK-HOUSE, on the south side of the new paved street, commonly known by the name of Governor Hopkins Lane, on Monday next.

The bank building was about half-way up the hill and the street [now Hopkins] later came to be called Bank Lane. On April 1, 1801, the stockholders in special meeting voted to purchase the house on South Main Street designed and built by Joseph Brown in 1774, and since 1794 owned and occupied by Thomas Poynton Ives. Olney Winsor, the cashier, was permitted to live on the premises but he and his family were restricted to the use of the two north-east rooms, all the chambers and a part of the cellars. One of his duties was to keep the south gate open and the bank yard free of shays and other carriages. He also had

<sup>4</sup>*Providence National Bank, One Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary 1791-1941* (Providence, R. I., 1941), pp. 9-10.

<sup>5</sup>*Providence Gazette and Country Journal*, October 8, 1791.



the use of the garden but the fruit was reserved for the directors if they should desire to pick it during meetings.

In 1926 the Providence National Bank was merged with the Merchants National Bank (founded in 1818) under the name of the former but occupying the home of the latter at 20 Westminster Street until Washington's Birthday, 1930, when it moved to its new building at 100 Westminster Street.

The primary purpose in establishing the Blackstone Canal Bank<sup>6</sup> was to create a financial mentor and cornerstone for the Blackstone Canal Company.

This latter company, organized in May, 1825, had begun excavation for the canal in 1826, and had established full service to Worcester by 1832.<sup>7</sup> But by the Fall of 1829 the cost of the canal had exceeded the original \$500,000 estimate by \$162,000 and plans were made to offer a new issue of stock.

That the issuance of additional stock was but a compromise is indicated by a circular, dated January 18, 1831, announcing the formation of the Blackstone Canal Bank. This circular refers to "a resolution passed by the Stockholders in the BLACKSTONE CANAL CO., at their meeting on the 11th day of March, 1829, authorizing us [T. P. Ives, S. Dorr, and B. Hoppin] to apply to the Honorable General Assembly for a Charter of Incorporation to a Bank, to be connected with said Canal Co., on such terms and conditions as should be deemed expedient. . . ."

The records of the canal company have disappeared and thus the original motion is not now available, but it seems evident to this writer that the committee delayed two years before carrying out the resolution adopted March 11, 1829. It did apply to the General Assembly, however, at the January session in 1831, and a charter was granted to the Blackstone Canal Bank.

We quote from the circular issued by the Committee January 18, 1831, to the Canal stockholders:

<sup>6</sup>It became a national bank in June, 1865; *The Hundredth Milestone* (Providence, 1931).

<sup>7</sup>An article on the Blackstone Canal by the writer will appear in a future issue of *Rhode Island History*.

By the first Article you will perceive, that the Capital of the Bank now created will consist of Two Hundred and Fifty Thousand Dollars, divided into Shares of \$25 each. Each Shareholder in the Canal [may subscribe for one share of Bank stock for each share he holds in the Canal and pay the first installment of \$5.00 per share; on or before the third Monday in February]. The Bank is to purchase of the Canal Co. new stock to the amount of \$150,000, at the rate of \$15.00 per share. . . . By this measure carried into full effect, the proprietors in both institutions will be the same. . . .

The funds provided by this sale of the Canal Stock, together with the means now in the possession of that Company, it is believed will be amply sufficient to discharge the claims against the Company, and the liabilities to which it may be exposed. The future income of the Canal may therefore be annually divided, and the Stockholders . . . retain their respective interests in the Institutions, and share in the advance on the Stock, which may confidently be anticipated soon to take place. We cannot doubt but the Stockholders in the Canal Company will clearly see their interest promoted by taking their proportion of the Shares in the Bank.<sup>8</sup>

Article 6 of the Charter provided that the directors to serve until July 1 should be Joseph L. Tillinghast, Lemuel H. Arnold, Charles Potter, Moses B. Ives, Benjamin Hoppin, Jr., George Baker, Enoch W. Clarke, William P. Bullock, George Grinnell and Jefferson Borden. With the exception of Arnold and Potter these gentlemen met in the north room of the Providence Washington Insurance Co. on Washington Row, Wednesday, February 9, 1831. Tillinghast was chosen chairman and Clarke secretary. George Curtis was appointed cashier pro tem, to receive the first installment of \$5 per share due February 21. Committees were appointed to procure designs for the bills, to obtain quarters, and to select a permanent cashier.

On February 21, Lemuel H. Arnold and Charles Potter resigned as directors and the following were added to the Board: Nicholas Brown, Thomas Burgess, John Whipple, Paris Dyer (who declined to serve) and Freeborn Sisson of Warwick. They unanimously chose Nicholas Brown, nephew of John and an original director of the Providence Bank, as president. Thomas B. Fenner was appointed to

<sup>8</sup>Original circular in Brown Papers, John Carter Brown Library; photostat in R.I.H.S.

serve as cashier until the first Monday in July at a salary of \$800 per year.

On February 23, the Board discounted E. W. Clarke's draft on Joseph Howard of Philadelphia in the amount of \$6,530.61. On February 24, subscriptions to the stock were received:

Certificates of Deposit on the Exchange Bank	\$27,271.60
ditto Providence Bank	9,190.00
cash	7,443.00
	<hr/>
	\$43,904.60

February 28, the Bank took possession of quarters in the Brown & Ives Building, 23 South Main Street.

In the Spring the financial difficulties of the canal once more produced a crisis. At a meeting of the directors of the bank, June 2, 1831, this minute was adopted:

Whereas the engagement of this Bank entered into on account of the Blackstone Canal Co., and in payment of the Stock transferred by that company to the Bank are great, exceeding in amount the Surplus Funds now on hand belonging to the Bank, therefore to provide in part for the payment to be made by the Bank on the Sixth instant, it is

*Voted and Resolved*, That the Cashier of the Bank receive on deposit from Brown & Ives, from Thomas Coles [of 124 Westminster Street], The Providence Institution for Savings and from any other persons or bodies corporate such sum or sums of money as will be requisite and necessary for meeting the present engagements of the Bank, the amount and terms to be determined by the Board of Directors; and that he [the Cashier] issue Certificates of Deposit to the several persons or bodies corporate of the amount received from them respectively, for what time and interest to be paid, according to the several engagements which have already been made, or may be made by the Board of Directors aforesaid.

Attest: Thomas B. Fenner, Cashier.<sup>9</sup>

By the time of the annual meeting, July 1, 1833, it had become apparent that the canal could not be a financial success. On motion of Thomas Burgess, a committee was appointed to consider enlarging the stock of the bank with authority to apply to the General Assembly "so that the Bank may be relieved against the heavy loss sustained in that part of the capital invested in the stock of the Canal Co." At the annual meeting, July 7, 1834, the act passed

<sup>9</sup>From the records of the Bank.

by the General Assembly at the January session was read and accepted and it was voted to call a general meeting of the stockholders on August 6 to act on the matter. So few were present on the date set that the meeting was adjourned to September 10. September 30, 1834, a circular was sent to the stockholders setting forth the proceedings of the meeting of September 10, "on the subject of increasing the Capital Stock of the Bank, with a statement showing the condition of the Capital Stock, and a copy of the act in amendment of the Charter of the Bank." We quote in part:

At an adjourned meeting of the Stockholders of the Blackstone Canal Bank, holden at the Bank, September 10, 1834.

Whereas the . . . General Assembly, at their last January session, passed an act, authorizing this corporation to divide out or dispose of that portion of the Capital Stock which consists of Shares in the Capital Stock of the Blackstone Canal Company, and to fill up or enlarge the Capital Stock of this Bank, in such way and manner as the Stockholders should deem expedient, according to the provisions of said act: And whereas, the Stockholders present at this meeting are of the opinion that a severance of that portion of the Capital which is composed of Canal Stock, would be beneficial to the interest of the Bank, and can be done without prejudice to the Canal Company or the Stockholders in that institution—therefore,

*Voted and Resolved*, that nine thousand two hundred and twenty Shares in the Capital Stock of the Blackstone Canal Company, held and owned by this Bank as a part of its present Capital, be divided out to and among the Stockholders in this Bank, on the first day of February next, in the proportion in which the Stockholders own the same, by giving each and every Stockholder one Share of the Canal Stock for every Share he, she or they own in the Capital Stock of this Bank; and that the President and Cashier be and they are hereby authorized and directed to transfer the same accordingly.

And in order to carry the act of the General Assembly into full effect, and to take advantage of all its provisions, it is further

*Voted and Resolved*, that the Directors of this Bank be and they are hereby directed to apportion and assign to each and every Stockholder five additional new shares for each and every share now held by such stockholder in the Capital Stock of the Bank; and on each and every new share such stockholder shall pay the sum of eight dollars and fifty cents, at such time or times as the Directors shall hereafter prescribe. [Any stockholder not exercising this right within 63 days (by Nov. 12) will be considered to have relinquished his proportion.]

## Further Voted and Resolved

[that the stock not taken up will be apportioned among those who have exercised their rights] in the ratio in which they hold the said new shares, first assigned [and if these are not taken up within 30 days they revert for the interest of the Bank, to be disposed of by the directors accordingly.]

## STATEMENT OF THE BANK CAPITAL

Capital Stock, 9220 Shares at \$25 each		\$231,750.00
Invested in the Stock of the Blackstone Canal Co. in conformity with the Charter, Feb. 1st 1831	\$150,000.00	
Purchased by the Bank, 100 Shares in the Canal Stock, May 13th 1833 at \$10	1,000.00	
50 Shares of the Stock in the Bank, purchased by the Bank, May 14th, 1830, (the par value \$1,250) for	993.75	151,993.75

Leaving the active Capital..... \$ 79,756.25

[Then follows the Act to Amend the Charter as passed at the January session of the General Assembly, 1834, authorizing on 2/3 vote of all present an increase in the Capital Stock to \$500,000,] without paying any bonus or duty to the State for said privilege.

Sec. 2. . . . [Present stock] and the future augmentation thereof, shall be and hereby is exempted from taxation for the space of five years from the first day of July 1834, except on one hundred thousand dollars of the capital stock, on which the said Bank shall pay an annual tax in common with other Banks.

Sec. 3. [Authorizes the distribution of Blackstone Canal stock].<sup>10</sup>

Thus the Blackstone Bank divorced itself from the Canal Company and became a commercial bank with a capital of \$500,000, which remained the same until the merger.

On July 11, 1836, the Bank accepted the offer of Nicholas Brown to rent his property on the west side of South Main Street, formerly occupied by the United States Branch Bank. On the completion of the What Cheer Building, (1850) some of whose foundation stones were taken from the remains of the canal, the Blackstone Canal Bank occupied quarters on the south side of the property and has remained there ever since.

<sup>10</sup>Original circular in Bank files, also J. C. B. Library, photostat at R. I. H. S.

Richard LeBaron Bowen, vice-president of this Society, has published recently the first volume of *Early Rehoboth*, and we understand that the second volume is now in the hands of the printer. The book reached the editors too late for review in this issue, but we hope that this situation can be remedied in our next number. It should be noted, however, that the volume contains much material of interest to the student of 17th Century Providence history, and that it also deals with towns which although once part of Plymouth Colony have since become part of Rhode Island's eastern tier.

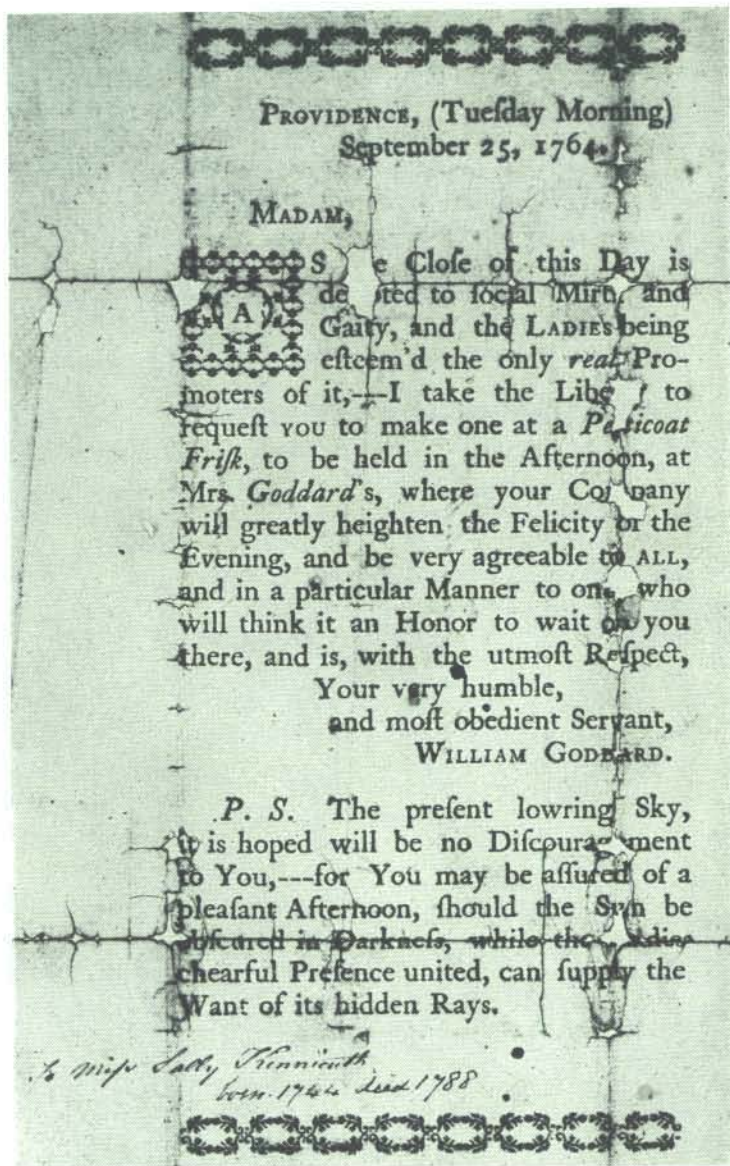
In the *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* for April, 1945, Mr. Bowen published an article on Rehoboth in King Philip's War which adds new names to the list of qualifying ancestors for the Society of Colonial Wars and makes important additions to our knowledge of the war and of the soldiers serving in it.

The *Providence Sunday Journal* for Sept. 9 and *Life* magazine for Sept. 17, 1945, carried illustrated articles on the expedition of Commodore Mathew C. Perry to Japan in 1853-1854.

The frontispiece of the September, 1945, issue of *Antiques* magazine is a view of Market Square, Providence, during the Great Gale of 1815. The same issue carries a photograph of the southeast parlor of Carrington House, and a short note on the house itself.

The ell of the Society's building, John Brown House, is being done over to provide museum space on the ground floor and living quarters for the assistant librarian and his family on the floors above.

The Rhode Island Historical Society's collection of genealogical material, both printed and in manuscript, is one of the finest in the country and is constantly being enlarged. Members and friends of the society are earnestly urged to deposit in our library copies of any genealogical researches they may have made. This would include genealogical charts, family genealogies, published books, files, etc., etc.



INVITATION TO A "PETTICOAT FRISK"  
Gift of Mrs. C. Oliver Iselin

## A Petticoat Frisk

On the opposite page is a Rhode Island imprint of considerable importance. As an imprint, it is probably unique. As a bit of social history, it is fascinating.

The Society's editors must confess they are at a loss when it comes to a precise definition of a "petticoat frisk," but they presume it was some sort of dancing party. They would welcome any more definite information from readers.

In the matter of bibliography, however, we can be somewhat more confident. The invitation was undoubtedly printed at the press of William Goddard, publisher of the *Providence Gazette*, who began printing in Providence in 1762. The list of Rhode Island imprints published by the Society in 1915 records this item but fails to locate a copy. Through the kindness of Mrs. C. Oliver Iselin, great-granddaughter of William Goddard, we can now add this little broadside to the extensive holdings of the Society in the Rhode Island imprint field.

Our specimen is somewhat damaged along the folds, but we believe our readers can supply the deficiencies without our help. This particular invitation, according to a manuscript note at the bottom, went to Miss Sally Kinnicut. In another hand there has been added: "born 1744 died 1788."

The whole paper (its margins have been trimmed in our reproduction) measures 12 $\frac{3}{8}$  inches by 7 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches, while the printed portion measures 8 by 3 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches. It is now framed and hangs in the Director's office at the Society.

B. F. S.



LIGHTHOUSE-TYPE CLOCK

*Gift of the late C. Prescott Knight*

## A Simon Willard Lighthouse Clock

*by* ELISHA C. DURFEE

Two distinct trends are discernible among the clockmakers of the American Colonies between 1750 and 1800. With one group there was an effort to improve the style of the eight-day hall clocks, the fundamental design for which had been set by immigrant English clockmakers. With the other group there were attempts to originate new styles or types which would take the place of the expensive grandfather type. Underlying both these trends was the idea of creating such a demand for clocks as to make it possible for a clockman to keep himself fully occupied at all times in his chosen occupation.

One of the two most important American clockmakers in getting out these new types of clocks was Simon Willard (1753-1848), a native of Grafton, Massachusetts. Simon Willard is supposed to have been apprenticed to an English clockmaker named Morris. Prior to the Revolution, Willard was making clocks at Grafton. Until he moved to Roxbury, Massachusetts, about 1790, he confined his activities largely to the making of grandfather clocks. Being a master workman, he turned out a very good hall clock, but on these he rarely made use of the inventiveness which so customarily marked the clocks of his own design.

In 1802 he invented the banjo clock, which was an immediate success and for which he is so well known today. He designed both case and movement of this clock.

Before he produced the banjo clock, Willard made a number of unsuccessful attempts at other designs. While he was still at Grafton he got out a 30-hour clock without a strike, in collaboration with his brother Aaron. The Willard brothers tried this as a wall clock and also as a shelf clock. Both types are rare, the latter extremely so.

Later Simon Willard made a mirror wall clock. This consisted simply of a rectangular box to conceal the pendu-

lum and weights, with a mirror in front and surmounted by a small clock dial with the movement in back of it. The case of this clock was of pine; the movement was of brass, struck the full hours, and was well made. It could not be turned out cheaply.

The lighthouse clock pictured herewith was another of Willard's unsuccessful attempts at a new design. It is supposed to be as close a replica as possible to the Eddystone Lighthouse which, in Willard's time, was the first landfall on a trip from America to England.

John Ware Willard, in his book *Simon Willard and His Clocks*, simply mentions the fact that Willard made a few of these clocks and that they were not successful. The design seems, however, to have been the best of Willard's failures. He made very few of these clocks. They were produced in two sizes, of which the Society's example is the larger. The movements are of brass and run a week, striking one blow on each hour. In order to make the drop run the clock for the full period the mechanism is highly geared and the weight is very heavy.

After the style was produced the idea was copied by a few other makers. Accordingly, one sees these lighthouse clocks in different shapes. Sometimes the bases are square; again, there are scenes painted in three of the base panels. But all of these clocks made by Simon Willard are of the design pictured here. It is strictly a table clock; and in this feature it is unique among antique American clocks.

The style is rare, but next to the banjo clock it is the best known of those designs ascribed to Simon Willard.

The Society's lighthouse clock came to it in 1934 under the will of Mr. C. Prescott Knight, who purchased it in Providence.

## Joseph Brown, Scientist and Architect

by J. WALTER WILSON

(Concluded from *RHODE ISLAND HISTORY*, Vol. IV, p. 79)

During the Revolution Joseph Brown played the part of a patriot, though not so spectacularly as his brother John, who is traditionally accredited with a leading part in the Gaspee affair. The danger of attack from the British fleet made it imperative to establish an alarm signal at once and to fortify the shores of the bay. In both these activities he played a leading part as has been told by Field. In July, 1775, Joseph Brown, Joseph Bucklin, and Benjamin Thurber were appointed a committee to "erect a beacon on the hill to the eastward of the town to alarm the country in case of an enemy's approach". The beacon was erected near the corner of Prospect and Meeting Streets. It consisted of a kettle suspended by an iron crane from an eighty-foot mast. Joseph Brown was appointed "Master of the Beacon" and had associated with him four wardens "to rig the kettle when orders are given to alarm the country."<sup>28</sup> On Aug. 17th a practice drill was held of which the people had been forewarned by printed handbills. The beacon was observed over a wide range of country from Newport, New London, Pomfret and well into Massachusetts. As far as I can learn it never was used as an alarm.

Early in January, 1776, Joseph Brown and General West were appointed "to lay out such fortifications upon the said [Warwick] Neck as they shall think necessary," for it was thought by some that this would be the logical place to land for an attack upon Providence. The arrival of the British fleet at Newport created great excitement in Providence, and in December, 1776, Joseph Brown with Stephen Hopkins and six others all military officers were

<sup>27</sup> Zachariah Allen, *Science of Mechanics* (Providence, 1829), p. 326.

<sup>28</sup> Edward Field, *Revolutionary Defences in Rhode Island* (Providence, 1896), pp. 43, 49, 54.

appointed a committee "to examine the most suitable places for erecting and making proper batteries and entrenchments for the defence of the public against the enemy."

One of the greatest problems of the American armies was to obtain cannon. The British officers had expected them to find this insurmountable. Among the places that helped in its solution was the Furnace at Hope in which the Brown Brothers were interested. The whole story of this works has not I think been told. But here cannon for the forts in the Bay and for ships were cast and bored. Among the Brown Papers in the John Carter Brown Library are letters of Joseph Brown to his brother Nicholas from Grafton (where his family seems to have taken refuge) in which he discusses the cannon, and one in which he suggests how to get boards to roof the "boaring" mill. Since we know that he later directed the building of the steam engine there, it seems a not improbable conjecture that he helped in the general planning of the work which solved the problem of the cannon. If so his contribution to the winning of the war was of very great importance.

Most of his work discussed thus far has been of a practical nature. Even the transit of Venus was of importance primarily because of its bearing on navigation. He was, however, interested in pure science as well. The inventory of his estate lists his books, of which many are scientific, including astronomy, chemistry and electricity, along with the Gibb's *Architecture* already referred to and among many others *Pilgrims Progress* and *Tristram Shandy*. It also lists "The Electrical Machine and Apparatus with all the appurtenances thereunto belonging," valued at 30 pounds.<sup>29</sup> West says he had constructed and furnished himself "with as curious and complete an apparatus for electrical experiments as any, perhaps, in America, and of which he well knows the use."<sup>30</sup> Such machines which could produce large amounts of static electricity to be stored in Ley-

<sup>29</sup> Inventory of the Estate of Joseph Brown, died December 3, 1785, *Providence Probate Records, Will Book No. 7*, pp. 7-26.

<sup>30</sup> West, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

den jars had long been popular with amateur scientists. One had been made by William Claggett, a clockmaker in Newport, which Franklin saw when passing through Newport in 1746 and which according to Parsons aroused Franklin's interest in electricity.<sup>31</sup> The Bridenbaughs, however, quoting Franklin's autobiography, conclude that Franklin's interest in electricity was first aroused by Dr. Spencer of Edinburgh, who had lectured on electricity in Boston in 1743 and who also had encouraged William Claggett in Newport. In any case it is certain that Claggett knew Franklin "and quite probably communicated to him some of his 'great discoveries in electricity' during the latter's visit to Newport in 1746".<sup>32</sup> Joseph Brown could have obtained help from the Newport people and may have had his interest aroused by two lectures advertised in the *Providence Gazette* for Saturday, March 3, 1764, as follows:

"For the entertainment of the curious, will be exhibited at the Court House a course of experiments in that instructive and entertaining branch of Philosophy called Electricity. To be accompanied with lectures on the nature and properties of the electric fire; by William Johnson."

The course consisted of two lectures. They are outlined in some detail in the advertisement and completely in a pamphlet in the John Carter Brown Library.<sup>33</sup> They ended with an experiment that consisted of "A battery of seven Guns, fired by a Spark, passing through cold water." If Joseph Brown's interest in electricity did not antedate these lectures it would surely have been aroused by them.

The inventory includes also "in the north parlour, one barometer out of order and one thermometer." In those days everyone did not have a thermometer outside his kitchen window. In Stiles' *Diary* for August 10, 1771, there is the following entry:

"Dr Eyers told me he was at Providence last Wed. and

<sup>31</sup> Parsons, *loc. cit.*, p. 245.

<sup>32</sup> Bridenbaugh, p. 223.

<sup>33</sup> William Johnson, *A Course of Experiments in that Curious and Entertaining Branch of Natural Philosophy called Electricity* (New York, 1764).

viewed Mr. Brown's thermometer at III½ P. M. it stood at 95 in the house. Mr. Brown suspended it abroad on a post in the yard in the sun, where it rose to 107, and thence it was said the heat of that day was 107 at Providence."<sup>34</sup> They learned early how to use the thermometer effectively!

The most convincing evidence of his interest in pure science is that when the French soldiers left the college ruined and it was about to undertake resumption of its activities with no faculty but the President and was also without funds, Joseph Brown and another Trustee, Benjamin Waterhouse, volunteered to serve as professors without pay. Thus Joseph Brown became Professor of Experimental Philosophy. This was not Brown's first indication of interest in science in the college, however. Each of the four brothers had contributed 200 pounds toward the fund to build University Hall but Joseph gave only 100 in cash, the other hundred "to be paid in philosophical apparatus . . . as soon as a proper place is provided to put them in." He was probably instrumental when the college was recovering from revolution in his brother John's offer to pay "half the sum necessary to buy 'a compleat Philosophical Apparatus and Library' if the Corporation would raise the other half," which they did and 700 pounds was spent on it.<sup>35</sup> I have been unable to find any account of Joseph's activities as Professor, but it seems that he had something to do with the spending of his brother John's money. Manning in a letter dated March 18, 1784, says:

"A catalogue of the books, which are to compose our new library is made out with great care and attention. It has cost me a great deal of care and labor through the winter, and we are now busy in collecting the books subscribed here, in order to leave them out of the catalogue which Mr. John Brown is about to send to England this spring. The air

<sup>34</sup> *The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles*, F. B. Dexter ed. (New York, 1901), vol. I, p. 137.

<sup>35</sup> Walter C. Bronson, *The History of Brown University, 1764-1914* (Providence, 1914), p. 81.

pump with its apparatus is arrived. It cost fifty pounds sterling in London, and is perhaps the most complete in America, made on the new construction. Mr. Joseph Brown has not yet completed his list of the apparatus, for want of some information on that subject which he has not yet been able to obtain."<sup>36</sup>

In the college archives is a manuscript document with the label "Rough Draught of the remaining parts of an apparatus for the college, 1783."<sup>37</sup> It is a list of scientific equipment, each item followed by a price, and is apparently a list of Joseph Brown's desiderata. Some of the equipment must have been obtained, for it appears in later lists. Whether Joseph used it or not is doubtful because he was so soon taken sick.

In Solomon Drowne's diary there are two sets of entries that give us an idea what he would have done. Drowne entered college in 1770 at the age of seventeen, and graduated in the class of 1773. The diary covers his college years.

The first entries are as follows:

- Oct. 4th 1771 Spend this week reading and working upon my wooden telescope.
- April 18 1772 This day worked upon my wooden telescope.
- April 25 This day I finish my prism for demonstrating the theory of light and colors. It is made of wood and glass, the glass being cut and fastened in with putty after the manner of windows.
- April 26 Talk with Mr. Brown concerning the prism.

It is not difficult to reconstruct from this a picture of Joseph Brown fostering an interest in science in a lad of eighteen years.

The next set of entries are to me of great interest, for they give a picture of actual laboratory work in science in Brown in 1772.

<sup>36</sup> Reuben A. Guild, *Early History of Brown University including the Life, Times, and Correspondence of President Manning* (Providence, 1897), p. 385.

<sup>37</sup> Ms. No. A9411.



Aug 3 1772 This morning at about 8 the senior and junior classes go down to Mr. Brown's apparatus at the works to attend electrical and *Philosophical* lectures. Mr. Howell present. In the forenoon and part of the afternoon try electrical experiments. Kill a pigeon, etc. Then darken the room to construct the camera obscura which affords very pretty diversion as some go out and ride, play, etc. and David stands upon his head. We then carry out the telescope and micrometer up on the hill and look at the sun as long as we could see him, then at the moon, then stars, and lastly the planet Jupiter, 3 of whose moons we see.

Aug. 4th This morning at 8 we go again to the apparatus. In the first place we fill a globe with water which is hung up in a darkened room with only a hole in the window shutter to let a ray shine upon the globe, which after a refraction and reflection or two exhibits a rainbow; but our globe falls in the midst of the experiment, not being well suspended. Next we demonstrate the theory of light and colors with a very neat prism: Then we fix the camera obscura or solar microscope which magnifies objects amazingly. A louse is made to appear six feet long in which we could plainly discern the peristaltic motion. Lastly we see water ascend in capillary tubes which concludes the experiments.

Here we see the electrical apparatus as well as the equipment used in the observation of the transit of Venus in actual use in teaching. The use of the solar microscope is particularly interesting. This type of microscope had been invented by Lieberkuhn in 1738. "The vast magnifying power obtained by this instrument, the colossal grandeur with which it exhibited the 'minutiae of nature,' the pleasure which arose from being able to display the same object to a number of observers at the same time" did much to make the microscope a popular instrument.<sup>38</sup> I would like to know if the instrument used here was the same one which appears as the last item in the catalogue of the Providence Library for 1768. This library thus owned such an instrument as well as Baker's book on the microscope which was one of the most popular manuals of the time. In any case it seems very clear that a complete description of "Mr. Brown's apparatus at the works," would be an interesting thing to discover. It is also worthy of note that the members of the classes of 1773 and 1774 all had more laboratory work, though it was crowded into two days, than many of

<sup>38</sup> Jabez Hogg, *The Microscope: its History, Construction and Application* (London, 1856), p. 7.

their followers in the classes of to-day. What Mr. Brown would have done with the new apparatus seems obvious.

This concludes the sketch of Joseph Brown's scientific activities as far as I have been able to discover them. In closing, it may be permissible to speculate on the question how such a man, a business man with no college education, came to be interested in such things in the Providence of the 18th century. In the first place we may emphasize again that an interest in science was much more generally widespread than it is usually thought to have been. Furthermore, as Bronson in his *History of Brown University* has emphasized, Rhode Island was no backwoods colony of primitive people. Newport was already wealthy and had received from Berkeley a "rich legacy of lofty thought and generous culture". Association between the leaders of Providence and Newport was very close. In the appendix to Stephen Hopkins biography there is a list of twelve college graduates resident in Providence before 1770<sup>39</sup> which, though not a large number today, would be a significant focus in the population of between 4000 and 5000 of those days. Some of the population must have been interested in science for the Catalogue for 1768 of the Providence Library lists many scientific books, and the microscope we have mentioned.

In Brown's case, however, there is a more personal circumstance which I think may have influenced him. When he was a boy his sister Mary married Dr. David Vanderlight, a Dutch doctor who came to Providence after graduating from the University of Leyden. According to the *Chad Brown Memorial* Dr. Vanderlight was the principal druggist in Providence and with the Brown brothers engaged in the manufacture of candles, having brought from Europe the knowledge of the Dutch process of separating spermaceti from its oils.<sup>40</sup> He died in 1755, leaving a surprisingly large personal estate, valued at over £4000. In-

<sup>39</sup> *R. I. Historical Tracts*, No. 19, part 2, p. 251.

<sup>40</sup> *Chad Brown Memorial* (Providence, 1888), p. 16.

cluded in the inventory are sundry books valued at 20 pounds, a parcel of Dutch books valued at £7, a case for an anatomy with bones, a violin and a flute and four double columned pages of drugs.<sup>41</sup>

He is said to have given instruction in anatomy at his house on South Main Street.<sup>42</sup> It can hardly be doubted that his interest in science went beyond medicine. The Leyden of his day was the scientific center of the world. It was the Leyden of Boerhaave. With such a brother-in-law it is easy to see how Joseph Brown, a boy of eighteen or nineteen, became interested in science.

No one would claim that Joseph Brown became a great scientist, and it would be a mistake to imply that he was of great importance in the history of science. His importance was not that of the spectacular discoverer of fact or theory but rather that of the many quiet men who by their intellectual activity and interest keep the fires of scholarship alive and pass them on to be fanned by the drafts of greater geniuses.

<sup>41</sup> Inventory of Estate of Dr. David Vanderlight, *Providence Probate Records, Will Book, No. 5, p. 75.*

<sup>42</sup> Walter L. Munro, "Early Medical History in Rhode Island," *Rhode Island Medical Journal* (July, 1935), p. 12.

## Fall Lecture Program

Dr. Harold Bowditch of Brookline, Mass., a member of the New England Historic Genealogical Society's heraldry committee, will speak on "Early New England Paintings of Coats of Arms" Tuesday, Nov. 13, at 8:15 p. m.

"Town Meeting Country" will be the subject of Dr. Clarence M. Webster of Brown University when he lectures Sunday, Dec. 16, at 3:30 p. m. Dr. Webster is the author of a recent book bearing this same title.

## New Local History Society

Another society for the study of local history was formed in Rhode Island this Summer: The Western Rhode Island Civic Historical Society. It will collect historical material pertaining to the region and plans eventually to establish a museum.

Clarence Murdock of Clayville was elected first president of the society, with the following other officers: Prof. Mildred E. Bassett of Rhode Island College of Education, vice-president; Mrs. Mae Hudson of Coventry, secretary-treasurer; Town Clerk Leroy H. Remington of Scituate, curator; and Rev. Eldin H. Bucklin of Glocester, Mrs. Iva Shippee of West Greenwich, Stanley S. Gairloch of Foster, Mrs. Edwin H. Arnold of Coventry, and Forest Ranger Clarence Edson of Scituate, directors.

## Some Recent Accessions

From Mr. Joseph G. Henshaw, photographs of family records from the Henshaw Bible and other genealogical papers.

From Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., a photostat of the will of Commodore Mathew C. Perry.

From Mr. Harold C. Lyman, a lithograph of the head of navigation at Providence and 17 pictures of waterfront views, bridges, Narragansett Bay steamers, etc.

From the First Baptist Church, through Prof. Arthur Watson, photographs of the exterior and interior of the meeting-house, taken by Norman S. Watson.

From Miss Mary W. Peckham of Santa Barbara, California, miscellaneous papers including a typed article on Richard and Catherine (Marbury) Scott and their pedigrees, by Stephen Farnum Peckham.

From Mrs. Edmund B. Delabarre, miscellaneous papers including notes from a diary kept by the late Professor Delabarre on the "Progress of Spring," 1904-1943.

From Mrs. Ward E. Smith, pictures and lantern slides of old Rhode Island houses collected by her late husband.

From Mrs. Charles H. Weeden, *Lewisiana*, vols. 1 through 17, genealogy of the Lewis family.

From the Misses Louise and Emily Diman, a diary kept by Mrs. Abby M. (Clark) Stimson, 1850-1867, and five scrapbooks of clippings referring to the Stimson family.

From the compiler, Mrs. Martha A. Bennis, a bound typescript: The Hatton Family of Lancashire.



SEA CAPTAIN'S DAY-BED WITH CHEST BENEATH

For many years in the Nightingale family.

*Gift of Mrs. Harriet Nightingale Dorrance and Mr. Joseph G. Henshaw*