

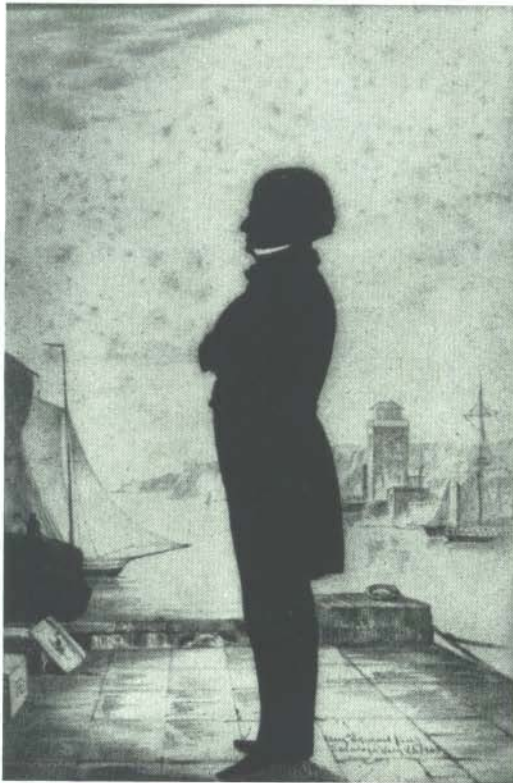
RHODE ISLAND HISTORY

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NO. 1



EDWARD CARRINGTON, 1775-1843

Canton merchant; U. S. consul in China; Major-General of the State Militia; president of the Blackstone Canal Company; one of Rhode Island's foremost industrial leaders of the nineteenth century; the first of the family to live in the house he purchased from John Corlis at 66 Williams Street and now owned by the Rhode Island School of Design.

*Cut by Edouart,
August 23, 1843*

*Courtesy of Museum of Art,
Rhode Island School of Design*

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RHODE ISLAND HISTORY

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NO. 1

WHY RHODE ISLAND OPPOSED THE FEDERAL CONSTITUTION

THE CONTINENTAL IMPOST

by HILLMAN METCALF BISHOP*

IN DISCUSSING the negative role of Rhode Island in the formation of the Union a leading contemporary historian has remarked that to this day "Rhode Islanders turn their memories more fondly upon the burning of the bad ship *Gaspee* than upon the part they did not take in launching the 'Good Ship Constitution'." We tend to read the story of the struggle over the Constitution through glasses colored by our knowledge of the 160 years which have followed the adoption of the Constitution. Today the superior wisdom of the Founding Fathers seems almost beyond debate. Hindsight is always better than foresight, and we ask ourselves, "How could our Rhode Island forefathers have been so blind, so provincial as not to have seen the tremendous benefits which the Constitution was destined to bring to this state and the rest of the Union?"

The dramatic story of the extended political conflict over the Constitution has been told several times, most exhaustively in Frank G. Bates's *Rhode Island and the Formation of the Union*. My own interpretations of the reasons why Rhode Island opposed the Constitution are somewhat different from those advanced by Bates and other writers on the period. I will omit here, in so far as possible, descriptions of events, and concentrate on analyses of the reasons for the events.

During the War for Independence Rhode Island's zeal for the Revolutionary cause was at least equal to that of any of the thirteen states. When proposals to call a Continental Congress were made in 1774, Rhode Island was the first of the states to elect delegates to the

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opening session. Later Rhode Island was the first state to recommend that the Continental Congress should be established on a permanent basis. During the War for Independence the state incurred a very heavy debt in the prosecution of the war, and when in December, 1793, accounts between the states and the Union were finally balanced, Rhode Island was one of the so-called "creditor states." If we use as a basis of comparison the principle established in the Constitution for apportioning representation and direct taxes (*i. e.*, white population plus $\frac{3}{5}$ of the slaves), we find that by this test South Carolina proportionately spent the largest sum of money for the support of the war, with Rhode Island in fourth place close behind Massachusetts and Connecticut.

Rhode Island's isolationism or "othermindedness," as one critic calls it, is generally assumed to have begun in 1782, when this state defeated the first of several Congressional proposals to reform the Articles of Confederation. One of the fatal weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation was the complete dependence of Congress on the states to lay and collect taxes. Almost all of the states made but little effort, especially in the later years under the Articles, to fulfill the financial requisitions of Congress for the support of the war and the payment of the Revolutionary debt. By 1781 it was clear that the war might continue for several years, and that defeat was even possible because of the inability of Congress to draw upon the resources of the nation to finance the common struggle. For some time the war had been financed by paper money and foreign and domestic loans. All these expedients had been exhausted by 1781. Congress planned to float a new, large loan in Europe, and it seemed apparent that no European nation would lend money to a government which had no power to tax its people in order to repay the loan.

In February, 1781, Congress by unanimous vote asked the states to enact laws vesting in Congress power to levy for the use of the United States a five per cent ad valorem duty on imports. Unanimous approval by the states was necessary before the measure could go into effect. By November, 1782, the recommendation of Congress had been accepted by eleven of the thirteen states. In spite of the acceptance of this recommendation by the other states, the lower house of the Rhode Island General Assembly in November, 1782, rejected the proposed Continental Impost by a unanimous vote.

A few months later, in April, 1783, Congress modified its original proposal to meet some of the objections offered by Rhode Island and asked the states to accept a revised form of the Continental Impost. The second recommendation of Congress, known as the Impost Act of 1783, was no more acceptable to Rhode Island than the first. Historians have tended to place on Rhode Island the sole blame for the defeat of the first concerted effort to reform the Articles of Confederation. In Congress it seemed good strategy to make it appear that the will of 98% of the people had been blocked by 2% — for Rhode Island at that time had only $\frac{1}{50}$ th of the population of the Union. Actually there was more opposition to the Continental Impost in the other states than the leaders of Congress wished to admit.¹

After five years of debate the Rhode Island legislature in February, 1786, accepted the impost proposal, although in a form that was neither workable nor acceptable to Congress. The vote on the measure in the lower house of the Rhode Island General Assembly was 49 for and 18 against. This changed vote was brought about by a reversal in the position of the mercantile interests of the State, which at that time dominated the state government.

If we draw our conclusions primarily from newspaper articles and from official correspondence between the state and the Rhode Island members of Congress, it would appear that objections raised to the Continental Impost were the same as those which a few years later were advanced against the Constitution. This has led to the conclusion that Rhode Island's whole course of action from 1782 (when the state first defeated the Continental Impost) to 1790 (when the state convention very narrowly ratified the Constitution) was primarily the result of the same general philosophy — an attachment to states' rights and a jealousy of all outside authority.² Rhode Island's

¹Among the leading historians who have assumed that the impost recommendation of 1781 was ratified by all of the states except Rhode Island are Channing, Farrand, Hart, Fish, Hockett and John Quincy Adams. Actually Georgia never accepted the measure; and Virginia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and in effect New York withdrew their approval after Rhode Island had turned the recommendation down. The writer's study of the acts passed by the states shows that other states attached various reservations and limitations to their approval. New Hampshire was the only state to accept the recommendation of Congress without any conditions or exceptions, while Rhode Island was the only state flatly to reject the measure.

²Frank G. Bates, *Rhode Island and the Formation of the Union* (New York, 1898) pp. 73, 74, 105, 208-212.

separatism in turn is held to be the result of, to quote Bates, "religious liberty, local independence, democracy, and individualism"³ which have been characteristic of this state since the days of Roger Williams. As we shall see, the popular attachment to democracy, liberty, and individualism had a good deal to do with Rhode Island's actions, although I would use these terms in a somewhat different sense from that used by Bates. Other interpretations of Rhode Island's actions were made at the time, and most of these were much less flattering to the state. The chief difficulty in the states' rights explanation of Rhode Island's conduct is that it overlooks the fact that the men who were primarily responsible from 1782 to 1785 for the opposition to the Continental Impost reversed their position a few years later and from 1787 to 1790 fought with equal vigor and ability for a Constitution which centralized power in the Federal Government to a far greater extent than the Continental Impost did.

During the whole period of Rhode Island's opposition to the Continental Impost the political leadership of the state was chiefly in the hands of the same mercantile leaders who later made up the backbone of the Federalist Party. The Providence merchants, who had so vigorously fought all attempts of Great Britain to tax their commerce, were no more desirous of paying impost duties to Congress than to the British Parliament.⁴ Speaking of his own very active part in the defeat of the Impost, Nicholas Brown wrote, "I look upon myself as one Amongst us who has done about as much Mischief as most amongst us if the Oppsit'n Can be so Called."⁵

The explanation of the opposition of the merchants to the Continental Impost is found in the peculiar nature of Rhode Island commerce. Most of the articles imported from abroad into this state were not consumed in the state, but were re-exported either abroad or to other states. Rhode Island had few native products to export. Even as late as the early nineteenth century approximately half (and in some years considerably more than one half) of the goods that Rhode

³*Ibid.*, p. 44

⁴"The gentlemen who are at the head of opposition in this state [R. I.] are those who are in the mercantile line." "A Friend to Rhode Island and the Union" [Thomas Paine] in the *Providence Gazette*, February 1, 1783. See also the Nicholas Brown Papers, John Carter Brown Library and typescripts of letters of John Brown to his son James, R. I. H. S. Originals owned by Frank Hail Brown.

⁵Nicholas Brown to David Howell, March 26, 1785. *R.I.H.S. Manuscripts*, v. 14, p. 53.

Island exported abroad were grown, produced, or manufactured in foreign countries.⁶ And the articles manufactured in Rhode Island from raw materials imported from abroad may not have been included in this figure. During the colonial period the foundation of Rhode Island commerce had been the West Indies trade. Especially important were the large quantities of molasses imported from the West Indies. The molasses was distilled into rum for export abroad. In their 1764 remonstrance against the British Sugar Act the Colony of Rhode Island had maintained that if a duty were laid on molasses it would amount to a prohibition of the distilling of rum for export.⁷ Since the Continental Impost proposed by Congress contained no provision for a drawback on goods re-exported, the effect of competition with foreign countries was to prevent the merchant from passing on the five cent impost duties when the articles were re-exported abroad.⁸ Because the great majority of the voters were farmers, who would naturally favor the transfer of a part of the growing burden of taxation from their own backs to that of the merchants,⁹ it was necessary for the merchants to conceal their own role in opposition to the impost and to win over the farmers by arguments with a wide popular appeal.

Not only a large part of the Rhode Island imports was re-exported abroad, but a considerable amount was sold to individuals in other states. In colonial times it was estimated that the Rhode Island merchants sold more of their imported goods in Massachusetts and Connecticut than in Rhode Island. This fact gave the state a selfish reason for preferring a state impost system to the Congressional Impost, since through state duties Rhode Island could in effect tax her

⁶*American State Papers — Class 4 — Commerce and Navigation*, v. 1, 1789-1815, pp. 927-929. Not until 1802 were the exports from the states subdivided into those which were the growth, produce, and manufacture of the United States and those which originally came from foreign countries.

⁷John R. Bartlett ed., *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island* (Providence, 1856-1865) v. 6, pp. 378-383.

⁸See "On the Five per Cent Impost" by "Democritus" in the *Providence Gazette* of April 5, 1783, reprinted from the *Freeman's Journal* of Philadelphia.

⁹What popular support existed for the Impost seemed to come from some of the country towns as shown by the fact that in April and June, 1782, the following towns instructed their deputies to vote for the Impost: Westerly, West Greenwich, Charlestown, and Jamestown. Gloucester took the same position in January, 1783. On the other hand nine towns voted against the Impost including two of the leading seaports of the state Newport and Bristol. See Town Meeting Records in the respective towns, except West Greenwich which are in the Rhode Island State Archives.

neighbor states.¹⁰ Ultimately the state impost system, when adopted by the majority of the thirteen states, was to become a greater burden to the commerce of Rhode Island than the Continental Impost could ever have been. All this was not fully foreseen in the early stages of the contest over the Impost. The opportunity to tax the people of the neighboring states through a state duty on imports was a powerful factor influencing the people. However, the newspaper articles gave comparatively little attention to this argument, because it had potentialities of danger for the merchants and also because it served to confirm the suspicions expressed in other states that Rhode Island's conduct in opposing the Continental Impost was dictated by selfish considerations.

In numerous newspaper articles the able writers and pamphleteers skipped lightly over all economic considerations and tried to place Rhode Island's opposition to the Impost on a high political plane. For over a year and a half there was hardly an issue of the *Providence Gazette* without one or more articles on the Impost. Although the *Gazette* opened its columns to both sides, the opponents of the measure, adopting pseudonyms like "A Farmer" (David Howell), "A Freeholder" (Theodore Foster), "A Countryman," etc., were much more numerous than the supporters. Even such able writers for the Impost as James Mitchell Varnum and the redoubtable Thomas Paine were overwhelmed by the number of articles which continued to come forth from Providence.

The chief result of the extensive propaganda campaign against the Impost, which we shall describe below, was the creation of a public opinion hostile to or at least suspicious of every attempt to increase the powers of Congress. Voters who had been led to believe that the small increase in the powers of Congress contemplated by the Continental Impost was a threat to democracy and liberty were certain to reject the Federal Constitution. Whether the propaganda against the Impost created an Anti-Federalist public opinion or whether it merely aroused and made articulate the latent political beliefs of the people

¹⁰"And if there be an advantage to the landed interest in laying duties on trade, which I disbelieve, would it not be folly and madness in my brother farmers, to embarrass the trade of this State, and hurt their own markets, to raise a revenue to be divided among all the interest in the union? If the duties are laid on, let it be under the sole direction of our own legislature and only for our benefit." "A Farmer" [David Howell] in the *Providence Gazette*, March 30, 1782.

See also a widely distributed pamphlet *Thoughts on the Five Per Cent*, reprinted as a supplement to the *Providence Gazette* of October 19, 1782.

is hard to say. Let us examine the political theories which the conflict over the Impost popularized. Since every plausible argument which could be invented or thought of was used against the Impost, there is a danger of oversimplification in the following attempt to reduce the arguments to a logical and coherent political philosophy.

The major premise of the opposition to the Impost was the very popular idea that all political power must be jealously guarded and cautiously distributed. To quote: "It is the nature of government to extend its power and prerogative."¹¹ "The spirit of liberty is a spirit of jealousy."¹² In every form of government "avarice, ambition, or the lust of power . . . are more prevalent than the virtues."¹³ Hence, "all earthly power ought therefore to be limited and watched: and this holds good with respect to Congress, no less than every other political body."¹⁴ To those who maintained that the desperate state of the army and the crisis which confronted the country demonstrated the need for giving to Congress power to raise a limited revenue, the answer was that history had shown that it is in times of emergency and crisis that the people are often led to give up powers which, once surrendered, could not be regained.

The second major argument was that the impost proposal would make the Congress independent of the people. In view of the fact that members of the Congress were elected annually, and in Rhode Island by a direct vote of the people, it is hard to understand this contention. It should be remembered that in Rhode Island the government was directly accountable to the people. The Governor and the upper house of the Legislature were annually elected at large by the direct vote of the people. The lower house of Assembly was elected by the voters in town meetings every six months. Taxes during the colonial period had been light and were almost exclusively direct taxes on real estate and polls. The Legislature might apportion the taxes among the towns, but the actual assessment and the collection of the taxes were undertaken by the towns.¹⁵

¹¹"A.C." in *Providence Gazette*, January 25, 1783.

¹²"Candid" in *Newport Mercury* and *Providence Gazette* of Dec. 28, 1782.

¹³David Howell to Gov. Greene, January 12, 1785, in William R. Staples *Rhode Island in the Continental Congress*, (Providence, 1870) p. 520.

¹⁴"Argus" in *Providence Gazette*, August 3, 1782.

¹⁵Comparing the degree of democracy in the various state governments, David Howell maintained: "As you go Southward Government verges towards Aristocracy. In New England alone have we pure & unmixed Democracy and in Rhode Island & P. P. it is in its Perfection." Letter to Welcome Arnold, August 3, 1782, Simon Gratz Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

In support of the contention that the Continental Impost would destroy democracy and make Congress uncontrollable, it was maintained that the experience of the British House of Commons had shown that the power of the purse is the source of all other power. The collection of an impost would mean the establishment of "numerous tribes of officers concerned in the revenue . . . it would require a military force to execute it, and bring in standing armies; that our coast must be lined with cutters, galleys, &c., to prevent running goods;"¹⁶ It would lead to smuggling, bribery, and political corruption on a scale never before seen in America. It would enable Congress to establish an unlimited number of pensioners and office holders, with high salaries and great extravagances. To give Congress a revenue independent of the states would place the power of the purse and the sword in the same hand, a danger which many celebrated writers had warned against.¹⁷

Discussing the proposal in Congress to raise an army to garrison the western forts and to protect the frontier against the Indians, David Howell wrote:

"But a difficulty arises; if Congress have power to establish an army of 500, they may of 5,000 men; they, being the only judges of the force necessary to answer the purpose. So that they may at any time increase their standing army to a size dangerous to the particular states and employ such army to obtain additional powers or grants from the States. Especially if they should also be vested with the power to levy, collect, and appropriate a permanent revenue in addition to that of raising men; for these two powers, viz., that of raising men at their pleasure, and paying them without yearly grants of the people, being both united in one body, would render that body dangerous to the freedom of the particular States; and in time, however good and virtuous the present members of Congress may be supposed, that body might degenerate into lordly aristocrats."¹⁸

All of the above arguments against the Impost, as well as many others, were developed with considerable demagogic skill in many

¹⁶Arnold and Howell to Gov. Greene, Oct. 15th, 1782. Staples, *op. cit.*, p. 397.

¹⁷"I answer that when any body of men have the power of collecting money from the people, and to be accountable to nobody for it, and have at the same time power to make war or peace, then that body of men, having that power once established, have the people under the greatest bondage that it is possible to express." "A Lover of Liberty" in Providence *Gazette*, January 25, 1783.

¹⁸David Howell to Thomas Carder Hazard, August 26, 1783. Original manuscript in Brown University Library. Printed in Burnett, *Letters of the Continental Congress*, v. 8, p. 842.

able newspaper articles. Before long most of the voters of Rhode Island were completely convinced that the adoption of the Continental Impost would destroy democracy and individual liberty; it would subordinate the states to the central government; it would result in the worst form of tyranny and despotism through the establishment of a single despotic republic, and ultimately even in a return to monarchy.

By 1785 or 1786 it became increasingly apparent to the Rhode Island merchants that in engineering the defeat of the Continental Impost they had made a serious mistake even from the standpoint of their own selfish interests.

In the first place the defeat of the Continental Impost led most of the states to enact their own impost laws. Before the Revolution the British had attempted, not too successfully, to tax imports, but the colonial legislatures with one or two minor exceptions avoided laying duties on their own imports. Rhode Island had built its commercial prosperity under a system of free trade between the colonies. It need hardly be mentioned that the British attempts to tax the commerce of the colonies had been one of the most potent influences in bringing on the Revolution. The crushing burden of taxation after the War for Independence and the attempts of the states to pay interest on their revolutionary debt led for the first time to a system of state duties or tariffs, which became a heavy burden on the commerce between the states. It is well known that these interstate duties were among the most important factors in producing the Federal Constitution. Historians, however, have failed to point out that the harmful effects of the interstate tariffs were felt only by the minority of the people engaged in interstate and foreign commerce. The general practice of the states was to exempt from duties all articles grown or manufactured in the United States; therefore the farmers were unaffected by interstate duties. On the other hand the Rhode Island merchant had to pay not only the Rhode Island duties on his imports but also a second duty when the articles were re-exported to other states. Especially harmful to Rhode Island's trade were the high duties established by Connecticut and Massachusetts.¹⁹

When Rhode Island in February, 1786, finally adopted the Continental Impost recommendation of Congress, the Legislature in-

¹⁹Nicholas Brown to David Howell, March 26, 1785. See Note 5.

cluded the express condition that trade between the states should be completely free from state duties. This condition was beyond the power of Congress to grant under the Articles of Confederation, for Congress had authority neither to forbid interstate duties nor to regulate commerce between the states. Only through the adoption of the Federal Constitution could free trade between the states, so essential to Rhode Island's commercial prosperity, be assured.

A second unanticipated result of the failure of Congress to secure an adequate revenue was the inability of Congress to pay more than a small part of the interest on the Continental debt. This brought about a continued fall in the value of Continental securities, and it should be remembered that in Rhode Island the largest security holders were merchants. Those who were forced to sell their securities lost heavily. On the other hand, those with capital to invest bought large amounts of securities from the original holders at a small fraction of face value. As a result of the funding system established by Hamilton after the adoption of the Constitution, the Continental debt was paid at full face value. At the time of the struggle over the Constitution some Anti-Federalists charged that Rhode Island merchants with the intention of later buying up the securities at bargain prices, had deliberately killed the Continental Impost in order to destroy the value of the Continental securities. To this charge was added the further assertion that under the Constitution the Federalists intended to tax the people to repay the debt at face value and thus make great fortunes for themselves. It must be admitted that this is exactly what happened, although it is improbable that all this was foreseen when the merchants originally opposed the Impost.

Of course the major factor in changing the attitude of the merchants and the creditor class in Rhode Island toward the power of the central government was the triumph of the "paper money" party in the elections of May, 1786, and the resulting system of settling debts both public and private by tendering depreciated paper money. However, even before the triumph of the paper money partisans, there had been a significant change in the attitude of Rhode Island merchants on the Continental Impost.

(to be continued)

NEWS NOTES

The Society has available for those who desire the following recent publications by our members:

Early Rehoboth by Richard LeBaron Bowen, \$5.00

Highways and Byways of Providence by John Hutchins Cady, \$1.00

Angell's Lane by George Leland Miner, \$5.00.

* * *

On October 27, 28, and 29 Mr. Roelker was in Raleigh, North Carolina, attending the annual meeting of the American Association for State and Local History. The purpose of this association, of which Mr. Roelker is a member of the council, is to assist historical societies in developing their programs.

* * *

A meeting of the Southern New England Conference of Historical Societies was called by Mr. Roelker on June 1, at John Brown House. The work of this society, the integrating of the activities of historical societies in this area, was interrupted by the war. About twenty-five attended, electing the following officers: president, James H. Radio, president of the Warwick Historical Society; vice-president, Miss Alice B. Almy, librarian and custodian of the Bristol Historical Society; treasurer and secretary, Clarkson A. Collins, 3rd, research associate of the Rhode Island Historical Society.

* * *

During the fall several meetings have been held by the Cocomussoc Associates. The initial meeting, held at John Brown House, was presided over by Mr. Norman B. Smith, who told of the acquisition of an option to buy the property at Wickford and outlined the hopes and plans of the group.

* * *

In July Mr. Roelker and Mr. Collins attended the Seminars on American Culture held in Cooperstown, New York, under the auspices of the New York State Historical Association. The Association operates Fenimore House and the Farmers' Museum.

* * *

Mr. Roelker and Mr. Monahan have attended several meetings of the Preservation Society of Newport County. At a postponed Annual Meeting of the group, Mr. Roelker was elected a consultant of the Society, whose president for the current year is Mrs. George Henry Warren.

As co-host with Museum of Natural History of Roger Williams Park and the Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, The Rhode Island Historical Society entertained the New England Conference of the American Association of Museums at its annual meeting held here in Providence on October 29 and 30. The Society chartered a bus to take the group on a tour of Newport to visit the Touro Synagogue, the Hunter House, The Breakers, Newport Historical Society, and Trinity Church.

* * *

Approximately 1500 persons have attended meetings at the John Brown House this fall. The first meeting was on September 29, at which Mr. John Hutchins Cady spoke before the Antiques Club. On October 22 the E.O.W. Club of East Providence used the facilities of the House. Slides of the island were shown at an afternoon meeting of the Block Island Historical Society on October 24. On November 4 Professor Mildred Bassett addressed the members of the Roger Williams Family Association at an evening meeting, and on the 9th the Plum Beach Garden Club held its fall meeting in our headquarters. A high light of the programs of the Pottery and Porcelain Club was their meeting on November 10 at which Mr. Frank Stoner of London and New York gave an illustrated lecture on Bow, Chelsea, and Derby. One of the largest groups to attend a meeting at John Brown House was that of the Western Rhode Island Civic Historical Society on November 23. Mr. Roelker addressed the group on "Rhode Island Lives by its Wits." He also addressed the Beacon Pole Chapter, D.A.R., on November 30. On December 2 was a meeting of the League of Women Voters; on December 9 an illustrated lecture was given to the Providence County Garden Club. Mr. Collins addressed the American Association of Teachers of French, Rhode Island Chapter, at their meeting on December 11. He also lectured to the Junior League Provisionals earlier in the month. The Flint Lock and Powder Horn Chapter of D.A.R. (Pawtucket) met at John Brown House on December 13. Mr. Roelker addressed the group. At meetings outside the Society's headquarters Mr. Collins has addressed the Tavern Hall Club at Kingston; Mr. Monahan has lectured at the Stamford (Connecticut) Historical Society and the Handicraft Club.

G. P. M.

WEYBOSSET BRIDGE

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

THE EARLY TOWN of Providence was divided into two parts by rather formidable waterways, which included the Great Salt River and the Cove. Nearly all of the inhabitants resided on the Neck, as the present East Side was called; their farms and meadows were on Weybosset Side. The waters of the cove, which covered the present Exchange Place, Memorial Square, and the railroad property, flowed into the river at the narrows east of Weybosset Point (near the southerly end of Washington Row); below the Point the swampy shore sloshed southwesterly and southerly, following, approximately, the lines of the present Pine and Eddy streets. The crossing from the Neck to Weybosset Side was sometimes made by fording the river at low water from the present Steeple Street to the Point;¹ also there was passing "from the Towne Side to Wayboysett side Cross the Water . . . with Cannooes & Boates, Riding & Carting & Swimming over of Cattell from side to side; & the Streame often times Running so swift . . ."²

From documentary records it appears that nine bridges have been erected across the river at Weybosset, as follows:

(1)

The first bridge was built by the town about 1660³ connecting the shore of the Neck with Weybosset Point and the Pequot Path, and providing access to the meadow lands on Weybosset Side. The only clue to its method of construction is found in a record for its repair in 1665, with orders to replace the trestles that were down with "Timber worke in the forme of a square, diamond fashion," to lay "Gice" [joists] over the diamond, to "planke it with planks," and to "procure posts and railles and raile up the Bridge where the defects are."⁴ These and subsequent repairs proved to be such a heavy financial burden upon the town treasury that the bridge was abandoned before the close of the century.

¹*The Early Records of the Town of Providence* (Providence, 1892-1909) v. 9, p. 79. Hereafter cited as *E.R.P.*

²*Ibid.*, v. 11, p. 89.

³*Ibid.*, v. 2, p. 130.

⁴*Ibid.*, v. 15, p. 109.

(2)

The second bridge, erected in 1711, was financed by private subscriptions, to which was added a grant by the General Assembly toward its construction.⁵ The bridge, with its approaches backed up with earth, began at the Towne street "against ye west End of the lott whereon Daniel Abbott his dwelling house standeth" (later known as the Manufacturers Hotel and now 20 Market Square), where a highway to the waterside had been stated in 1681,⁶ and extended "cross the water unto the hill called Waybosset"⁷ at the present Turk's Head. It was about 14 feet wide, having one section constructed in such a way that it could be removed to permit the passage of vessels into the cove.⁸ A highway leading from the westerly end of the bridge "southward towards Pautuxett" (Weybosset Street) was ordered by the town in 1712-13.⁹

(3)

The bridge was destroyed by a freshet and was rebuilt about 1719 at the expense of the town.¹⁰ In 1738 the highway from the Towne street to the waterside was widened to 123 feet¹¹ and became known as the Town Parade. During this period Weybosset Hill was leveled by Thomas Staples, who was granted permission by the town in 1724 "to dig Clay . . . to make Bricks."¹²

(4)

In 1744 the General Assembly granted a lottery for paying the cost of a new bridge.¹³ This was 18 feet wide and more substantially built than its predecessors, having a stone pier in the center and abutments at its ends.¹⁴ Its construction required two years, during which time

⁵John R. Bartlett, ed., *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations in New England* (Providence, 1856-1865) v. 4, p. 118. Hereafter cited as *R.I.C.R.*

⁶*E. R. P.*, v. 8, p. 106.

⁷*Ibid.*, v. 11, p. 91.

⁸Welcome G. Arnold, *The Providence Plantations for Two Hundred and Fifty Years*, (Providence, 1886) p. 50.

⁹*E. R. P.*, v. 11, p. 165.

¹⁰William R. Staples, *Annals of the Town of Providence*, (Providence, 1843) p. 198.

¹¹*E.R.P.*, v. 9, p. 78.

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 41.

¹³*R.I.C.R.*, v. 5, p. 100.

¹⁴Staples, *Annals of Providence*, p. 198.

a ferry was kept in operation. The superstructure of the bridge was carried away and its pier and abutments damaged during a gale, accompanied by an excessively high tide, October 24, 1761.¹⁵ A plat drawn in that year defines a wedge-shaped highway running westerly from the bridge and increasing in width to Whitman's Corner (so named for the house erected about 1750 by Jacob Whitman on which a "turk's head" was attached); the plat also shows "the new back street" (Westminster), in a westerly extension of the highway from the bridge,¹⁶ which was constructed two years later by means of a lottery.¹⁷

(5)

The bridge was rebuilt in 1764 with funds provided by the General Assembly.¹⁸ It was 22 feet wide and 150 feet long, its abutments on the east end in alignment with the present easterly line of Canal Street and on the west with the present westerly line of Washington Row.¹⁹ Subsequently a draw was installed in the bridge, financed by a lottery.²⁰ In the first official listing of street names, adopted by the town in 1772,²¹ Weybosset, Westminster, and Market streets appear, the latter leading "from the Parade on the East Side of the Bridge Westward to the parting of the Road by Jacob Whitman;" and the Towne street was re-named Water Street (South Main) south of the Parade, and King Street (North Main) north of the Parade as far as North Court Street. The Parade, previously tide-flowed, was graded to a level with the bridge in 1772, and retaining walls were built at the water line in extension of the bridge abutments.²² The Parade was bordered at that time by the Abbott Still House on the south, the houses of Deputy Governor Jabez Bowen, Governor Joseph Jenckes, and Dr. Ephraim Bowen on the east, and the Exchange Coffee House on the north. In the center of this area the Market House was built in 1773. A short distance south (opposite Hopkins Street) was the Newport Packet Wharf.²³

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 205.

¹⁶Plats of Streets, Highways, etc., v. 1, p. 22.

¹⁷*Providence Gazette*, October 19, 1763.

¹⁸*R.I.C.R.*, v. 6, p. 294.

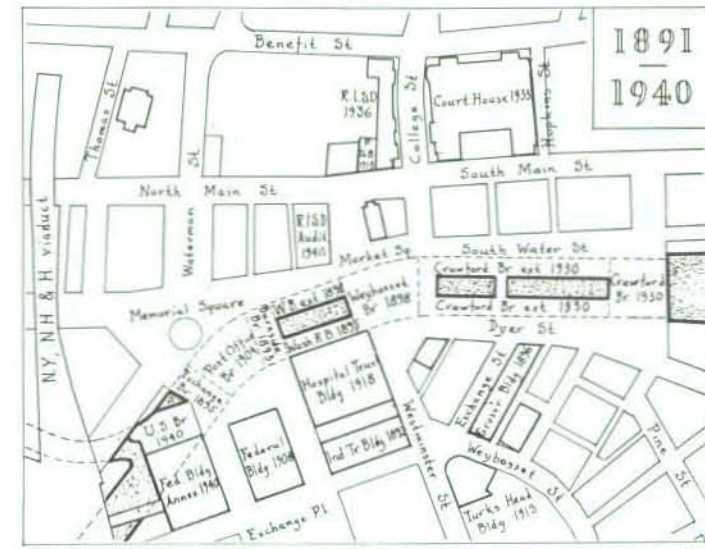
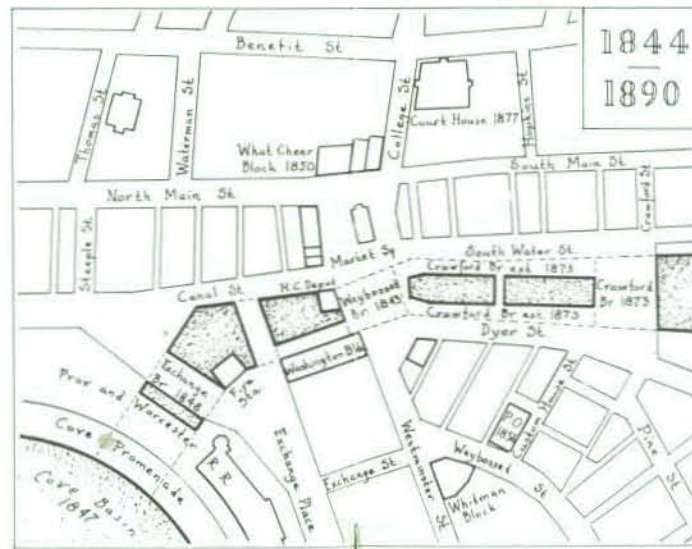
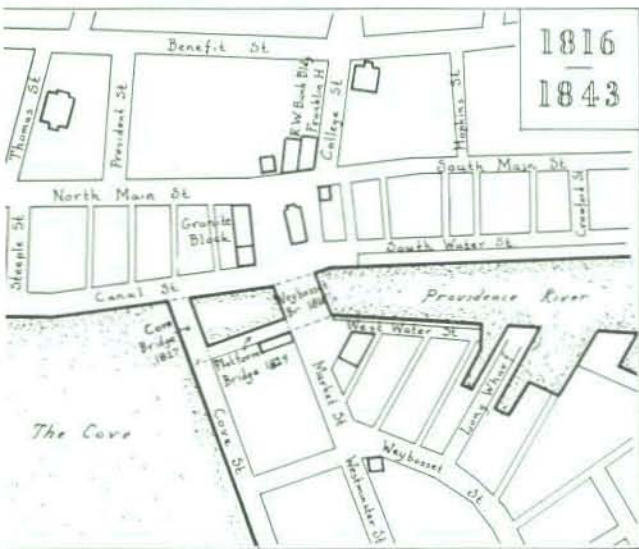
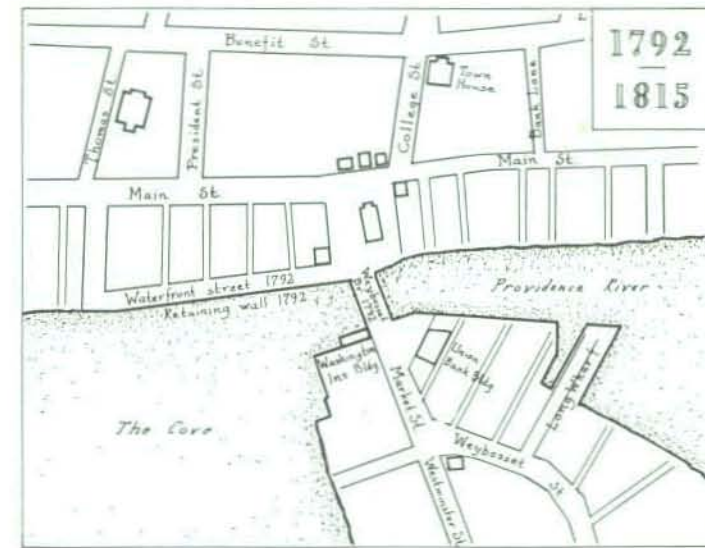
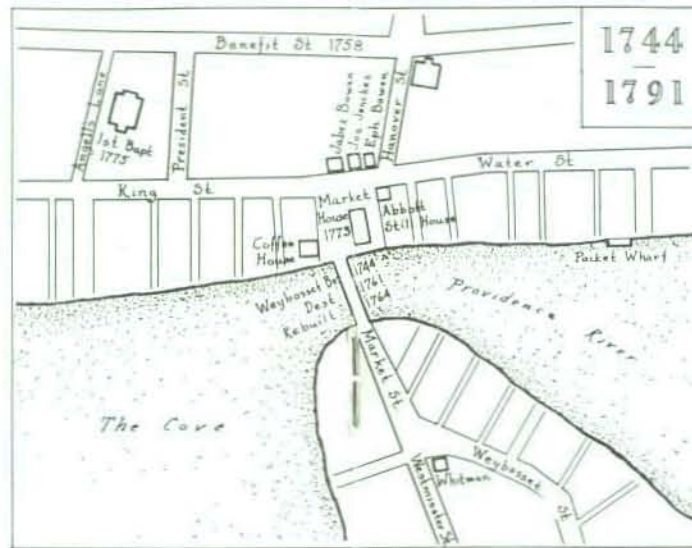
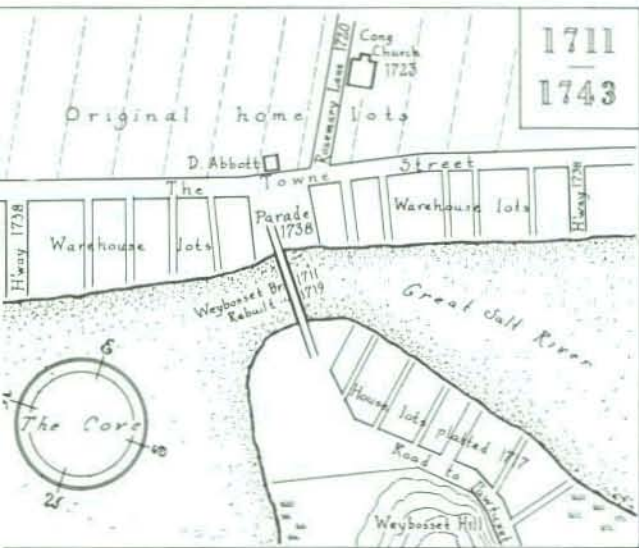
¹⁹City Engineer's records.

²⁰Staples, *Annals of Providence*, p. 205.

²¹*Record Book* no. 20 (1), 01.

²²*Providence Town Papers*, 1772, p. 466.

²³Edwin M. Stone, *The Life and Recollections of John Howland* (Providence, 1857) p. 32.



WEYBOSSET BRIDGE AND VICINITY

1711-1940

Drawn by JHC 1948

(6)

Following the grant of a lottery,²⁴ the bridge was replaced in 1792 by a new span, 120 feet long between abutment walls and 56 feet wide, with a draw of the lift type.²⁵ The east abutment walls, erected in the water 40 feet west of the former abutments, were extended northerly as far as Steeple Street and a waterfront highway (Canal Street) was constructed on filled land. The west abutment, coinciding with those of the former bridge, were carried southerly to Long Wharf (Custom House Street) and West Water (Dyer) Street was laid out, 20 feet wide.²⁶ Buildings were erected compactly on both sides of Market Street after the turn of the century, the more important of which were the Washington Insurance Building, at the present corner of Washington Row; and the Union Bank Building, part of which is still standing at the corner of Dyer Street. Water and King streets were re-named Main Street in 1807.²⁷ The bridge was destroyed in the great gale of September 23, 1815.

(7)

The next bridge, completed in July, 1816, was a fixed span, supported by piles driven in the river. It was the same length as its predecessor and had an overall width of 95 feet, including a 22-foot sidewalk on each side.²⁸ South Water Street was laid out southerly from the Town Parade in 1817,²⁹ and shortly afterward the row of warehouses was erected which survived until the 1920's. The name "Market Square" appears in the Providence Directory of 1824. Franklin House, Roger Williams Bank Building, and Granite Block were erected on the square in 1823-24. Canal Street was extended northerly to Smith Street in 1825³⁰ with a retaining wall built along its westerly side, which formed a section of the Blackstone Canal, constructed in 1828. Cove Street was laid out in 1825 along the southern border of the cove, following the present lines of Washington Row, the south line of Exchange Place, Dorrance Street, and West Ex-

²⁴*R.I.C.R.*, v. 10, p. 395.

²⁵Staples, *Annals of Providence*, p. 359.

²⁶Record Book, no. 7, p. 238.

²⁷Town Council Proceedings, v. 8, p. 535.

²⁸*Providence Gazette*, July 27, 1826.

²⁹*Ibid.*, August 2, 1817.

³⁰City Council Records, v. 11, p. 299.

change Street. In 1827 the Providence Washington Insurance Company undertook the erection of two bridges. One of these crossed the river from Cove Street to Canal Street, about 200 feet north of Weybosset Bridge; the other was a "platform bridge" (completed 1829) on the section of Cove Street (now Washington Row) east of the company's building.³¹

(8)

Weybosset Bridge was rebuilt in 1843 to a width of 135 feet.³² The Washington Buildings were erected on Washington Row in the same year. Market Street was omitted from the 1850 city directory, which defined Westminster Street as starting from Weybosset Bridge. In 1847 the Cove Basin was constructed by the Providence and Worcester Railroad, together with retaining walls extending from its easterly rim to provide a channel into Providence river. The remainder of the cove waters east and south of the basin were filled. Exchange Bridge was constructed across the channel from Exchange Place to Canal Street in 1848 (the northerly part of Memorial Square). In the same year Dyer Street was widened on its westerly side and extended southerly across Long Wharf; the widening involved the removal of the easterly end of the Union Bank Building.³³ Wharfage was provided on both sides of the river, adjacent to Dyer and South Water Streets, for sailing vessels. What Cheer Block was built on the site of Manufacturers Hotel at 20 Market Square in 1850, soon followed by the erection of two brownstone buildings west of Granite Block, replacing the Coffee House. The widening of College Street in 1867 forced the razing of Abbott Still House. Horse car lines were put in operation in 1864, and a passenger depot was erected by the Union Railroad Company in 1867, supported on piles driven in the river north of and adjacent to Weybosset Bridge. The retaining walls of Providence river, constructed in 1792, were extended southerly to Crawford Street in 1873, and Crawford Bridge was erected as a fixed span across the river 130 feet wide. Its ends projected at right angles northerly to Weybosset Bridge with pile supports driven in the river bed, leaving a river opening 75 feet wide. The extensions provided additional widths for South Water and Dyer streets.

³¹Records of Providence Washington Insurance Company.

³²City Engineer's records.

³³City Engineer's plan 0282. March 28, 1848.

(9)

In 1888 the City Council ordered the filling of the Cove Basin and the erection of retaining walls to confine the waters of Woonasquacket and Moshassuck rivers. The walls were completed in 1892, providing for the convergence of those rivers a short distance east of the new railroad buildings (erected 1897-98) and their discharge into Providence river. New walls for Providence river, 132 feet apart, were constructed southerly to the head of navigation at Crawford Street between 1892 and 1897, and two rows of intermediate piers were built as far south as Weybosset Bridge. Four new steel bridges were erected in replacements of former spans, including Burnside Bridge (1893), Washington Row Bridge (1895), Exchange Bridge (1895) and Weybosset Bridge (1898), the latter including an extension northerly along Canal Street. The gap between Burnside and Exchange bridges was filled by the erection of Post Office Bridge in 1904, providing the last link in a continuous span (except for river openings), 1147 feet wide, extending from the head of navigation to the railroad viaduct (erected 1908). A cable tramway line ran up College Hill 1890-92. Cable and horse cars were succeeded by trolleys in 1893. Freight cars were drawn by long lines of horses on rails across Weybosset Bridge to supply fruit and produce dealers on South Water and Dyer streets. Several old landmarks were eradicated when the Peoples Savings Bank replaced the Roger Williams Bank Building in 1913; Turks Head Building rose on the site of Whitman Block in 1913; and the Hospital Trust Building was erected in 1918 where the Washington Buildings had stood. Crawford Bridge, together with its extensions along South Water and Dyer streets, was rebuilt between 1928 and 1930; the wood piles driven in 1874 were replaced by stone walls and piers, and a steel superstructure was built extending to the retaining walls built in 1892. South Main Street was widened in 1929, and the lines of College Street were revised in 1936. The erection of Providence County Court House (1928-33), the Metcalf Building (1936), and Auditorium (1940) of the School of Design in replacement of old buildings on South Main and College streets and Market Square, together with the razing of the South Water Street warehouses, climaxed the transformation of Market Square. Only the Market House, the Union Bank Building, and the frontispiece of Franklin House now remain as links with the past.

D. B. UPDIKE AND THE MERRYMOUNT PRESS

by CLARENCE E. SHERMAN*

IN 1880, a young Rhode Islander, then 20 years of age, whose genealogical lines were tied back to Lodowick and Wilkins Updike, to the Reverend James MacSparran, to Smith's Castle in Cocumscussuc, to Kingston and other sections of the old Narragansett country, set forth from his home here on Benefit Street for Boston. His objective was to make a fresh start in carving out a career. Due to the death of his father, his family's resources could not provide for him a college education. During one winter he had filled in as a substitute library assistant in the Providence Athenaeum, but this was only temporary employment.

Through a cousin in Boston, he heard of an opportunity for employment with the book publishing firm of Houghton, Mifflin & Company. The position was indeed a humble beginning, — errand boy at age 20!

Later, as he progressed from simple to more advanced tasks, he was sent over to the Riverside Press in Cambridge where his apprenticeship in typography and book building really began in earnest. His development progressed so successfully that in 1892 a very important opportunity was presented to him. He was asked to plan a scheme of decoration and select a competent designer for the *Book of Common Prayer* in a special re-issue. His choice was Bertram G. Goodhue, artist and architect, and together they produced a work that was considered a striking success. Updike, however, always felt that the over-decorative influence of William Morris was too prominent and detracted considerably from the book he hoped it would be.

Nevertheless in the reception of the book by church authorities and others, there was no such restraint. The *Book of Common Prayer* was rated as a distinctive achievement. This brought standing and the birth of a reputation to his door, and soon he was at work on the *Altar Book*, which with the financial support of Mr. Harold Brown, another Rhode Islander, was finally completed in 1896.

Meanwhile, in 1893, Updike decided to set himself up in business, first in two rooms on an upper floor of a building at the corner of

* Librarian of Providence Public Library.

Tremont Place and Beacon Street in Boston. At the time, he had no printing press. He planned, designed and supervised the printing, but the composition, press-work and the binding as a job was sent out to established publishers. His first book issued in this manner was a volume of calendar selections by Lucy Bradlee Stone entitled *Vexilla Regis Quotidie*, and it was printed and bound at the Riverside Press. Among his most significant books of those early years was one of Rhode Island interest, — *The Hazard Family of Rhode Island, 1635-1894*, issued in 1895.

Updike was graduated from the rank of typographic adviser to printer and publisher when he determined to have his own type-setting and printing-press establishment. And so it was that in 1896, in the printing of a sermon in memory of Martin Brimmer, "D. B. Updike, The Merrymount Press" appeared, which was one day to signify forthright book design, excellence in type-face choice and a rare gift of skill in execution and production. This was the first use of the to-become-famous trade-name in a book. He had selected "Merrymount," he later explained, to signify that "one could work and have a good time." This is a philosophy that every age of man could well adopt to live by.

And so for more than half a century, *D. B. Updike, the Merrymount Press* has continued as a hall-mark of excellence in printed publications of a variety of kinds, — in privately printed books for distribution by the author only, or a patron who pays the bill and permits no public sale; in trade books for several general publishers of the higher levels of standards; in the reports and other publications of learned societies, institutions and ecclesiastic sources. His imprint also appeared in the publications of book clubs and a limited editions club. The quality of these books for "select" groups was, of course, improved by Updike design and direction, but the idea of a Limited Editions Club of several hundred members amused him. "To say you are a member of the Limited Editions Club is like declaring you are a member of the Grand Central Station," he once remarked.

In March, 1940, the American Institute of Graphic Arts and the Grolier Club together paid tribute to this great master of typography with an exhibition of his work in the club house. At the private view, there were notable addresses by leaders in the field of book arts, including David T. Pottinger of the Harvard University Press and Lawrence

C. Wroth, Librarian of the John Carter Brown Library. Many who were there still recall their pleasure and satisfaction in sharing in homage so well deserved.

Two of America's leading universities, — Brown (1910) and Harvard (1929), — honored Updike with the degree of Master of Arts.

Daniel Berkeley Updike died December 28, 1941, in his eighty-second year.

The path of books leading from the Merrymount Press, when its founder died, back to the beginning of his career in the field, is a long one and includes about 800 books and brochures, truly an impressive output of quality in design and execution. Fortunately, plans for the continuation of the press under the direction of John Bianchi, his partner, had been arranged by Updike and so work went on under the same name, in the same plant but with different leadership.

And now for more specific reasons for this discussion in this periodical at this time.

During the past year or so, two books have appeared which are concerned with D. B. Updike and the Merrymount Press.

The author of the first book,¹ — George Parker Winship, — has occupied a high post among American bibliographers and typographical authorities ever since he became Librarian of the John Carter Brown Library in 1895, and later moved to Cambridge as Librarian of the Widener Collection in the Harvard Library.

In his closing page, Winship sums up his estimate of Updike of Merrymount in the words of Dr. Max Farrand, formerly Director of the Henry E. Huntington Library in San Marino, California:

"Updike's greatest assets in the field he had undertaken to cultivate were an impeccable taste and an instinct for fitness . . . he was always striving for betterment so that his natural qualities were improved by his careful studies . . . All these elements were fused by integrity of character into a complete intolerance of anything but the best in life as in work. There has been no one in the United States who so consistently demanded and achieved distinction in the work of printing."

¹*Daniel Berkeley Updike and the Merrymount Press of Boston, Massachusetts*, by George Parker Winship. The Printing House of Leo Hart, Rochester, 1947.

The second book² is a symposium by distinguished typographic experts and scholars. It opens with Updike's well known and admirable *Notes on the Press and its Work*, followed by *Recollections and Perspectives*, by Stanley Morison, the eminent English typographical authority; M. A. De Wolf Howe's appraisal of Updike as a scholar-printer; *The Soul of the Merrymount Press*, by David T. Pottinger; *An Enquiry into Updike and the Name Merrymount*, by Carl Purington Rollins, and others.

The gallery of Merrymount title pages and types furnishes more than 20 excellent full page reproductions, many in original colors.

If the publication of these two books were not enough to bring to focus a beam of high light on this son of Rhode Island, the recent news that the Merrymount Press is to be closed out, its brilliant course terminated, within a few weeks, surely should suffice. This unhappy ending of one of New England's significant cultural institutions is not on account of lack of business. The owner of the building occupied by the Press requires the space, the lease expires, and that ends it. John Bianchi, no longer a young man, does not desire to go through a laborious readjustment of staggering dimensions. Consequently, the type and the printing presses of Merrymount at 712 Beacon Street, Boston, will presently come to a full stop at the end of a splendid record.

Winship in the final chapter of *Daniel Berkeley Updike and the Merrymount Press* writes: "The Merrymount Press will be Updike's monument, but his name will be kept alive in the city of his birth by the "Updike Collection of Books on Printing". It was he who led a movement to raise funds to purchase the duplicates of the St. Bride Foundation Technical Reference Library on Printing in London in 1911. With these books as a nucleus, a Printing Collection was established in the Providence Public Library, devoted to the history, techniques and processes which, he believed, together with the examples of printing in the John Carter Brown, Annmary Brown, John Hay and Rhode Island Historical Society Libraries, would endow our city with unusual resources in the lore of the printed book. In 1937, the trustees of the Providence Public Library, encouraged

²*Updike: American Printer and His Merrymount Press*, by M. A. DeWolfe Howe, Stanley Morison, David T. Pottinger and others. The American Institute of Graphic Arts, New York, 1947.

by a gift from William Davis Miller then president, authorized the furnishing of a separate room, and D. B. Updike was at last persuaded to have it named the Updike Collection of Books on Printing. He had at first urged "Merrymount" instead of his own name.

To help perpetuate the collection, Updike by his will left the royalties from the sale of his own published writings, including his masterpiece, *Printing Types*.

After the death of the collection's great patron, his personal library came to the Public Library, and many other valuable additions have been received from Miss Edith M. K. Wetmore of Newport. The total number of books, pamphlets and bound periodicals in the Updike Collection now exceeds 3,500.

This collection and the one in the Huntington Library on the Pacific Coast, span a vast continent with a common bond, — the noble work and expanding influence of a master craftsman. Printing from the Merrymount Press was ever appropriate to its purpose, — whether it was a label for a jelly jar or a prayer book for the House of God. Updike proved beyond any doubt that a trade can be practiced in the spirit of a profession.

That Rhode Island was ever dear to D. B. Updike may be revealed in the list of publications about our state and some of its residents which came from his press, and the loving care he gave them.

Then, too, he maintained strong ties with a number of dear friends, especially in Newport and Providence.

He was a useful member of the Board of Managers of the John Carter Brown Library.

And, finally, on December 16th in 1937 on the occasion of the official opening of the Updike Collection in the Providence Public Library, he said this to his audience:

"It has not been my fortune to live in Rhode Island. But in this city where the first twenty years of my life were spent, I always feel more at home than I can ever feel elsewhere. No streets are so familiar, no houses so full of happy association or of dear ghosts, as they are here. And 'the South County' where my family has held land for nearly three hundred years, is to me full of memories."

SILHOUETTE EXHIBITION

by CLIFFORD P. MONAHON

NEARLY 200 SILHOUETTES were lent to the Society for its exhibition of silhouettes. They represent not only profiles of famous Rhode Islanders but also well-known silhouettists.

The front cover of the July, 1948, issue of *Rhode Island History* carried a reproduction of the silhouette of Governor James Fenner. Research reveals that this was cut by William Henry Brown in 1833. Brown was a famous cutter from Charleston, South Carolina. His silhouettes are extremely rare. Miss Carrick in her book, *Shades of our Ancestors* (Boston, Little, Brown & Co., 1928) writes, "It is a tremendous pity that, aside from his *Portrait Gallery*, so little really remains of his work. I rank a good Brown far above a good Edouart, not only because I prefer his work, but since, from the very rarity of his silhouettes, they are infinitely more valuable." Katherine M. McClinton in her book, *A Handbook of Popular Antiques* (Random House, 1945-46) says, "It is too bad to whet your appetite for a Brown silhouette, for they are so rare that there are few even in museum collections." In view of the scarcity of these items, it is a source of satisfaction to have been able to exhibit fourteen Brown silhouettes: James Russell Bartlett; Moses Brown; his nephew, Nicholas Brown; Capt. Shubael Cady; Sullivan Dorr; Gov. James Fenner; Adeline Harris; Avis Lockwood Harris; Benoni Harris; William J. Harris; Benoni Lockwood; A. Herman Stillwell; his wife, Eliza Bailey (Wyatt) Stillwell; and Elisha R. Potter.

Brown's silhouettes all face right and the ground is painted in, apparently with india ink. We know that he was in Providence August 1, 1833, as the *Journal* carries his advertisement: "Mr. Brown invites the citizens of Providence to call at his room, on the corner of Main & College Streets, adjoining the post office and examine the likenesses of several gentlemen of this city, which he has taken from memory, after a casual glance at the original in the street." The likenesses were so striking that the *Journal* published a commendation in its columns, inviting the readers' attention to Mr. Brown's advertisement, adding "there is no humbug or deception about his [Mr. Brown's] performances. If any of our readers should doubt his ability, we would advise them to call at his room and see how perfectly

he has taken the 'counterfeit presentments' of Hon. Tristram Burgess, Gov. Fenner, Elisha Potter and many other distinguished citizens, from memory merely, and a hasty glance at the originals, as they were walking in the street. The likenesses are taken at full length — and every peculiarity in the dress or appearance of the originals is so accurately preserved that they bear in the ensemble the impress of life."

It is probable that Brown's silhouette is the only likeness made of Moses Brown in his life time. Moreover the original wash drawing, made by William Harris of Moses Brown was exhibited in a case in the museum at this time. It is quite evident that Mr. Harris drew upon the silhouette for his profile likeness of the eminent Moses.

Among other famous silhouettists represented in the exhibition are Samuel Metford, Augustin Edouart, William Bache, William Seager, Master Hubbard, and of later period, Baroness Meydell, Kartherine Buffum, Baron Cotford, and Wetherbee. There are doubtless likenesses cut by Samuel King, William Cottu, and other famous silhouettists, but until an authority in the field has examined them, we shall have no definite information. For this reason photographs have been made of each item in the exhibition.

THE 127TH ANNUAL MEETING

THE ONE HUNDRED TWENTY-SEVENTH annual meeting of Rhode Island Historical Society was held September 15, 1948, at 8:15 p.m. at John Brown House. President Richard LeBaron Bowen presided.

The secretary read the call of the meeting and declared a quorum to be present.

The minutes of the one hundred twenty-sixth annual meeting were read, accepted, and placed on file.

Mr. Howard W. Wilson, treasurer, presented his report, which showed an operating deficit for the year ending June 30, 1948, of \$832. Dividends and interest amounted to \$4,697 on investments, which, as of June 30, 1948, had a book value of \$123,600.73. This latter figure did not include \$7,520 held in the John Brown House Fund.

Mr. Clifford P. Monahon, librarian, reported several recent accessions including papers from the estate of Lydia Owen Beckwith and

an oil painting of Thomas Cranston by John Singleton Copley. Mr. Monahan stated that Mr. Clarkson Collins, 3rd, research associate, had made substantial progress in getting valuable papers, hitherto in storage, into usable condition.

The Membership Committee, Mr. David B. Lovell, Jr., reporting, stated that there had been a net gain of twelve members from January 1, 1948, through June 30, 1948, and that the membership on the latter date stood at 1314. The guest book was signed by nine hundred fifty persons in the period.

No report was received from the Library Committee.

Dr. James H. Hanley, reporting for the Lecture Committee, stated that four lectures and social meetings had been held from January to May with a total attendance of 330. Mr. Roelker addressed four outside organizations in the same period; and Mr. Monahan, one. Twenty patriotic societies and other organizations used John Brown House for meetings at which total attendance was 1237.

The Publication Committee reported that two issues of the Society's quarterly, *Rhode Island History*, were published in the past six months, each of thirty-two pages. These issues contained eight articles, one book review, and other material.

The Grounds and Buildings Committee reported the installation in the cellar, of a dehumidifying unit, which renders this portion of the house much more suitable for the storage of books and documents.

The exterior of the house was reported to be in good condition; but the interior was said to be in need of extensive redecorating. It was recommended that a program for this work be started soon.

As those present stood out of respect, the secretary read the report of the Committee on Necrology. Sixteen members died in the period from January 1 through June 30, 1948.

The treasurer read the report of the Finance Committee. As of June 30, 1948, the investment portfolio consisted of 28½% bonds, 37% preferred stocks, and 34½% common stocks, which returned an overall current yield of 4.40%. Invested funds showed a marked increase, the greater part of which came to the Society by bequests. Two additional bequests of substantial size are expected in the coming year.

Mr. Edward C. Palmer reported for the Audit Committee and delivered the completed auditor's report. This found the financial

records of the Society to be in good order, and the auditor offered no criticism.

Mr. William G. Roelker, director of the Society, rendered his report the highlights of which were:

Mrs. Monahan, who is not on the payroll, acts as museum director and is rendering splendid service.

Mrs. Seamans, secretary of the office and loyal member of the Society for several years, was obliged to resign because of illness. Her loss will be keenly felt.

Miss Louise Huling who has been in the library for three years has moved to the office downstairs. A new employee, Miss Catherine Grady, is now Mr. Monahan's secretary in the library.

Our quarterly, *Rhode Island History*, was selected as an outstanding publication by the American Association for State and Local History in its annual contest.

Historical societies fall roughly into three classes: those entirely supported by the State, those entirely supported by endowment, and those depending upon some State support, a small endowment, and the efforts of their members. Our Society is in the last class, which makes for independence and a vigorous interested membership. We do not, as many societies do, limit our activities by the amount of money appropriated from the State and the income from endowment, but we decide what we can reasonably do for the community and then call upon the community to back up our program with the necessary funds.

The need for a lecture room is great. Such a room should be a modern one equipped with air conditioning and projection booth. It would make it possible for greater numbers to attend lectures in greater comfort. Furthermore, it would free the rooms that are now used for other purposes. Construction would be expensive, but it cannot be doubted that somehow the funds will be found.

At its conclusion the report of Mr. Roelker was enthusiastically applauded. All of the reports above referred to were accepted and placed on file.

President Bowen rendered his address in which he spoke of the splendid condition of the Society. He called attention to the fact that invested funds continue to increase and that there is more to be expected. In spite of increased activity expenses remain relatively

TREASURER'S REPORT

FOR SIX MONTHS ENDED JUNE 30, 1948

At the annual meeting of 1948 the fiscal year was changed to begin July 1 and end June 30, in conformity with the State's fiscal year. The figures below represent an interim report from January 1 to June 30, 1948.

On an annual basis beginning July 1, 1947, ending June 30, 1948, the loss was slightly over \$800.

RECEIPTS

OPERATING

Dues	\$ 2,624.00	
Corporate Membership	800.00	
State Appropriation	3,249.98	
Interest and Dividends	2,313.47	
Sale of Publication, Books, etc.	188.07	
Contributions	424.46	
		\$ 9,599.98

NON-OPERATING

Bequest from Wilbour Estates	17,421.90	
John Brown House Fund	450.00	
State of R. I., Newspapers, etc.	269.72	
Sundry Receipts	13.00	
	18,154.62	
Total Receipts		\$ 27,754.60

EXPENDITURES

OPERATING

Salaries	\$ 7,125.60	
Supplies, Light, Telephone, etc.	480.57	
Director's Discretionary Fund	358.09	
Committees:		
Library	594.67	
Lecture	190.96	
Publication (<i>R. I. History</i>)	1,052.27	
Grounds and Buildings	2,071.01	
Membership	27.44	
Insurance	153.33	
Audit	40.00	
		\$ 12,093.94

NON-OPERATING

Investments	\$ 24,749.12	
Calder Bequest	231.10	
Paine Estate	240.00	
John Brown House Fund	450.00	
State of R. I., Newspapers, etc.	532.38	
Miscellaneous	12.75	
		26,215.35
Total Expenditures		\$ 38,309.29

ASSETS

AS OF JUNE 30, 1948

CASH AND INVESTMENT ACCOUNTS

Cash and Rhode Island Hospital		
National Bank	\$ 10,622.87	
Providence Institution for Savings	315.37	
Rhode Island Hospital Trust Co.	536.13	
Securities (Cash and Permanent account)	123,064.60	
		\$134,538.97
Rhode Island Hospital Trust Company		
(John Brown House Fund)	7,520.00	
John Brown House	50,000.00	
Books and Manuscripts	50,000.00	
Property (Four parcels of land)	4.00	
Furniture and Fixtures	1.00	
Museum Material	1.00	
Accounts Receivable	308.26	
Total Assets		\$242,373.23

RESERVES

General Endowment	\$182,266.04
Life Membership Fund Reserve	5,750.00
Sustaining Membership Fund Reserve	1,000.00
John Brown House Endowment Fund Reserve	7,520.00
Revolving Publication Fund Reserve	277.45
Wilbour Endowment Funds Reserve	32,986.90
Calder Endowment Fund Reserve	13,909.11
Index to Publication	25.00
Ward Papers	960.73
Surplus and Profit on Securities	(Deficit) 2,322.00
Total Reserves	\$242,373.23

HOWARD W. WILSON, *Treasurer*

Examined and found correct.

J. CUNLIFFE BULLOCK, *Chairman Auditing Committee*

stable. Mr. Bowen stated that he took great personal pleasure in being president of such a fine society.

Mr. James C. Collins presented the report of the Nominating Committee for officers and committee members. There being no counter nominations the secretary was instructed to cast one ballot for the slate as presented. This was accordingly done, and those members were declared elected to serve until the next annual meeting or until their successors were chosen.

The secretary presented the following resolution:

Resolved: That the thanks of the Society be extended to Mrs. Charles D. Cook, chairman of the Entertainment Committee, for her work in connection with the lectures, which contributed so much to the enjoyment of those attending the meetings.

This resolution was unanimously approved by all present.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 9:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
M. RANDOLH FLATHER
Secretary.

RECENT ACCESSIONS

By purchase, *Leading Americans of Italian descent in Massachusetts*, by Joseph William Carleyale.

Gift of the author, John Hutchins Cady, *Swan Point cemetery, a centennial history*.

From the Jacobs Hill Hunt, four record books and *High Lights and low downs*, by Mildred Kenyon.

From Margaret Stillwell, an illuminated volume by Emily Crouch and a collection of valentines.

From Capt. R. S. Hitchcock, a typewritten manuscript of *James Andrews of Dighton and Conway, Mass.*

Gift of Miss Grace A. McAuslan and Axel A. Christensen, *Record of deaths, Middleboro, Mass.*, comp. by the late Deacon Alfred Wood.

From Frank E. Maxwell, *The maritime history of [Warren] Rhode Island*, by Virginia Baker. (Typewritten)

From the late Clarence Irving Brown, a collection of genealogical and other material, sectional bookcases, and metal files.

By purchase, *Province and court records of Maine, v. 3, 1680-1692*.

By purchase, *Salem and the Indies and Salem in the eighteenth century*, both by James Duncan Phillips.

By purchase, *Churches of old New England*, by George Francis Marlowe.

LECTURE PROGRAM

STATED MEETING

Wednesday, January 12, 1949 8:15 p.m.

NEWPORT BEGINS TO REVOLT, 1764-1766

EDMUND S. MORGAN, PH.D.

History Department, Brown University

* * *

Wednesday, January 19, 1949 . . . 2:30 p.m.

POEMS AND LARD

WINFIELD T. SCOTT

Literary Editor, Providence SUNDAY JOURNAL

* * *

Wednesday, February 9, 1949 . . . 8:15 p.m.

CAPTURED COLOR, RHODE ISLAND IN KODACHROME

Illustrated

HAROLD MADISON

* * *

Wednesday, March 9, 1949 . . . 8:15 p.m.

SUBMARINES OFF THE ATLANTIC COAST

Illustrated

LT. CMDR. HENRY SALOMON, JR., U.S.N.R.

* * *

Wednesday, March 16, 1949 . . . 2:30 p.m.

EARLY RHODE ISLAND SILVER

Illustrated

DOROTHY NEEDHAM CASEY

JANUARY AND FEBRUARY
EXHIBITION OF DOLLS

from the collection of Mrs. Edward L. Singen

LIBRARY HOURS

Monday through Friday . . . 9:00 to 5:00

Tuesday Evening 7:00 to 9:00

Sunday Afternoon 3:00 to 5:00

R H O D E I S L A N D H I S T O R Y



NEW MEMBERS

July 1 — November 30, 1948

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Mrs. Gilman Angier | Arthur J. Levy, Esq. |
| Mrs. H. P. Beck | Dr. Fedele U. Luongo |
| Tiverton, R. I. | Most Rev. Russell J. McVinney, |
| Mr. H. Glenn Brown | D.D., LL.D. |
| Dr. Alex M. Burgess | Mr. Thomas L. Marcaccio |
| Mr. Lester P. Burgess | Mrs. Edward E. Mathewson |
| Hamilton, R. I. | Johnston 9, R. I. |
| Mr. W. Russell Burwell | Mrs. Paul W. Monohon |
| Cleveland, Ohio | Mrs. J. Frank Morrissey |
| Mr. J. Austin Carroll | West Warwick, R. I. |
| Mrs. Arnold B. Chace, 3rd. | Miss Ruth A. Murray |
| Mrs. Frederic Low Chase, Jr. | Rumford, R. I. |
| Mr. Franklin Clarkin | Mrs. Raymond E. Ostby |
| Mr. and Mrs. F. Morris Cochran | Mr. Thomas E. Prendergast |
| Mrs. May E. Colwell | Mr. Andrew P. Quinn |
| Cranston 9, R. I. | Hon. Robert E. Quinn |
| Mr. Walter V. Connly | Mr. Thomas H. Quinn |
| Paul C. Cross, Ph.D. | Mr. Sturgis Rice |
| Hon. Patrick P. Curran | Plainville, Mass. |
| Mrs. Robert C. Dexter | Miss Jean Richmond |
| Mrs. Frederick James Durfee | Wakefield, R. I. |
| Mr. and Mrs. Glendore M. Elliott | Dr. William Joseph Robbins |
| Mr. Edward H. Fleer | Mr. R. Stockton Rush |
| Rumford 16, R. I. | Mr. Briton W. Sears |
| Mr. Harry B. Freeman | East Providence 14, R. I. |
| Miss Catherine G. Grady | Mrs. Newell C. Shippee |
| Mrs. Clifford D. Heathcote | Mrs. John Jermain Slocum |
| Mr. Frank L. Hinckley, Jr. | Tuxedo Park, New York |
| Mrs. Alexander T. Hindmarsh | Mr. Benjamin A. Smith |
| Cranston 10, R. I. | Mr. Ronald B. Smith |
| Mr. Thomas J. Hogan | Mrs. W. Bowers Smith |
| Miss Frances Hubbert, Librarian | Mr. T. Everett Starrett |
| Redwood Library and Athe- | Mr. John O. Stitely |
| naeum, Newport | Kingston, R. I. |
| Walter S. Hunter, Ph.D. | Mr. Benjamin R. Sturges |
| Mrs. Charles E. Hurdis | Mr. J. Banigan Sullivan |
| North Providence 4, R. I. | Narragansett, R. I. |
| Mr. Richard A. Hurley | Mrs. Willard B. VanHouten |
| Mrs. Donald E. Jackson, Jr. | Mr. Gilbert Verney |
| Mrs. Hope Iselin Jones | Job's Island, Dedham, Mass. |
| Tuscon, Arizona | Mrs. Richmond Viall |
| Mr. Richmond Greenhalgh Kent | Miss Alice M. White |
| Chepachet, R. I. | Johnston, R. I. |
| Dr. Maurice W. Laufer | Mr. and Mrs. George E. Wilson |
| Riverside 15, R. I. | Mr. Lee A. Worrell |