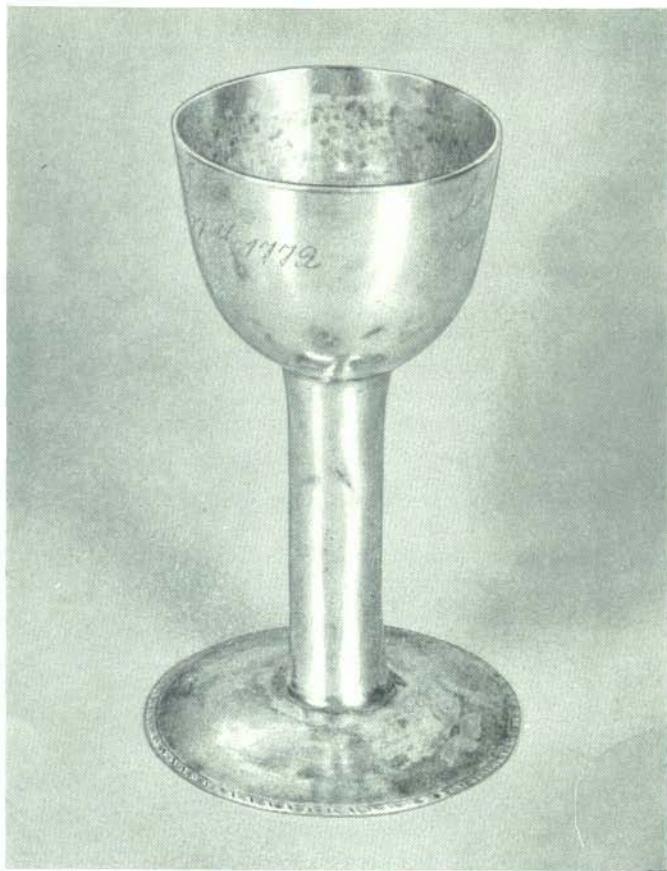


RHODE ISLAND HISTORY

VOL. 10, NO. 4

OCTOBER, 1951



Rhode Island Historical Society

Gift of David Fisher

SILVER WINE GOBLET taken from the *Gaspee*

[see inside front cover]

THE RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PUBLISHED BY RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY
52 POWER STREET, PROVIDENCE 6, RHODE ISLAND

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SILVER WINE GOBLET

taken from the *Gaspee*

[reproduced on front cover]

On August 20, 1895, the Society received from Mr. David Fisher of Kalamazoo, Michigan, a silver wine goblet, which Abraham Whipple, the recognized leader of the GASPEE expedition, took from the British vessel on the morning of June 10, 1772.

The goblet is four inches tall, two inches in diameter at the top, two and three-eighths inches in diameter at the foot, with hollow stem, and bowl one and five-eighths inches deep. There is a fine gadroon around the base. The inscription reads, "Captured by Com. Whipple of R. I. from the British Sloop Gaspee, June 17th [sic] 1772."

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THE BEAVERTAIL LIGHTHOUSE

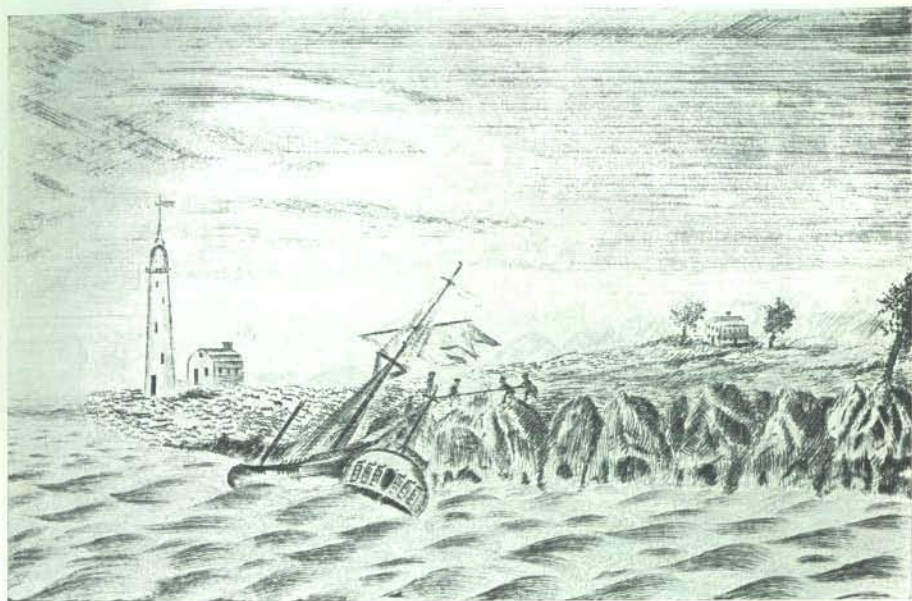
by SUSAN B. FRANKLIN*

THE TWO HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY of the building of a lighthouse at Beavertail, Jamestown, Rhode Island, should not pass unnoticed. This lighthouse is the third to be erected on the Atlantic coast, and its subsequent history makes it worthy of record. An eminent architect planned its tower; the angered British partially destroyed the building as they departed from Newport in 1780; an impoverished colony made no delay in repairing it; an alert Newporter supplied its successor with gas, the first time such fuel was used in a lighthouse. Time left its well proportioned foundation unnoticed for years, but a violent hurricane brought it to view again.

As early as 1712 the Proprietors' records of the town of Jamestown record a vote "to sett a watch and build a beacon." It was "voted that John Hull grant a warrant to Gershom Remington to warn the Indian to build a beacon as soon as possible." It was further ordered "That John Hull grant forth a warrant to Benedict Arnold to look after the watch and see that it is faithfully kept, and if any person or persons should neglect his duty you are hereby ordered to make complaint unto the Warden, that they may be dealt withal. It is further ordered that any that shall neglect his watching or warning shall pay three shillings for his defect. It is ordered that Gershom Remington warn the Indian man to build a beacon at Beavertail and to come to John Hull's house for his directions where and how to make it."

One can picture them gathering the corn husks and tying them into beacons and then traversing the rough fields to John Hull's house, trembling a little lest they have been *defective* and must pay the three shillings forfeiture.

*Miss Franklin, Ph.D., Bryn Mawr, 1895, has written many articles for classical publications as well as a number of historical articles.



BEAVERTAIL LIGHT, 1798

Detail of a drawing made for the Providence Marine Society's certificate of membership

In 1740 the Colony ordered a lighthouse to be placed at Beavertail, and on June 16, 1744, it was "voted and resolved that Thomas Carr procure a good stock lock* and key for the watch house at Beavertail pint and put same well upon the south door, and prepare a good bolt for the north door to bolt on the inside, and also that Thomas Carr provide a suitable gun or small arm for the use of the town, and to deposit the same in the watch house, and to be paid out of the town treasury."

In the Acts of the General Assembly in February, 1749, is the following: "... And now a general Peace being established, there appears as great a Necessity of a Light-House as ever, several Misfortunes having very lately happened for want thereof; Which Things being represented by many Gentlemen, Merchants, and others, Inha-

*According to Webster's *New International Dictionary* a stock lock is a "lock inclosed in a wooden case and attached to the face of a door."

bitants of the Colony, and the Affair maturely considered, *Be it Enacted by this Assembly . . .* That Capt. *Simon Pease*, *Jonathan Nichols*, Esq; Capt. *Joseph Harrison*, Mr. *Abel Franklin*, *Josiah Arnold*, and *George Brown*, Esqrs. be, and they, or the major Part of them, are hereby constituted a Committee, to build a Light House on *Beaver Tail*, in the Island of *Jamestown*, alias *Conannicut . . .*"

In *A Plan of the Town and Harbour of Newport on Rhode Island*, drawn by Peter Harrison in 1755, now in the Public Records Office in London the lighthouse is portrayed on the southerly end of Jamestown. Carl Bridenbaugh in *Peter Harrison, First American Architect* includes this description of the tower by a Dr. William Douglass, a friend of Joseph Harrison, brother of Peter: "The Diameter at the Base is 24 Feet, and at the Top 13 Feet. The Height from the Ground to the Top of the Cornice is 58 Feet, round which is a Gallery, and within that stands the Lanthorn, which is 11 Feet high, and 8 Feet Diameter." Bridenbaugh further notes that this building was of timber and burned July 22, 1753, only three days after the General Treasurer paid the Harrisons, Joseph and Peter, for the paint used on the building.

In August of the same year provision was made for the erection of a more substantial building for which the stones and brick from Fort George on Goat Island should be used. Considerable time elapsed before additional land could be acquired and the new structure



BEAVERTAIL LIGHT
before the 1938 hurricane

built. There is a well-founded tradition that in the intervening period Abel Franklin, the first lighthouse keeper, waved some kind of warning light.



Photograph by J. M. Watson

FOUNDATION OF THE BEAVERTAIL LIGHT
DESIGNED BY PETER HARRISON
brought into view by the hurricane of 1938

It has not been generally known that there exists a picture showing Harrison's second lighthouse in the distant background. However, a sketch showing D'Estaing forcing the passage between Newport and Conanicut on August 8, 1778, was drawn by Ozanne, an artist in D'Estaing's fleet. This drawing, one of six in the Louvre, was discovered by Dr. Waldo Leland, a member of the staff of Carnegie Institution of Washington, Washington, D. C., and published by them in *News Service Bulletin*, July, 1933. The Harrison lighthouse appears in small outline at the southern point of Conanicut.

In due course of time David Melville of Newport, then experimenting in the use of gas for illumination, contracted with the government to build a gas house and apparatus for lighting the lantern, and the apparatus was installed in 1817. Probably this was the first use of

this fuel for illuminating a lighthouse. For a record Melville kept a log book, and on one occasion he states, "Found the light out at daylight, the key having been turned during the night, supposed by the mason's boys who are working on the keeper's house and lodge in the Light house. Obligated them to quit the light house and find other lodgings in consequence of smoking cigars in the light house, and carelessness with their lamp endangering its safety."

To quote from William Gilman Low's article, "A Short History of Beaver Tail Light, Conanicut, Rhode Island," in the *Bulletin* of the Jamestown Historical Society, #7, August, 1936: "In 1829 a bell house was built near the base of the tower and a fog bell established. In 1851 an air fog whistle and an air trumpet or reed horn was experimentally installed, the air compressor being operated by a horse; then six years later a steam fog whistle was placed in operation. This last it is claimed was first used at Beaver Tail.

"The existing Beaver Tail Lighthouse tower was built in 1862. It is constructed of granite, with a square tower. The upper half of the tower is painted white and the adjacent buildings are likewise white."

In the hurricane of September, 1938, a mighty tidal wave destroyed the building where the foghorn was located and brought into view the fine proportions of the original lighthouse foundation designed by Peter Harrison.

For two hundred years Indians, ferrymen, farmers, and faithful keepers have watched the seas, the raging storms, the howling gales; have tended lights in snow and sleet; have sounded for dreary hours on a stretch the wailing horn, when in snow and fog the Brenton Light showed them no tiny gleam. For them all, from Abel Franklin, the first keeper, to Captain Manders and Edward A. Donahue of recent days, seamen on sailing ships and steamers, on warships and destroyers, on tankers and barges, should wave a salute in gratitude.

HISTORY OF CASTLE HILL LIGHT STATION NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND

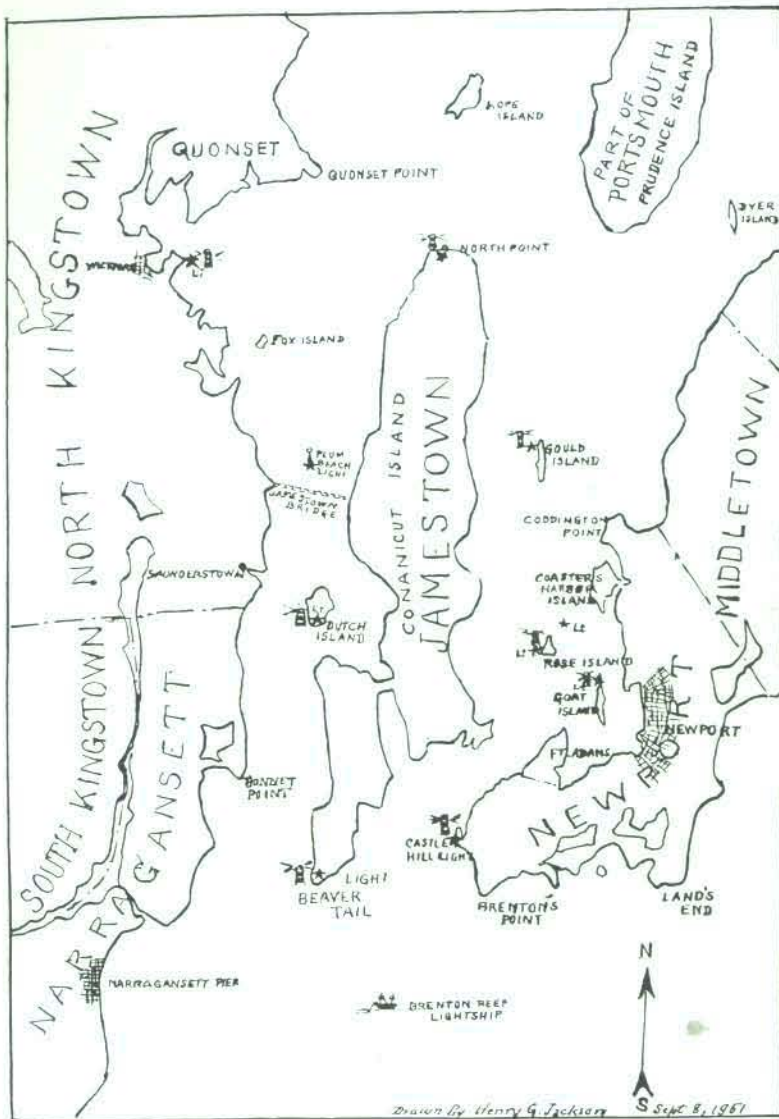
Compiled by the United States Coast Guard
from data in the National Archives

CONGRESS first appropriated \$10,000 under an Act of March 3, 1875 making appropriations for sundry civil expenses, "for a fog-signal at Castle Hill, entrance to Newport, Rhode Island." This was followed on August 4, 1886 by an appropriation of \$10,000 "for a lighthouse and fog signal at Castle Hill, R. I." and this was augmented by an appropriation of \$5,000 "in addition to above amount for lighthouse etc. at Castle Hill" on March 30, 1888 and another \$5,000 "in addition to sum already appropriated for lighthouse at Castle Hill, R. I." on March 2, 1889. The lighthouse was established in 1890.

As early as 1869 the annual report of the Lighthouse Board had indicated that applications had been made at various times in the past, and renewed that year, for a lighthouse and fog signal on Castle Hill to guide vessels, especially in thick and foggy weather, into Newport Harbor and Narragansett Bay. After a careful examination, the Board had recommended in that year that an efficient fog signal be authorized for this point. An estimate for such a fog signal, including the cost of land, was submitted. In the following year, no action having been taken in the meanwhile by Congress, the request was repeated and a sum of \$18,000, the amount previously estimated and submitted, was again requested.

In 1871 the report stated that the application for a fog signal on Castle Hill was not being renewed "in view of the proposed erection of a steam syren signal at Beaver Tail Light Station; distant only about two miles."

In 1875 it was reported that an appropriation of \$10,000 had been included in the Sundry Civil Expenses Act of March 3, 1875, but that "the purchase has not been consummated, as the owners of the property where it is proposed to erect the signal have, within the past year, erected spacious mansions for summer residences, and are opposed to the erection of a signal on their land, which must, of necessity, be at their very doors, and in their opinion would depreciate the value of their property." No proper site, it seemed, could be procured in the locality except by condemnation and even in this case



MAP SHOWING BEAVERTAIL
AND CASTLE HILL LIGHTS
at entrance to Narragansett Bay

the valuation of the land would undoubtedly be far beyond the sum appropriated for the fog signal. No other site could be occupied to the same advantage. "There are no positions on either side of Castle Hill, seaward or landward, suitable for such a fog signal, and a selection could only be made of positions on the opposite shore, which would not answer the purpose." The Board still felt that a fog signal was very much needed at this point, however. In 1877 a proposed automatic buoy, giving frequent blasts of a whistle in the channel off this point, was considered of doubtful value because of the sheltered character of the position. As no proper site could be obtained, the \$10,000 appropriated in 1875 was accordingly allowed to "lapse back to the Treasury."

On August 4, 1886, the same amount (\$10,000) was appropriated to establish both a lighthouse and a fog signal, provided that a site be obtained "without expense to the Government." Such an agreement was found to be impracticable with the amount of funds (\$10,000) in hand, and on March 30, 1888 an additional appropriation of \$5,000 was made. It was, however, still found impossible to build a lighthouse and fog signal for the amounts appropriated. Therefore, in its 1888 annual report, the Lighthouse Board recommended that the condition that the site be obtained "without expense to the Government" be eliminated from the appropriation act. "It is believed that such (a suitable site) can be obtained," the report continues, "and that proper structures can be erected for the amount already appropriated, if it can be made available within the condition which now prevents action in the matter." A new \$15,000 appropriation, omitting the undesirable condition, was accordingly passed October 19, 1888.

In 1889 the Board reported "Separate sites for the lighthouse and dwelling were obtained without condition and without expense to the Government. These structures will be built this season . . ."

The Board reported the completion of the station in 1890. The site for the lighthouse and fog signal had been deeded for \$1 to the Government on June 10, 1887 by Alexander Agassiz, the famous professor of Zoology at Harvard University.

"To have and to hold the same to the said U. S. of America for the uses and purposes aforesaid only (i.e. 'for the purpose of having a Light House and fog signal station erected thereon according to plans

made and agreed upon by the parties hereto'), but without any right-of-way thereto except when the same is not accessible by water and this grant is upon the further condition that the said Light House and fog signal station shall be constructed upon the plans and specifications agreed upon by and between the Light House Board of the U. S. and this grantor and annexed hereto, which Light House and Fog Signal Station shall not be hereafter changed but with the consent of the said grantor or those who may have his estate at Castle Hill."

When proposals were opened on October 20, 1887, it had been found that Mr. Wm. T. Wilbor of Newport, R. I., was the lowest bidder (\$8,600), but this bid was coupled with the condition that he should be allowed right-of-way for men and materials "over the most accessible route in the vicinity of the proposed site." This condition was refused by Professor Agassiz, who wrote on May 22, 1888 to the Engineer of the Third Light House District:

"It is impossible for me to make any further concessions in the matter of the light house. What with one thing and another I stand an excellent show of having my place ruined and nobody to foot the bill. I must now protect myself at all hazards. I have signed a deed to the U. S. on the only terms which I will agree to and if the Government cannot carry out its part of the programme I shall take the necessary steps to re-enter the land. I don't feel called upon in any way either to be guided by the interest of navigation or of the public to ruin a place upon which I have spent a great deal of money, the more so as I feel and have always felt that had the Light House Board met my objections there would have been no need of a light on Castle Hill and the transfer of the Brentons' Reef Light Ship to a straight range with Rose Island would have given all the possible safety needed for so short a run."

Meanwhile an offer made on July 27, 1888 by the Old Colony Steamboat Company, to contract for the building of the proposed lighthouse and fog signal for the sum of \$13,600, was duly considered by the Board. This was to be an entirely different site. The proposal, however, was turned down as being contrary to Government policy "to have public works erected by private parties at their cost in whole or in part."

By November 23, 1888 the Engineer of the Third Light House District had, therefore, "been directed to confer with the owner, and ascertain from him the terms on which he would sell to the U. S. the land necessary for a site for this station, and in case he refuses to sell, or asks an excessive price for the land, or insists upon conditions which are inadmissible, then to recommend that the necessary steps be taken to obtain title by proceedings in condemnation."



Courtesy of T. Robley Louttit, Inc.

CASTLE HILL LIGHT, NEWPORT
entrance to Narragansett Bay

On May 20, 1889 the land for the lighthouse was deeded to the U. S. by Professor Agassiz "without condition and without expense to the Government." It consisted of .198 acres.

The station, when erected in 1889-90, consisted of a small granite tower (about 25 feet above land) located close to the shore and containing the light and fog bell. The keeper's dwelling was on a separate site nearby and was a "commodious structure of six rooms with summer kitchen attached." A small pile wharf with boat-house attached was built for the use of the Keeper. The light was first shown on May 1, 1890.

The fog bell was discontinued November 30, 1891 and the bell and apparatus removed. Apparently the fog bell was discontinued in accordance with an understanding with Professor Agassiz. The fog bell was reinstated February 27, 1896, the new bell weighing 2400 lbs. "A more efficient fog signal was found to be necessary," the Board reported.

On December 7, 1896 Professor Agassiz wrote the chairman of the Light House Board:

"Referring to the statements I made to Mr. Lamy and expressed by him in his letter to Col. Ludlow that the Light House Board had not treated me fairly in the matter of the Bell at the Castle Hill Light House and had not kept their agreement with me, I beg to refer the Board to the correspondence which passed between Major Heap and myself at the time the question of a Lighthouse on Castle Hill first came up. This correspondence plainly shows the conditions under which I was induced to deed land to the U. S. for a Light House on Castle Hill. For making my agreement with the official representatives of the Light House Board, I had nothing to guide me or to hint to me that any agreements I should make would not be respected hereafter; nor that it would be necessary for me to protect myself in a manner differing from that which I should pursue in making similar agreements elsewhere. Nor was I informed that there were statutes emanating from Congress in existence then which would make any agreement made void on the part of the Light House Board."

In another letter to the Board of the same date Professor Agassiz stated, "this occurrence need not have happened had I been notified by the proper authorities that it would be necessary for the officers of the Board to erect guys on my property to replace the light on the Castle Hill Light House. . . . Mr. Lamy's report is not correct in stating that he put up 'a guy': he put up four (4) the measurements of which I have, some of which were fully 50 feet away from the right of way or from the boundary of the U. S. lot and on two sides of it. Nor did he use the words he quotes when he threatened me with military interference. Nor did I have a pleasant talk with him for about 20 minutes after cooling off. This is of no importance except to show that Mr. Lamy's encroachment was deliberate and that he took no pains whatever to communicate with his superior officers after my com-

plaint of his trespassing. He is merely trying to wriggle out of an unpleasant and serious position by trying to make a joke of an unwarrantable intrusion."

In 1898 a fog bell screen was set and fitted to deflect sound. In 1899 a new set of new model fifth order lamps for lens was furnished the light station and the color of the upper half of the tower changed from gray to white.

In the 1950 "Light List, Atlantic and Gulf Coasts of the U. S." Castle Hill Light station is described as a conical granite tower (upper half white), 40 feet above water and visible for 10 miles, located on the east side of the entrance to Narragansett Bay at 41° 27.7' N, 71° 21.8' W. The 250 candlepower 5th order light flashes Red every 30 seconds for 9 seconds. The fog bell sounds a group of 2 strokes every 20 seconds during fog.

NEWS NOTES

In July of this year the library answered an inquiry of Mr. Richard S. Allen concerning a picture of "a mill pond and mill, plus a railroad track and a covered wooden railroad bridge over an inlet into the pond." The photograph was made by Lombard. Search revealed that the picture was of the mill of S. and J. H. Capwell, manufacturers of shuttles in Anthony. Search of Providence directories revealed that Lombard was a photographer in Providence in 1880.

In acknowledging the receipt of the information that the library had given Mr. Allen, he made this comment, "... this raises the known Rhode Island covered bridges to the number of five. There were two known covered highway bridges, — one between Providence and East Providence on Washington St., [Mr. Allen doubtless means the Washington Bridge] and the Narrow River bridge near Narragansett. Then there were three railroad covered bridges, — one between Providence and East Providence, the one near the Capwell Mill in Anthony, and the still-existing one on the Hamlet Spur line in the heart of Woonsocket."

Mr. Robert L. Wheeler of the *Providence Journal* wrote about the Hamlet spur line bridge in *The Rhode Islander*, the *Providence Sunday Journal* magazine of August 19, 1951.

If readers know of any other former or existing covered bridges in Rhode Island, the Society for the sake of historical record would like to know of them.

* * *

Among recent gifts to the Society is a communion set, once owned by the Liberty Baptist Church in Exeter, formerly at Tripps Corner. The set, consisting of a flagon, ten inch plate, and communion cup, was made by William Calder, Providence pewterer, who lived from 1792 to 1856. According to *Guide to Church Vital Statistic Records of Rhode Island* (Historical Records Survey, Works Project Administration, 1942) the Liberty Baptist Church was founded in 1829. The communion set appears to have been made at about that same time.

* * *

In working on the thesis which he presented for his doctorate at Harvard, Mr. Earl C. Tanner had occasion to use the Custom House Papers in our library. These had never been placed in order, classified, or cataloged. Through Mr. Tanner's efforts these have been logically arranged and subsequent users of the books will profit by Mr. Tanner's labors. The Society is grateful to him.

* * *

An increasing number of groups makes arrangements to have a guided tour of John Brown House. The staff is always willing to do this and appreciates the fact that sponsors of these tours make arrangements in advance. The architectural detail of John Brown House is of sufficient interest to entertain even those who are not enthusiastic about old houses. It is always more satisfactory if groups viewing the house are not more than fifteen or twenty in number.

Besides the organizations that regularly meet at John Brown House and the groups who were conducted on tours of the house, the following organizations met at the Society's headquarters during the past season: the Providence League of Women Voters on January 11, the Providence County Garden Club on January 11, the Review Club on January 13 and February 10, the Pottery and Porcelain Club on February 21, the Colonial Dames on March 15, the Mayflower Society on March 31, the Mount Vernon Ladies Association on April 13, the Rhode Island Simmons Club on April 26, and the Rhode Island Button Club on June 16.

C. P. M.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY
PEW HOLDERS, 1816

IN 1916 William W. Chapin, whose genealogical papers are in the Rhode Island Historical Society, compiled biographical notes on the holders of pews in the First Congregational Society in 1816. This was doubtless the first list of pew holders in the new church, which was designed and built by the architect, John Holden Greene and which was dedicated October 29, 1816.

The sketches are here printed as they were written by Mr. Chapin, with no attempt to verify or correct them.

- (1) Parsonage pew. For an account of the Parsonage, see "Samuel Soule, pew (68)" below.
- (2) Sullivan Dorr, b. Boston, Mass. Oct. 20, 1778; d. Mar. 3, 1858; m. Oct. 1, 1804, Lydia Allen. He was in Canton, China, 1798; in Providence, R. I. 1805. Their children were: Thomas Wilson Dorr (1805-1854); Allen Dorr (1808-1889); Anne Allen Dorr, (1810-1884); m. Moses B. Ives; Mary Throop Dorr (1811-1869) m. Judge Samuel Ames; Sullivan Dorr (1813-1884); Candace Crawford Dorr (1815-1886) m. Edward Carrington, Jr.; Henry C. Dorr, (1820-1897); Mr. Dorr lived at the northeast corner of Benefit and Bowen Streets, in the residence built by him about 1811, now owned by Mrs. Frank A. Sayles, his great granddaughter.
- (3) Samuel W. Brigham, b. May 4, 1774; d. Dec. 31, 1840; father of Mrs. William S. Patten and other children. Several of his descendants have lived and live in East Providence. He was the first Mayor of Providence, from June 1832, to Dec. 31, 1840.
- (4) Oliver Kane, b. d. m. Ann Eliza Clark, b. Oct. 1779. Mrs. Kane was dau. of John Innes and Lydia (Bowen) Clark, and Mrs. Clark was dau. of Dr. Ephraim Bowen. Mr. Clark was partner of Col. Joseph Nightingale (Clark & Nightingale), and he built the residence later owned and occupied by William Jenkins, by the burning of which Mrs. Jenkins and her elder daughter lost their lives, in 1849. Col. Joseph Nightingale built the John Carter Brown residence near the Clark residence. Mr. Clark's only other child who reached maturity m. Dr. Robert Hare, of Philadelphia.
- (5) Edward Carrington, son of Lemuel Carrington, b. New Haven, Ct. Nov. 2, 1775; d. Dec. 23, 1843; m. Loriania Hoppin. Mr. Carrington was a prominent merchant of Providence during most of the first half of the nineteenth century. His only child, Edward Carrington, Jr. m. Candace Crawford Dorr, as said above. A son of

Edward Carrington, Jr. is living (1916) and his dau. Ann Ives Carrington m. (1) Gamaliel Lyman Dwight and (2) her cousin, Gen. William Ames. Miss Margarethe Dwight is dau. by the first marriage. The residence of Edward Carrington Sen. now occupied by his grandson, Edward Carrington, is on Williams St., built by John Corlis and purchased by Mr. Carrington in 1812, the year of his marriage.

- (6) Samuel Ward Greene, b. June 24, 1771; d. Sept. 2, 1849; m. Mary Rhodes Nightingale, b. Nov. 18, 1772; d. April 13, 1835. Their children were: Catherine Greene; Joseph N. Greene; Wm. Ray Greene; George Spencer Greene. Mary R. Nightingale was dau. of Col. Joseph Nightingale. See the Greene Family of Rhode Island. He was son of Gov. William Greene and a merchant of high standing.
- (7) Richmond Bullock, b. Mar. 19, 1772; d. June 17, 1849, son of Jabez and Patience (Winsor) Bullock. His children were: William P.; Jabez; Harriet who m. Edward Pearce; James Peckham; Julia. Mr. Bullock was a very prosperous merchant of Providence and one of the incorporators of the Union Bank. He was a sea-captain many years.
- (8) William Church, b. Nov. 8, 1777; d. May 3, 1849; m. Abigail Mauran. Their children were: Martha Church m. James W. Otis; Nathaniel Church m. Harriet A. Brown; Joseph M. Church m. Maria L. Goodwin; Abby M. Church m. Joel B. Post; Hannah Church m. Nicholas E. Hayward; Clementine Church m. Edward Post. See the Mauran Memorial, by Rev. John C. Stockbridge.
- (9) Benjamin Greene, Have not identified him. There are 38 Benjamin Greens in "The Greene Family of Rhode Island" and not one in the Directory of 1824.
- (9) Samuel Dexter. (See pew 100) b. Boston, Mass. July 5, 1781; d. Feb. 26, 1862. He married four times. By the first wife he had Maria Sophia who m. Benjamin Cozzens, and Catherine who m. Gov. Charles Jackson. By the third wife he had Caroline M. who m. Frank DeWolf of Bristol, and by the fourth wife he had Arthur F. and Newton Dexter. He was from a family of Malden, Mass., and not a descendant of Gregory Dexter of Providence.
- (10) William Wilkinson, b. Killingly, Ct. June 19, 1760; m. (1) Chloe Larned and (2) Marcy, dau. of Oziel Wilkinson. His children were: Sarah who m. Charles N. Tibbitts; William H. who m. Harriet L. Cady; Nancy who m. Josiah Keene. Mary, by his second wife, was the second wife of Charles N. Tibbitts. He kept a school and, later, was a publisher and bookseller. He was treasurer of the Providence Mutual Fire Insurance Co.

- (11) Samuel Ames, b. Groton, Mass. July 7, 1766; d. Feb. 16, 1830; m. Ann Checkley. They were the parents of Hon. Samuel Ames, Justice of the Supreme Court 1856-1865. Samuel Ames, Sen. was a merchant and among the old church papers is a bill of Samuel Ames for the cloth with which the church was draped upon the occasion of the funeral of George Washington.
- (12) Walker Humphrey, b. Jan. 6, 1784; d. Aug. 14, 1866; m. (1) Sarah, dau. of Jonathan Gladding and had Martha who m. Leon Chappotin Jr., and Miss Sarah Humphrey. He m. (2) Olive Bicknell Mauran b. Feb. 9, 1789; d. June 28, 1856; their dau. Abby Mauran Humphrey, m. William P. Lyman.
- (13) James Burr, son of Levi Burr, b. 1761; d. Feb. 19, 1826; m. (1) Deborah Keene and (2) Hannah (Gladding) Field. Deborah Ann Burr, dau. of James, m. John A. Field, grandfather of Mrs. Henry R. Chace, Miss Mary H. Balch and others.

The compiler of this paper has a photograph of the house (now Benefit St.) of James Burr and a photograph of the Levi Burr residence at the junction of Benefit and North Main Sts. The latter has recently been torn down, owing to the widening of North Main St.

- (14) Walter R. Danforth, son of Job Danforth, b. April, 1787; d. Aug. 11, 1861; m. Elizabeth Ann, dau. of John Carter. Mr. Danforth was mayor of Providence in 1853; and was at different times, editor, clerk of court, collector of Customs, etc. He had a large family.
- (15) Joseph Cady, b. Killingly, Ct. 1777; d. Providence, 1862; a dau. Almira, m. Thomas Backus, and they were the parents of Susan Backus who m. Dr. J. W. C. Ely. Mr. Cady kept a hotel at Pomfret, Ct. He moved to Gloucester, R. I. where he was justice of the peace in 1808. Later, Mr. Cady was steward of Brown University and lived on George St. in a house that was sold to the University and moved to Waterman St. No. 94, and is now (1916) occupied by Mrs. Ely, widow of Joseph C. Ely, son of Dr. J. W. C. Ely. Mr. Cady served in the City Government as councilman and as an alderman.
- (16) Aaron Draper, d. July 8, 1818, in his 54th yr.; m. Mildred who d. Mar. 21, 1839, in her 74th yr. They had Edward, d. at Auburn, Oakland Co. Mich. in 1831, in his 28th yr.; Mary Ann who d. Sept. 26, 1835, in her 30th yr., and Jonathan G. who d. Dec. 26, 1887, in his 87th yr. at The Home for Aged Men, Providence. In 1798 Aaron Draper owned half of a house on land of Ebenezer Thompson, where the Industrial Trust Company now is.

- (17) Jason Williams, b. Woodstock, Ct. Sept. 8, 1774; d. June 6, 1863; m. Sarah Rose, dau. of James and Sarah (Congdon) Rose, who d. Mar. 3, 1863; age 84 yrs. Their dau. Sarah Rose Williams, m. Lewis J. Chace, son of John B. Chace. Another dau. m. Hazel Crouch, and their dau. Emily Crouch, is now (1916) living in her grandfather's residence at 102 George St. Here Mr. Williams had a boarding house where students boarded and he had a place of business on South Water St. There is at the R. I. Hist. Society an account-book of Mr. Williams in which he recorded the names of some of his boarders and some of his business transactions.
- (18) Edward Taylor, b. Barnstable, Mass., April 11, 1751; d. Dec. 6, 1832; m. Alice Dexter, dau. of Christopher Dexter, of North Providence; b. 1756; sister of Amey Dexter who m. Isaac Brown. Mr. Taylor was living on Thomas St. in 1824, with his mother and sister as tenants. He was son of Rowland and Sarah (Gorham) Taylor.
- (19) John P. Jones 2nd, son of Thomas and Esther (Dunn) Jones, and brother of the wife of the first Elisha Dyer. In 1824 he was a tin-plate worker and gauger at 22 Market St., with residence on Bradford St. north of Atwell's Avenue.
- (20) James Burrill, b. Lynn, Mass. Mar. 1744; d. Dec. 15, 1825; m. Elizabeth dau. of Stephen Rawson; father of Hon. James Burrill (See pew 30), and Geo. Rawson Burrill. He was a tin-worker and lived at the south corner of Union and Westminster Sts.
- (21) George Freeman appears as an auctioneer living at 22 Market St. in 1824, with place of business at 7 North Water St., now Canal St. He d. Jan. 30, 1827; age 51 yrs. "Buried with Masonic Honors." See R. I. American.
- (22) William H. Allen, physician; office 197 North Main St. and residence 149 North Main St. in 1824; died 1850; A. B., B. U. 1811; M. D. 1817.
- (23) Moses Richardson, son of Stephen; b. Attleboro, Mass. Dec. 12, 1774; d. Aug. 11, 1859; m. (1) Harriet Pond and (2) Eliza Andrews. His children were: Aaron Richardson; Sophia Field Richardson; (1841-1900) m. Abel Foster; George Richardson; (1813-1863); Oscar Richardson (1829-1868); and Albert, Charles and Elizabeth. He was a jeweler. Am not sure that I have the children correctly.
- (23) Josiah Whitaker, b. Oct. 29, 1788; d. May 8, 1871; m. Pamela Andrews and had: James G. Whitaker b. April 19, 1817; d. 1873; Henry C. Whitaker, b. 1818; d. July 5, 1887; Amelia Andrews Whitaker b. Jan. 26, 1826; d. Aug. 17, 1845. He was a dealer and

manufacturer of jewelry, fancy goods and combs, at 55 Cheapside in 1824, residing on Benevolent St. He was son of Thomas Whitaker who m. Rachel Greene, P.S. Other children were: Mary Elizabeth Whitaker (1822-1855) m. Allen O. Peck and Ellen Maria Whitaker b. 1828; living Dec. 1916, and others. She died 1919. Thomas Whitaker was of Haverhill, N. H. He d. 1834, in his 76th yr. See the Greene Family of Rhode Island.

In 1824 Thomas Whitaker was living on George St. where the Allen O. Peck family now live and Josiah Whitaker was living on Benevolent. See advertisement of Josiah Whitaker in 1824 directory.

- (24) Samuel Arnold, b. Mar. 4, 1773; d. Nov. 6, 1842; m. (1) Phebe, dau. of Capt. Richard Jackson, and had Susan G. Arnold who m. Holder Chace Borden, and Anna E. Arnold who did not marry. He m. (2) Freelope Sophia, dau. of David L. Barnes, and he m. (3) Margaret dau. of Col. Daniel Lyman. In 1824 he appears as "manufacturer"; office at 25 So. Water St. and residence at 133 North Main St. He was interested in a distillery and, later, in a calico-printing establishment in the Moshassuck valley, near the Butterfly Factory. In the inventory of his property pew No. 24 is mentioned.
- (25) Darius Sessions, b. Jan. 30, 1794; d. June 6, 1869. He was a son of Thomas and Elizabeth (Marchant) Sessions, and grandson of Deputy-Gov. Darius Sessions. The only living descendant of Darius Sessions (b. 1794) is Miss Anna Maria Sessions of Providence. She d. 1919.
- (26) Jacob⁵ Dunnell, (Jacob⁴, David³, Thomas², Michael¹) b. Boston, 1784; d. May 10, 1837; m. Mary, dau. of Col. Daniel and Mary (Wanton) Lyman. They were the parents of Jacob Dunnell who m. Amey Dexter Brown, dau. of Isaac, and of Thomas L. Dunnell who m. Elizabeth Breese; also of Mary Lyman Dunnell b. 1809; d. 1895, and of Margaret Dunnell who m. Samuel W. Peckham.
- (27) Joshua Mauran, b. Mar. 3, 1782; d. Jan. 1, 1847; m. Abigail, dau. of Ira Winsor. Their children were: Joshua who did not marry; Suchet who m. Abby W. Kelley; Patience who m. Daniel Bush; Olive Bicknell who m. Christopher S. Rhodes; Edward C. who m. Mary W. Dorrance; Abby W., who m. Sylvester R. Knight; Magdelaine who m. Lewis Richmond; Sarah B. who m. Edward D. Pearce. See the Mauran Memorial.
- (28) Nathan Tingley. Formerly a resident of Providence and later of New York d. Charleston, S. C. April 6, 1832 in his 48th year. See Prov. Phenix.

- (28) Matthew Watson, b. Rehoboth, Mass. Mar. 2, 1786; d. Sept. 23, 1857; m. Abigail Burr Wheaton, dau. of Seth Wheaton, b. Jan. 5, 1797; d. June 24, 1872. Their children were: Robert W. Watson m. Abby Fiske; Mary Watson m. Philip Allen Jr.; Sarah Watson m. Peleg Hall. Mr. Watson lived in the residence now owned by Miss Rosa Grosvenor, at the corner of Angell and Prospect Sts., built by George Benson, at one time partner of Nicholas Brown.
- (29) William Bowen M.D. b. Mar. 8, 1747; d. Jan. 19, 1832; m. Sarah, dau. of Capt. George Corlis; she d. April 23, 1825; age 77 yrs. Their children were: Elizabeth Bowen m. Thomas Amory and had Harriet Amory who m. Robert H. Ives; Sarah Bowen m. Wm. S. Skinner; Maria Bowen m. John Whipple; Wm. Corlis Bowen m. Rebecca Olney; Harriet Bowen m. Com. Charles Morris, U.S.N.; George C. Bowen. Dr. William Bowen was son of Dr. Ephraim Bowen.
- (30) James Burrill Jr. b. April 25, 1772; d. Washington, D. C. Dec. 25, 1820; m. Sally, dau. of Jonathan and Mollie (Burr) Arnold. Their children were: Mary Elizabeth Burrill m. George Curtis, parents of George William and James Burrill Curtis; Susan Arnold Burrill m. Wm. R. Greene; Eleanor Burrill m. (1) Welcome Arnold Burges, son of Hon. Tristram Burges, and (2) Hon. Walter S. Burges; James Arnold Burrill; Sarah Perkins Burrill m. William S. Fearing. James Burrill Jr. was U. S. Senator from Mar. 1817 to Dec. 25, 1820.
- (31) Samuel Nightingale Jr. b. 1782; d. July 1851; m. (1) Harriet Rogers; (2) Elizabeth Kinnicut Thompson; (3) Eliza Rogers. His children by the first wife were: Susan E. Nightingale (1809-1883), did not marry; Harriet Nightingale (1810-1894) did not marry. By the second wife he had Rev. Crawford Nightingale, b. 1816; d. by accident on College St., and by the third wife he had Edwin J. Nightingale, Horatio Nightingale and Samuel Arnold Nightingale.
- (32) Joanna Barnes, b. Sept. 6, 1762; d. July 3, 1835; m. (2) Hon. David Leonard Barnes. Their dau. Ann Eliza Barnes, m. (1) Peter Pratt, and (2) Hon. Thomas Burgess. Mrs. Pratt had Anna Pratt who m. Horatio Nightingale, and Leonard B. Pratt. Mrs. Joanna Barnes was dau. of John Jencks and sister of Ebenezer Jencks who m. Mary T. Nightingale and lived in the residence next east of the Athenaeum on College St. Mrs. Mary T. (Nightingale) Jencks had two children who d. young and she gave her estate to her Nightingale kindred, some of whom still own it. Mary T. Jencks was dau. of Samuel Nightingale, Sen.

- (33) Henry W. Lothrop, son of Zebediah Lothrop; b. d. Oct. 9, 1874 age 72 yrs. m. Thornton. He was a merchant on South Water St., Stafford & Lothrop. He left an only heir, Henry W. Lothrop, Jr. who d. without issue and intestate. Mr. Lothrop was a member of the Board of State Charities and Corrections from its beginning, in 1869, until a short time before his death. His residence was on John St.
- (34) Daniel Lyman, b. Durham, Ct. April 10, 1756; d. 1830; m. Mary Wanton of Newport; children: Mary m. Jacob Dunnell; John W. m. Eliza Wheaton, dau. of Seth; Henry B. m. Caroline Dyer; Louisa m. Dr. Geo. H. Tillinghast; Sally m. Gov. Lemuel H. Arnold; Margaret m. Samuel Arnold (see pew 24); Julia M. m. John H. Easton, of Newport; Harriet m. Benjamin Hazard of Newport; and five others, thirteen in all. He was Chief Justice of the R. I. Supreme Court, 1812-1816, and major (colonel?) in the Continental Army in the Revolution.
- (35) Horatio Gates Bowen and Henry Bowen were sons of Dep. Gov. Jabez Bowen. The former was b. June 18, 1779; d. Mar. 24, 1848; and the latter was b. Jan. 5, 1785, d. April 16, 1867. Horatio Gates Bowen m. Candace Crawford Nightingale and had no issue. He was first librarian of Brown University and professor of natural history. Henry Bowen m. Harriet Amanda Munro. He was Secretary of State of Rhode Island during about thirty years.
- (36, 37, 38, vacant.)
- (39) Isaac Brown, b. 1787; d. Sept. 7, 1872; m. Lydia Williams. He was son of Isaac Brown, son of Dep. Gov. Elisha Brown. His mother was Amey Dexter, dau. of Christopher and Priscilla (Carpenter) Dexter. He m. (2) Caroline Bartlett. His children, by the first wife, were Nathaniel Brown; Alice Brown who m. Moses B. Lockwood; Amey Dexter Brown who m. Jacob Dunnell; Miss Addie Brown and others. Mr. Brown was in business with Benoni Cooke (Cooke & Brown) and the two partners built the two houses on South Main St. opposite Crawford St., the estate of Mr. Brown being now covered by the building of the Providence Institution for Savings. He was of the committee who built the Dexter Asylum, Caleb Earle (pew No. 94) and Truman Beckwith having been the others.
- (40) Asa Larned, d. Jan. 14, 1827, in his 67th yr. He was a school-teacher from Killingly, Ct., partner at one time of William Wilkinson—perhaps a relative of Wilkinson's first wife, who was Chloe Larned. Mr. Larned was for many years head clerk of Brown & Ives.

- (41) George C. Nightingale, b. 1786; d. 1827; m. Eliza, dau. of John S. Dexter, whose name appears among the pew-holders. See No. 42. He was uncle of the late Geo. C. Nightingale and son of Joseph Nightingale, Sen.
- (40) Nathan Waterman. There were two of the name in 1816, neither of whom married. One was Nathan, son of Amaziah (1741-1830), and the other was Nathan son of Rufus and grandson of Amaziah (1780-1822). Which was the pewholder?
- (42) Dr. John M. Eddy, b. Gloucester, R. I., Feb. 14, 1780; d. Havana, Cuba, April 29, 1817; m. (1) Oct. 7, 1804, Hannah Carlisle and m. (2) Nov. 20, 1814 Mary Ann, dau. of Hon. John Singer and Mary (Pearce) Dexter. [See: *The Eddy Family in America . . .* comp. by Ruth Story Devereux Eddy . . . Boston, 1930.]
- (42) John Singer Dexter, b. 1753; died at an advanced age; m. Mary Pearce. He was judge of the Court of Common Pleas and, later, secretary of the Union Insurance Co., inc. 1815. "Family extinct in the male line." See Dexter Genealogy, in which it is said that in the Revolution he held the rank of Colonel. He was a member of the Order of the Cincinnati and was a charter member of the Kentish Guards. He lived in East Greenwich and later in Cumberland, R. I.
- (43) Charles L. Hyatt; administrator of his estate appointed in 1820; nothing more learned regarding him.
- (44) Cyrus Barker, b. Aug. 25, 1786; in Middletown, R. I. and d. July 27, 1870. He established a hardware business on Weybosset St. with a relative, William Peckham, and, later, the business was carried on by his descendants, under the firm-name of Brown, Barker & Co. and Barker Chadsey & Co. He resided on Chestnut St.
- (45) John Snow, There are two John Snows in the 1824 Directory and several in the Snow genealogies, but we do not know who John Snow the pewholder was.
- (46) John C. Jencks, b. on the Island of Rhode Island in 1777, and died in Providence, Mar. 29, 1852; m. (1) Sally Snow by whom he had eight children, and m. (2) Fanny Smith by whom he had eight children. He was an officer of the First Cong. Church fourteen years. He was one of the early jewellers in Providence and for a time, partner of Mawney Jastram. He lived on Friendship St. "Twice in his life he narrowly escaped a violent death—once by the falling of the bell while attempting to save the organ of the First Cong. Church, during the conflagration of that edifice in 1812, and, again during the memorable gale in 1815, being the last person who crossed the bridge before it was carried away."

- (47) Sylvanus G. Martin b. Sept. 14, 1782; d. about 1856; son of Gen. Philip Martin. He m. Anne Bullock; no child reached maturity. He was a dealer in drygoods and groceries at 177 North Main St., and lived at the corner of N. Main and Smith Sts. He left legacies to two dau. of Martin Page.
- (48) Henry Hill and George Hill. In 1824 there was a George Hill, tallow-chandler, Peck's wharf, with residence corner of Pine and Potter Sts; and Henry C. Hill, machine-maker, 240 North Main St. Henry Hill, formerly of Brighton, Mass., d. Providence, Aug. 13, 1820. See R. I. American.
- (49) John Howland, b. Newport, R. I. Oct. 31, 1754; d. Nov. 5, 1854; m. Jan. 28, 1788, Elizabeth, dau. of John and Elizabeth Carlisle. She d. May 28, 1845. Their children were: Alfred, Penelope, m. Amherst Everett; Benjamin Russell; Janette; Mary, and eight who d. under the age of three years. Mr. Howland was by trade a barber with a shop on Market Square and residence at 56 Benefit St. in 1824. The residence, still standing, is at the north corner of Howland and now numbered 102. In 1803 Mr. Howland was chosen auditor of Providence and, in, 1818 town treasurer, which office he filled for eighteen years. He was also, for many years, treasurer of the Providence Institution for Savings and President of the R. I. Historical Society. He was secretary of the committee that had charge of erecting the present church, and clerk of the Society.
- (50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, vacant.)
- (56) Daniel Bates, b. ; d. ; m. 1813, Susan Casey. He is not in the 1824 directory. M. G. C. Bates, Reuben Bates and Varnum J. Bates appear, but we have been unable to trace Daniel Bates.
- (57) John R. Balch, Sen. b. May 18, 1772; d. April 4, 1848; m. Saphira Packard. He was son of Timothy and Sarah (Rogers) Balch of Newport. He had a brother, Joseph Balch, and a sister, Mary Balch. He was father of John R. Balch, Jr., who was treasurer of the Providence and Worcester R.R. many years, father of Mrs. George O. Olmstead and Collins L. Balch. Joseph Balch, son of Timothy, was a school-teacher and was living with his sister on George St. in 1824. See Mary Balch pew No. 70. The family was related distantly to that of Joseph Balch, druggist.

[to be concluded]

PICTURES OF PROVIDENCE IN THE PAST, 1790-1820

THE REMINISCENCES OF WALTER R. DANFORTH

edited by CLARKSON A. COLLINS, 3rd.

[continued from July, 1951, v. 10, no. 3, p. 96]

THE old Coffee House building has undergone a variety of metamorphoses in its interior, while its exterior has not materially changed its aspect. The Providence Insurance Company, having obtained a charter, commenced business there about fifty years ago¹ and fitted up some rooms in the second story in very handsome style for the times. John Mason² was the president of that institution, and he was highly esteemed for his well-balanced mind and for his cool and dispassionate investigations of questions which were brought to his consideration, not merely those connected with insurance, but questions of a commercial nature and indeed of most kinds of business. He was grave in his appearance and slow of speech, with a voice much under the ordinary tone; so that it was extremely difficult for his hearers, especially in a full room, to receive his remarks entire. He made frequent pauses; and low as his voice was, he was in the habit, as many public speakers are, of making a cadence in the most important word or phrase. His remarks, however, were accompanied by an occasional oracular nod and tone and were received with great deference, which was generally their due. But critics in classical literature, as far back as the Roman Horace, detected the father of epic poetry in nodding sometimes; and would it be strange that one of less eminence and fewer pretensions should, now and then, disappoint expectations extravagantly raised? The following circumstance was

¹The Providence Insurance Company, first chartered insurance company in Rhode Island, was founded in 1799 by a group of prominent merchants. After the War of 1812 it united with its rival, the Washington Insurance Company, founded in 1800, under the name Providence Washington Insurance Company. Today it is the oldest insurance company in New England and the third oldest in the United States.

²John Mason (1742-1809), a native of Swansea, as a young man moved to Killingly, Connecticut, where he established a carting business to carry the produce of the surrounding countryside to Providence. After the Revolution he settled in Providence, engaged extensively in commerce, and became the leading private insurance underwriter previous to the founding of the Providence Insurance Company.

related to me more than forty years ago by Col. George R. Burrill³ of whom I shall endeavor to give some account on my next evening. The insurance office was well filled with company whose faces wore a sombre aspect. The subject was the death of Alexander Hamilton, a statesman, patriot, and scholar, who has never found a superior, if an equal, in our country, and who had been recently *murdered* by Aaron Burr in a *duel*. Some of the company gave a sketch of his brilliant and useful career as a lawyer, an orator, and a statesman. Some expressed sympathy for his family; others deplored the event as a public calamity; while others read from a paper the proceedings of various societies in New York, where the deceased was more intimately known, appreciated, and beloved, and where it had been resolved that the courts and the members of the Bar should wear badges of black crepe, and some, if not all the churches should have their pulpits and tall columns shrouded in the same habiliments of mourning. There was a pause, when a deep and clear *hem*, which was always a notice from Mr. Mason that he was about to offer a remark, excited their eager attention, and in a low and solemn tone, accompanied with a sigh, he exclaimed, "*Well, all the crape in the world will never bring him back!*" The company was affected, some of them almost to tears and sobs, but Col. Burrill was proof against the infection and retired to give vent to his feelings in some other way. There is a parallel to this brief and affecting style of oratory in *Tristram Shandy*, where the corporal in remarking on the death of our young master in London, affected to tears the gentle Susannah, the cook, by these emphatic words, accompanied with characteristic gestures, "Are we not here now — and gone in a moment?" But Stern has told that story better than I can repeat it; so no more on that subject. Let not this anecdote derogate from the high estimation in which that worthy citizen was held, who, I presume, had settled more cases as an arbitrator or referee than any other man, and generally if not always to the satisfaction of the litigant parties who had availed themselves of his judicious opinion and just decision.

³George Rawson Burrill (1770-1818), son of James and Elizabeth (Rawson) Burrill and brother of Senator James Burrill. He married Amelia, daughter of Captain Simon Smith, and had two children, George M. Burrill, who died in the Sandwich Islands in 1826, and Amelia, who married Dr. Francis L. Wheaton. George R. Burrill was commanding officer of the Independent Company of Cadets of Providence.

The directors of the Providence Insurance Company were generally, if not wholly, of the old Federal Party, and the primary caucuses of that party were held for many years in that office. I recollect one evening about forty years since, when the canvass for Gov. Jones had just commenced,⁴ it was thought necessary to have all the voters in the town called on personally by committees appointed for that purpose to induce them to come out, one and all, and make one great effort to overthrow the Fenner dynasty.⁵ Opinions were given as to the favorable disposition of freeholders in various parts of the town, the common divisions or sections being designated *up town*, *down town*, and *over the river*, but no voice had been heard from the north end or up town, which was the stronghold of the Republicans. Just before the meeting adjourned, a citizen, who always entered the political campaign with zeal and continued throughout with unabated perseverance, remarked on the necessity of rousing the whole force into action and called on Thomas Abbott,⁶ then a worthy constable at the north end, *to wake them all up* in his part of the town. To which Mr. Abbott replied that he thought, when he looked round his neighborhood, it would be better to appoint a committee to *put them asleep*. The remark was productive of some mirth. No committee was appointed at the suggestion, but I have no doubt some opiates were administered.

There being no large hall so central as Market Square, this Insurance room, after the Company relinquished it, continued to be used for various purposes besides political meetings. Itinerant proprietors of museums, mechanical panoramas, wax figures, and extraordinary productions of nature and art found it a convenient place for their several exhibitions. This block has of late been the receptacle of book sellers, book binders, dry goods dealers, traders in leather, shoe makers, hatters, tailors, printers, cork leg wrights, professional men, and others. It was the cradle and grave of a scurrilous weekly journal called the *Beacon*, about thirty years ago, got up and carried on by

⁴William Jones (1757-1822) was first elected governor in 1811 and was re-elected annually until 1817.

⁵Since 1790 the governorship, with a brief interval in 1806 when no candidate obtained a majority, had been held by Arthur Fenner, governor 1790-1805, and his son James Fenner, governor 1807-1810.

⁶Thomas Abbott, constable, is listed at 222 North Main Street in the 1824 *Directory*. He married Ruth Owen in 1801 and died June 11, 1826, in his 66th year.

a trio of irresponsible and mercenary men for the purpose of levying blackmail on such of the citizens as they had marked. Many bought or subscribed for the paper to purchase an exemption from appearing in its mendacious columns; but its articles were so malignant and vulgar that its very object was defeated, and it soon fell below contempt.⁷

In 1825 from this Old Coffee House also was ushered in, under encouraging patronage, *The Microcosm*, another weekly paper, devoted to far more worthy objects than the *Beacon*, but its duration was less than three years. It would not become me to say much in relation to this paper or its editor. The former will be no more perused, while the latter remains to be daily inspected, read, and like a proof sheet, to be corrected.⁸ I have no higher wish than that the readers and patrons may be such as are present this evening.

This building is formed of light and combustible materials, yet it has had so many "hair breadth escapes" from frequent assaults of the fiery element as to have acquired the title of the *Fire Proof Block*. The westerly end of the wooden block, as before stated, had been built by Carter & Wilkinson. The first named, John Carter,⁹ had

⁷Though Danforth's low opinion of *The Beacon* was not unjustified, the paper provides livelier reading and gives more information about the manners and customs of Providence in the early 1820's than do its more sedate competitors.

William S. Spear, the editor, proclaimed himself the champion of the rights of the people and the defender of freedom of the press, with considerable latitude given to the meaning of *freedom*.

Most of the paper's columns were devoted to anonymous poems and letters, probably written for the most part by Spear himself. Highlight of his journalistic career in Providence was the libel suit brought against him by the irascible Col. Edward Dexter. The editor touched off the merchant's easily inflamed wrath by printing a poem entitled "Sally of Sugar Lane Alley" in which Dexter found uncomplimentary references to himself and his second wife, Sarah Mumford.

The first issue of *The Beacon* appeared on November 11, 1823. The last in the Rhode Island Historical Society's file is dated October 28, 1826.

⁸Walter R. Danforth's second venture into journalism began June 10, 1825, with the first issue of *The Microcosm* and ended August 31, 1827, when he announced the sale of the paper to the *Rhode Island American & Providence Gazette*.

The Microcosm, which Danforth announced as "a compendious compository of literary, moral, political and commercial information, as well as an efficient ancillary to the advancement of science and of the manufacturing and mechanic arts" was the only evening paper in Providence at the time.

⁹John Carter (1745-1814) was publisher of the *Gazette* from 1768 until the year of his death. He had previously been a partner of Mrs. Sarah Goddard, who published the *Gazette* after the departure of her son, William Goddard, from Providence. Carter's daughter Elizabeth Ann married Walter R. Danforth.

been the publisher of the *Providence Gazette* for a long number of years anterior to and through the Revolution and the first postmaster in this place after the establishment of our government, by appointment of Postmaster General Benjamin Franklin, with whom he had served his apprenticeship as a printer. He kept the office in Meeting Street, opposite the Friends' Meeting House, at the sign of Shakespear's Head, and resigned the post, which was then far from lucrative, as it interfered with his printing concerns. Mr. Carter closed his useful career more than thirty-five years ago, leaving a character above reproach. Mr. Wilkinson,¹⁰ his partner, is still with us, enrolled amongst the octogenarians at the corner, now Stillwell's and Webster's stores. The co-partners carried on the printing business in its various branches, with the publication of the *Gazette* under the charge of Mr. Carter and the book and stationery trade under Mr. Wilkinson's care, and for most of their business connexion had no competitor in either branch. During Washington's administration Mr. Wilkinson succeeded Mr. Carter as postmaster, and at this corner the post office was kept for many years.

We will run through with the post office. When Mr. Jefferson became President, Mr. Wilkinson was superceded by Dr. Benjamin West, a gentleman who had long been distinguished as a mathematician and an astronomer and had been a professor in those sciences in Rhode Island College.¹¹ He removed the post office to a building on the West Side belonging to the then senior Jacob Whitman at the junction of Westminster and Weybosset (now Broad Street),¹² which will be shortly more particularly described. On the removal of the old Whitman Building the post office was temporarily removed to

¹⁰William Wilkinson (1760-1852) received his degree from Brown in 1783 after a college career interrupted by the Revolution. Following his graduation he was made principal of the grammar school run in conjunction with the college. At the same time he served for several years as college librarian. His partnership with John Carter lasted from 1793 to 1799.

¹¹Benjamin West (1730-1813), after an early career as a school-teacher, store-keeper, and maker of almanacs, first established his reputation as a scientist through his observation (with Joseph Brown and others) of the transit of the planet Venus in 1769, an event for which Transit and Planet Streets in Providence are named.

From 1786 to 1798 he was Professor of Mathematics and Astronomy at Brown and later opened a school of navigation in his home. He was postmaster from 1802 until his death.

¹²For about a decade prior to 1856, Weybosset Street was a part of Broad Street. In 1856 the name Weybosset Street was revived for that part of Broad Street between Westminster and Dorrance Streets.

the house of Hopestill McNeal, where has recently been erected by heirs of Thomas Brown, the McNeal Building, Westminster Street.¹³ On the completion of Whitman Block, the post office was returned to its former location and kept in the second room from the corner, on Broad Street, now occupied by John Gladding as a barber's shop.¹⁴ On the death of Dr. West his son-in-law, Gabriel Allen,¹⁵ became his successor in that office, who, on the completion of the Union Buildings, in 1816, removed the post office to that block, in the part now occupied by Mr. King.¹⁶ On the death of Mr. Allen, Bennett H. Wheeler, who for many years had been the intelligent and industrious editor of the *Providence Patriot and Columbian Phenix* was appointed postmaster, and he continued the office at the same place during his term of public service.¹⁷ Some time after the accession of President Jackson he was superceded by the appointment of Edward J. Mallett,¹⁸ son-in-law of Gov. James Fenner, and he removed the office to South Main, a little below College Street. Mallett continued postmaster through the administrations of Jackson, Van Buren, Harri-

¹³The eastern half of the brick double building at 95-103 Westminster Street between McNeal Lane and the Industrial Trust Building. At present the *City Directory* lists the McNeal Building at 103, the western half, but the name was originally applied to the eastern part which borders on McNeal Lane.

¹⁴The barber shop of John Gladding, 3rd, was at 5 Broad (Weybosset) Street in 1850. The Whitman Block stood on the site of the present Turks Head Building.

¹⁵Gabriel Allen was the son of George Allen, an Englishman who emigrated to Boston and later moved to Seekonk. The son served as a lieutenant in the Second Battalion of Rhode Island Infantry during the Revolution. Later he served as assistant postmaster under his father-in-law, Benjamin West, to whose office he succeeded in 1813. Gabriel Allen died April 3, 1824, in his seventy-fifth year.

¹⁶A part of this building, which was also known as the Union Bank Building, is still standing at the junction of Westminster and Dyer Streets. The firm of William J. King & Co., merchants, was located at 8 Union Building (8 Westminster Street) in 1850.

¹⁷Bennett H. Wheeler (1788-1863), was the son of Bennett Wheeler, publisher of the *United States Chronicle*, in whose printing office he served his apprenticeship. After the *Chronicle* ceased publication in 1804 he worked in Boston and Portland, Maine, for a few years, later returning to Providence to become co-proprietor of *The Phenix*, the title of which by a series of evolutionary changes eventually became the *Providence Patriot*. Wheeler was connected with the paper from 1807 to 1823 shortly before he was appointed postmaster.

¹⁸A North Carolinian by birth, General Edward J. Mallett came to Providence a few years after his marriage to Sarah, daughter of Governor James Fenner. In 1845, after her death and his remarriage, he moved to New York. He subsequently had a distinguished career as a banker, diplomat, and army officer.

son, and Tyler, and then resigned, perhaps that he might be enabled to repeat:

Let others hail the rising sun,
I bow to him whose race is run.

on the election of Mr. Polk to the Presidency, Welcome B. Sayles, now one of the publishers of the *Daily Post*, was appointed postmaster, and he removed the office back to the Union Buildings, near its former location, and there it still remains. Soon after President Tyler had been installed in the highest post of honor, the services of Mr. Sayles were dispensed with,¹⁹ and Henry L. Bowen,²⁰ the present incumbent was appointed to fill the place.

In reviewing the names of those who have been placed in this responsible station, it is satisfactory to every Providence man to know that no one was ever charged with malfeasance in office, but everyone discharged his official duties to the satisfaction of the public and the approbation of the appointing power. Some vacancies were caused by resignation, others by death, and the balance by political revolutions, which, to office holders on the wrong side, are generally as fatal as death.

In the rear of the Coffee House, when it was in its palmy days, stood a very antiquated building, which was fitted up and for a long time was occupied as a theatre; and here, after a short season in Henry Rice's barn,²¹ where the performances were termed moral lectures to eschew the prejudiced of the age and place, were first exhibited scenic representations to the grave and sober people of Providence, who had never before seen a member of the Thespian Corps nor been influenced by the witcheries of the enacted drama. Here the heroes of the sock and buskin strutted "their hour on the stage" to receive the plaudits of delighted auditories. This building had been previously used as a *slaughter house*; and after its trans-

¹⁹Welcome B. Sayles (1813-1862) regained his postmastership in 1853, when he was reappointed by President Pierce, and held the position until 1857. During the Civil War he was a Lt. Colonel in the Seventh Regiment Rhode Island Volunteers and was killed in action at Fredericksburg in 1862.

²⁰Henry Leonard Bowen (1810-1865), a lawyer, was a son of Henry Bowen, for many years Secretary of State of Rhode Island, and a grandson of Deputy-Governor Jabez Bowen. He was postmaster from 1849 to 1853.

²¹Henry Rice's barn and shed, seventy feet long by seventeen feet wide, stood in the rear of the Golden Ball Inn, later the Mansion House, at the corner of Benefit and South Court Streets.

formation into a theatre, a very natural and obvious reflection in the audience on the principles of association would give a *peculiar zest* to the performance of *tragedy*. The grave digger in *Hamlet* would find a rich mine of bones here to throw upon the stage!

The mass of our people were then opposed to histrionic representations and depreciated the presence of a play actor in our borders. They were utilitarians and were jealous of vain amusements, as insidious in their influence to thwart industry and the growth of morals; but Mr. Harper,²² the head and manager, was a gentleman of great suavity of manners, was well educated, bland, social, and amiable, and soon won the respect and good will of the most opulent and influential citizens. In a few short months a theatre was erected and opened in 1795 in Westminster Street, where, under a succession of good managers for many years, it continued "to hold the mirror up to nature" and was rewarded with extensive patronage. Amongst the performers at its commencement and for several years, including stock actors and stars, were Harper and wife, Mr. and Mrs. Powell, Prigmore, Simpson, Dickenson, Kenny, Hodgkinson, Cooper, George Frederic Cook, Bates, with many others who might be named; and well do we recollect the varied excellencies of these performers and their succession in after seasons. By one of those metamorphoses so common in this place that theatre, a few years since, sank its dramatic character and became Grace Church. Had some of the patrons of the stage entered before its transformation and fallen into an abbreviated Rip Van Winkle sleep which might have continued till the procenium had been converted into the chancel and the whole change had been completed, a line of Goldsmith, slightly altered, might have been appropriately applied:

And those who went to laugh, remained to pray.

On the site of that building first consecrated to the dramatic muse, and then set apart for the adoration of God, with the addition of the Talbot lot, now stands the imposing edifice of Grace Church, in which the services of the sanctuary are performed by Bishop Henshaw.²³

²²Joseph Harper first brought his players to Providence during the summer of 1792. In 1794 he returned and continued as manager of the theater in Providence until 1810.

²³From 1843 until his death, John P. K. Henshaw (1792-1852) was the first Episcopal Bishop of Rhode Island and Rector of Grace Church.

Precisely in the rear of the old Coffee House block, partly on the spot covered by the red store of Tillinghast Almy²⁴ and partly in front, for there was no street there at that time to be encumbered, was the hull of an old sloop embedded in oyster shells in a small dock or slip which made in from the river or cove above Great Bridge about eighty feet from the north line of Market Square, that being the extent of all the land on what is now Canal Street, all north being then covered with the waters of the cove. This sloop was moored close to the cap log and was called the Old Hooker. It was owned and kept by Samuel Thurber²⁵ fifty years ago or more and for many years after and was the first regular oyster shop in this town. There was for a long time no competition in this business, and it was lucrative. While his oyster bench outside was thronged through the day, the Hooker was crowded at night by the young and the old gentlemen of the most respectable character, who were served with raw or roasted oysters in a plain, unostentatious style suited to the room, to the landlord, and to the times, and to the full satisfaction of the guests. Mr. Thurber was a person of industrious and regular habits, never being known to indulge in sleep after day break nor to walk in the streets at night, unless from his place of business to his home, illustrating in his practice this truth:

Early to bed and early to rise

Makes a man heathy, weathy, and wise.

He caught his own oysters on the various beds below, and according to a calculation made by one of his connexions a few years since, during his active years he had sculled his canoe or oyster boat miles enough to have circumnavigated this globe three times. He died about twenty years ago, leaving behind him the enviable character of an industrious, temperate, benevolent, and honest man, whose habits and success through life had been such as to enable him at the advanced age of four score to say that he enjoyed "health, peace, and competence." He gave a name to one of the oyster beds below

²⁴Tillinghast Almy, wholesale grocer and auctioneer, advertized his place of business at 8 Canal Street as the "most public situation in this city for sales of HORSES, CARRIAGES, FURNITURE &c. . . . fair or foul weather" in the 1850 *Directory*.

²⁵Samuel Thurber, oysterman (1751-1832), son of Samuel and Agatha (Bryant) Thurber, should not be confused with his third cousin, Samuel Thurber (1757-1839), son of Samuel and Hopestill (Martin) Thurber, of the paper-making and shopkeeping branch of the family.

in the following manner. He and several others were fishing for oysters on the usual ground, and as they had become scarce there, he removed his boat on a voyage of discovery to a distant place hitherto unexplored. On drawing up his rakes, he found them filled with fine oysters. Surprised and delighted at his unexpected success, he gave vent to his joy in these exclamations, "Oh! Hi! Oh!" The other oystermen were soon around him, and having taken in full loads, they unanimously agreed in christening that spot *the Ohio bed*.

At the time the Hooker was a popular resort the town authorities, wishing to show their constituents that they were wide awake in the way of improvement, for the first time appointed a nightly town watch of eight men, being two in each section: north end, south end, West Side (or in the common parlance of the day: up town, down town, and over the river) and two to be stationary to relieve the first two who might return from patrol duty. Thomas Munro,²⁶ a respectable, retired, nautical commander, who lived on Broad Street near the pumps, was appointed captain of this first town watch. There being no station or watch house provided for this new corps of municipal town officers, Mr. Thurber generously volunteered the use of the Old Hooker for that purpose; and when he retired at ten in the evening, those guardians of the night entered and one pair of them retained possession till morning.

The Great Bridge, which was less than one third the width of the present Weybosset Bridge (until a recent date the only connecting link between the East and West Sides), was erected nearly simultaneously with the Coffee House. Then the stream was much wider than it is now, the disposition to encroach on the waters not having been so rampant as it has since become. The bridge was built with much taste and at no inconsiderable expense. It was furnished with a large draw in the middle to admit vessels into the cove, several of our merchants engaged in navigation having their wharves, store houses, and counting rooms nearly as far north as Smith Street. A short time anterior to that vessels of fifty to eighty tons burthen were built at a ship yard near the confluence of the Mosshassuc and the cove, twenty or thirty rods north of the dilapidated lock of the basin of the late

²⁶Captain Thomas Munro was principally employed by John Innes Clark and Col. Joseph Nightingale, whose sister Sarah he married in 1766. He died September 14, 1815, in his 79th year.

canal,²⁷ not far from the merchandise depot of the Boston and Providence Railroad. Even after the erection of the "great bridge" I have seen vessels of large tonnage pass through the draw. The sides of that bridge were protected with an ornamental balustrade and furnished with novel walks for pedestrians to protect them from carriages, while six lamps were suspended from as many posts; Billy Gerrish, as he was commonly called, was invested with the august office of lamp lighter.

At that time there was no large hall of an insurance office in the town. There were but two weekly papers published, the *Gazette* and the *Chronicle*, and many of our male population from all parts of the town hied to that spot in the evening to learn what matters and things of a novel or important character had occurred. Thus assembled, they reciprocally became communicators and recipients of local information and of foreign news. The ephemeral occurrences of the day, however, did not engross all the attention of the citizens on the Great Bridge assembled, but subjects of a commercial, political, theological, and scientific nature were frequently introduced and ably discussed by men of sound understanding and extensive reading; and few places have I known where an inquisitive youth might derive in an evening's attentive listening more practical instruction than on the Great Bridge at the period to which I allude. But the lips of all those early instructors to whose words I have often given such silent attention are mute, and most of their listeners are laid low in the dust.

²⁷Construction of the Blackstone Canal, greatest financial fiasco in the history of Providence, began in 1825. The company was finally liquidated in 1847, when the tracks of the railroad from Worcester reached Providence. The lock of the canal basin was located at the west end of the present Haymarket Street.

[to be continued]

RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY



LECTURES

- October 17, 1951 8:15 p.m.
Three Men in an Industrial Century:
Jabez Gorham, John Gorham, and Edward Holbrook
EDMUND C. MAYO, *President*
Gorham Manufacturing Company
- November 14, 1951 8:15 p.m.
Some Rhode Island Whaling Voyages
STUART C. SHERMAN, *Assistant Librarian*
Providence Public Library
- December 12, 1951 8:15 p.m.
Governor Samuel Ward of Rhode Island:
One of the Big Eight in the Continental
Congress of 1775-1776
BERNHARD KNOLLENBERG, *Author of*
The Correspondence of Samuel Ward

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Except holidays

Monday through Friday 9:00 to 5:00

Sunday afternoon 3:00 to 5:00

Library only

Tuesday evening 7:00 to 9:00

*Closed Sundays and Tuesday evenings,
June, July, and August*