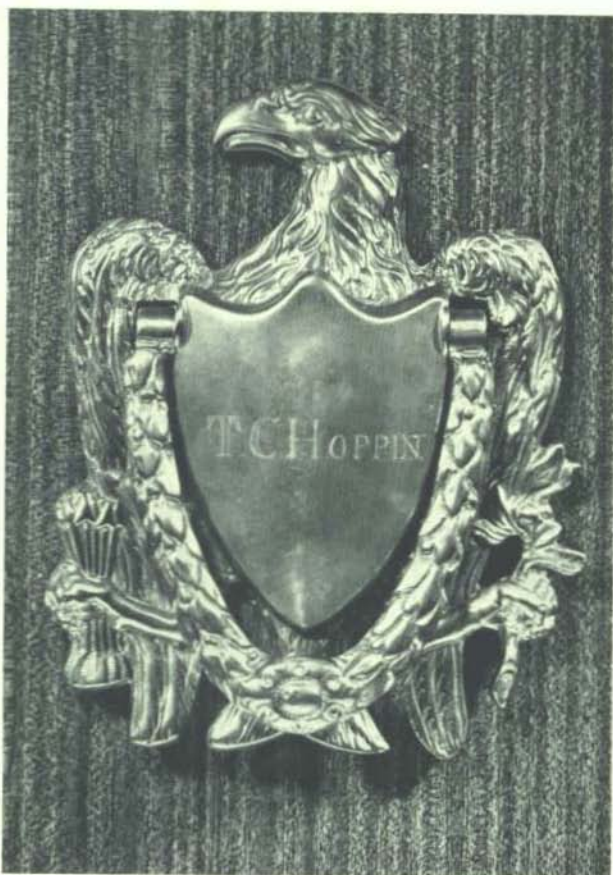


RHODE ISLAND HISTORY

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BRASS KNOCKER
from Auton House
[see inside front cover]

THE RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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BRASS KNOCKER

from Auton House

Photograph by Laurence E. Tilley

Among recent accessions is the original brass knocker of the Thomas Coles Hoppin house, presented to the Society by the heirs of Francis Vinton Hoppin. Under the name of Auton House the three story brick mansion on the corner of Westminster and Walnut streets was made famous to at least two generations of Rhode Islanders by Augustus Hoppin in his *Recollections of Auton House*.

Augustus Hoppin (1828-1896), A. Auton in the *Recollections*, was the ninth of the eleven children of Thomas Coles Hoppin, a prominent Providence merchant. During the second half of the nineteenth century Augustus Hoppin achieved great success as an illustrator and author; and fifty years ago there were few homes in Rhode Island where one could not find a copy of *Recollections of Auton House*, in which with amusing words and drawings Hoppin presented a lively picture of life in his boyhood home.

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THREE MEN IN AN INDUSTRIAL CENTURY:

JABEZ GORHAM—JOHN GORHAM—EDWARD HOLBROOK

by EDMUND C. MAYO*

IN THE VERY HUMAN STORY which I propose to share with you to-night I shall unfold with becoming brevity the lives of three men—each a New Englander, each a pioneer, each an industrialist. The three were identified with the progressive development in America of influences for the benefit of American culture. Each in his generation contributed liberally to leadership, wisdom, and inspiration.

The three men were Jabez Gorham, master craftsman; John Gorham, manufacturer; and Edward Holbrook, patron of the arts, merchandiser, and promoter.

Strangely enough the sphere of influence of these three men covered a period of 32 years each. I use "sphere of influence" because, although Edward Holbrook served only 25 years as president, during his previous eight years as treasurer under the presidency of William H. Crins, he was the guiding spirit in the organization. In breadth of vision and operational techniques these men had little in common, but each during his tenure of office made substantial contributions towards the forwarding progress of the enterprise.

Jabez Gorham's vision encompassed Boston, Worcester, and Providence. His son, John Gorham, visualized the entire American market as his field of operation, and Edward Holbrook determined to plant the name of Gorham throughout the world.

Jabez Gorham, the founder of the Gorham Manufacturing Company, was born in Providence, February 18, 1792. He was descended from John Gorham, who came from Northamptonshire, England, in 1643. After serving 7 years apprenticeship under Nehemiah Dodge,

*Mr. Mayo, president of the Gorham Manufacturing Company, read the following paper at a meeting of the Rhode Island Historical Society, October 17, 1951.



Portrait in oil

Courtesy of Gorham Manufacturing Co.

JABEZ GORHAM, 1792-1869

a pioneer jeweler of Providence, in association with four other men, he established a manufacturing jewelry business at Steeple, North Main, and Canal Streets.

In those days the distribution of manufactured jewelry was comparatively simple, as peddlers called at the different manufacturing plants and purchased their wares, which the peddlers distributed through jewelry stores. Jabez Gorham decided that the peddlers were making a profit as a middleman between him and the jewelry stores, and therefore he felt that it would be to his best interests to contact the jewelers direct and save this margin for himself.

He used to ride to Boston and according to trustworthy information, packed the jewelry in the top of his tall beaver hat. Upon arrival in Boston he engaged a hotel room and invited the jewelers to view his wares. The merchandise was spread on the bed, and each jeweler placed his upturned beaver hat on the bed, picked out the items he wanted and deposited these items in his hat. After all the merchandise had been disposed of Jabez checked the contents of the hats and the next day he went to the jewelry stores and collected the money for the merchandise.

His contacts in Boston persuaded him that there was a market need for coin silver spoons and in 1831 he decided to begin the production of these items. To aid him in this enterprise he invited Henry L. Webster, a young man from Boston who was a spoon maker, to enter into partnership with him. The new firm was named Gorham and Webster. They manufactured silver spoons, forks, thimbles, combs, child's mugs, and a few other small articles.

William G. Price entered the partnership in 1837, and the firm became known as Gorham, Webster & Price.

Following the death of Mr. Price in 1841 the interest of Henry Webster was purchased by the firm and the business organized as Gorham & Son. They continued to prosper and developed a reputation for the quality of their products.

The then current method of making teaspoons was crude and laborious by present standards. An ingot of silver was rolled to a thickness equivalent to that of the shank, and the bowl and upper part of the handle were forged in the proper thickness with a hand hammer. The rolls were revolved by a windlass, at first by manpower, and later by hitching a horse to the arm of the windlass. As the silver became

too hard to work it was necessary to heat it in a blacksmith's forge nine times during the process of fabrication. No two spoons were identical either in weight or conformation.

In 1847 Jabez Gorham retired from the business, and the burden and responsibility of operating the enterprise fell upon the shoulders of his 24-year-old son, John, who had served a seven years' apprenticeship in his father's shop.

Measured in terms of present day standards, John Gorham was a remarkable young man. He was not at all satisfied with his father's concept of the market for silverware articles and he determined to cater to the American market rather than the Massachusetts and Rhode Island market. At this particular point he manifested great wisdom and foresight. He determined not to embark upon this project without first making a survey of the potential possibilities of his market, and the strength of his competition in terms of mechanical equipment, a procedure unheard of in those days.

Although traveling was slow and expensive, he visited the United States Arsenal at Springfield, Mass., to have a look at their mechanical equipment, and he visited the United States Mint at Philadelphia to see their procedures in handling coin silver.

Upon his return to Providence he decided the first thing to do was to install a steam engine to generate power for his visualized new mechanical equipment. Some of this equipment he designed himself, and other equipment was designed by ingenious New England mechanics of that day.

Recognizing that his competition was from his English brethren across the seas, he determined to visit England and Europe to find out at first-hand what mechanical equipment they had that he did not have. He wished to be technologically abreast of the times when he embarked upon the venture of controlling the American market. So we find him on May 1, 1852, at the age of 29, sailing for Europe, which in those days was a long and expensive journey. Since no fortune had been created by his father, he was taking quite a risk in depleting the cash reserves of the company for his mission. However, he wisely determined it was best to find out what he was competing with. The money involved in a trip abroad was well spent, because had he not done this he might have dissipated the assets of the company by an unsuccessful endeavor to meet his competition. He visited

the silverware factories in Birmingham, Sheffield, the Mint in London, and the Woolwich Arsenal, and also the silverware shops in Paris and Brussels. His observations satisfied him that the American metal workers were equal, if not superior, to those in England and Europe in the use of machinery. He was also satisfied that in all processes depending upon experience in hand work, the Englishmen averaged much higher in quality and productivity than the Americans.

Here again we have a shrewd observation on the part of this young man. He had only 12 skilled craftsmen in his organization. The procedure in those days was to apprentice a young boy to each craftsman, and the period of apprenticeship was 7 years, so obviously 12 craftsmen could only produce 12 additional craftsmen in the first seven years. John Gorham said to himself that that would not do, because if he was going to embark on a campaign of capturing the American market he needed at least 50 craftsmen. He therefore in his contacts in England made acquaintances of silversmiths, die sinkers, and chasers, and during his tenure of office brought into this country more than 100 skilled artisans from overseas. The sons and grandsons of some of these men are presently employed by the company.

In 1872 the number of craftsmen employed reached 450, and the buildings occupied covered the whole area bounded by Steeple Street, North Main Street, Canal Street, and Friend Street, with the exception of a small building at the corner of North Main Street and Friend Street, and the company was reputed to be the largest manufacturer of coin silverware in the world at that time.

I have read the biographies of many early American industrialists, and I am satisfied that for foresight and sound judgment no one of them excelled John Gorham. All of which goes to show that brains are no handicap, whether you have a college education or not.

Up until 1873 Gorham Manufacturing Company designed and manufactured all of the silverware for Tiffany & Company, and they were the exclusive Gorham selling agents in the New York metropolitan area. Tiffany & Company decided to build their own factory that year, which posed quite a problem for the management of Gorham Manufacturing Company, since the New York area, as is the condition today, was the greatest single market for the distribution of their wares.

Edward Holbrook, who had been a minor employee of the Gorham Manufacturing Company, was sent to New York as selling agent and established a retail store at 1 Bond Street, New York City, in May, 1875. Edward Holbrook was a super-salesman and promoter. He had never served an apprenticeship as had been the case with his predecessors, but a man of his characteristics fitted into the picture at that particular time to continue and accelerate the forward progress of the enterprise. He knew that the corporation had mechanical equipment and technological methods not surpassed by anyone, and since the plant was manned by skilled craftsmen, many of whom had served apprenticeships in England, he conceived his job to be to increase the volume of sales and the prestige of the company in the United States and to make the name of Gorham as well known in Europe as it was in this country.

He proceeded to implement his program, and well did he do it. In 1879 he entered Gorham wares in the International Exhibition in Sydney, New South Wales, now Australia, but there is no indication that he received any awards. But this did not bother young Holbrook. He immediately entered the Paris Exposition in 1889 and was awarded the gold medal and numerous other citations. In 1893 at the Chicago Exposition the Gorham Manufacturing Company obtained 47 awards.

When the Gorham Manufacturing Company was invited to exhibit at the Paris Exposition in 1900, Edward Holbrook made up his mind he really was going to show them something. He was going to beard the lion in his own den, and he decided to spare no expense in an effort to capture the Grand Prize. Europeans in those days considered American art, design, and culture to be decidedly in the adolescent stage, and they were totally unprepared for this invasion of the Paris Exposition with the quality of design and craftsmanship that made up the Gorham exhibit. The company was awarded the grand prize, the gold medal, and 30 other citations, and Edward Holbrook was personally awarded the Legion of Honor. The gold medal for flatware was awarded the Mythologique pattern, and that design is on permanent exhibition at the Luxemburg Museum of Art in Paris. It was a bold undertaking with a most happy result.

Holbrook never missed an opportunity to have a substantial Gorham exhibit at every exposition, and as a result in 1901 at the Charles-

town Exposition the Gorham Company was awarded the Grand Prize and other awards; in 1901 at the Buffalo Exposition the Gorham Company was awarded the Grand Prize and other citations; in 1902 at the Turin Exposition Gorham received the gold medal; in 1904 at



Courtesy of Gorham Manufacturing Co.

VASE and PLATEAU

Exhibited at the St. Louis Exposition of 1904, where the Gorham Company received the Grand Prize and numerous other awards. It is an exceptionally fine example of the Art Nouveau period and is hand wrought, requiring 3500 hours of craftsmanship.

the St. Louis Exposition Gorham received the Grand Prize and other citations. In 1909 at the Alaska Yukon Exposition Gorham was awarded the Grand Prize and other awards, and in 1915 at the Panama Pacific Exposition Gorham received the Grand Prize and other awards.

Each year Edward Holbrook spent three months in Europe. Whenever he saw a machine which would be useful in his manufacturing processes and which the Gorham Manufacturing Company did not possess, he bought it. Whenever he found an outstanding craftsman, whether a die sinker, a silversmith, a chaser, or designer, he hired him and sent him to Providence.

On one of these visits to Europe he met William C. Codman, a versatile designer, trained primarily in the ecclesiastical field. In London, William Codman was associated with Sir Gilbert Scott, an architect, and executed work for him in Westminster Abbey, All Saints, and St. Mary's. Mr. Codman had executed industrial art work in all parts of the world, being an acknowledged master in Gothic art. The Chester Eagle lectern, the Truro Cathedral lectern, and the lighting of the Luxemburg Cathedral, the communion plate for Delhi in the Memorial Chapel, candlesticks at Sandringham Chapel for the Prince of Wales, all the stained glass windows in the Ottawa Cathedral, and the candelabra for St. Paul's Cathedral in London were executed from his designs. William Codman's interest in ecclesiastical bronze work especially intrigued Edward Holbrook, and he built a bronze foundry on the Gorham grounds in Elmwood from which has developed the Gorham statuery bronze foundry, the largest in the world.

Edward Holbrook early decided in his quest of world domination in the silverware industry that the plant in downtown Providence was too small to accommodate the manufacturing activities of the business. Therefore, in 1887 he had designs prepared for a much larger plant to be erected in a section then known as Elmwood. In 1890 the main buildings of the present Gorham plant were erected. Those who had a part in the design of these buildings were far sighted men. In window-light area and ventilation they compare favorably with present day industrial construction.

Having firmly established the name and prestige of the Gorham Manufacturing Company abroad, culminating in his Paris venture, Holbrook decided it was time to turn his attention to the home territory.

In 1903 he commissioned McKim, Mead and White to design the world's most beautiful mercantile building for a Gorham retail store to be erected at 36th Street and Fifth Avenue, New York. This build-

ing was Italian Renaissance in its design, and the marble carving was executed in Italy. It created a sensation in the architectural world, particularly among those interested in mercantile building design.

Because of Edward Holbrook's wide acquaintance in New York, he secured many commissions, among those who were establishing fortunes, to design and create for them massive pieces in the form of center pieces, candelabra, silver and gold service plates, etc. These men of affairs in New York, who were Mr. Holbrook's intimate friends, were engaged in the early 1900's in bringing about the amalgamation and consolidation of many of the industrial enterprises of the country, and being a promoter at heart, he was so intrigued with the philosophy involved that he decided to create a silverware manufacturing empire for himself. By 1913 he had acquired the Mt. Vernon Silver Company, the Roger Williams Silver Company, the Mauser Silver Manufacturing Company of New York, Hayes & MacFarland of New York City, the Whiting Manufacturing Company of Bridgeport, Connecticut, the Wm. B. Kerr Company of Newark, and the Wm. B. Durgin Company of Concord, N. H. Most of these were old and reasonably successful silversmiths producing the same kind of product as the parent company, the Gorham Manufacturing Company.

It is very unusual for a super-salesman and promoter to have the capacity for organizing and controlling manufacturing operations of a group of corporations. Unbridled optimism is the stock in trade of the super-salesman, and he is very seldom found in the area of realism. The various corporations, which made up what was known then as the Silversmiths Group owned by the Gorham Manufacturing Company, were competing with one another for their share of the market, and when this situation exists there is but one end—it was like a family taking in each other's washing. It was under these circumstances and through these procedures that in 1919 the Gorham Manufacturing Company found itself in financial difficulties for the first time in one hundred years.

Edward Holbrook died in 1919. In spite of this unfortunate and unhappy conclusion of Edward Holbrook's regime, he so firmly established the name and prestige of the Gorham Manufacturing Company, and built up a demand for its products, that there was sufficient latent momentum in the forward movement of the enterprise to allow succeeding managements to carry on.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY
PEW HOLDERS, 1816

[continued from October, 1951, v. 10, no. 4, p. 118]

(58) Charles F. Hayford, son of Daniel Hayford; died at sea, April 12, 1817, in his 20th yr. See Prov. Phenix. There were four of the name (Hayford) in 1824, three of whom were house carpenters. Daniel Hayford appears in the Prov. records about 1798 and is buried at Swan Point Cem. with several daughters. He was b. at Pembroke, Mass. Query: How came Chas. F. Hayford to have been owner of pew 58 at the age of eighteen years? Daniel Hayford appears in the Church papers as sexton.

(59) William Hamlin,

(59) Samuel Ely Hamlin,

(59) John H. Hamlin,

children, with a sister Mary, of Samuel Hamlin, son of Charles and Thankful (Ely) Hamlin, b. Middletown, Ct. Sept. 9, 1746; d. April 1, 1801. He was a pewter and brass worker and is said to have made a vane for the First Baptist Church. His son, Samuel E. Hamlin, continued the business of his father.

William Hamlin, son of Samuel, b. Oct. 15, 1772; d. Aug. 19, 1873; m. Eliza, dau. of Isaac Bowen, Jr.; children: Wm. Ezra Hamlin; Sarah F. Hamlin who m. Shubael Cady; Richard E. Hamlin. He was an engraver and maker and repairer of nautical instruments. He engraved the first map of Providence, made by Daniel Anthony in 1803.

Samuel Ely Hamlin, son of Samuel, b. June 30, 1774; d. April 14, 1864; m. Nancy Hartshorn. He lived at the northwest corner of Church and Benefit Sts., in 1824, and Mrs. Nicholas Power with her two daughters were his tenants. Mrs. Power was mother of Mrs. Sarah Helen Whitman. By will Mr. Hamlin gave pew 59 to his brother William and his heirs. Legacies were left to his only surviving sister, Mary Hamlin, to the Children's Friends' Society and to his ward, Martha Thurber. The use of his entire estate he gave to his wife, and after her, to his niece and nephews, children of his brother, William.

John H. Hamlin, son of Samuel Hamlin, b. Aug. 24, 1787; d. Feb. 9, 1856. At the time of his death he was a grocer living at the south corner of Hopkins and Benefit Sts. He had been an engraver, like his brother, William, shown by the following from the record of the building committee of the new Church, regarding the dedication of the Church in 1816. John Howland, Clerk of the committee made the record from which the following is taken, as quoted by Rev. Carlton A. Staples in his sermon, preached

on the sixtieth anniversary of the dedication of the First Congregational Meeting House, Oct. 29, 1876:

"During the time of depositing the plate and fixing the (corner) stone we were favored with a plentiful shower of rain . . . Messrs. William and John H. Hamlin generously and elegantly engraved the plate which we hope will remain, till the archangel with the trump of God, shall bring their works to light." See Mr. Staples' Sermon, p. 10. Queries: Is Mr. Howland's record extant, and where is the Corner Stone located?

(60) Charles O. Foster, b. d. The only mention of Chas. O. Foster that we have found is in a quotation from Mr. Howland's record, made by Mr. Staples on the 9th page of his Sermon, referred to above. Mr. Howland says: "On the day appointed, according to the notice given on the previous Sabbath, the males of the Society assembled at the Town House, and the females on the floor of the new foundation. John C. Jencks and Charles Orme Foster acted as marshals of the day."

(61) John Gladding, son of Jonathan Gladding, b. April 1, 1777; d. March 27, 1851; a sea-captain; father of the late Benjamin C. Gladding, b. d. whose family now occupy the pew. Miss Mary T. Gladding is dau. of Benjamin C. Gladding.

(62) Ann Mason, b. Aug. 19, 1780; d. Brooklyn, N. Y. Jan. 27, 1866; dau. of Charles and Deborah Cadman Jencks, and widow of Daniel Mason. They had a dau. Sarah Parmenter Clarke who d. Brooklyn, N. Y. Oct. 30, 1871. Doubtless "Sally Jencks" who had pew 62 with Ann Mason was her sister. See Prov. Records. Mrs. Mason mentions her pew 62, in her will.

(62) Sally Jencks. See above.

(63) Stephen H. Smith, b. Aug. 1784; d. May 28, 1858. He was son of Benjamin and Mary (Tillinghast) Smith, and did not marry. He built the residence near the Butterfly Factory, now occupied by Arnold Gindrat Talbot, and beautified Quinsnickt. According to the plat of pews in 1816, Mr. Smith did not acquire pew 63 until 1830. Mr. Stone intimates that he added to the original list, but only three such additions have been found, namely; pew 63, pew 15, and pew 89.

(64) Danforth Lyon, b. Woodstock, Ct. Oct. 2, 1784; d. April 12, 1857; m. Hannah Wilkinson. Their children were: Paschal D. Lyon, d. 1833; Wm. Rhodes Lyon d. young; Mary W. Lyon (1821-1904); Mary Eliza Lyon, m. Richard Edgar Riddick. Hannah, wife of Danforth Lyon, was b. Dec. 28, 1783; d. Dec. 10, 1884; dau. of Rhodes and Clarissa (Marcy) Wilkinson. Danforth Lyon was a grocer on Weybosset St., with shop on Mathewson St. in 1824.

- (65) John Larchar, b. _____ d. Sept. 15, 1863; merchant tailor. on Market Square and residence on Benefit St. in 1824. He m. Lucy Hartshorn, in 1814. His children were: Ann Larchar who m. Earl P. Mason in 1836; Sarah Larchar (_____); William Larchar (_____) and Charlotte Larchar (1829-1861). He was son of Capt. John Larchar.
- (66) Henry Cowing.
- (67) vacant)
- (68) Samuel Soule, b. Oct. 6, 1747; d. July 26, 1825; m. Mehitabel _____, who d. Feb. 14, 1809. They had dau. Fanny and son Henry. The latter d. Jan. 10, 1840; age 51 yrs.
- Samuel Soule owned and lived in an old house on what is now the southwestern corner of the estate of the late Josiah W. Crooker, next to the Sullivan Dorr estate. He acquired the land intervening between his lot and the parsonage estate of the First Congregational Soc. and his family, later, sold his estate to Henry A. Rhodes and wife, who built upon it. This estate passed to Henry J. Steere whose executors sold it to Mr. Crooker. The parsonage estate, now 87 Benefit St., was also acquired by the Soule family, who sold it to George Owen in 1859. Mr. Owen lived here many years and his family have recently sold the estate with the house.
- The parsonage was built in 1784 by the First Cong. Church and was first occupied by Rev. Enos Hitchcock, who died there in 1803. A few years later it was occupied by Rev. Henry Edes who occupied it until 1833, when it was sold, as said above. The history of the house is partly told by Mr. Hitchcock in his diary now at the R. I. Hist. Soc. He mentions the date of the "raising" of the frame and the date of his moving into the house—Dec. 30-31, 1784, adding: "May our next remove be to a House not made by hands, eternal in the Heavens." Among the papers of the Church, also at the Hist. Society, is a bill of Samuel Nightingale for material furnished for the building, including N. E. rum and white sugar for the "raising". The house was built from the proceeds of a lottery. The Society bought about twelve acres here in 1771—part of the home lot of Joshua Verin.
- (69) George Gilbert, b. _____ d. _____ 1826. In 1824 George Gilbert was living at 19 Weybosset St. and George O. Gilbert, physician and surgeon, was at 89 High St. George Gilbert d. June 5, 1826; age 59 yrs.
- (70) Mary Balch, d. Jan. 5, 1831, in her 69th year, b. Feb. 9, 1762. The following is from her gravestone at North Burial Ground: "She was for a series of years engaged in the instruction of youth, the first who established a Female Academy in this Town, which by her industry and amiable qualifications attained a high reputa-

- tion. She was a sincere and tender friend and her love to God and goodwill to man were conspicuous traits of her character."
- Beside her at the North Burial Ground are buried her parents, Timothy and Sarah Balch, and her brother, Joseph. See Pew No. 57.
- (71, 72, 73, 74) Vacant
- (75) John Holden Greene, architect of the Church. b. _____ d. _____
- (76) Vacant
- (77) Thomas Coles, b. _____ d. _____ was an Englishman who was prominent many years in Providence, having filled the office of collector of customs for about twenty-five years. He was a captain in the Continental Army during the Revolution. He m. Sarah Walker, but had no children. His landed property, including his residence at the corner of Snow and Westminster Sts. was left by him largely to his niece, Sarah Walker, who m. James Cranston. Thomas C. Hoppin and Thomas C. Hartshorn and Thomas C. Peckham were named for him. To Mr. Hoppin and his son, Thomas F. Hoppin, he left considerable real estate and to Frederick S. Hoppin, son of Gov. W. W. Hoppin, a sword that had been given to Capt. Coles by Gen. LaFayette. This sword is mentioned in the will of Capt. Coles and a picture of it may be seen in "Our French Allies."
- (77) Thomas Peckham, son of Thomas and Sarah (Weaver) Peckham, b. Middletown, R. I. Sept. 8, 1783; d. _____ m. Sarah, dau. of Samuel and Lydia Wardwell. She d. April 15, 1868; age, 83 yrs. He was a deputy-collector, U. S. Custom House, and was living at 219 Benefit Street. 1824.
- (78, 79) Vacant)
- (80) Jonathan Adams, b. 1748; d. Mar. 18, 1840. His place of business was at 17 South Main St. and his residence was on Williams St. in 1824. He had dau. Sophia, who d. Aug. 15, 1850; age, 70 yrs.
- (81) Seth Adams Sen. b. 1748; d. March 18, 1840; m. Susan Simmons. He was a commission merchant, with residence at 110 South Main St. in 1824. His son, Seth Adams Jr. b. Taunton, Mass. Jan. 14, 1800; d. _____ 1866. m. (1) Harriet E. Fenner and (2) Sarah, dau. of Hon. Abijah Bigelow, of Worcester, Mass.
- (82) Francis Bailey, b. _____ d. _____ The only Francis Bailey we have found is in the Greene Family of Rhode Island, which says that Francis Bailey was son of _____ Bailey of Boston, who m. the widow Ruth (Greene) Currier, who d. 1868. By her first marriage she was mother of Wm. Pitt Fessenden of Maine.
- (83, 84, 85, 86, vacant.)

[to be concluded]

NEWS NOTES

Among the organizations that have met at John Brown House during the fall are: October 18, 1951, The E. O. W. Club (Mr. Clifford P. Monahan spoke on The John Brown House); October 19, Rhode Island Independence Chapter, D. A. R. (Mr. Leon Watson talked about Conanicut Island); November 1, Esek Hopkins Chapter, D. A. R. (Mr. Milton Goff gave a talk illustrated by slides on Colonial Williamsburg); November 10, Review Club (the title of Mrs. Alex M. Burgess's address was I Married a Descendant); November 16, Rhode Island Independence Chapter, D. A. R., Mrs. Charles Hurdis described colored slides showing the D. A. R. Headquarters in Washington, D. C.); November 26, The Providence League of Women Voters (Professor Hugh Killough discussed World Trade Expansion—An Essential Part of United Nations Policy); December 8, Review Club (Professor Israel J. Kapstein talked about Aldous Huxley); December 13, Providence County Garden Club (Mrs. Helen Wilson gave a demonstration and description of Christmas Greens); December 19, Pottery and Porcelain Club (Mrs. Clifford P. Monahan lectured on the colored slides recently acquired by the club from Mr. Frank Stoner); December 21, Rhode Island Society of Mayflower Descendants (Forefathers' Day Reception to the Governor, Mr. Herbert A. Crowell. Mrs. Dorothy Place, harpist; Mrs. Calvert Garth, soloist; Miss Irma Howes, reader).

* * *

Mr. Roelker addressed the Bristol Historical Society on September 24, 1951, on The Seizure of John Brown.

* * *

Miss Catherine Pierce of 987 Memorial Drive, Cambridge, Massachusetts, is engaged in research concerning the life and work of Francis Alexander, an artist who came to Providence in 1823 and spent several years in the city. A number of his portraits are known to be preserved in Rhode Island homes, and Miss Pierce would appreciate information about their location and history.

A newcomer to the ranks of organizations interested in Rhode Island history is the recently formed Rhode Island Jewish Historical Association. The purpose of the group is to study the history of the Jews in Rhode Island from the period when they played so important a part in the mercantile life of colonial Newport down to the present. Officers of the new organization are Mr. David C. Adelman, president; Mr. Bernard Segal, vice-president; Miss Matilda J. Pincus, secretary; and Mr. Arthur J. Levy, treasurer. Rabbi William G. Braude, Professor Israel J. Kapstein, and Mr. Alter Boyman are also members of the Executive Committee.

* * *

The activities of the Society were first brought to the attention of the television public on November 21, when Mr. Collins discussed and exhibited a number of the sign boards and other old advertising media in the Society's collection on the program "New England at Work" over WJAR-TV.

ACCESSIONS

From Edward Winsor, three small diaries of Col. Israel Angell, miscellaneous papers of the Angell family, several broadsides, and an account book.

From Winfield T. Scott, miscellaneous papers of Joseph M. Coldwell.

From Mrs. Robert C. Dexter, miscellaneous papers and pamphlets.

From Miss Louise Hobson, Boston Symphony Orchestra Programs, 1950-1951.

From Bradford H. Kenyon, John Kenyon of Onondaga, his lineage. (typewritten)

From the Camera Club of the Providence Engineering Society, 382 contemporary photographs of Rhode Island.

From Mrs. Charlotte Estey, photographs of Benefit Street.

From Edward W. Husband, notes concerning John Brown House.

From Mrs. Earl Owen, *The Marston Genealogy*.

From William Davis Miller, *Early Houses of the King's Province in the Narragansett Country*.

From Miss Hope L. Potter, a miniature of Col. Edward Dexter.

From Franklin R. Cushman, Jason Williams family papers.

From Mrs. S. Foster Damon, *Who's Who in the East* and *Who's Who in New England*.

From Harold A. Greene, records of the Pioneer Fire Company, records of the Rhode Island Art Association, speaking trumpet from the Water Witch Engine Company.

From Mr. and Mrs. Willis Warner, *A History of Bristol County, Massachusetts* and *John Browne, Gentleman of Wannamoisett*.

From Miss Florence Estabrooks, *History of Sackville, New Brunswick*.

From Mrs. Walter J. Gilbert, Thomas DuBois family Bible.

From John H. Wells, papers of Capt. Jenkins D. Jones and the sloop *Phebe*.

From Miss Bertha W. Clark, Francis Baker of Yarmouth (type-written).

From Mrs. Haven Parker, *The Arts Bulletin* for September, 1951.

From Mr. William G. Thurber, Location of fire boxes in Providence in 1830.

From Mrs. Walter H. Watson, *Eastham, Massachusetts, 1651-1951*.

From Mrs. Henry Wharton, Godfrey Malbone account book.

From J. Whitney Bowen, *The Descendants of John Bowen*.

Genealogical material or genealogies of the following families have also been added to the library shelves: Austin, Branch, Comstock, Dodd, Grimshaw, Howe, Johanson, Johnson, McIntyre, Newland, Pendleton, Putnam, Sherman, Williams.

Gift of William G. Roelker, *The Winthrop Family in America*.

Gift of Michael J. Walsh, *Contemporary broadside editions of the Declaration of Independence*.

Gift of Miss Helen M. Daggett, 31 issues of the *Pilgrim news letter*.

Hon. Theodore Francis Green, set of maps published by the Geologic Survey, covering areas of the state of Rhode Island.

Gift of Rufus C. Fuller, *Ballous in America* and 1828 Providence tax book.

Gift of the author, *Lafayette, Rhode Island*, by George W. Gardiner.

Gift of Albert C. Rider, lithograph of the Boston City Guards on Smith Hill, Providence, August 5, 1836.

From Dana Rice, doll and cradle, which belonged to Charlotte Rice.

From Mrs. William H. Kenerson, photographs of Cyrus and Abigail (Williams) Churchill and daguerreotypes of Mr. and Mrs. Joshua Williams.

From Mrs. John Farr, photograph of the Waterman farm on Reservoir Avenue.

By purchase, Stephen Gano's ms. memorandum book.

By purchase, Cranston, R. I., tax list, 1787 (ms).

Publication Notice

CORRESPONDENCE OF GOVERNOR SAMUEL WARD

May 1775-March 1776

Edited by BERNHARD KNOLLENBERG

and

GENEALOGY of the WARD FAMILY

Compiled by CLIFFORD P. MONAHAN

Samuel Ward was three times Governor of Rhode Island, Chief Justice of the Superior Court, and Delegate to the First and Second Continental Congresses.

To be published in February. Price \$7.50 postpaid.

Prepaid order envelope enclosed.

PICTURES OF PROVIDENCE IN THE PAST, 1790-1820

THE REMINISCENCES OF WALTER R. DANFORTH

edited by CLARKSON A. COLLINS, 3RD

[continued from October, 1951, v. 10, no. 4, inside back cover]

THE MARKET HOUSE and City Hall was a building two stories high until the year 1795,¹ I think, when the masonic fraternity, or St. John's Lodge, added another story. On removing the old roof, workmen found among other things a large number of tin canteens which had been used by soldiers in the war, and they all bore the mark *M.T.* (empty).

South of the Market House and in the rear of the Jenckes Building² (now occupied by E. R. Young's extensive grocery) was a range of as old and unseemly buildings as were ever agglomerated in the center of a populous and thriving town. In the chamber of one of them, entered by a high flight of outside stairs, Kinsley Carpenter³ had a turner's shop fifty-five years ago and before and after that time. He

¹Even Mayor Danforth's phenomenal memory occasionally played him false. The third story of the Market House was added in 1797.

²This building, which stood at the corner of Market Square and South Main Street facing the foot of College Street, is probably better remembered today as the Abbott Still House. It was built *circa* 1730.

³Kinsley Carpenter, son of Oliver, who died April 28, 1859, at the age of ninety-seven. Kinsley Carpenter, chair maker, like many other Rhode Islanders was also engaged in commerce, being part owner of the schooners *Farmer*, *Good Intent*, and *Minerva* between 1800 and 1810.

supplied the youth with tops and the joiners with table legs, and made and sold kitchen and parlor chairs, some of which are now extant and are likely to outlast a large portion of those of modern manufacture. The mechanics of those days generally made their work for long service; but as men now are wiser in *their* generation, their articles are made to sell, like the razors described by Peter Pindar. On the lower floor William Valentine⁴ opened a small retail grocery and there commenced the structure of his large fortune. Mr. Valentine was an industrious, plodding, prudent, and saving man, even approaching to parsimony, and many a bitter tear did he shed at the expenditure of public money and the increase of taxes. To avoid being overtaxed here, he bought him an estate in Cranston, where he resided several years, and then changed his residence to Fall River, where he might be amongst his cotton factories and witness the growth of his wealth. He died there a few years since.

In one of the apartments of this old block was probably the first cotton spinning jenny that was ever put in operation in this country. Now our land is full of spinning jennies and equally full of a singing Jenny.⁵ This pioneer spinning jenny was put in operation by Andrew Dexter, Senior,⁶ and William Potter,⁷ and was moved by a crank turned by hand. Its operation was afterwards suspended on the introduction by Samuel Slater at Pawtucket of the art of cotton spinning by water power. Mr. Dexter was for many years a resident and merchant in this town, and having an active and inventive mind was

⁴William Valentine died in Fall River June 21, 1839, in his eighty-first year. His obituary in the *Manufacturers and Farmers Journal* of June 27 states: "Mr. Valentine for many years occupied a prominent place in this community. He was at one time a member of the Senate of this State. In his youth he was engaged in the revolutionary war; after the peace he devoted himself to mercantile pursuits, by which, aided by habits of rigid economy he acquired an ample fortune . . . in his younger days he was a man of great energy and activity and particularly distinguished for the boldness and success of his mercantile adventures."

⁵Jenny Lind, under the inspired managership of P. T. Barnum, gave a concert at Howard Hall (Westminster and Dorrance Streets) on October 7, 1850. At the public auction of tickets before the performance the prize ticket, which measured 27 by 17 inches, was purchased by Col. William Ross for \$653.

⁶Unlike most Providence Dexters this Andrew Dexter was not a descendant of Gregory, but was a member of the Massachusetts Dexter family. He was born in Boston, May 4, 1751, and died at Athens, N. Y., November 12, 1816. His wife was Mary Newton of Newport.

⁷The account of this first unsuccessful attempt at power spinning in George S. White's *Memoir of Samuel Slater* . . . (Philadelphia, 1836) states that Dexter's associates were Daniel Anthony and Lewis Peck. It makes no mention of William Potter.

the author of many projects of improvement in the arts, some of which were successful and others not.

There was no road then by the waterside south of the Jenckes estate. To get into the old stores on the Bowen, Leonard, and Halsey estates foot passengers might pass over a plank stretching from the spot where the doors of what is known as the Hoppin Building now



Halftone copy of old woodcut

R.I.H.S. Library

JENCKES ESTATE or ABBOTT STILL HOUSE

Corner of South Main Street and Market Square

are and extending across the site of Leonard Street.⁸ The usual way, however, was from South Main Street down the gangways, as it was to every wharf down to the lower part of the town.

There were some inconsiderable improvements made to promote business facilities south of the bridge on the river in this locality, but none of magnitude until after the ever memorable gale and high tide

⁸Leonard Street was the first street south of Market Square running between South Main and South Water. It vanished from the map of Providence when the area between the Square and Crawford Street was cleared of buildings beginning in 1929-30.

in September 1815. These having swept away the greater part of the old buildings standing on the wharves, which before that event had been insuperable obstacles in the way, a highway was soon after opened and became South Water Street, which has since been the great commercial mart of Providence.

Less than fifty years ago the oyster benches were on the southerly side of Market Square, westward of the Market House, and there also was the fish market. The fish were exposed on benches without shelter or covering. Then and for several years after there was no South Water Street to be obstructed by the vendors of those articles. As though that small space was not sufficiently crowded, a person was permitted by the municipal authorities to place an old building directly against the west end of the Market House, blocking up one door and thereby making space for a retail grocery shop. The cellar of the Market was then used for the storage of stone lime. In this small building Asa Payson⁹ was first ushered into notice amongst us as a grocer and obtained many customers of such as required groceries in a small way, the greatest portion using them in the shop by the simple process of crooking the elbow. As a consideration for this occupancy of public land, Payson agreed that the Town Watch, then wishing to quit the Old Hooker, where we last left them, should occupy the shop during the night, so that this small building became a store by day and a public watch house by night, assuming the same hybrid character as the piece of furniture mentioned by the poet, "A bed by night—a case of drawers by day."

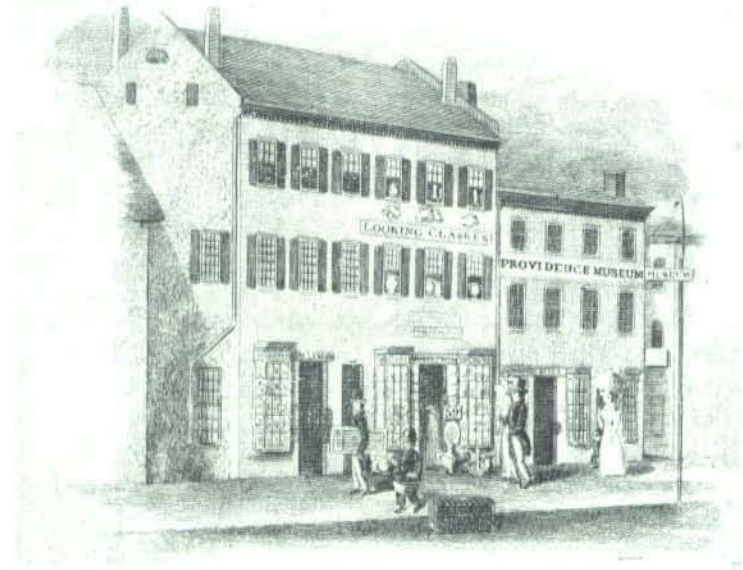
A citizen as well known for the eccentricity of his character as for the goodness of his heart and strength of intellect, Obadiah Brown,¹⁰ commonly called Squire Obadiah to distinguish him from his cousin Obadiah, son of Moses, musing on his name, Asa Payson, which was not familiar in the place, stepped hurriedly into the corner brick store, and touching both heels alternately with the toe of either shoe, in his characteristic manner enquired—"Mr. Hoppin, will you be

⁹Probably Asa Payson (1782-1864), who was born and died in Woodstock, Connecticut, but who, according to *The History of Woodstock* (Worcester, 1943), v. 8, p. 83, by Clarence W. Bowen, also lived in Providence and Dennis, Massachusetts.

¹⁰Obadiah Brown (1762-1815) was the son of Joseph Brown, second of the "Four Brothers." As he died unmarried and the line of Joseph Brown is now extinct, little has been written about him.

kind enough to inform me what is Asa Payson's Christian name?" On being answered that it was Asa, he repeated it, gave thanks for the information and departed.

In 1810 or 1812 there had been in town a few months a person by the name of Goliah Williams,¹¹ rather an uncommon name for the times, though having scripture authority for its use, who first kept a store on High Street, then opened an oyster cellar not far from Market



Moses Potter advertising card

R.I.H.S. Library

The PROVIDENCE MUSEUM, ca 1828
opposite the First Baptist Meeting House

Square, then figured for a short time as an auctioneer near the bridge in what is now Canal Street; at that time only a possible street. From that location he transferred himself to the Providence Museum, opposite the Baptist Meeting House, having bought in; and there he was deemed to be the greatest curiosity amongst his whole collection of wonderful productions. He was unique, if not *outré*, not more in

¹¹Goliah Williams, born 1782, of Scituate, son of Squire and Anne (Potter) Williams. He married Sarah Bickford in 1801.

name than in speech and address. His person cannot be described—that look, that tone, that emphasis—alas they have passed away—to be recollected by contemporaries, but not to be delineated for succeeding generations. He had a peculiar way of recommending the articles he offered at auction, and his comparisons would not infrequently suggest the most grotesque images. Putting up a tub of butter one day for sale he said, “Come now, bid away like smoke; what you going to give for this ’ere butter? Start it, for I’ll be killed outright if it isn’t as good a tub of butter, as you ever stuck an axe into!”

Our friend, Squire Obadiah, for I ever esteemed him as one of my best friends, had seen this name in the newspaper and heard it repeated on ’change and there was a seeming oddity about it that puzzled him worse than did Asa Payson’s. He wished, not that heaven would make him such a man, but that some power would casually throw him in his way, that he might see, know, scan him, and his own will soon granted what Dame Chance denied. He arose one morning resolved to make a bold push and at all events and hazards to see the object which had engrossed so many of his waking thoughts and had been an incubus to disturb his nightly rest. He proceeded up High Street near its junction with Westminster, and there his eyes rested on a sign board inscribed *Goliah Williams*. He read it over aloud, and to “make assurance doubly sure” repeated the reading, and then approaching the door, gave a succession of loud raps, which raised Goliah from his breakfast, and brought him wondering to the door. “Well, what is wanted?” said Goliah.

“I wish, Sir, to see Mr. Goliah Williams, Sir.”

“Well, I suppose I’m the man you’re arter.”

“Indeed, Sir, are you the veritable Goliah Williams?” walking round, shrugging his shoulders, alternately touching each heel and closely surveying this rare specimen of humanity.

“Well, I guess I am, and nobody else.”

“Be kind enough to turn round, Mr. Williams,” which request being complied with he continued, “I am very happy to see you, Mr. Goliah Williams. Good morning, Sir; good morning, Mr. Goliah Williams,” and turning on his heel departed leaving Goliah bewildered at the scene. Like the fair bather in Thomson’s *Seasons* “A stupid moment motionless he stood,” and then Goliah resumed his breakfast.

We take leave of Goliah, but cannot refrain from giving a few characteristic anecdotes of Mr. Brown. He was aroused one cold night and hearing some one in his wood yard, he opened a window and caught a man in the very act of stealing wood. His sympathies were awakened to learn that one of his fellow inhabitants was destitute of fuel in such inclement weather, and instead of warning him off as a thief, he cried to him, “Be so kind, Sir, as to take what you want off the other pile, which is mine, and put that back on Mother’s, who will be greatly annoyed to find any gone in the morning.”

He would frequently, when in a wakeful mood at night, rise from bed and take a long walk for exercise. On one occasion, it is said, he and his brother-in-law, Richard Ward,¹² found themselves on the road to Taunton on a beautiful moonlight night. Crossing the Green, about break of day, Obadiah exclaimed, “I have just found the key of our house in my pocket, and we have come off and locked mother in and no mistake. She’ll find herself in a quandary by and by, but it can’t be helped now, and if she can’t get out by her own efforts she must alarm the neighbors.” And then they entered Atwood’s Hotel for rest and breakfast.

While he was holding a Justice’s Court once a defendant in some case filed a plea of infancy and proved himself to be under age. Justice Brown remarked, “It is law, law, Sir, and no mistake, but a mean and contemptible plea for a man to make to get clear of an honest debt, and no one who calls himself a gentleman would degrade himself so low as to make it.”

The following incident will show how a deliberative body may be influenced and swayed by a happy hit or an appeal to deep rooted prejudice, rather than by an argument. A man of the minority party produced his deed of real estate in open Town Meeting, in a time of high party excitement, in 1809 or 1810, and begged to stand propounded for admission as a freeman. He had never been sparing of invective against the majority, and therefore an objection was made to his being propounded. There was no precedent for his rejection, but a long debate arose; and many of the party, who had the power to reject, doubted the policy, propriety, or the right to exercise it. A doubt hung over the meeting for a long time; when Squire Brown

¹²Richard Ward (1765-1808), son of Governor Samuel Ward, married Elizabeth Brown, daughter of Joseph.

arose and said, "Mr. Moderator, I see no reason for wasting any more time in a protracted discussion of this question. I have learnt, Sir, in this room, that this man not long since applied to the Tammany Society for admission and was rejected. Now, Sir, will this town meeting receive as a freeman a man that that Society rejects?" The effect was electrical. The vote was taken and the application was rejected, or more properly, the right was denied. As the name of the Tammany Society, or Columbian Order, has thus been incidentally introduced, I deem it proper to state that on its roll were the names of most of the members of the Republican party of that time, and they included some of the most able and reputable men in this town and state. But at that time of party excitement no Federalist would admit that truth any sooner than one of the Republican party would speak in praise of the Washington Benevolent Society.

Passing over Weybosset Bridge one day, Squire Brown came near a group of young men, one of whom, John M. Peck¹³ was imitating some of Squire's peculiarities of tone and gesture and repeating one or more of his characteristic remarks. The speaker, turning suddenly and seeing the original, was somewhat abashed, but was prevented from making an apology by Mr. Brown, who good-naturedly said, "Very well, Mr. Peck, very well indeed; I couldn't have done it better myself."

Mr. Brown was a Committeeman or Commissioner on the affairs of the exploded Farmers' Exchange Bank¹⁴ and Mr. Burrill was Attorney General and prosecuting officer against any delinquents. The latter one day received a package from the former, who was in-

¹³John Mathewson Peck, son of Colonel William and Abigail (Mathewson) Peck. He died suddenly at New York on January 12, 1813, at the age of twenty-four.

¹⁴Failure of the Farmers' Exchange Bank of Gloucester in 1809 brought to light the most scandalous proceedings in the history of Rhode Island banking. The bank was founded in 1804 by a group of prominent citizens of Gloucester and nearby towns. For four years the directors used the bank's funds as seemed most to their own financial interest, employing the stockholders' money in such schemes as the speculative purchase of grain in Hartford for their own account. They then sold out to an even more unscrupulous adventurer, Andrew Dexter, Jr., of Boston, who in the course of his speculations had bills printed in such large numbers that the president and cashier were unable to sign them quickly enough to fill his demands.

When the Farmers' Exchange Bank closed its doors in 1809 its vault contained \$86.48 in specie in contrast to more than \$500,000 of its worthless bills in circulation. Investigation led directly to closer state supervision of the many local banks of the period.



R.I.H.S. Library

MARKET SQUARE in the 1840's
as it looked when Danforth was giving his lectures

defatigable in the investigation, with this letter. "Hon. James Burrill, Jr.—Dear Sir, I herewith forward a package of papers and documents in relation to the Farmers' Exchange Bank, which will require your immediate attention. Despatch is the life of business, as Capt. Jo. Cooke once wrote his owners at Providence after he had been lying six weeks idle at a southern port bound for the West Indies.—Yrs. &c. O. Brown."

On one occasion he was conversing with a gentleman in the street, when Alexander Jones,¹⁵ then largely engaged in the cotton trade, came along and stopped within listening distance. Hearing a remark made about some one whose name he did not hear, he approached nearer and inquired, "Who is that you spoke about?"

¹⁵Alexander Jones (1764-1840) was a native of Milford, Massachusetts, and a classmate of "Squire" Obadiah Brown at Rhode Island College (Brown University), where they received their degrees in 1782. After a brief seafaring career he settled in Charleston, S. C., where he became a leading commission merchant. In 1805 he removed permanently to Providence, thereafter gaining prominence as a cotton broker. Between 1813 and 1838 Alexander Jones owned the Stimson-Diman house at the corner of Angell Street and Diman Place. During his residence there he called the estate "Bellevue."

Mr. Brown, probably not pleased with the interruption or construing the act as a breach of good manners tartly replied, "He is not a man, Sir, who buys much cotton." A person less delicate in his language might have replied, "None of your business."

Hearing some one speak of being thirsty, he remarked, "That is a very common complaint, for I often hear folks say they are thirsty. Why, Sir, I never was thirsty in my life; I never allow myself to be thirsty, for just before I think I may be thirsty, I always go and take something to drink."

One very warm afternoon he was seen on the sidewalk in front of his door at tea time taking that beverage in the open air, occasionally placing his cup or saucer on the post near the curb stone. An acquaintance passing by remarked, "You have chosen a comfortable place for taking your tea." "There are two decided advantages in it," replied Mr. Brown, "I can enjoy the cool air, and have all out doors for a slop bowl."

On the site of the imposing granite block on the north of Market Square was a range of low, wood buildings extending from the old Coffee House to the corner eastward. Amongst the occupants whom I can call to mind were Benjamin Hoppin, auctioneer;¹⁶ Munro, Snow, and Munro, merchants and ship owners;¹⁷ William Lee, retail grocer;¹⁸ Joshua B. Wood;¹⁹ Joseph Lawrence, insurance broker;²⁰

¹⁶Benjamin Hoppin (1747-1809) was the founder of the famous Rhode Island branch of the Hoppin family, long prominent in the business, political, and cultural life of the state. During the Revolution he served as a captain in the Rhode Island line and later was an auctioneer and merchant in Providence.

¹⁷For a decade before its failure in 1807 Munro, Snow, and Munro ranked high among Providence mercantile concerns, owning in part or in whole the ships *Mary*, *Mercury*, *Patterson*, *Rebecca*, and *Zenobia*, the brigs *Hope* and *Industry*, and other smaller vessels. Partners in the firm were James Munro, Samuel Snow, and Benjamin Munro.

¹⁸William Lee lived on Westminster Street just east of the site on which the Arcade was later erected. He was first married to Abigail Kinnicut by whom he had several children. She died April 30, 1808, in her forty-ninth year, and on September 25, 1811, he married Anstis Updike, daughter of Lodowick Updike of Wickford. Lee died October 21, 1814, at the age of fifty-five.

¹⁹Joshua B. Wood was a lottery broker, a profitable occupation in a period when most public and many private enterprises were supported by the sale of lottery tickets. His wife Eliza Ruth, whom he married October 4, 1810, was the second daughter of Alexander Jones (see note 15). In the late 1820's Mr. Jones moved to New York. He was born in Rutland, Massachusetts, November 18, 1779, and died at New York City, March 2, 1852.

²⁰In 1774 Joseph Lawrence opened the first insurance brokerage in Providence. Later he was the first secretary of the Providence Mutual Fire Insurance Company. He died in 1811 at the age of eighty-two.

Jonathan Russell²¹ and William Charles White, lawyers;²² and David Vinton, who kept an extensive fancy goods and jewelry store.²³ He gave the name of *Vinton's Corner* to the building at the junction of Market Square and North Main Street, which for a short space north from the corner was called Cheapside; and by the name of Vinton's Corner that spot is now generally known and often called by elderly citizens. Mr. Vinton was a man of considerable industry and enterprise, forming many plans, executing as many of them as he could, and not desponding if others failed. He was one of the go-ahead men of the day. About forty-five years since, being owner of the corner building, and lessee of the land from Governor Fenner, he caused a third story to be added to it, raising it high above its fellows in that humble range. This was thought to be a prodigal expenditure for an inadequate object, as the business of the town would not warrant the building of rooms at such a height from the ground. But soon the secret came to light, which showed the rogues they lied.

At that time Scipio Brenton, well known to the lovers of good eating in days of yore, was a tenant below in the building, where he kept an oyster and victualling cellar, and the object of this new superstructure was to accommodate him with a larger, more airy, and better finished hall for select parties. This extension of Scipio's establishment was not sufficiently lucrative to allow of its long continuance. The hall was after a short period converted into a Printing Office,

²¹Jonathan Russell (1771-1832), son of Jonathan Russell of Providence, graduated from Brown in 1791 with highest honors. Thereafter he studied law and engaged in a mercantile career in Providence. A strong Jeffersonian in politics, he was appointed *chargé d'affaires* at Paris by Madison in 1810. His later life was devoted to diplomacy and politics. After 1819 he lived in Massachusetts.

²²Search in numerous White genealogies reveals but one William Charles White who could have practiced law in Providence at the beginning of the nineteenth century. He was William Charles White (1777-1818) son of William White of Boston. He was a lawyer, but evidently spent at least his later years in Worcester, Massachusetts. Daniel Appleton White, *The Descendants of William White . . .* (Boston, 1889), p. 59.

²³David Vinton (1774-1830), a native of Medford, Massachusetts, came to Providence as a young man after working for a while in Boston. His wife was Mary Atwell, daughter of Amos Atwell of Providence. Vinton's advertisements in the *Gazette* often occupy nearly a column. They offer such varied articles as spectacles, paint boxes, pianos, face powder, "house, hearth, horse, hand, cloth and flesh brushes," cordials, sauces, "DUMB'D FISH (in half quintals) warranted to please; if not nothing charged for the first meal, and the cash returned," essence of spruce with directions for making spruce beer, and "Patent SCOTCH OINTMENT . . . for the cure of the TITCH IN FOUR HOURS."

and Scipio's ebony visage was once more consigned exclusively to the region below. This oyster cellar (they were not termed *saloons* in those days) was a step or two on the road of progress; it was a great improvement over any other establishment which had been attempted. His oysters were cooked in a greater variety of ways; and venison and soups and pastry prepared by Scip and his helpmeet Katy were ever at hand to suit the tastes and satiate the appetites of gourmands. Scip continued to thrive in this business "buying golden opinions from all sorts of men," who visited his cellar, until the Town Council, in an evil moment for him and his aspiring hopes, declared for sundry good reasons them thereunto moving but nothing impugning the character of Scip, that no license should be granted to a black or colored person. Scipio, (I had almost said he hung his harp upon the willows, but Scipio had no such instrument, although he did harp long on the severity of that order in council) hung up his frying pan and gridiron, and exclaimed in all the poignancy of despair, "Othello's occupation's gone."

The reason why the Town Council decided to refuse licenses to colored persons should be explained, lest some Free Soil hearer might arraign that Board, of which I then constituted a part, for injustice towards descendants of the African race. Another colored man had within a short time set up an opposition line in a cellar not far distant. An affray took place one evening amongst his company of rowdy white men, and in trying to quell the disturbance the keeper was killed. It was the opinion of the Council that a man of color could not have that influence in his establishment which was necessary to preserve order among his palefaced customers, and therefore the prohibitory ordinance was passed.

But Scipio recovered from the shock and was often employed at hotels, by restorators, and in private families to cook when something extra was required. He also had a good run in the business of house scouring and whitewashing, and in posting auction and play bills. After many years residence here, he removed from this city to Boston, where he died about three years ago. For many years he grieved under a conviction that his eldest son George had been kidnapped and was held in slavery in the South, but if he had evidence of that fact, he was never able to effect his release. It was far more easy then, with or without a fugitive slave law, for the slave holder to pursue,

reclaim, and take back his slave in the North than it was, is, or will be for a parent here to reclaim or recover in the South a son and free man who has been kidnapped and forcibly and feloniously carried into a slave state. Scipio Brenton came to this place from Newport, where he or an ancestor originally belonged to the Brenton family, who gave name to a reef of rocks known well to mariners as Brenton's Reef.

[to be continued]

THE 130th ANNUAL MEETING

THE 130th ANNUAL MEETING of the Rhode Island Historical Society was held September 19, 1951, at 8:15 at John Brown House, President Westcote H. Chesebrough presiding.

The secretary read the call of the Meeting and declared a quorum to be present. Upon motion the reading of the minutes of the previous Annual Meeting was omitted since they had been published in the January 1951 issue of *Rhode Island History*. The minutes of the Stated Meeting held April 11, 1951 were read and accepted.

Mr. Harold H. Kelly, treasurer, reported a deficit of \$2,221.13 for the year. The balance sheet showed assets as of June 30, 1951, to be \$264,192.10 and liabilities of \$49,057.41. The net worth is therefore \$215,134.69.

In the absence of Mr. Philip R. Arnold, chairman of the Membership Committee, Mr. J. Harry Marshall submitted the report, which showed a net gain for the year of 41 members, and which brings the total membership of the Society to 1453, the highest it has ever been.

In the absence of Mr. Henry D. Sharpe, Dr. James L. Hanley presented the report of the Lecture Committee. Twelve meetings of the Society were held with a total attendance of 652. In addition 47 meetings of other organizations were held in John Brown House. Mr. Roelker addressed four organizations; Mr. Monahan, two; and Mr. Collins, three.

Dr. Francis H. Chafee read the report of the Publications Committee in the absence of Mr. Paul C. Nicholson, chairman. Four

issues of the Society's quarterly, *Rhode Island History*, have been published, each of 32 pages. It was reported that a considerable amount of work has been done to prepare the Susan Lear Diary for publication and that it is expected that the correspondence of Governor Samuel Ward will be published before the end of the year.

Mr. William G. Roelker read the report of the Buildings and Grounds Committee for Mr. Frederick P. Austin, Jr., chairman. The report called attention to a saving in heating cost because of the insulation project undertaken in 1948. Mr. Roelker also stated that a part of the outside of the house as well as some window sashes inside were painted during the year.

As the members stood in respect, Mrs. Axel A. Christensen, chairman of the Committee on Necrology, read the names of the members who had died since the last Annual Meeting.

Mr. Edward C. Palmer, chairman, read the report of the Audit Committee, which recommended certain changes in the classification of disbursements.

Mr. Clifford P. Monahan then read his report as librarian, which included the report of the Library Committee. Mr. Monahan mentioned some of the more recent acquisitions of the Society and reported on the work being done.

Mr. William G. Roelker, director, presented his eleventh annual report. He stated that the steady increase in membership (each year showing a gain) is primarily a result of changing the entire personnel of the membership committee each year. In this way new prospects are constantly being suggested, and many of them become members.

Mr. Roelker said there are many desirable activities in which the Society should be interested; but that it is necessarily restricted by the limited funds at its disposal. He showed how income from membership grows steadily but gradually; endowment funds even more slowly; but gifts to the Society should be unlimited since they may be deducted from gross income under the present internal revenue laws.

Mr. Chesebrough in his annual address stated that the reports of the director, the librarian, and the various committees had shown the Society's contribution to the community and had also demonstrated a pressing need for additional support in order to continue and improve its work.

He said that because of its invaluable collection of historical materials which make currently available the records of the past, the Rhode Island Historical Society is an important factor in the life of our state and is worthy of the same community support accorded so generously to our other great public institutions.

The president went on to point out that the Society occupies a unique place among Rhode Island institutions, since it has the opportunity to pass on the great traditions of the past to the present generation of active Rhode Islanders, many of whom have cultural backgrounds quite different from those of the founders and early builders of the state. And in conclusion he said that by its activities the Society can inspire the community to preserve and strengthen these traditions, putting them to use in meeting challenges of today as had past generations when faced with challenges of other kinds.

Dr. Bruce M. Bigelow, chairman, presented the report of the Nominating Committee, and there being no counter-nominations the secretary was instructed to cast one ballot for the slate as read. This being done, the nominees were declared elected to serve until the next Annual Meeting or until their successors are duly elected.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

IVORY LITTLEFIELD, JR.

Secretary

BALANCE SHEET

of Rhode Island Historical Society, June 30, 1951

ASSETS	
Cash	\$ 19,584.35
Investments	136,432.47
Real Estate, books and manuscripts	100,006.00
Other assets	8,169.28
	\$264,192.10
LIABILITIES	
Special Funds, only the income from which is available to the Society	49,057.41
Net worth of Rhode Island Historical Society	\$215,134.69

OPERATING STATEMENT

for the year ending June 30, 1951

RECEIPTS

Dues	7,766.50	
Interest and Dividends	7,243.03	
John Brown House Fund Income (Net)	166.56	
State of Rhode Island Appropriation	8,500.00	
Contributions: General	\$2,639.04	
Corporate	1,010.00	3,649.04
Sales of Publications, Books, et al	762.03	
Patriotic Societies	200.00	
Aldrich Estate Bequest	1,671.34	
Profit on Securities Sold	133.30	
Miscellaneous Income	403.38	
Total Receipts		30,495.18

EXPENDITURES

Salaries (gross)	16,873.44	
Director's Discretionary Fund	750.00	
Bonus	500.00	
Supplies and Telephone	1,052.83	
Membership	455.92	
Library	1,420.14	
Lecture	272.67	
Publication	2,383.15	
Grounds and Buildings	4,103.14	
Furniture and Fixtures	303.75	
Fees (for Surveys, etc.)	292.00	
Heat, Light, etc.	1,863.07	
Insurance	1,699.68	
Newspapers and Microfilm	17.18	
Miscellaneous Expense	729.34	
Total Expenditures		32,716.31
Excess Expenditures		2,221.13

HAROLD H. KELLY, *Treasurer*

Examined and found correct.

EDWARD C. PALMER, *Chairman for the Auditing Committee*

LECTURES

January 9, 1952	8:15 p.m.
STATED MEETING	
Rhode Island a Billion Years before Roger Williams	
ALONZO W. QUINN, <i>Professor of Geology</i> Brown University	
February 13, 1952	2:15 p.m.
A New Look at our Foremothers	
ELISABETH ANTHONY DEXTER <i>Author of Colonial Women of Affairs and Career Women of America, 1776-1840</i>	
March 12, 1952	8:15 p.m.
Providence Trade with the West Indies and South America, 1790-1840	
EARL C. TANNER, <i>Research Technician</i> Rhode Island Development Council	
April 2, 1952	8:15 p.m.
STATED MEETING	
Neglected Aspects of King Phillip's War	
DOUGLAS E. LEACH, <i>Department of History</i> and Government, Bates College	
May 14, 1952	2:15 p.m.
Traveling Artists in Early New England	
NINA FLETCHER LITTLE, <i>Author and Collector</i>	

EXHIBITION

January-March

Personal Accessories of the Nineteenth Century

RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY



NEW MEMBERS

July 1, 1951 — November 30, 1951

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Mrs. Henry F. Anthony | Mr. Samuel J. James |
| Mr. Thomas B. Appleget | East Providence, R. I. |
| Mr. Dana R. Arnold | Dr. and Mrs. Harry M. Kechijian |
| Lincoln, R. I. | Pawtucket, R. I. |
| Miss Lydia Beckwith Bates | Mrs. Marston Whitin Keeler |
| Mr. T. Dwight Boole | Mrs. Irving A. King |
| Mr. R. Graham Bosworth | Conimicut, R. I. |
| Mr. J. Whitney Bowen | Mr. John S. Lennon |
| Fall River, Mass. | Pawtucket, R. I. |
| Mr. and Mrs. O. Griswold Boynton | Miss Nancy Duke Lewis |
| Mr. Howard T. Brenner | Mrs. John Lowry |
| Mr. Frederick S. Bristow | Hollywood, California |
| Mr. and Mrs. Clifford W. Brown | Mr. Albert O. Lundin |
| Mr. Maury Caito | Rumford, R. I. |
| Mr. DeVere V. Carney | Mrs. William M. Mackenzie |
| Jamestown, R. I. | Mr. Barry S. Martin |
| Mr. William G. Chafee | Webster, N. Y. |
| West Barrington, R. I. | Dr. William L. Mauran, Jr. |
| Mr. George S. Champlin | Miss Ethel Merriman |
| Mrs. Westcote H. Chesebrough | Mr. and Mrs. Edwin F. Morgan |
| Rehoboth, Mass. | Mr. and Mrs. Wallace L. Mossop |
| Mr. Eben S. Church, Jr. | Mrs. William G. Nightingale, Jr. |
| Dr. and Mrs. William B. Cohen | Mr. Arthur L. Philbrick (reinstated) |
| Mr. John Cooke | Dr. Arnold Porter |
| Seekonk, Mass. | Mrs. Charles A. Post |
| Mr. Alfred E. Corp | Mr. and Mrs. Malcolm D. Raworth |
| Mr. Frederick J. Coyle, Jr. | Mrs. Russell S. Rowland |
| Barrington, R. I. | Dr. and Mrs. Vincent J. Ryan |
| Mr. William R. Crowley | Mr. Burton I. Samors |
| Mr. Newton T. Dana | Mrs. Victor A. Schwartz |
| Mr. E. Russell Davis, Jr. | Seekonk, Mass. |
| Mr. and Mrs. Ernest H. Davison | Mr. and Mrs. Amory S. Skerry |
| Mr. John Winthrop DeWolf, Jr. | Barrington, R. I. |
| Bristol, R. I. | Mrs. H. Stanton Smith |
| Mr. Alexander A. DiMartino | Mrs. Royal C. Taft |
| Mrs. Margaret D. Dunbar | Mrs. Harold B. Tanner |
| Saunderstown, R. I. | Mr. Henry F. Tingley, Jr. |
| Mr. Charles A. Dunn | Mrs. Lucy Rawlings Tootell |
| Mr. Charles R. Easton | Kingston, R. I. |
| Miss Edith W. Edwards | Mr. Edward Tyler |
| Dr. William J. H. Fischer, Jr. | East Greenwich, R. I. |
| Mr. Clarence H. Goff | Mrs. Charles P. Williamson |
| Mr. James D. Grassick, Jr. | Mr. Clement W. Williamson |
| Miss Bertha Clark Greenough | Mr. and Mrs. Walter L. Worrall |
| Mr. C. J. Haugum | Barrington, R. I. |
| Mr. Stanley Henshaw, Jr. | Mr. Robert Zundel |
| | Seekonk, Mass. |