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THE SKATER

Gilbert Stuart, 1755-1828

Courtesy of National Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C.,
Mellon Collection, 1950

The Rhode Island Historical Society is reproducing on the front cover this early painting by Stuart to commemorate the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of Rhode Island's most famous artist, born December 3, 1755, at the Old Snuff Mill in North Kingstown. Painted in London and first exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1782, it is believed to be Stuart's first full-length portrait. It is the likeness of Mr. William Grant of Congalton, skating in St. James's Park. The oil did much to establish Stuart's reputation and its exhibition "was the real beginning of Stuart's success in London, when, as he told Josiah Quincy many years afterwards, he was 'suddenly lifted into fame by a single picture.'" [Quoted from GILBERT STUART, by William T. Whitley. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1932].

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TRANSCENDENTALISM AND "THE NEWNESS" IN RHODE ISLAND

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§1.

MODERN READERS who are puzzled by the vagaries of New England Transcendentalism may be happy to learn that many of the contemporaries of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry Thoreau, Bronson Alcott, and George Ripley felt much the same way. Convers Francis, a Boston clergyman, insisted on referring to the new philosophy as "Transcendental chirography,"¹ and a New York weekly newspaper, *Brother Jonathan*, printed a burlesque account of a Transcendentalist gathering under the title, "Boz Dinner," which contained a note from a fictional dinner guest declining an invitation:

Gentlemen of the Committee:

The wonder-sign of Great Goslington's furibundity is world-absorbing. Quoazdom yawns absymal. Liontzed humanity, ephemeral through, floats upon the time-stream of newspapers, and peradventure may avoid fuliginous obliviscity. . . .

Since calf-skin was made into knapsacks, cobblers have gone in leather aprons. But to Quoazdum what avails this? Gentlemen, I incline not dinner-wise. And why?—I have dined already. Pransi;—enough.²

The Transcendentalists were described by a Boston woman as "a race who dove into the infinite, soared into the illimitable, and never paid cash."³ Adding to the growing stream of satirical defini-

¹Convers Francis to Theodore Parker, December 30, 1843, Massachusetts Historical Society Library.

²*Brother Jonathan*, March 26, 1842.

³Quoted by T. W. Higginson in "The Sunny Side of the Transcendentalist Period," *Atlantic Monthly*, XCIII (January, 1904), 9.

tions, a Baltimore clergyman declared that Transcendentalism was "a new philosophy which has risen, maintaining that nothing is everything in general, and everything is nothing in particular."⁴ Nathaniel Hawthorne gave classic expression to the belief that Transcendentalism was little more than a peculiar collection of amusing absurdities. In Hawthorne's *Celestial Railroad*, a parody based on John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, the pilgrims come upon a strange monster.

He is a German by birth, and is called Giant Transcendentalist; but as to his form, his features, his substance, and his nature generally, it is the chief peculiarity of this huge miscreant that neither he for himself nor anybody for him has ever been able to describe them. . . . He shouted after us, but in so strange a phraseology that we knew not what he meant, nor whether to be encouraged or affrighted.⁵

One Rhode Islander, after attending a lecture by Ralph Waldo Emerson at the dedication of the Greene Street School, complained of being lost in "the seven-fold mysteries of thrice-wreathed mysticism."⁶ William Pabodie of Providence further expressed the opinion held by many of the conservatives when he dismissed Transcendentalism as "sophomoric."⁷

However, other New Englanders were not inclined to laugh at Transcendentalism, and regarded the movement as a dangerous threat to existing institutions. Andrews Norton, "the Unitarian Pope" of Boston, denounced the movement as "the latest form of infidelity," and Dr. Samuel Gray of Boston, when asked precisely which beliefs characterized a Transcendentalist, replied without hesitation that such a person was "an enemy of the institution of Christianity."⁸

Transcendentalism was neither so obscure as Hawthorne had suggested nor so easily defined as Dr. Gray had assumed. Historically it had its origin in the Unitarian revolt against orthodox Calvinism. By proclaiming their belief in the primacy of ethics over dogma, Unitarians swept away the whole decaying structure of Calvinism; all the old theological dogmas of human depravity, the atonement,

⁴Quoted by Moncure Conway in *Emerson at Home and Abroad*, (Boston, 1882), 187-8.

⁵Nathaniel Hawthorne, *Works of . . .* (Boston, 1882), II, 224.

⁶"The Opening of the Greene Street School," *Providence Journal*, June 17, 1837.

⁷Rhoda Newcomb to Charles Newcomb, July 6, 1840, John Hay Library.

⁸Theodore Parker MSS deposited by F. B. Sanborn in the Massachusetts Historical Society Library.

predestination, the perseverance of the saints, were rejected by the religious liberals. Unitarians marched under the banner of freedom of religious discussion and advocated a broad, liberal religion which offered almost complete freedom of thought and expression to the minister and congregation.

The Unitarian movement, which attained its peak of energy during the period 1815-1830, left New England Congregationalism divided between the Unitarians, the moderate Calvinists, who tended to modify Calvinist doctrines to meet the changing spirit of the times, and the Hopkinsians, the consistent or old-line Calvinists who made a militant attempt to preserve the whole theological fabric inherited from Jonathan Edwards and his Rhode Island disciple, Samuel Hopkins. Hopkins expressed the unreconstructed spirit of old-line Calvinism by testing the faith of believers with the query, "Are you willing to be damned for the greater glory of God?"

In Rhode Island the consistent Calvinists, the Hopkinsians, were dominant, and Unitarianism did not make as much headway as it had in eastern Massachusetts. The First Congregational Society of Providence under the ministry of the Reverend Henry Edes unobtrusively became Unitarian after 1815. The second Rhode Island defection occurred with the establishment of a new Unitarian church by the Westminster Congregational Society in 1829. The church's first minister was Frederick A. Farley, who was later to gain fame as a New York preacher. Farley's ordination was quite an event in New England liberal religious circles, and two of the most prominent Unitarian ministers in the country, William Ellery Channing and George Ripley, preached for the occasion. In 1835 the third Unitarian congregation was formed in Newport. William Ellery Channing dedicated the building and Charles T. Brooks, a notable Rhode Island Transcendentalist, was chosen as minister.⁹ Unitarianism dominated the intellectual climate of eastern Massachusetts and paved the way for the rise of Transcendentalism. The failure of Unitarianism to achieve similar results in Rhode Island accounts in part for the limited success of Transcendentalism in this area.

If Unitarianism was the parent of Transcendentalism, the Transcendentalists proved to be ungrateful children, quarreling a great deal of the time with their elders. In fact, the immediate cause of the Transcendentalist revolt was a reaction against Unitarianism. Most

⁹*History of Providence County*, ed. Richard M. Bayles, (N. Y., 1891) I, Ch. 16.

of the recruits for the Transcendentalist movement had come from Unitarian ranks; Ralph Waldo Emerson, George Ripley, John Sullivan Dwight, William Henry Channing, Orestes A. Brownson, F. H. Hedge, James Freeman Clarke, W. H. Furness, Cyrus A. Bartol and Charles T. Brooks were all in the Unitarian ministry at one time during their lives, and several of them remained in the ministry. Among the major leaders of the new school only Henry D. Thoreau, Bronson Alcott, and C. P. Cranch were never in the Unitarian ministry.

However, a Unitarian background and a common opposition to Calvinism were not enough to prevent the young insurgents from rebelling. Second generation Unitarians were far more conservative than their forefathers, who were hardly revolutionaries. The Transcendentalists launched a bitter attack upon these heirs of a liberal religion for their timidity and conservatism, and above all for their emotional frigidity. Ripley inveighed against "the dead hand of Unitarianism;" Emerson denounced the "corpse-cold Unitarianism of Brattle Street and Harvard College;" and Margaret Fuller described a Unitarian congregation as "that crowd of upturned faces, with their look of unintelligent complacency."

But Transcendentalism was more than an emotional uprising. It was a discovery of moral and mystical significance in nature, an attempt to establish a religion based on human nature rather than revelation, and a philosophical revolt against the authority of John Locke and eighteenth century British empiricism, the philosophy represented by New England Unitarianism. The leaders of the new school were intent upon building a rational religion which would not result in emotional starvation. They advanced a theory of intuition which ascribed to men the power to gain immediate knowledge of all truths, particularly religious truths. They endeavored to defend religion against the inroads of modern science and establish it on a basis which would make it immune to scientific attack. They attacked all authority and asserted that men who sought the truth should look within to exploit the miraculous faculty which all men possessed of seeing the truth face to face. In politics and social thought the Transcendentalists preached the gospel of social democracy and self-reliance. They found little inspiration in New England Unitarianism and turned to England, France, and particularly Germany.

German language study became very popular among the New

England intelligentsia, and many of the transcendentalists read Kant and Schiller in German. As a matter of fact, to the popular mind an enthusiasm for German philosophy and literature indicated Transcendentalist leanings. In Providence Rhoda Newcomb joined Sarah Whitman and twenty-one others in a private German class with the goal of obtaining direct access to the treasures of German thought.¹⁰ Soon Sarah Whitman was reading Schiller and Kant with painstaking slowness, and Rhoda Newcomb, using her well-thumbed German dictionary, was struggling valiantly with Goethe's *Faust*. A factor favorable to the study of German thought in Providence was the presence of three professors at Brown University who had studied in Germany: John L. Lincoln, James R. Boise, and James B. Angell.¹¹

Other Transcendentalists acquired their knowledge of German thought from reading Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Thomas Carlyle.¹² James Freeman Clarke spoke for a substantial portion of his generation when he stated that Carlyle had made for the young intellectuals, "a new heaven and a new earth, a new religion and a new life." Charles T. Congdon, a student at Brown University, reported the existence of a "Carlyle mania" among the Brown students and in the Providence intellectual community at large. Prevalent among the students at Brown were florid imitations of Carlyle's literary style, which threatened to drive the rhetoric professor to distraction.¹³ The *Providence Journal* for ten years after 1837 printed a number of articles on Goethe, Kant, Schiller, Cousin, religion and human nature, self-reliance, social democracy, and German philosophy, many of which were inspired by essays of Carlyle or Coleridge.

The American counterpart of Carlyle and Coleridge was George Ripley, whose series of translations of Herder, Kant, Schleiermacher, Goethe, Schiller, Cousin, Jouffroy, Constant, and other European proponents of the new philosophy was a landmark in the intellectual revolution. One of the key volumes in the series, volume fourteen, *German Lyric Poetry*, was translated by Charles T. Brooks of New-

¹⁰Rhoda Newcomb to Charles Newcomb, May 11, 1838, John Hay Library.

¹¹I am indebted to Theodore Crane of Dartmouth College for my information on these three Brown professors.

¹²The first public notice in Rhode Island of Carlyle was a brief "filler" in the *Providence Journal*, June 17, 1837, noting that "a Mr. Carlyle" was lecturing in England on German literature.

¹³Charles T. Congdon, *Reminiscences of a Journalist* (Boston, 1880), 116-117.

port, one of the best German scholars in America. Brooks, minister of the Newport Unitarian Congregational Society, published several dozen volumes during the course of his life and became very popular as a translator of German literature in America.

Ripley's *Specimens of Foreign Standard Literature*, the first collective achievement of the New England Transcendentalists, was followed in 1840 by the second common effort, a literary magazine. The *Dial* was a quarterly publication edited by Emerson, Ripley, and Margaret Fuller. Perhaps the most important Rhode Island contribution to the *Dial* was "The Two Dolons,"¹⁴ a short story by Charles Newcomb of Providence, whom Emerson repeatedly referred to as a genius. The hero of the story, Dolon, was a beautiful ethereal lad with a romantic enthusiasm for nature. One day while wandering in the forest near his home, he saw a mysterious man in a crimson tunic sitting high in a nearby tree. His parents tried to keep him away from the woods, fearing that the mysterious stranger was a madman who worshipped pagan gods, but Dolon insisted on returning to relive the mystical experience he had undergone. One moonlit night he saw the man again, dressed in pagan ceremonial robes. The stranger approached Dolon, placed a wreath on his head and swiftly plunged a knife into his breast. The sacrifice completed, he prostrated himself before the rock where Dolon had sat. This strange story aroused varying responses among the Transcendentalists, many of them unfavorable. There were a few, however, including William Henry Channing who felt that the story could not be praised enough. "The Two Dolons" revealed a romantic and transcendentalist outlook on nature and children, and suggested the influence of Jean-Paul Richter's *The Titan*, which Newcomb had recently read in a translation by Charles T. Brooks.

Two other Rhode Island authors who contributed to the *Dial* were Charles T. Brooks, who translated two poems of the German poet, Ferdinand Freilegrath, "The Moorish Prince" and "The Emigrants,"¹⁵ and George W. Curtis,¹⁶ who sent in a highly romantic poem entitled "A Song of Death."¹⁷

¹⁴The *Dial*, III (July, 1842), 112-123.

¹⁵The *Dial*, IV (April, 1844), 524, 525.

¹⁶G. W. Curtis' family moved from Providence in 1839 when he was fifteen years of age, but he often returned to Providence to visit Sarah Whitman, or the Burrills and Curtises, to whom he was related.

¹⁷*Dial*, IV (January, 1844), 87.

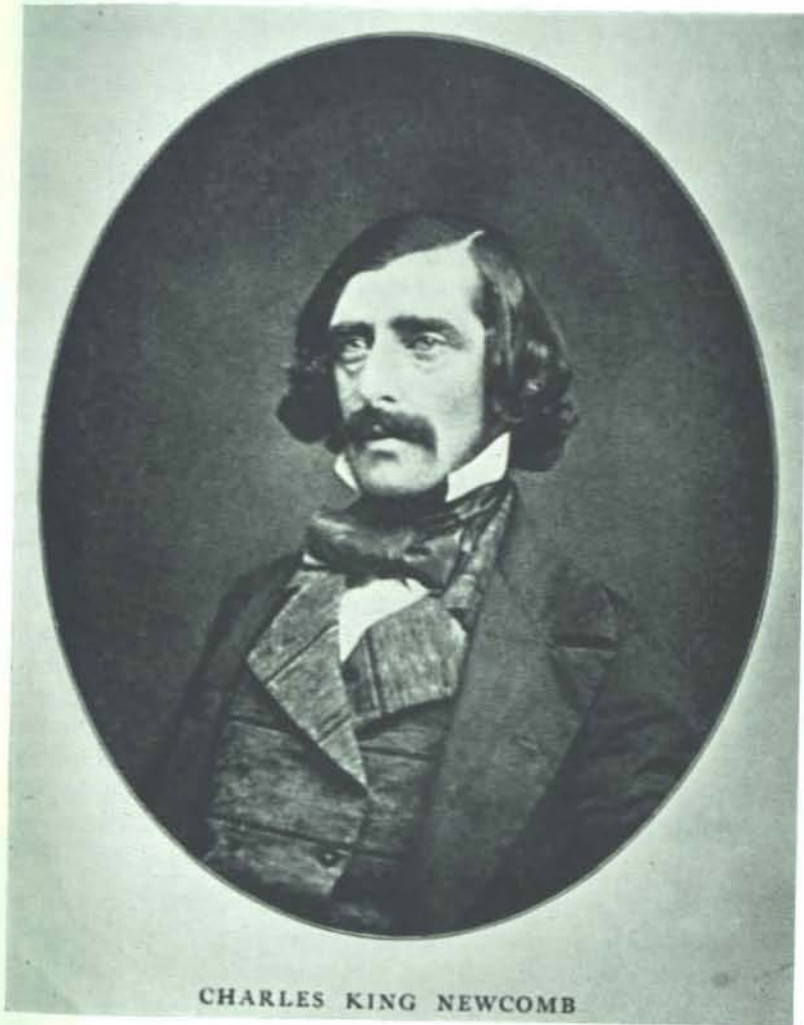
The *Dial* created quite a furor in Providence as well as elsewhere in the United States, and reactions varied depending on the attitude of each individual toward Transcendentalism. Tristram Burgess, a fiery and conservative Whig politician, dismissed the magazine as unworthy of a rational man; but Rhoda Newcomb, an aspiring intellectual, praised almost everything in the magazine, and liked particularly the articles by John Sullivan Dwight, a musician, and Washington Allston, an artist. She thought Bronson Alcott's "Orphic Sayings," which her conservative Providence friend, William Pabodie, had dismissed as "sophomoric" was filled with "the highest wisdom." Her acceptance was completely uncritical, and she bestowed high praise on each article with the exception of George Ripley's contributions, which she felt lacked "soul."¹⁸

The daily newspaper was a more common vehicle of literary expression than the literary quarterlies in the early nineteenth century, and a host of Transcendentalist articles, poems, and stories were published in the *Providence Journal* from 1836 to 1846. A Transcendentalist circle in Rhode Island, which included Charles T. Brooks, Sarah Whitman, Charles and Rhoda Newcomb, Ann Lynch, and others published beyond the confines of Rhode Island in the *Dial*, in Orestes A. Brownson's *Boston Quarterly Review*, the *Harbinger*, Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune*, and a multitude of popular national magazines and newspapers. The more solid accomplishments of the Rhode Island group were Sarah Whitman's articles in the *Boston Quarterly Review*, Charles T. Brooks' German translations, Charles Newcomb's *Journals*, none of which were published until 1946, and an anthology entitled the *Rhode Island Book*, published in 1841.

§2.

Rising from an amazing milieu, Transcendentalism represented the intellectual achievement of a still broader movement. Late nineteenth century cultural historians, looking back on the period after a lapse of forty years, were baffled by the task of naming this varied and dynamic upsurge of creative energy and called it simply "the newness." The movement was responsible for the first generation of American Bohemians; the creation of an *avant garde* magazine, the *Dial*; and the most bewildering array of intellectual, social, and

¹⁸Rhoda Newcomb to Charles Newcomb, July 6, 1840, John Hay Library.



CHARLES KING NEWCOMB

Halftone illustration used by courtesy of Brown University
with the permission of Houghton Mifflin Company.

political reform movements in American history.

Emerson gave the classic description of the spirit of the times in his report on the "Convention of the Friends of Universal Reform," which met in 1840 on Chardon Street in Boston:

Madmen, madwomen, men with beards, Dunkers, Muggletonians, Come-outers, Groaners, Agrarians, Seventh Day Baptists, Quakers, Abolitionists, Calvinists, Unitarians, and Philosophers, — all came successively to the top, and seized their moment, if not their hour, wherein to chide, or pray, or preach, or protest.¹⁹

Emerson's catalogue was far from complete. The spirit of protest was rampant, and the reform conventions, congresses, and meetings were innumerable. Temperance men argued with prohibitionists; peace men debated with non-resistants. The Millerites, predecessors of the Seventh Day Adventists, after years of careful calculations based on the Old Testament, predicted the end of the world on October 23, 1843. (They were chided by the Boston newspapers for building very permanent stone buildings on the eve of the great cataclysm.) Owenite communists, Practical Christians, Garrisonian non-resistants, Fourierist Associationists, and others competed in efforts to attract new members to their causes and into their communities. Mormons practised polygamy; Grahamites denounced the "cannibal" meat eaters and followed a diet more austere than mere vegetarianism; and the disciples of Joseph Palmer urged the cure of social evils through the abolition of money. Swedenborgian mystics, Spiritualists, and advocates of "the Church of Humanity," cried out for religious attention while homeopaths, hydropaths, mesmerists, and phrenologists demanded medical recognition of their efficacy as healers.

Rhode Island had its full quota of reformers, many of whom were substantial citizens in their communities. The state had, for example, one of the strongest anti-slavery organizations in the country, and the Browns, Angells, Buffums, Howlands, Lovejoys, and Chaces appeared with increasing frequency on the abolitionist petition rolls in the *Providence Journal* from 1830 to the Civil War. Rhode Island possessed a strong temperance society under the leadership of John Howland and William Chace, and a vigorous peace society dominated by such Quaker families as the Buffums, the Browns, and the Chaces.

¹⁹*Works*, Centennial edition (Boston, 1883), X, 374.

Prior to 1850 there were no reform movements which attracted as much attention in the state as Mesmerism and phrenology. Hypnotism and the interpretation of character and health through the reading of physiological characteristics may seem rather curious "reforms" to the modern reader, but they were seriously regarded as reforms by their advocates. Anton Mesmer, the pioneer hypnotist, was looked upon not only as a great scientist but also as a great reformer; and George Cambe, the English phrenologist, was acclaimed as a great innovator and benefactor of humanity when he made a tour of the United States in 1838. The phrenologists and the Mesmerists fought the conservative skeptics as vigorously as the abolitionists denounced the southern slave owner. The *Providence Journal*, responding to popular demand, in 1837 ran a long series of highly complimentary articles on Mesmerism by an anonymous Providence author. Over one hundred persons in Providence were mesmerized, and the *Providence Journal* articles announced triumphantly that the skeptics had been confounded at last by the miraculous cure of a young Providence girl, who had been blind for a year, through the use of "animal magnetism."²⁰

John Neal, a Maine author and a frequent visitor to Providence, reported that a Dr. B (apparently Dr. Richmond Brownell) was in the habit of using "animal magnetism" in his difficult cases. Brownell lost many of his patients because he insisted on consulting a Miss Brackett, who was well known in Rhode Island as a clairvoyant. A case of Brownell's, which became a *cause célèbre* in Rhode Island, concerned a somnambulist patient who, while in "the magnetic sleep," described a room she had never seen where a man lay dying of an enlarged spleen. Her description of the man happened to fit exactly a patient of Brownell's who was afflicted with a diseased liver. A week later this patient died, and Brownell invited eighteen witnesses to the post-mortem examination, including sixteen doctors which comprised the total medical population of Providence at the time. All sixteen doctors were in agreement on cause of death, which they held to be a diseased liver. Brownell then proceeded to perform the autopsy, which disclosed, to the delight of the Rhode Island Mesmerists, the presence of an enlarged spleen of a size and weight unknown in medical history.²¹

²⁰See *Providence Journal*, May 21, 1837.

²¹See John Neal's *Wandering Recollections of a Somewhat Busy Life* (Boston, 1869), 387-389.

Bartlett shared the limelight with L. N. Fowler, who baffled the skeptics with his detection of criminal tendencies by phrenological "readings." This lively interest in phrenology was by no means confined to the lunatic fringe. Typical of many of the notable intellectuals, who championed the cause of phrenology, was Isaac Ray, who was to become well-known as superintendent of the Maine Insane Hospital, and who served as superintendent of the Butler Hospital in Providence from 1846 to 1866.

As early as 1833 the Providence Franklin Society, a scientific organization of excellent repute, added a phrenological division to its physical, chemical, and biological divisions; and the Society in January, 1837, ordered a committee to make a careful examination of "animal magnetism."²²

Interest in Mesmerism, clairvoyance, and phrenology seemed to lead naturally to spiritualism, and Providence became a spiritualist center after 1845. Sarah Whitman, the Providence poet,²³ became a convinced spiritualist early, held seances, followed the careers of the leading spiritualist mediums, and wrote articles on spiritualism for Horace Greeley's *New York Tribune*. In addition, spiritualist medicines achieved a notable popularity in Rhode Island.

Some of the radical reform movements had no outlet of expression in the state, but several causes, such as the temperance movement, had their own newspapers; and the *Providence Journal*, in spite of its rigid Whig political conservatism, served other reform movements by printing news of their activities. The *Journal* was even willing to extend editorial support to a few reforms, particularly dietary ones. A typical editorial of this kind found the newspaper denouncing the enemies of the Grahamites, a sect who lived on little more than Graham bread, and warmly praising the advocates of dietetic virtue.

As a rule an individual was not merely a spiritualist or an abolitionist or a temperance advocate, but all three and more. William Lloyd Garrison, as well as a substantial number of his contemporaries, was the proponent of an incredible number of reforms. An apt Rhode Island illustration of this type of active reformer was Elizabeth Buffum Chace,²⁴ the wife of a Rhode Island manufacturer and the

²²Franklin Society Records, I, 268, Rhode Island Historical Society Library.

²³See Caroline Ticknor, *Poe's Helen* (New York, 1916) and Thomas Bailey, "Recollections of Sarah Whitman," MSS in the John Hay Library.

²⁴See Lillie B. C. Wyman and Arthur C. Wyman, *Elizabeth Buffum Chace* (Boston, 1814) 2 vols.

daughter of Arnold Buffum, the first president of the New England Anti-Slavery Society. Elizabeth Chace was a close friend of William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, and Stephen S. Foster. In addition to her role in the abolitionist movement she pursued a multitude of other reform activities. She discarded her Quaker religious beliefs at an early age and adopted the "liberal" theology preached by Theodore Parker, then a religious and social outcast. She was later converted to spiritualism after reading the works of Andrew Jackson Davis, "the Poughkeepsie Seer," who had revelations on a multitude of things including the past and future history of the created universe, the world of spiritual beings, and the inhabitants of Saturn. She became interested in clairvoyance, and was much impressed by the public lecturers who spoke of a spiritual world from a communicative trance. The loss of five children while under medical care made her an easy convert to spiritual healing, and at one time or another she adopted hydropathic treatment, called in a practitioner of "animal magnetism," and used mysterious compounds of spiritualist medicine. Few causes were ignored by Elizabeth Chace in her quest for social reform. She used progressive educational methods in teaching her children; she practiced a number of dietary reforms; and in spite of her essential modesty, for a very short time she wore bloomers, the badge of the crusading feminist. A pacifist, a non-resistant, and an opponent of capital punishment, she took a consistent Garrisonian position toward the state. When the Civil War came, in spite of her devotion to the Abolitionist cause, she opposed sending her sons to war because of her pacifist views and her attitude toward the Union. Like Garrison she considered a constitution and a Union which recognized and upheld slavery "a covenant with death" and an "alliance with hell." In later years she became interested in penal and educational reform, organizing the Ladies Board of Visitors for State Institutions, and becoming a key figure in the organization of the American Woman Suffrage Association.

§3.

Transcendentalism and "the newness" combined to produce a second and more radical type of reformer. The intellectual and social ferment of the new era created an atmosphere of iconoclasm and lent support to a critical scrutiny of almost every aspect of American life. Out of this milieu arose the first class of American Bohemians.

There was among these young men a great deal of sincere protest against existing social evils, an almost explosive reaction against all custom, habit, and tradition, and an all-pervasive exuberance which made it possible to believe in a total reformation of society. These young Bohemians combined with a reaction against custom and convention, a puritanical zeal for reform. Although George Ripley and the Brook Farm group adopted the costume and some of the manners of the young Bohemians,²⁵ none of the major Transcendentalists, in spite of their unorthodox attitudes, could be classified as Bohemians. However, they were surrounded by young men who wore shapeless blouses and peasant boots, who renounced all social conventions, and who were abolitionists, prohibitionists, vegetarians, and Grahamites, often living off a single food such as apples or bread made from unbolted flour. Three young men, Cyrus Burleigh, George Burleigh, and Samuel Larned, a close friend of Sarah Whitman's, while discussing the absurdities of language, decided to institute one reform by a protest against superstitious reverence for sacred words and names. They abandoned their own names in order that each might take the name of a member of the Trinity and proceeded to address one another in this fashion anywhere and everywhere. Once at Emerson's front door they so astonished passing "Phillistines" that Emerson had to adjourn the conversation to the rear of the house. Shortly afterward in Nantucket they were arrested, tried, and fined for blasphemy and profanity. They had no money of course and were prepared to go to jail until some sympathetic liberals in the town came forward and paid their fines.

A number of these Bohemians were from Providence, and Robert Carter used a young Rhode Islander, whom he did not identify, as the prototype of the group.²⁶ This young man, the son and heir of a wealthy Providence merchant, rebelled at the age of eighteen against all social distinctions and refused to let the family servants do anything for him. He blacked his own boots, made his bed, and insisted on helping the servants wait upon the table. His father, enraged by this unseemly behavior, ordered him to leave home, a command which the young man gladly obeyed. He grew a beard and donned the Bohemian costume, a broad brimmed felt hat, a

²⁵J. D. Codman's *Brook Farm, Historic and Personal Memoirs* (Boston, 1894), contains information on Charles Newcomb's life at Brook Farm.

²⁶Robert Carter, "The Newness," *Century Magazine*, XXXIX (November, 1889) 124-131.

Byron collar, a plain shapeless blouse, a sack coat, peasant boots, and baggy trousers. In the summer he existed by working in the experimental communities, and in the winter he would simply drop into a strange home, make himself useful, and assume residence there.

On one occasion he dropped into the Concord home of Emerson's friend, Mrs. Sturgis, when Robert Carter was visiting there. He announced that he had known Caroline Sturgis at Brook Farm and wished to stay with Mrs. Sturgis for a while. Having accepted an invitation to sit down, he fidgeted restlessly in his seat until he saw the Irish maid hanging clothes in the yard. Much to the consternation of everyone, including the maid, he dashed outside and insisted on helping with the laundry, a task which he performed in a very skilled manner. Later at dinner he ate only apples and lectured the family and dinner guests on the barbarity of eating the various courses as they were served, with particular denunciations directed at the evils of consuming beef, butter, wine, and coffee.

§4.

The intellectual climate of Rhode Island was dominated for more than a decade by transcendentalism and "the newness," which generated a spirit of social and political iconoclasm and a tendency toward literary innovation. Sarah Whitman showed an open hostility toward all organized religion, and Charles Newcomb treated religion and other "sacred institutions" as mere conventions. Even when the Transcendentalists refrained from crusading against custom and social evils, they were encouraged in literary innovation by their very surroundings. In a sense the spirit of the personalities and movements which we have discussed was exemplified in the "Comeouters," the "natural mystics" of Cape Cod who insisted on leaving the churches, which they denounced as corrupt shells of Christianity because of the refusal to denounce slavery and other social evils from the pulpit. Elizabeth Chace "came out" of a narrow Quaker background in which women were timid helpmeets, and entered a career of activity, innovation, and reform. The Newcombs "came out" of a smug intellectual world dominated by Locke in philosophy and the neo-classicists in literature. The Transcendentalists, reformers, poets, and religious innovators were "comeouters," who left a provincial culture subservient to British tastes for new vistas in literature and politics, and the creation of a democratic culture and a national literature.

UNCLE BROWN GRABS A TOWN

by DAVID S. LOVEJOY

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THE WARD-HOPKINS controversy in Rhode Island politics during the 1760's was more than a rivalry between political leaders, Samuel Ward and Stephen Hopkins; it was a struggle between factions — one north and one south — for control of the government. Victory in the annual spring election meant an opportunity for the successful faction to establish an administration biased in favor of its own members and the section of the colony from which it derived support. The hundreds of offices filled by the General Assembly each year, the system of taxation, and even the courts of justice reflected the interests of the faction in power.

Despite the north-south alignment of parties, Hopkins and Ward each received welcome assistance from a few lieutenants in the enemy's territory. Stephen Hopkins of Providence was ably supported by the Wanton family of Newport, who could round up in the southern town as many as a hundred votes for the Hopkins people of the north. Twice when the northerners captured the government they put Joseph Wanton, Jr., of Newport into the Deputy Governor's chair.

Samuel Ward, the southern leader, also had accomplices who supported him from the other end of the colony. Chief among these was Elisha Brown, a fiery politician from the northern edge of Providence, who counted among his relatives the four Brown brothers, leading merchants and Hopkins supporters of the same town. "Uncle Brown," as he was unaffectionately called by his nephews, served as Samuel Ward's Deputy Governor when the Newporter managed to receive a majority of the freemen's votes. No more cantankerous politician than Elisha Brown ever graced the General Assembly, where his warm support of the southern party coupled with his vigorous campaign each spring in Ward's behalf made him extremely unpopular among most of the voters in the upper half of the colony.¹

¹The above information is based upon an analysis of the Ward-Hopkins controversy in the writer's Ph.D. thesis, *The Licentious Republic: Rhode Island, 1760-1776* (1954), Brown University Library.

The political rivalry between the two factions was responsible for the act dividing the town of Providence which passed the Assembly in 1765. The fact that Elisha Brown was a ringleader in pushing the plan is sufficient evidence in itself to show that the scheme was politically inspired. With a town of his own, no longer need "Uncle Brown" knuckle under to his nephews in Providence at town meeting. Although setting off part of Providence would not lessen that town's number of deputies in the Assembly, it would accomplish a similar purpose by adding two new representatives to the lower house, who, with Elisha Brown at the helm, might be expected to vote as he did with the southern interest.

Plans for the division were made in February, 1765, while the Hopkins faction was still in power. One hundred and fifteen freemen from the northern end of Providence, headed by Elisha Brown, petitioned the Assembly to divide that town into two distinct parts. The petitioners desired to be separated, they said, because they were farmers living in a remote part and naturally had interests which contrasted with those of the merchants and traders of the compact part of the town. Seven town meetings, they said, were called within three months' time during the previous fall on matters which did not concern the farmers, yet they were obliged to attend "although inconvenient in order to prevent anything disadvantageous passed." It resulted in loss of time, contention, and expense, all of which, they claimed, ought to be borne by the merchants and artisans. As usual, the Assembly referred the petition to the next session and voted to cite the town of Providence to appear to answer why it should not be granted.² This meant, of course, that the Assembly would vote on the petition after the coming election in May.

At the same session a second group of citizens, living in the northern end of town, petitioned the Assembly asking that no division be made of Providence. They claimed that the first petitioners had "been instigated and Set on by Crafty and designing Men" to divide Providence "by Such Boundaries as are directly Calculated to Serve the Interested Views and Sinister purposes of Such instigators."³ In spite of the dissatisfaction of a number of people and in spite of

²Rhode Island Colony Records, 8, 292, Rhode Island Archives, State House, Providence; Brown Papers, P-P6, February, 1765, John Carter Brown Library, Providence.

³Petitions, 11-2, 140, R. I. Arch.

the "Violent efforts made by those Concerned," the lower house in June resolved *by a majority of one vote* to grant Elisha Brown's petition; it immediately drew up a bill for dismembering the town. Both votes were promptly concurred with by the Council where Samuel Ward and Elisha Brown sat.⁴

It is apparent from what then occurred that the Assembly's action outraged many inhabitants in several parts of the colony. Moses Brown and others from the business end of Providence drafted a protest which they presented to the lower house. According to the new act the north-end people not only had cut off more than forty houses and about sixty freemen from the compact part of the town, but they had made off with the grist mill and the public burying ground. Moreover, Moses Brown and his friends claimed that the town of Providence had never been cited to appear before the Assembly agreeable to that body's vote and "the standing Law of the Colony."⁵ It is apparent, too, that indignation aroused by the act was not confined to members of the Hopkins faction. Thomas Potter of South Kingstown and Metcalf Bowler of Newport protested against it; they claimed that Providence was small enough as it was and that a further division was "vastly prejudicial to the Interest of the Colony." Other deputies from those two southern towns objected on grounds that the lower house was already too large, and "the Number ought to be lessened rather than multiplied."⁶ The Ward faction enjoyed a majority in the lower house, for it had won the election in May and had appointed numerous new officers, but its majority had dwindled to a single vote in favor of splitting Providence. A few Ward voters had minds of their own when it came to granting what seemed to them to be an outright seizure by Elisha Brown and his friends of North Providence.

It was not until September, however, that the inhabitants of the old town of Providence officially protested against the whole affair to the Assembly. The Providence petition claimed that regardless of the Assembly's strict compliance with the letter of the law in other cases, the town had not been cited to appear before the Assembly to answer the original petition. It was with great alarm, then, that they

⁴Journal, House of Deputies, 9-2, June, 1765, R. I. Arch.; Petitions, 11-2, 141, R. I. Arch.

⁵R. I. Col. Recs., 8, 318-319, R. I. Arch.

⁶*Ibid.*, 319.

discovered at the end of the session that the act had passed, and that they had no means of redress but by remonstrating to the Assembly. The people of Providence admonished the members of the legislature and "with a firmness equal to the Justice and equity of the Cause," declared that if the Assembly had observed the same care throughout the whole proceedings that it had used at the outset, the people of Providence would have been heard in the legislature. Once heard, the original petition to divide the town would "have made its Exit in as Hasty a Manner as it did its appearance." The petitioners prayed for a reversal of all that had occurred and a speedy restoration of that part of the town which had been taken off.⁷ But Elisha Brown and his cronies gave no ground. The act in its final form, however, did give the people of Providence free use of the burying ground which then lay within the boundaries of the new town.⁸

It was two years before Hopkins and his friends could persuade the freemen to put them back in office. In 1767 Stephen Hopkins dug up an impressive majority of votes and sat again in the Governor's chair. The Assembly hardly had time to count noses after the general election when a number of the inhabitants of the compact part of North Providence petitioned the legislature to reunite them to Providence proper. Their principal reason was that many of them were merchants and tradesmen and were naturally associated with the people of Providence.⁹ This caused a great stir in the Assembly, and it was followed by several petitions from both the compact and rural areas of North Providence. Elisha Brown signed one which argued that if the compact part were reunited with Providence it would leave but eighty-one freemen in North Providence, who, he claimed

wou'd be represented in the Assembly by the same Number of Deputies, as other Towns in the Colony (particularly some Southern ones) who have four times the Number of Inhabitants, and pay eight Times the Tax, which wou'd be productive of an Inequality of Representation, and apparently destructive of the Ends of Government.

Elisha Brown's magnanimous concern for the equality of representation and the ends of government must have deeply moved that august

⁷Petitions, 11-2, 141, R. I. Arch.

⁸John Russell Bartlett, ed., *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island* (Providence, 1861), VI, 440-441.

⁹Petitions, 13-2, 80, R. I. Arch.

body, the General Assembly. A counter proposal in the same petition came with more grace; rather "than be mangled and dissected in the Manner propos'd," they preferred to be reunited as they were before any division was made.¹⁰

During the first week of July the Assembly debated whether or not the compact part of North Providence should be restored to the original town. Moses Brown, house leader of the Hopkins faction, cautiously maneuvered his forces in preparation for the vote. Elisha Brown, although out of the Assembly that year, was represented by his son John, who had been sent by the North Providence town meeting to "advise and assist the Deputies."¹¹ The moment of voting was put off when a "Long harrangue Lasted till Dark." Reluctantly Moses Brown agreed to postpone the question to the next day. With this advantage his opponents sent posthaste to Tiverton for one of their friends and had him back in time to vote in the morning. But "through Great Pains" and "good Generalship," said Moses Brown, the compact part of North Providence was reunited to the ancient town of Providence by *two votes*. Moses Brown was jubilant. "Uncle Brown" was "So Irritated" that he promptly moved bag and baggage into what was left of North Providence, and swore, "as there is Browns up Town as well as Down it shuld be Taken off."¹²

THE IVES FAMILY AND THE RHODE ISLAND HOSPITAL

by ROLAND HAMMOND, M.D., Providence, R. I.

THE INTERESTING ARTICLE on the Thomas Poynton Ives House, by John Hutchins Cady in the January, 1955, issue of *Rhode Island History*, with illustrations of the beautiful interior, serves to recall the connection between the Ives family and the founding of the Rhode Island Hospital.

Vigorous efforts made in 1851-1852 and for several years thereafter, by the Providence Medical Association failed to impress upon the general public the urgent need of a hospital, and, regretfully, the movement was abandoned, though it was still cherished in the

¹⁰*Ibid.*

¹¹*Ibid.*

¹²Moses Brown to John Brown, Providence, July 7, 1767, Brown Papers, Miscellaneous Letters, 1767, I, John Carter Brown Library.

thoughts of many benevolent-minded people in the community. During this period Thomas Poynton Ives, the grandson of the original Thomas Poynton Ives, manifested a considerable interest in medicine. He became a pupil of Dr. J. W. C. Ely and took a full course at the College of Physicians and Surgeons, New York, but without obtaining a medical degree. Since he had no intention of practicing medicine, he devoted himself to the scientific side of medicine. He bought a microscope which was demonstrated on various occasions to the physicians of the community. The records of the Providence Medical Association state that "the October and November meetings of 1856, were spent pleasantly in the study of microscopic specimens for which the Association was indebted to Mr. T. P. Ives, Drs. Collins and Ely." At the outbreak of the Civil War Mr. Ives offered his yacht to the government and was commissioned a Captain. He was later promoted to the grade of Lt. Commander by the War Department.

The actual origin of the Rhode Island Hospital came about through the benevolence of Moses Brown Ives, who, upon his death, in 1857, bequeathed \$50,000 to such worthy objects as should be selected by his brother, Robert Hale Ives, and his nephew, Thomas Poynton Ives, (grandson of the original T. P. Ives) who were named as his trustees.

\$10,000 of this amount was expended on various charities, but the two trustees, believing that the time had now come for the realization of hopes long cherished, decided to devote the remaining \$40,000 of this liberal bequest toward starting a public hospital. However, further efforts were required to speed the accomplishment of this worthy purpose.

As so often happens, it required a tragedy to arouse a sufficient interest in the establishment of a general hospital in Providence. Lieutenant Robert Hale Ives, Jr., the son of one of the trustees of this will, had been fatally wounded in September, 1862, at the battle of Antietam. Shortly thereafter the immediate family decided to proceed more vigorously with the plans for founding a hospital and in the spring of 1863 obtained a charter for the Rhode Island Hospital which became a corporate institution of the state. Robert Hale Ives was elected the first president of the Board of Trustees, and his portrait now hangs in the hospital.

The present site of the hospital was immediately selected as appro-

priate and desirable for the institution. A considerable portion of this site, owned by the city, was willingly donated by the City Council on condition that the new corporation would first secure subscriptions to the amount of at least \$75,000. This sum was at once subscribed. It is hard today to understand the difficulties which had to be met and overcome by these pioneer founders who firmly established the Rhode Island Hospital. Theirs was the task of spreading information, soliciting funds, and developing what had at first been only a benevolent purpose in a comparatively few minds to meet a long-existing social want by giving to charity patients necessary medical and surgical treatment which they could neither provide nor afford in their own homes.

The Civil War was at its height and the uncertain tide of battle flowed toward the borders of New England. It was one of those moments most favorable to every benevolent enterprise. Men were inspired with generous sentiments. The people of the state responded generously and within sixty days over \$200,000 was contributed. This amount was quickly doubled by subscriptions which poured in from every section of Rhode Island. The gifts came not from the rich alone but from people in every walk and station of life.

The hospital was opened in October, 1868, with accommodations for about sixty patients. During the succeeding years numerous additions have been made to the original structure and at the present time an entirely new building is in the process of construction. When it is completed the hospital will be able to accommodate at least 600 patients.

The Ives family has been active in providing many other benevolent gifts to worthy projects in Providence, including donations to Brown University.

NEWS NOTES

Donations sent in with annual dues amount to \$1,700, a sum that will go a long way toward meeting the \$2,500 expense of hurricane damage. Large contributions were of course gratefully received, but the smaller ones from about four hundred members, amounting to a little over \$500, indicate an interest of a large group of our members. Donations continue to come in, and it is hoped that we shall reach our goal by the end of the fiscal year in July.

* * *

In February of this year Mr. Richard LeBaron Bowen, a former president of The Rhode Island Historical Society, was elected a Fellow of the Society of Genealogists of London, England.

Only four men are Fellows of both the American and the English Societies of Genealogists. Of these four, three, Mr. Bowen, Dr. Arthur Adams of Boston, Mass., and Mr. George Andrews Moriarty of Ogunquit, Maine, are members of The Rhode Island Historical Society. The fourth Fellow is an Englishman, Mr. Anthony R. Wagner, Richmond Herald of the College of Arms, London, England.

* * *

The Society's fine collection of logs and journals kept on board Rhode Island vessels has received an important addition through the purchase at auction of the logbooks of three famous Providence East Indiamen. Most important is the log of John Brown's ship *General Washington*, Jonathan Donnison master, kept by Richard Low on the first voyage of a Rhode Island vessel to the East Indies. The record begins on December 27, 1787, and ends on July 5, 1789, when Block Island was again sighted. In the course of her voyage the *General Washington* traded at Madeira, Madras, Canton, and St. Eustatius and visited a number of other ports.

A second volume contains a log of the ship *Resource*, Nathaniel Pearce master, owned by John Corlis and William F. Megee, on a voyage to Java in 1800-01, and a partial log of the same vessel bound for Manila and Canton in 1802. Both were kept by Peleg Gifford.

Of later date is the logbook of the second *Ann and Hope*, Thomas Holden, Jr., master, covering voyages to Batavia, Amsterdam, and Gothenburg, 1833-34, and to Batavia and Canton, 1835-36. The book also contains the logs of voyages of the *America*, of which Holden was master, between United States ports and Liverpool in 1839 and 1840.

Another important acquisition, also bought at auction, is a previously unknown broadside printed at Newport by Solomon Southwick in 1776. It describes the evacuation of Boston by the British.

* * *

The Society continues to cooperate with other institutions by lending paintings and material from the museum for exhibitions. During the winter a large number of our pictures of Providence has been on exhibition at the Art Center in Providence and at the Attleboro Mu-

seum. Several pieces of Chinese export porcelain were on exhibit at the Los Angeles County Museum in Los Angeles during the late winter.

* * *

On March 18 the Society had the welcome opportunity of being the guest of Brown University on its television program "An Evening on College Hill." Using moving pictures taken by the Brown Photographic Laboratory Mr. Monahan told of the history and purpose of the Society and described John Brown House and some of the contents of its rooms. Mr. Collins used objects from the museum to illustrate various aspects of the history of the state. Enthusiastic comments from many persons who saw the program seem to indicate that television is an excellent medium for arousing an interest in historical subjects.

* * *

The time of the Society's weekly radio program, "Rhode Island Ramblings," heard on Betty Gunning's "Friendship Club" program every Wednesday over Station WJAR has been changed to 12:45 p.m.

* * *

Plans are being made for a pilgrimage to some historical spot, possibly the Concord Antiquarian Society, at the end of May or the beginning of June. It is open to women members of the Society. Any one interested should call the Society, DExter 1-8575, and she will be kept informed of the plans as they progress.

BOOK REVIEWS

James Burrill Angell: an American Influence, by Shirley W. Smith. Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1954. xiv, 359 p. \$7.50.

In 1951 Shirley W. Smith, retired vice president of the University of Michigan, wrote *Harry Burns Hutchins and the University of Michigan*, an entertaining life of the University's fourth president (1910-1920) in whose administration he had taken part. One reviewer of this book severely criticized Michigan's administrative policies in the early twentieth century, suggesting not only that Hutchins was too conservative, but also that Michigan had been declining in comparison with other state universities since about 1900, while the elderly President Angell, in office since 1871, was "venerated almost to the point of deification."¹

¹Walton Bean in *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XXXIX, 1 (June, 1952), 147-148.

The present life of James Burrill Angell represents, in part, an answer to this challenge. It also provides another chance for Mr. Smith to portray the character of an academic leader whom he knew and served. This book, like the life of Hutchins, will have its greatest attraction for readers interested in the history of the University of Michigan. Mr. Smith has used such sources as Angell's *Reminiscences*, published in 1911, Angell manuscripts preserved at the University of Michigan, files of the *Providence Journal*, and Angell's published addresses, together with his own fund of anecdote and reminiscence, to create a comprehensive and entertaining biography. Perhaps his greatest service has been to construct on the framework of Angell's own dry, prosaic *Reminiscences* a mellow and inspiring picture of the educator's life.

For Rhode Island readers this biography should certainly have an appeal. A seventh-generation descendant of Roger Williams' companion, Thomas Angell, James Burrill Angell was born in Scituate in 1829, son of Andrew Angell, and descendant of several generations of country tavern keepers. His education was obtained in rural schools and academies, and at the University Grammar School, Providence, under Henry Simmons Frieze, who, as Professor of Latin at Michigan, later suggested his former pupil's name to the Regents of the University as a candidate for its presidency. Angell's excellent preparation and diligent work brought him top honors in the Brown Class of 1849.

Mr. Smith's discussion of Angell's undergraduate years neglects some of the significant material in the chapter of the *Reminiscences* on which it is based. The influence of Alexis Caswell (later Angell's father-in-law) and of President Francis Wayland is emphasized, but no mention is made of the debt Angell himself acknowledged to the teaching of William Gammell, whose history course was "fuller than that at any other college except Harvard." Also he should have mentioned George Washington Greene, whose discussions of the European crises of 1848 were so fascinating that Angell later wrote "I confess that my own intense interest in European politics and history dates from the hours I sat under the spell of George Greene's fine talk."² Here was the beginning of some of the interests which Angell pursued later as teacher, editor, and diplomat.

At Brown Angell began his lifelong friendship with Rowland Hazard of Peace Dale with whom he traveled after graduation, first through the South, and later, after brief employment by the Boston City Engineer, through Europe. During the European tour Angell received President Wayland's offer of a professorship at Brown, either civil engineering or modern languages, with permission to remain abroad some months for study. He chose to teach modern languages and prepared himself by study in France and Germany.

Angell did not for long enjoy the opportunities, which he had anticipated, of teaching literature to upperclassmen; under the Sears regime he was given only elementary language classes. Soon he began to write occasional newspaper articles on European affairs. In 1860 he resigned his professorship and became editor of the *Providence Journal*. He held this post through the Civil War, helping to inaugurate the *Evening Bulletin*, an outgrowth of wartime extras. In 1866 came a call to the presidency of the University of Vermont, where

²*The Reminiscences of James Burrill Angell* (New York, 1911), 25.

Angell successfully restored the finances of a school hard hit by the Civil War and supervised the establishment of vocational courses. In 1869 began the protracted negotiations which led to Angell's removal to Ann Arbor in 1871.

Mr. Smith's account of Angell's career at Michigan comprises the main portion of the book. He makes a special attempt to show that Angell recruited promising faculty members from other institutions after 1900, in answer to the charge that Michigan was becoming inbred and conservative at this time. Detailed accounts are also given of Angell's missions to China and Turkey and his service on international commissions. Finally, there are a number of chapters affectionately describing Angell as Mr. Smith knew him from the late nineties until his death in 1916.

The reader should not expect from this book an analysis of general problems of higher education; Mr. Smith rarely ventures far from the Michigan scene. Ample material is supplied to illustrate Angell's own educational philosophy. Perhaps, however, Mr. Smith could have pointed out more precisely how earlier developments prepared the way for Angell's success after 1871. President Wayland's influence is emphasized. Angell, however, regarded Wayland with more than mere youthful veneration; even as a student he was able to appraise the president's imperial manner with shrewd detachment. He learned, as he told Walter C. Bronson in 1910, that the way to deal with Wayland was to admit his authority and then question the principles on which it was applied.³ Angell saw that Wayland was not a perfect administrator, and that Professor Caswell saved him from mistakes, but he admired the spirit of Wayland's plans for collegiate reform, and his career was affected by their execution. The choice of professorships offered him in 1852, sometimes cited as a classic example of the adaptability expected of the pre-Civil War professorial candidate, arose from a crisis at Brown created by Wayland's arbitrary dismissal of Professors Greene, Norton, and Porter, able teachers who had dared to question the President's regulations on student discipline. Angell's withdrawal from his professorship was partly a result of President Sears' abandonment of Wayland's scheme. And he was speaking for those of the Brown faculty who thought that Sears was falling behind the times, as well as drawing on his own Vermont experience, when, in an address at the Brown commencement of 1868, he praised Wayland's vision and called on Brown to expand its facilities.⁴

At Michigan Angell completed the educational edifice planned by Wayland's great contemporary and acute critic, Henry Philip Tappan. He also maintained close ties between the University and the State's public school system, as contemplated by John D. Pierce (Brown, 1822), Michigan's first Superintendent of Public Instruction. Thus Angell's administration at Michigan was influenced by Tappan and Wayland, the most important pre-Civil War writers on the future of American higher education, while the mature State educational system of his day owed much to the vision of an earlier Brown alumnus.

Dartmouth College

THEODORE R. CRANE

³Walter C. Bronson, "Notes of My Talk With President Angell, Nov. 12, 1910." Typed memorandum, Brown University Library.

⁴James B. Angell to W. W. Keen, October 31, 1914. ALS, Brown University Library.

From Slave to Citizen, The Story of the Negro in Rhode Island, by Irving H. Bartlett. Providence, The Urban League of Greater Providence, 1954. 76p. \$1.00; mailing 10¢.

Professor Bartlett's account of the Negro in Rhode Island is thrice welcome. He has explored an area in the state's history hitherto neglected and presents the results of his careful research in a highly readable, frequently lively manner. As the author describes the long, upward struggle of the colored race in this small section of New England, the reader becomes acutely conscious of the fact that the "Negro problem" is both national and local.

One of the most interesting aspects of Rhode Island history stems from the variety of people who have made their homes within the borders of this little state. In spite of the tradition of religious and political liberty, Rhode Island has seen its share of "man's inhumanity to man." Although we know that slavery was accepted as necessary in the seventeenth century and that Newport merchants were not the only ones to profit from "catching black birds on the coast of Africa," some of the facts about the Rhode Island slave trade may come as a shock. After reading the short chapter on slavery, we can dimly understand what tortures of body the slave trade caused the African—and what tortures of conscience it brought to the Bristol slave trader.

This little book on one facet of local history enables the reader to see familiar events in a different dimension. The story of the Negro in Rhode Island touches on many subjects of both state and national importance—the influence of the Quakers, the American Revolution, Dorr's rebellion, the Civil War, and others. Particularly interesting to this reviewer was the author's description of the influences of war on the colored inhabitants of Rhode Island. In the American Revolution slaves were purchased from their owners and employed to fight for freedom. In the Civil War they volunteered as free citizens, anxious to take their places in the army on an equal basis with other soldiers.

Most pertinent for us today is the description of the Negro's position in the community after legal freedom had been achieved. In Rhode Island, as elsewhere, racial prejudice was not abolished with slavery. Mr. Bartlett's search into brittle old newspapers and dusty pamphlets brings to light such episodes as the destruction of Negroes' houses by a mob of white men in the Providence riots of 1824 and 1831. Two important victories won by the colored race in the nineteenth century, the suffrage and equal rights in public education, were achieved in the face of strong opposition.

The attitude of the *Providence Journal* concerning desegregated schools in the latter 1850's is illuminating, as that paper was so important in reflecting and in forming public opinion. Henry B. Anthony, the editor, regarded the demand for equal rights in education as the work of "newcomers and agitators . . . who sought position and influence for themselves rather than to promote the true interest of their race." Students of Rhode Island history will be quick to notice that the editor's opposition to desegregation in the schools was matched by an opposition to equal suffrage for foreign-born citizens. Although the immigrant groups outstripped the Negro in the race for economic im-

provement, the colored people were not alone in experiencing second-class citizenship.

One aspect of the history of the Negro in Rhode Island which is not included here is how unscrupulous bosses purchased the votes of ignorant Negroes in their efforts to maintain political power.

It must not be thought, however, that all Rhode Islanders were indifferent or hostile to the Negroes' struggle up and away from the abysmal depths of slavery. "It is true that Negroes in Rhode Island are allowed to make a better life for themselves than in most other states." It is also true that ". . . the same ideal which inspired Moses Brown . . . to labor for the 'elevation of the people of color' . . . is kept alive by those who are fighting to abolish discrimination in housing and industry."

Mr. Bartlett has certainly made a worthwhile contribution to Rhode Island history. His work should be an inspiration for similar studies of other groups. Thanks to the author's pioneering we can look forward to histories of the Irish, the French-Canadians, the Italians, and others who have contributed to the "livlie experiment" that is Rhode Island.

MARY COBB NELSON

Rhode Island College of Education

BLOCK ISLAND CEMETERY RECORDS

copied and arranged by

MRS. HELEN WINSLOW MANSFIELD

[continued from January, 1955, v. 14, no. 1, inside back cover]

SPRAGUE

Miss Elizabeth R. Sprague who departed this life Feb. 6, 1838, in 27th yr. of her ae.

Ephraim R. Sprague died in Stonington, Conn., Nov. 17, 1856, ae. 32 yrs.

Ezra Atwell Sprague, Rhode Island, BlackSmith 2nd. Cl. U.S.N. R.F., Apr. 2, 1882—Nov. 11, 1941.

George R. Sprague, Apr. 26, 1847—Nov. 13, 1919.

Loranie A. Ball, his wife, Dec. 31, 1853—Jan. 29, 1913.

Gilbert Sprague, 1829—1917, his wife,
Louisa Allen, 1839—1922.

Rosemond; wife of George H. Sprague, daughter of Benjamin and Margaret Sprague; died June 28, 1886, ae. 32 yrs., 1 mo., 18 da. Infant son of George H. and Rosemond Sprague, born and died June 7, 1884.

Father Henry C. Sprague died Aug. 15, 1902, ae. 62 yrs.
Mother Hannah R. Sprague, (no dates).

SPRAGUE

Father Henry Sprague, 1843—1918.

Mother Harriet E. Sprague, 1855—1900.

James E. Sprague, July 5, 1837—May 17, 1905.

His wife, Mary A. Ball, Feb. 24, 1842—Feb. 29, 1918.

Infant daughter of James E. and Mary Ann Sprague, died Jan. 4, 1874, ae. 3 mos., 17 da.

James Sprague died Mar. 27, 1903, ae. 73 yrs.

Icivilla Sprague died Dec. 15, 1906, ae. 58 yrs.

Clara C., daughter of James E. and Icivilla Sprague, died July 28, 1865, ae. 3 mos., 15 da.

Mr. Jesse Sprague who died May 24, 1821, in 26th yr. of ae.

John Sprague who died July 9, 1861, in 77th yr. of his ae.

Mother Phebe R., wife of John Sprague, died June 12, 1859, in 59th yr. of ae.

Jonathan S. Sprague died July 11, 1859, ae. 53 yrs.

Mercy R. Sprague, wife of Jonathan Sprague, born June 9, 1816; died Jan. 31, 1902.

George C. Sprague, son of Jonathan and Mercy Sprague, Sept. 27, 1838—Mar. 23, 1907.

Perciville Sprague, son of Jonathan and Mercy D. Sprague, born July 1844—Sept. 1846.

Lemuel B. Sprague, son of Jonathan S. and Mercy R. Sprague, born Sept. 28, 1856; died Mar. 6, 1898, ae. 46 yrs., 5 mos., 8 da.

Lillian N. Sprague, 1858—1928.

Penelope Sprague, 1849—1929. (on Jonathan and Mercy Sprague)

Our father, Joshua Sprague, Jr., born New Shoreham, 1798; died June 9, 1864, in 66th yr.

Joshua Sprague, died Mar. 19, 1923, ae. 88 yrs.

Melissa Sprague, 1837—1917.

Joshua Sprague, 1866—1935.

Mary Harris, his wife, 1868—1935.

Infant daughter, Mar. 1, 1901—Mar. 1, 1901.

Jeanette Sprague, wife of Levi Sprague, died Aug. 24, 1888, in 66th yr.

Leslie C. Sprague, born Nov. 19, 1876, died Dec. 23, 1901, ae. 25 yrs.

Obed Sprague, died July 10, 1868, ae. 34 yrs. and 5 mos.

Georgie E. B., son of Oliver D. and Amey E. Sprague, died Nov. 30, 1895, ae. 7 yrs., 4 mos., and 2 da.

Samuel D. Sprague, June 16, 1837—Dec. 15, 1919.

Hannah M. Sprague, his wife, Feb. 23, 1840—Feb. 26, 1908.

Charles R., died Apr. 23, 1869, ae. 6 mos., 7 da., Infant.

Infant son, died Mar. 3, 1867, ae. 7 da.

Children of Samuel D. and Hannah M. Sprague

Senaca Sprague, Co. D. 12 R. F. Inf.

Farnum Sprague, wife, 3 children and 2 others.

Infant daughter of Virgil W. and Phebe R. Sprague, born and died June 1, 1912.

Willard S. Sprague, Nov. 9, 1829—Dec. 29, 1912.

Cornelia A. Dodge, his wife, Mar. 25, 1837—July 8, 1904.

Ransford, son of Willard S. and Cornelia A. Sprague, died Mar. 19, 1864, ae. 4 yrs. and 4 da.

Sarah Sprague, wife of William A. Sprague, born Oct. 20, 1854; died July 11, 1888.

Elizabeth D., daughter of William and Sarah Sprague, died Nov. 20, 1821, ae. 25 yrs., 2 mos.

Maria P., daughter of William Sprague, Jr., died Oct. 20, 1821, ae. 2 yrs., 12 da.

William Smith Sprague, Mar. 9, 1851—Dec. 15, 1936.

Luzania Elnora, his wife, Apr. 30, 1872.

STEADMAN

Carl R. Steadman, Rhode Island, pvt. I. M. Corp's, Oct. 28, 1939—born Jan. 15, 1896.

Sacred to the memory of Elder Enoch Steadman, who died July 17, 1833, ae. 73 yrs., Sergt. Steadman Co., R. I. Troops Revolutionary War.

Sacred to the memory of Hannah, wife of Rev. Enoch Steadman, who died Mar. 7, 1847, in 87th yr. of her ae.

Deacon Enoch Steadman, Nov. 12, 1836—Sept. 9, 1910.

Annie C., wife of Enoch Steadman and daughter of Ebenezer S. and Angelina Tourgee, died Mar. 20, 1871, ae. 36 yrs.

Infant son of Enoch and Annie C. Steadman, born and died Nov. 24, 1873.

Elisha R. of Enoch Steadman. (couldn't read dates)

Mary Maria, wife of Enoch Steadman, Aug. 4, 1853—Dec. 22, 1928.

STEADMAN

Catherine, wife of Henry B. Steadman, died Mar. 23, 1886, ae. 66 yrs., 2 mos., 14 da.

Samuel L., son of Henry B. and Catherine Steadman, died May 17, 1853, ae. 2 mos.

John P. Steadman, Sept. 17, 1832—May 3, 1903.

Lydia S. Steadman, Mar. 24, 1836—June 22, 1920.

Infant, son of John P. and Lydia S. Steadman, born and died June 20, 1865.

Dea. Richard Steadman, 1803—1897.

His wife, Susanna Ball, 1805—1885.

Their daughter, Deborah Steadman, 1828—1919.

Elisha R., of Richard and Susanna Steadman, died Oct. 6, 1848, ae. 1 yr.

Richard Steadman, Sept. 10, 1867—Feb. 4, 1946.

Mary Ann Reddington Steadman, his wife, Dec. 25, 1870—Feb. 24, 1934.

Their daughter, Sarah Gladys, Jan. 3, 1890.

Deacon Samuel Steadman died Sept. 9, 1874, in 76th yr.

William J. Steadman, born Apr. 1825, died Feb. 2, 1892.

Lucretia Dodge, wife of William J. Steadman, born Feb. 11, 1819—died Apr. 19, 1877.

STINSON

Nelson Eugene Stinson, 1880.

Elsie Smith, his wife, 1884.

STEWART

Charles Stewart, born Feb. 12, 1845, died May 7, 1910.

SUTHERLAND

Alexander Sutherland, born Scotland, Sept. 1, 1859, died Oct. 12, 1928.

TAYLOR

John Carroll Taylor, born Jackson, Miss., Aug. 17, 1870, died Feb. 27, 1940.

TEAL

Joseph H. Teal, Jan. 22, 1854—Aug. 25, 1913.

Margaret E. Ball, his wife, Apr. 15, 1856—July 17, 1924.

Infant, son of William and Annie Teal, Nov. 17, 1902.

THOMAS

Rueben W. Thomas died in Liverpool, Aug. 24, 1880, ae. 18 yrs., 3 mos., 5 da.

Ernest W. Thomas, drown May 14, 1881, ae. 4 yrs., 8 mos., 12 da.

John O. Thomas, drown May 14, 1881, ae. 13 yrs., 3 da.

Children of John and Susan E. Thomas.

TOSH

Mr. Acres Tosh, died June ye 21st, 1739, in 54th yr. Table Stone.

Rebecca, wife of Mr. Acres Tosh, died Apr. 15, 1739, in ye 44th yr.

TOTTEN

Jemina Ella, infant of W. L. and S. R. Totten, Sept. 1885.

Sarah L., daughter of Walter L. and Susan R. Totten, died June 4, 1897, ae. 8 yrs., 10 mos.

TRACY

Phebe R. Sands, wife of Henry Tracy and daughter of William Pitt Sands, born 1825; died 1907.

TYLER

George Tyler, Apr. 25, 1839—Oct. 17, 1912.

His wife, Basha K. Dunn, Feb. 29, 1846—July 12, 1902.

Annie K. Tyler, born May 25, 1885—died Apr. 9, 1903.

George W. Tyler, 1869—1938.

Jerome J. Tyler, Dec. 2, 1881—Dec. 1, 1905.

John G. Tyler, died Nov. 3, 1897, ae. 26 yrs.

WARD

Lucinda G., wife of Samuel Ward, who died July 20, 1825, ae. 36 yrs., 11 mos.

WEEKS

G. W. Weeks, Co. D. 11th Conn. Inf.

WESTCOTT

Mother Celena, wife of Caleb Westcott, Dec. 29, 1888, ae. 68 yrs.

Noah Ball Westcott, 1846—1926.

Ruth Ann Littlefield, his wife, 1850—1903.

Infant, son of Noah B. and Ruth A. Westcott, died Apr. 19, 1872, ae. 1 yr., 5 da.

WESTCOTT

Annie J., daughter of Noah B. and Ruth A. Westcott, died June 30, 1880, ae. 10 yrs., 7 mos., 4 da.

Mattie A., daughter of Noah B. and Ruth A. Westcott, died May 21, 1887, ae. 11 yrs., 6 mos.

Joshua N. Westcott, 1873—1915.

Bessie M., 1874—

WHITE

Louis White, 1850—1925.

WILEY

Dr. Aaron C. Wiley died Mar. 27, 1828, in 51st yr.

He was born in Connecticut, but has been the only residing physician of this Island for the past 25 years. As a physician he had but few superiors, as a writer he was highly distinguished, and although law was not his profession, yet there were but few better acquainted with its practise. His loss is deeply lamented by the people of this Island there are but few men who have been more generally useful, possessed of more good qualities, or have by their acts conferred greater blessings on their fellow men.

Joanna Wiley, born S. Kingston, died 1807 in 32nd yr. While she lived she was beloved by all her friends and acquaintances, and when she died her loss was deeply lamented by her family and friends. In this woman concentrated the amiable qualities of benevolence and literary refinements and for which we trust she will receive her share in Heaven.

WILLIS

Andrew V. Willis, Sept. 4, 1841—June 12, 1908.

Adeline C. Willis, his wife, Apr. 18, 1840—Jan. 13, 1929.

Margaret S. Hayes, wife of Andrew V. Willis, died Aug. 15, 1867, ae. 27 yrs.

Infant, son of Andrew V. and Margaret S. Willis, born and died Aug. 4, 1867.

Infant, son of Andrew V. and Addie C. Willis, born and died Apr. 10, 1876.

Charles W. Willis, son of Hiram D. and Mary Ann Willis, born Nov. 1, 1844; died Oct. 7, 1892.

Parmelia A., wife of Charles W. Willis, daughter of Hamilton L. and Rosina C. Mott, born Dec. 23, 1845; died Mar. 29, 1914.

Mary Rosina Willis, born Aug. 16, 1866; died Nov. 14, 1867.

Permelia Adella Willis, born Mar. 8, 1868.

Jennie Baker Willis, born Mar. 18, 1871.

Lovina M. Willis, born Mar. 10, 1879, died Apr. 18, 1880.

Mary R., daughter of Charles W. and Permelia A. Willis, died Nov. 14, 1867, ae. 1 yr., 3 mos.

Lovina M., daughter of Charles W. and Permelia A. Willis, died Apr. 18, 1880, ae. 1 yr., 8 da.

Elizabeth Ball Willis, born about 1794, died Apr. 13, 1873, in 84th yr. (on Peter Ball stone)

Capt. Frances Willis, July 25, 1825—Mar. 4, 1902.

Hannah I. Dodge, his wife, Dec. 2, 1830—Dec. 11, 1912.

John Willis, son of Capt. Francis and Hannah I. Willis, died Dec. 14, 1856, ae. 1 yr., 8 mos., 6 da.

Susan A., daughter of Francis and Hannah I. Willis, died Apr. 9, 1863, ae. 3 yr., 10 mos.

Little Susie, daughter of Francis and Hannah I. Willis, died Sept. 13, 1863, ae. 7 wks.

Jane R., wife of George W. Willis, died Aug. 7, 1891, ae. 51 yrs.

Ellen A., daughter of George W. and Jane R. Willis, died Feb. 22, 1866, ae. 5 mos.

Infant son of George W. and Jane R. Willis, born and died Nov. 30, 1873.

George H., son of George W. and Jane R. Willis, died Sept. 10, 1874, ae. 2 yrs., 1 mo.

In memory of Sarah, wife of Henry Willis, died Sept. ye 8, 1733, ae. 49 yrs.

Henry Willis, born in New Shoreham, Oct. 14, 1787; died in New Shoreham, June 24, 1867, ae. 79 yrs., 8 mos., 10 da.

Caroline S. Willis, born in New Shoreham June 21, 1794, died New Shoreham Sept. 21, 1891, ae. 97 yrs., 8 mos.

Our sister, Harriet Amelia, daughter of Henry and Caroline S. Willis, died Apr. 3, 1838, ae. 4 yrs., 10 mos.

Here resteth our father Hiram D. Willis, died Oct. 20, 1875, ae. 81 yrs., 4 mos., 19 da.

Here resteth our Mother, Desire D. Willis, wife of Hiram D. Willis, who died Feb. 16, 1857, ae. 57 yrs.

Sibel Maria, daughter of Hiram D. and Desire D. Willis, died Jan. 25, 1850, ae. 23 yrs.

Hiram D. Willis, Apr. 5, 1838—Dec. 21, 1913.

His wives, Mary A. Littlefield, July 30, 1817—Oct. 12, 1861.

Alzada D. Mott, Sept. 29, 1843—June 25, 1927.

Infant children—Albert A., Abner H., Mary L.

Jane R., wife of Hiram F. Willis and daughter of George and Eunice Jelly, born Dec. 12, 1856, died Sept. 30, 1877.

Etta May, daughter of Hiram F. and Arabella L. Willis, born Apr. 20, 1886, died Sept. 7, 1886.

[to be continued]

THE RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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November 30, 1954 — March 28, 1955

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| Mr. and Mrs. Preston F. Arnold
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New York, N. Y. | Mr. William R. Innis |
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Bristol, R. I. | Mr. and Mrs. Carroll H. Rickard
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| Miss Catherine E. Dunderdale | Miss Dorothea J. Tormey
Central Falls, R. I. |
| Mrs. William B. Farnsworth | Mr. Willard B. VanHouten |
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Cranston, R. I. |
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