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CAPE VERDE BOUND

Photograph by Joseph M. Latham

Two familiar visitors from the Cape Verde Islands ride the cover of this issue. That's the brigantine MADALAN being towed into the river at the start of another long 3,000-mile haul across the Atlantic to the islands at the end of her visit here, November 24, 1953. She has a 300-horsepower diesel, but a tug was needed to break her out of the Providence River mud that year. The 147-foot vessel was built in 1927 at Lussinpiccolo, Italy, for \$3,500,000 as the yacht ILLYRIA for Cornelius Crane of Ipswich, Mass. She made a round-the-world cruise in 1928-29, served in the Coast Guard anti-sub patrol in World War II and entered the Providence-Cape Verde trade in 1947.

Still alongside the Old Colonial Line wharf at South Water Street is the 61-year-old schooner ERNESTINA, which started life in Essex, Mass., in 1894 as the EFFIE M. MORRISSEY of Capt. Bob Bartlett, the Arctic Explorer. She made thirty trips to the Arctic under Bartlett before he died in 1946. In 1947 she burned and sank in the East River at New York, was raised, and entered the Cape Verde service out of New Bedford the next year. She has been calling here regularly since 1948. Until last year, when a diesel was installed during her visit, she made the transatlantic run under canvas alone.

At last report the MADALAN is preparing for another passage to Providence, but when is not certain. Probably the ERNESTINA will return, too, although no information has been received here yet. They serve as a reminder of a day when many a vessel of these types put into Providence from distant ports.

ROBERT C. FREDERIKSEN

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TRANSCENDENTALISM AND THE PROVIDENCE LITERATI

by CHARLES R. CROWE*

§1.

THE DEVELOPMENT of Transcendentalism in Rhode Island was stimulated by magazines such as the *Dial* and by personal contacts with many of the major leaders of Transcendentalism—Ralph Waldo Emerson, Bronson Alcott, George and Sophia Ripley, James Freeman Clarke, and Margaret Fuller. Emerson was a frequent visitor to Providence; he gave a series of lectures in Rhode Island almost every year¹ and was a favorite speaker for such liberal events as the dedication of the progressive Greene Street School in 1837. Emerson's circle of acquaintances included virtually every literary figure in Providence, most of whom he met through Charles Newcomb. He had only the highest praise for Newcomb, and in later years remembering him at Brook Farm, he described him as a youth of "the subtlest mind . . . the subtlest observer and diviner of character I ever met, living, reading, writing, and talking there . . . his mind fed and overfed by whatever is exalted in genius."²

The Newcomb family maintained a close friendship with Bronson Alcott, who often came to visit Charles's mother, Rhoda Newcomb, during the days when Alcott was struggling with Fruitlands, that strange impractical community which seemed to justify the derision of his contemporaries who regarded Transcendentalism as little more than a humorous topic of conversation. Alcott always had problems which he discussed at length with Rhoda Newcomb:³ the community

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¹Notices of Emerson's lectures were usually printed in the *Providence Journal*.

²*Works* (Centenary ed., Boston, 1883), X, 362.

³Clara Sears, *Bronson Alcott's Fruitlands* (Boston, 1915).

was on the brink of financial ruin (a perpetual difficulty); a member had been expelled for secretly eating fish in the dead of night, a violation of one of the prime rules of the community which provided that only fresh fruit and bread made from unbolted flour should be consumed by its members; or a farmer had used a plow horse in clear violation of the rule which prohibited the use of draft animals in cultivating the soil.

George Ripley, one of the editors of the *Dial* and the founder of Brook Farm, occasionally came to Providence to see Margaret Fuller and to visit Rhoda Newcomb or Sarah Whitman.⁴ Ripley's wife, Sophia, was a very close friend of Sarah Whitman and the two could talk for hours about the status of women in modern society, New England Transcendentalism, or German literature and philosophy. It was the friendship between the Ripley's and the Newcomb family which led Charles Newcomb to join the Brook Farm community, where his eccentricities were to arouse a great deal of attention. James Freeman Clarke, a close friend of Ripley and one of the leaders of the western Transcendentalists, came to preach several times to enthusiastic audiences in Providence.⁵

Of all the Transcendentalists, perhaps none made as strong an impression on Rhode Island intellectuals as Margaret Fuller who lived in Providence from June, 1837, to December, 1838. Sarah Whitman accepted her without question as one of "the blood royal of intellect," and recorded the impression which Miss Fuller's arrival made on the Providence literati, who felt as

some watcher of the skies when a new planet swims into his ken. She brought with her a flood of light on all the new and exciting topics of the day. She came enveloped in a halo of Transcendentalism—a nebulous cloud of German mysticism and idealism. On all these topics Margaret talked with inspiration and enthusiasm, always soaring above her subject, always baffling analysis and transcending expectation. If her intellectual arrogance sometimes repelled, her rapid intuitions and electric sympathies rarely failed to dazzle and attract.⁶

§2.

It was Hiram Fuller, a schoolmaster and bookseller, who was

⁴See the letters of George Ripley in the Massachusetts Historical Society and in the Boston Public Library.

⁵See James Freeman Clarke, *Autobiography* (Boston, 1891), 313.

⁶Sarah Whitman, Letter published in the *Providence Journal*, March 27, 1868.

responsible for bringing Margaret Fuller to Providence. As a progressive educator he was well acquainted with the theories of the European thinkers, DeGerando and Pestalozzi, whom the Boston Transcendentalist educational experimenters praised so highly. Fuller, who later became a New York editor and who managed a pro-Southern paper in London during the Civil War, was a curious personality and a blend of both radicalism and conservatism.⁷ Although he held very strong notions of social propriety, he admired the erratic Bronson Alcott, who made no pretensions to respectability. His political ideas followed the lines of Whig conservatism, yet his progressive theories made him one of the most liberal educators of his age.⁸ He was a great admirer of Transcendentalism, and read Transcendentalist writings to his classes, an unorthodox practice which attracted attention and criticism. When the time came to select a speaker for the dedication of the Greene Street School, Fuller committed his greatest heresy by inviting Bronson Alcott. Alcott declined, however, and Fuller asked Emerson, who promptly accepted.

With a background of unorthodox educational reforms at earlier schools Fuller laid elaborate plans for the further development of his experiments at the Greene Street School. It was only natural that he should choose as his assistant Margaret Fuller, who had worked with Bronson Alcott in the famous Temple School. Fuller offered Margaret a salary of one thousand dollars a year for teaching the elder girls in the school four hours a day. Torn between a desire to proceed as rapidly as possible with her translation of Eckerman's *Conversations with Goethe* for George Ripley's *Specimens of Foreign Standard Literature* and the opportunity of achieving immediate financial independence, Margaret Fuller chose the latter and accepted the teaching position.⁹

The dedicatory address for the new school was given by Emerson on June 10, 1837. Hiram Fuller met Emerson at the station, took him to his lodgings in the City Hotel, and brought him at 4:00 P.M. to the Reverend Frederick A. Farley's Westminster Congregational Church, where the ceremonies were to take place. During Emerson's

⁷See Annie R. Marble, "Margaret Fuller as a Teacher," *The Critic*, XLIII (October, 1903), 341.

⁸See Henry L. Greene, "The Greene Street School," *Publications of the Rhode Island Historical Society*, New Series VI (January, 1899), 341.

⁹*Memoirs of Margaret Fuller Ossoli*, ed. J. F. Clarke, R. W. Emerson, and W. H. Channing (London, 1852).

lecture Margaret Fuller was irritated by the expressions of incomprehension on the part of her new teaching colleagues, Frances Aborn and Georgianna Nias. Margaret's reaction was unfortunate, since she was to be associated professionally with the two women. Moreover she had taken rooms at Frances Aborn's house and had arranged to share a parlor with Georgianna Nias and her children.

Later her first impressions of Providence were substantiated when she read a letter which appeared in the *Providence Journal* denouncing Emerson's lecture. The anonymous writer was not entirely unsympathetic with Emerson, but complained of being lost in the "seven folds of thrice-wreathed mysticism," and described the lecture as an unfortunate specimen of "Germano-Sartor-Resartus-ism," and proudly declared that Providence had not "acquired a taste for such verbiage."¹⁰

Fortunately Margaret had little time at first to think of these things and spent her first months absorbed completely in her teaching responsibilities. She found the Greene Street School a pleasant place to teach. The school was a white building with six columns and a simple cornice fronting it, surrounded by trees which were protected by freshly painted iron railings. Inside the school was a cloakroom with neat rows of pegs on either side of the room for the boys' hats and the girls' bonnets. Toward the rear of the building there was a large assembly room and two recitation rooms. The assembly room was painted white with pink borders and decorated with portraits of Hiram Fuller, the poet Percival, and others. There was a raised platform for the teacher's desk, faced by symmetrical rows of black and brown desks and chairs. A large French clock and a thick orange carpet completed the furnishings.¹¹

Margaret Fuller was to teach composition, elocution, history, Latin, natural philosophy, and ethics. She solved her disciplinary problems at the outset by putting to shame a boy who had brazenly placed a sack of marbles on his desk as if he had intended to play with them. Her pupils were made to understand that they must learn to think as well as study, and talk as well as recite. The approach which Hiram Fuller and Margaret Fuller attempted was an unusual one for their time. They wished to depart from the static

¹⁰"Opening of the Greene Street School," *Providence Journal*, June 17, 1837.

¹¹Margaret Fuller to Arthur Fuller, printed in *Publications of the Rhode Island Historical Society*, New Series VI (January, 1899), 371-2.

approach of the period, which stressed passive memorization and recitation, and to emphasize a creative approach to learning by stressing the necessity of solving problems.¹² A great deal of emphasis was placed on the journals which all students were required to keep, and Margaret insisted upon the necessity of thinking one's problems through to a satisfactory solution, telling her students that "journals without thoughts are as bones without flesh." When the journal project came to an end, a student, Ann Francis Brown, wrote with sad humor, "I am glad to close this bony journal."¹³

On the second day of school Ann Francis Brown declared in her school journal that Margaret was "an excellent teacher,"¹⁴ but later wrote in her journal (which Margaret was to read) that Mr. Fuller was still her favorite instructor. Margaret told the students Greek myths, tried to talk them out of an antipathy to caterpillars and worms, and caused them to marvel at "the progressive scale of beings," which ran from the smallest animals to God according to Smellie's *Natural Philosophy*. Ann Brown felt that Smellie had committed a grave injustice in not placing the dog and the elephant next to man in the scale of being. The class read Wordsworth, Byron, Coleridge, and were occasionally given brief glimpses into German literature. She encouraged them to read American writers on their own initiative and read in class the poetry of Emerson and Elizabeth Peabody. A sustained effort was made to sharpen their powers of observation and arouse their curiosity,—they were instructed to "let nothing pass in reading or conversation that you do not understand without trying to find it out."

When the time came for Margaret to leave Providence in December, 1838, she parted sadly with her pupils. She was especially fond of the English Poetry class, and Ann Brown recorded that "she talked to us so affectionately and feelingly that few could restrain their tears."¹⁵ She made a very emotional speech in which she told her students that she was now alone in the world with poor health and no protectors and warned them against placing absolute dependence on anything in the world. She begged pardon for any deficiencies that she might have revealed, and kissed each student goodbye.

¹²"The Greene Street School," *Book Notes*, X (September 23, 1893), 217-218, 231.

¹³See Ann Francis Brown, MSS "Journal," vol. IV, John Hay Library.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, II.

¹⁵*Ibid.*

§3.

During her stay in Providence Margaret Fuller did not confine herself to her teaching activities. Each day she made entries in a little album she kept titled "Notes on Goethe" and continued her extensive reading. As time wore on she became less of a recluse and began to move about in Providence society. Once when a French frigate anchored in Narragansett Bay, she went aboard and was entertained by the commander, whom she found charming. Feeling the romantic appeal of a naval officer's life, she inwardly stormed that this career, like so many others, was denied to women because of their sex. Not long afterward an English Quaker, John Joseph Gurney, who was reputed to be a great and distinguished man, came to Providence to lecture. Margaret was quite disappointed in him, for he was not only bigoted but even gloried in his bigotry. The sting of Gurney's lecture was removed a few nights later when Richard Henry Dana began his readings from the English dramatists in Providence. One evening, to the horror of Hiram Fuller, Margaret attended a Whig caucus and heard a speech by "the old bald eagle," Tristram Burgess, a Whig congressman and Rhode Island political power. She found him a magnificent looking man for his profession and a powerful orator. Margaret amused herself by drawing detailed portraits of Burgess and other Rhode Island notables. She could admire Burgess and Whipple, but did not find them sympathetic spirits. This craving for a kindred soul was satisfied by a Baptist minister, a Mr. William Hague, for whom Margaret had a great respect. She described him as follows in her journal:

He has a very active intellect, sagacity and elevated sentiment; and feeling strongly that God is love, can never preach without earnestness. His power comes first from his glowing vitality of temperament. While speaking, his every muscle is in action, and all his action is towards one object. There is perfect *abandon*. He is permeated, overborne, by his thought. . . . He is full of intellectual life; his mind has not been fettered by dogmas, and the worship of beauty finds a place there. I am much interested in this truly animated being.¹⁶

She later discovered another kindred spirit in the ministry, from whom she took communion for the first time, explaining:

I had often wished to do so, but had not been able to find a clergy-

¹⁶See J. F. Clarke, R. W. Emerson, and W. H. Channing, *op. cit.*, I, 243-244.

man,—from whom I could be willing to receive it,—willing to admit me on my own terms. Mr. H [Edward Hall] did so; and I shall ever respect and value him, if only for the liberality he displayed on this occasion.¹⁷

Margaret Fuller found conversational acquaintances in Providence by the score; William Chace was always willing to discuss universal reform, and Sarah Pratt, who had just been elected secretary of the Providence Ladies Anti-Slavery Society, was eager to discuss abolition. As time wore on Margaret acquired many friends among the Providence literati, whom she had taken by storm. Emerson said of her reception in Providence:

In Providence, she had won, as by conquest, such a homage of attachment, from young and old, that her arrival there, one day, on her return from a visit from Bristol, was a kind of ovation.¹⁸

Unfortunately the feeling was not completely reciprocal, and Margaret frequently complained to Emerson and W. H. Channing about the intellectual life in Providence. She found Albert G. Greene and Charles T. Brooks men of note, and Sarah Whitman, Ann Lynch, Ann Power, and Rhoda Newcomb women worth conversing with; however, she complained of being surrounded by women such as Frances Aborn and Georgianna Nias, whom she thought little more than half educated. Once, after listening to a group of these women discuss "Skiller" at length in an uninformed manner, Margaret snapped in exasperation: "It is Schiller, Schiller! Don't say Skiller!"¹⁹ On more than one occasion she lost all patience with Georgianna Nias, once exclaiming in acid tones, "Why Mrs. Nias, you would have been worth educating."²⁰

Margaret both enjoyed and detested Providence and displayed an equally paradoxical attitude toward the city's notables. While in Providence she wrote often of her dislike of the town, but after leaving it she reminisced nostalgically on her life there.²¹

¹⁷*Ibid.*, I, 262-263.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, I, 272.

¹⁹Quoted in Henry L. Greene's "The Greene Street School," *Publications of the Rhode Island Historical Society*, New Series VI (January, 1899), 211.

²⁰Quoted by Anne R. Marble in "Margaret Fuller as a Teacher," *The Critic*, XLIII (October, 1903), 342.

²¹Margaret Fuller to Sarah Whitman, January 27, 1840, *The Rhode Island Historical Society*.

§4.

Providence, as Margaret Fuller saw it in 1838, was deeply stirred by the new intellectual currents, as was the rest of New England. The Rhode Islanders were occupied with a multitude of reform movements: progressive education was practiced at the Greene Street School; the Franklin Society²² and the Rhode Island Historical Society, both of which were founded before 1830, had taken on a new vitality; Shakespeare Hall was erected for lectures and concerts in 1838; and a number of Rhode Island writers were engaged in creative work. The intellectual scene was further stimulated by visits from some of the most notable thinkers and writers in America.

There were two interlocking groups at the heart of Providence intellectual life: an informal group which met at the home of Ann Lynch and the Coliseum Club which held regularly scheduled meetings, usually at the home of Albert Gorton Greene and which often featured a speaker from outside Rhode Island. Emerson, Margaret Fuller, Julia Ward Howe, Bronson Alcott, George Ripley, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Nathaniel P. Willis, John Neal, James Freeman Clarke, F. H. Hedge, Samuel Osgood, and other distinguished writers visited these meetings and gave lectures. Providence authors such as Sarah Whitman, Ann Lynch, Rhoda Newcomb, Ann Power, Henry Giles, Charles T. Brooks, Frederick Farley, Francis Osgood, and Job Durfee read papers to the club. The Coliseum Club was well known in both New York and Boston literary circles, and there circulated in both cities a rather lame joke about it which took the form of a solemn assertion that someone had seen in the *Providence Journal* an announcement reading, "The Coliseum meets at Mrs. Nero's this evening."²³ In spite of its absurd name the club provided a setting for many evenings of brilliant conversation. The atmosphere was free and the arguments were uninhibited. On one particular evening when the members had fallen into a discussion as to just how they had come to call themselves the Coliseum Club, Albert G. Greene offered a sardonic explanation which defined the Coliseum as "a place where one Christian is set upon and torn into pieces by wild beasts."²⁴

²²See Robert Taylor's interesting article, "The Providence Franklin Society," in *Rhode Island History*, IX (April, October, 1950), 73-83, 119-129.

²³See G. W. Curtis, "The Editor's Easy Chair," *Harper's Monthly*, XXXVIII (January, 1869), 16.

²⁴Clipping in the "Albert Gorton Greene Scrapbook," John Hay Library, also see *Providence Journal*, October 12, 1878.

There was one memorable meeting at which John Neal spoke on the perfect man, the "phrenological" man. Phrenology was very popular in Providence, and Neal's lecture caused a discussion which lasted for several hours in spite of the digressions of Sarah Whitman and Margaret Fuller. Sarah Whitman spoke of Samuel Larned, who had changed to a diet of crackers after existing on apples for a year. Margaret Fuller described Bronson Alcott's monastic diet as an outward indication of his spiritual and "celestial" nature. The allusion to celestial qualities led to a discussion of animal magnetism, which brought the conversation back to Neal's topic, phrenology. Conversation on such subjects as Amateness and Adhesiveness, Ideality and Vitaveness filled the air in spite of the attempts of Albert Greene and Hiram Fuller to turn the conversation to other topics. Neal proposed to give a phrenological reading of Margaret Fuller and began with so many elaborate preliminaries that Fuller and Greene exchanged glances of amusement. He pronounced Margaret Fuller's character "complex and contradictory," with "nobilities and frailties," and asserted that her faculties were at odds, "Parentiveness" challenging "Ideality" and "Amateness" struggling with "Adhesiveness." He found Margaret a woman of contradictions, with man, woman, scholar, teacher, child, mother, and lover struggling for dominance. Margaret was to remember this phrenological reading the rest of her life; when he touched her head she felt a strange power—mesmerism, animal magnetism, demonology—she did not know how to identify it.²⁵

The Providence literati shared a number of tastes with the Boston Transcendentalists. They read Emerson's *Nature* aloud, listened to lectures on Coleridge, Carlyle, Madame de Stael, German literature and philosophy, discussed phrenology and animal magnetism, wrote poems for the *Harbinger* (the news organ of the Transcendentalists who had been converted to Utopian socialism), and enthusiastically attended concerts by the Norwegian violinist Ole Bull, who had become a fad among the Transcendentalists.²⁶

However, not all members of the Coliseum Club were advocates of the new philosophy. Papers on conventional literary subjects, such

²⁵See F. B. Sanborn, "A Concord Notebook: The Woman of Concord—Margaret Fuller and Her Friends. II," *The Critic*, XXXVIII (March, 1906), 251-257.

²⁶Rhoda Newcomb's letters, on deposit in the John Hay Library, are the best source for the meetings of the Coliseum Club.

as Rhoda Newcomb's essay on Samuel Johnson, were often read at meetings. Margaret Fuller read a twenty-four page paper on the progress of society in 1838, and Albert Whipple gave a lecture on the improvements and discoveries of modern times, asking if there was more good or evil in them and if they contributed to human progress in the long run.

The most significant personality among the non-Transcendentalists was Albert G. Greene. On her first visit to Greene's home, Margaret was very much impressed with the municipal judge who not only wrote poetry, but also considered his literary life more important than his legal career. He proudly showed Margaret his library which contained twenty thousand volumes, one of the largest private libraries in America. His collection was particularly rich in poetry and they fell into a conversation on poetry during which he remarked, "You see I am the only American poet who has never—and will never—publish a volume."²⁷ Throughout his life Greene retained a certain reticence regarding the publication of his work, and only a very few poems were ever printed. As a student at Brown, he wrote a humorous poem, "Old Grimes," which George W. Curtis, editor of *Harper's Monthly* in an 1869 issue of the magazine referred to as the most popular poem in America.²⁸ In 1833 Greene founded the *Literary Journal*, which had a rather brief career. He also contributed to *The Rhode Island Book*, published in 1841, and worked perennially on a long poem which was to incorporate all the "Yankeeisms" he had collected. He frequently read excerpts from it to the Coliseum Club and other groups.

Greene was an elusive personality, and reports on him are often conflicting. George W. Curtis remembered him for his secluded scholarly habits, "habitual reserve," and "reticent manner," but Sarah Whitman recalled a different personality and was impressed with "the geniality and hospitality of his nature, the racy humor, and fine conventional power."²⁹ Charles C. Congdon vividly recalled an evening on which Margaret Fuller led the conversation, while Greene

listened to all her fine theories with a quiet smile, sometimes riddling them with sharp arrows of satire, but always welcoming every posi-

²⁷See "The Personality of Margaret Fuller," *Temple Bar*, CVIII (June, 1896), 226-232.

²⁸See G. W. Curtis, *op. cit.*, 16.

²⁹Sarah Whitman to the *Providence Journal*, March 27, 1868.

tive accession of thought and experience. . . .³⁰

One of the most prominent anti-Transcendentalists was William J. Pabodie, who described Bronson Alcott's "Orphic Sayings" as "sophomoric." Pabodie was a good friend of Edgar Allen Poe and a member of the circle of Poe's admirers in Providence which included Sarah Whitman and Rhoda Newcomb.

Other members of the Coliseum Club were Hiram Fuller, Francis Osgood, Albert Whipple, and Sarah Jacobs, who was Margaret Fuller's successor at the Greene Street School. A frequent visitor to the club from out of town was George S. Burleigh,³¹ one of the most notable reform writers of the period. Burleigh wrote poems, short stories, and novels on the evils of alcohol, slavery, gambling, and war.³² He was an early advocate of improved treatment for mental disorders, and his popular poem "The Maniac" represented a pioneer effort in the drive for more humane treatment of the insane. Although modern readers can respect his efforts in the field of social reform, it is difficult to take his absurdly moralistic writing seriously. A temperance novel by Burleigh, *Mason Hodges*, is a representative example of a type of fiction which was widely popular twenty years before the Civil War.³³ The hero, Mason Hodges, was a reformed drunkard, who, after years of successfully resisting temptation, fainted from overexertion while helping to quench a fire at the Deacon's home and was given a dram of alcohol as a restorative. He became desperately ill after the fire and the doctor, secretly in league with Ben Swinger, the saloon keeper, insistently prescribed whiskey as the only possible cure. Hodges' wife, however, foiled the plot by curing her husband with clear, cold water, and Hodges converted all the saloon habitués to the temperance cause. The poverty stricken Swinger died of alcoholism under horrible circumstances.

§5.

Although a large number of the Providence literati were not Transcendentalists, a small group which included most of the talented Rhode Island writers were militant supporters of the movement.

³⁰*Ibid.*

³¹The John Hay Library has a wealth of George Burleigh material: letters, journals, and three scrapbook volumes.

³²Burleigh was born in Plainfield, Connecticut, and lived there as a young man, but he had a number of Rhode Island connections and often visited Providence. He married Ruth Burgess and settled in Little Compton.

³³*Mason Hodges* (Boston, 1848).

There were none who attained the stature of Emerson or Thoreau, but as a group they could boast a number of interesting and talented personalities. Perhaps the best-known member of the group was Sarah Helen Whitman, one of the most popular poets of her day. Ann Lynch was the only Providence writer who rivaled her in ability. She was a school teacher who lived in Rhode Island for a few years during the height of the Transcendentalist fervor. In later years she was hostess to an intellectual group in New York, which has been called the first salon in America and which included a dazzling array of literary, academic, and political minds.³⁴

Women were a dominant element in Providence intellectual life, and the four most important Rhode Island Transcendentalists were Sarah Whitman, Ann Lynch, Ann Power, and Rhoda Newcomb. Ann Power, a sister of Sarah Whitman, never married and devoted her life to a quiet literary existence. Rhoda Newcomb's literary output was less than Sarah Whitman's, but she was the most vigorous personality in the group. She possessed a genuine enthusiasm for literary and intellectual pursuits and a great ambition for her son's literary career. She shared many tastes with Boston and Concord Transcendentalists and read their books diligently. She read the German writers, Goethe, Schiller, and Kant, as well as Bronson Alcott, Emerson, Margaret Fuller, Sampson Reed³⁵ and other American writers. Although several national publications accepted her literary contributions, Rhoda Newcomb's most important function was to inform the intelligentsia in Rhode Island on such topics as German philosophy and literature, English Romantic literature, and New England Transcendentalism through her articles in the *Providence Journal*.

For years Rhoda Newcomb threatened to overshadow her son Charles, for whom she was so ambitious. Newcomb was a complex personality, and an examination of his life and ideas reveals extraordinary contradictions. At one time we find him denouncing Catholicism as a painted Jezebel, and on another occasion registering a passionate attraction toward it. On one wall of his room at Brook Farm there hung portraits of Saint Loyola and Saint Xavier and between them, a picture of Fanny Essler. He was frequently heard

³⁴See *Memoirs of Anne Lynch Botta* (New York, 1893).

³⁵Reed was a Boston pharmacist, who gained the admiration of Emerson and other Transcendentalists for his writings on Emanuel Swedenborg.

chanting Church Litany far into the night.³⁶ Although he was a fervent admirer of the institution of marriage, he could never bring himself to a practical proposal. In later years he was capable of simultaneously dashing off both pious Victorian platitudes on marriage and the virtues of an ethereal feminine chastity and pages of sexual opinions that many publishers would hesitate to print today.

Newcomb published only one short story during his lifetime; however, excerpts from his later journals were edited by Judith K. Johnson and published by the Brown University Press in 1949. Emerson pronounced him a genius, but the journal on which Emerson based his opinion was never published and did not even survive in manuscript. The remaining journals are interesting and frequently brilliant, but they do not fulfill the great promise which Emerson found in Newcomb's early writings.

Newcomb occasionally attended the Coliseum Club meetings with Charles T. Brooks³⁷ whose German translations were eagerly read by Newcomb and the other Transcendentalists. There were two other young men who sometimes came to the club meetings, G. W. Curtis, later a famous editor and essayist, and Charles T. Congdon, who was to become a famous journalist. Congdon was a young college student at the time, but Margaret Fuller and Rhode Island Transcendentalism had so profound an effect on him that fifty years later, long after he had dismissed Transcendentalism he spoke contemptuously of "the cheap understanding."³⁸

§6.

Transcendentalism reached its apex in 1841 with the publication of the *Rhode Island Book*. Although only a few of the selections could be characterized as "Transcendentalist," these were among the best in the anthology. Charles T. Brooks contributed an essay on "The Impossibility of Atheism" which adopted the Transcendentalist view of religion and argued that religion was rooted in human nature and that religious ideas were innate in the human mind. Henry C. Whitaker translated a poem by the German poet Tieck.

Perhaps the most valuable contribution was an essay by Sarah Whitman in which she took up the philosophical cudgels of Trans-

³⁶See Georgianna Bruce Kirby, *Years of Experience* (Boston, 1878).

³⁷See Charles A. Wedte's *Memoir of Charles T. Brooks* (Boston, 1885).

³⁸One of the key doctrines of Transcendentalism was the exaltation of the intuitive "reason" at the expense of the mechanical "understanding."

centualism. She thought that American intellectual life needed nothing so badly as "a little more of the German cosmopolitanism." She urged the overthrow of John Locke's philosophical authority and maintained that true religion and philosophy must be based on an acceptance of innate ideas and "faith in the power of the individual to discover for himself truth." She thought that the writer should be driven by the "desire to free the mind from its slavery to creed and convention." She admired Madame de Stael, and referred to Germany as "a bright land of promise."³⁰

A strong interest in Transcendentalism prevailed in Rhode Island for almost a decade after 1841, but after 1850 Sarah Whitman and the other Providence writers who continued to do creative work found other sources of inspiration and enthusiasm. From 1850 to 1860 much of the energy which formerly was expended on literature and reform was absorbed by the anti-slavery cause. In Rhode Island the attacks on Lockean philosophy, the battle for Kantian ideas, the enthusiasm for Goethe and Schiller, and the whole social and literary upheaval of Transcendentalism and "the newness" which had aroused so much enthusiasm and hostility were all but forgotten.

NEWS-NOTES

The first of a proposed series of trips to nearby places of historical significance was arranged by the hostess committee of the Society for women members and their guests. On June 14 a group of thirty-eight went by bus to Concord, Massachusetts, where they had luncheon at Hartwell Farm, which was built in 1636, and then visited the outstanding period rooms of the Concord Antiquarian Society. As announced in the April issue of *Rhode Island History* these tours are open to all women members of the Society. It is hoped that the success of this first trip will result in further expeditions of the same kind and that more members will find it possible to take part.

* * *

³⁰Sarah Whitman "German Literature in *The Rhode Island Book* (Providence, 1841), 50-58. For a sketch of Sarah Whitman's life, see Caroline Ticknor's *Poe's Helen* (N. Y., 1916). See also "Recollection of Sarah H. Whitman," MS. in the John Hay Library.

Mr. and Mrs. Monahan recently attended a three-day conference at Cooperstown, New York, where they were privileged to see at first-hand the recent excellent installations at Fenimore House (the headquarters of the New York State Historical Society) and the Farmers Museum. During the visit they had an opportunity to discuss problems of historical society management with others active in the field.

* * *

The Society was pleased to cooperate with The Preservation Society of Newport County by lending items for the Washington-Rochambeau Celebration. Among the articles loaned for the exhibition at Marble House from June 15 to September 15 are the *Calendrier Français*, the *Gazette Française*, the manuscript diary of Lieutenant Robernier, an officer under Rochambeau, and a manuscript map showing the positions of the American and British forces and of De Grasse's fleet in 1778.

* * *

There will be an exhibition this summer in the Society's headquarters illustrating life in eighteenth century Rhode Island. Examples of silver, needlework, dolls, glass, china, and wearing apparel will supplement our outstanding collection of furniture.

* * *

By the will of the late Mr. Frank Mauran of Hopedale, Pennsylvania, the Society is to receive certain historical material and \$5,000 for the upkeep of the grounds of John Brown House.





BOMBARDMENT OF TRIPOLI IN 1804

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Bayard Ewing

LABOR PROBLEMS IN
THE RHODE ISLAND COTTON MILLS—1790-1940

by EDITHA HADCOCK*

AT A TIME when the future for Rhode Island cotton mill workers appears gloomy, it is heartening to look back at the industry's progress through the past 150 years. Then as now mills failed, and investments were transferred to areas where there were lower wages, longer hours, and fewer labor union demands and government regulations. Limited by tradition and inadequate resources, many firms adopted price-cutting, cost-reducing measures during depression. In prosperity they sought speculative profits, not modernization. Such cyclical policies increased the insecurity and the deterioration of working conditions. Resourceful employers corrected managerial and marketing inefficiencies. Though labor saving and disturbing to work habits, their modernization programs provided improved employment facilities and set patterns for the profitable operation of the industry.

Three periods, 1790-1840, 1840-1900, and 1900-1940, represented distinct stages in the industry's growth and readjustment when failure seemed imminent. Each period was marked by worker resistance, union organization, and patterns of labor-management conflict and cooperation. Gradually the state set up minimum standards of employment and limited areas of conflict. Finally federal legislation supplemented state laws, and the problems of the industry and its workers gained national significance.

Rhode Island cotton manufacturing has always been an industry of imperfect competition. The relative ease with which small and medium-sized mills could be established intensified the sensitivity to seasonal and cyclical fluctuations. Capital investments and labor supplies were relatively immobile in spite of periodic overcapacity, unemployment, and the migration of enterprise to areas of lower wages.

Prior to 1840 there were apparently few obstacles to check expansion. Mill sites were plentiful; most of the machinery could be operated by unskilled labor; raw cotton prices were low after Whitney's invention of the cotton gin. Local merchants, shipbuilders, farmers, and mechanics readily invested their savings. Many mills were

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started by men with little or no manufacturing experience; some owners were youths of fifteen or sixteen years of age. Scant heed was given the warnings of Almy, Brown, and Slater that a cotton mill could remain profitable only when managed by men who understood sound production policies.

The depression years after 1819, 1829, and 1837 were marked by excess capacity, employment irregularity, and the deterioration of working conditions. Many plants closed temporarily; some that had failed reopened at lower overhead costs. To stabilize the industry leading manufacturers set up price schedules in 1816 and 1817, and a cooperative marketing experiment in 1836. Such controls were disrupted as new competitors entered the market, inventories accumulated and prices fell. Cost reductions were imperative; wages were cut; work loads and hour schedules were increased. Employment became especially insecure in the interior of the state where small mills were handicapped by inadequate water power and old equipment.

In the early mills only one adult was needed as overseer and mechanic. The relatively simple carding, roving, and spinning machinery could be operated by children, often under twelve years of age. Women and skilled male operators were employed after the mills began to make cloth and use heavier and more complicated machinery, but the majority of the workers continued to be children. In the 1830's more children under twelve were employed than women; and twice as many women, as men.

The mills' need for workers was quickly met through the practice of hiring family groups rather than individuals and through advertisements for large families. When the supply of local unskilled labor was depleted, the demand of the growing industry was satisfied by immigrant families from economically depressed areas, particularly Ireland.

Although adequate supplies of unskilled labor could be gathered into mill communities easily, labor did not move readily to other areas when the mills closed or imposed wage reductions. There were few other jobs available for the women and children save in domestic and agricultural employment where wages were lower. The factory workers lacked the wherewithal to move, and they often were tied to mill communities by unpaid store bills and rents. Families were

more dependent on mill village facilities than individual workers.

Skilled labor was scarce, although more mobile than the unskilled and semi-skilled workers. Mechanics were desired as the key men to make and repair machinery. Skilled men were needed to operate specialty looms, mules, and the new dyeing and finishing equipment. At first owners depended upon the few English and Scotch mechanics who before 1825 had evaded the British law prohibiting their migration. Later they trained native workers under informal apprenticeship arrangements. Skilled labor continued to be difficult to obtain and hold. Skilled workers easily found jobs in other industries or areas, were promoted to executive positions, or founded their own enterprises.

Probably the availability and cheapness of unskilled labor and the scarcity and dearth of skilled labor served to retard mechanization more than any other factor. Manufacturers questioned whether it was not more economical to use unskilled labor, old machines, and the "putting-out" system than to adopt processes which required skilled operators at higher wages. Capital was limited or tied up in machinery and real estate, and manufacturers did not dare to experiment with new machinery and products during periods of uncertainty. More than two thirds of the mills were without the machine pickers and power looms that had been adopted the decade before by leading Rhode Island plants.

When the low wage mills of New England and England dumped their products on the market, resourceful Rhode Island firms developed finer lines. New markets were found in the North, South, West, and in the 1830's in Mexico, South America, Africa, China, and the Near East. Spinning mills set up cleaning and weaving departments within their plants instead of "putting-out" cotton to be cleaned and yarn to be woven. Machine pickers, mules, looms, and dressing and warping machinery were installed. In order to secure additional funds a few firms were incorporated and consolidated in the 1830's.

Prior to 1840 little consideration seemed to be given the workers' safety or the contribution that better working conditions might have made to productivity. The long, narrow, low-studded factory rooms were poorly heated, ill ventilated, and inadequately lighted. Small windows, candles, and oil lamps provided poor illumination, and the windows were seldom opened. The mills were hot in summer and

cold in winter, and they were filled with lint, dust, and stale air.

In the late 1820's and 1830's the working day was reduced from fourteen to twelve hours. By 1832 two Rhode Island plants operated on an average eleven-hour day, while eighty-six mills ran on an average twelve-hour day. Hour reductions might have been motivated by any number of reasons: the inefficient lighting system, the costliness of whale oil, or an effort to remove the basis for labor agitation. The possible effect of long working days upon productivity may not have been noticeable, since the machinery did not require continuous attention or arduous exertion. Workers must have slackened their efforts during the day, for mill regulations were imposed that required constant attention to work and forbade interruptions.

Wage costs were not analyzed in the early mill records; nor was there any apparent consideration of a possible relationship between wages and productivity. As late as 1832 mill agents reported to the Secretary of Treasury that they did not know the general proportions into which their funds were allocated, the amount invested in buildings or machinery, nor even the gain or loss on their capital. Mill accounts were often a heterogeneous mixture of mill costs, store accounts, and personal expenses. Wage records revealed that children were given higher wages as they attained greater skill and that the wages of skilled workers were increased during periods of business expansion when their labor was in great demand. Sometimes a share of the profits was paid to mechanics, overseers, or other skilled employees whose services were prized by competitors.

For the most part the wages of women and children remained low. While men earned from \$6 to \$10 a week, women secured only from \$2 to \$4, and children from \$.75 to \$2 a week. Employers did not seem concerned that several or all in a family worked to secure a minimum standard of living. Nor did executives seem to realize that higher wages might provide a standard of living more conducive to efficiency.

Manufacturers regulated their employees' standards of living through their control of expenditures at the company store. Consumption habits were checked; thrift was encouraged; foolish expenditures for dress and drinking were rebuked. Saloons could not be operated in a community where the sole landlord forbade drinking either for the sake of efficiency or morality. A few employers found

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WASHINGTON-ROCHAMBEAU CELEBRATION

Extensive plans have been completed by the Preservation Society of Newport for the Washington-Rochambeau Celebration in Newport this summer from July 1 to September 15 with added events during the July 8-10 week end.

The Hunter House will again contain a loan exhibition of furniture, silver, and paintings, exceeding in size and scope the exhibition of 1953. It will be open every day from ten to five.

Marble House on Bellevue Avenue will be the setting for an exhibition of rare historic treasures loaned by the French and American governments as well as individuals and institutions in both France and America. Marble House has never before been open to the public.

The Vernon House and the Mawdsley House will have special exhibitions as will the Redwood Library and Trinity Church. The Art Association will have (during July only) an exhibition of 17th and 18th century and modern French paintings.

On the week end of July 8-10 the 35,000-ton French battleship *Jean Bart* visited Newport. On Saturday morning a military parade and ceremony was attended by the French Ambassador, the Secretary of the Navy, and many other honored guests. The Navy Band played.

Private colonial houses on Washington Street were open to visitors from ten to five. In the evening there was a block dance and fireworks, and at half-past ten the Cornelius Vanderbilt mansion, The Breakers, was for the first time the scene of a Benefit Ball, with the proceeds going to the Preservation Society to assist in its program of restoration and preservation.

ROCHAMBEAU'S SWORD

The silver hilted sword pictured on the opposite page was presented by Rochambeau to General Nathan Miller of Warren, Rhode Island. Miller's acquaintance with Rochambeau had gradually ripened into a close friendship, and at a ball in Newport the two men exchanged dress swords.

The hilt is of exceptionally fine craftsmanship. A well executed ball pommel is surmounted by a delicate finial. On the knuckle guard, where it fits into the pommel, are the marks of an English silversmith, indicating that the sword was made ca. 1772. The grip is wound with a continuous silver wire. Below it, in bas-relief, is a child embracing a lamb. The fact that all the work is in bas-relief instead of repoussé makes the hilt distinctive. On the upper surface of the guard are two pastoral scenes while on the under side are two different ones.

Photograph by the Brown University Photo Lab.

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it profitable to sell liquor at their company stores. Their workers were bound to them by debts incurred through frequent purchases of liquor.

Prior to 1840 the general public rated the mill owners as benefactors, not exploiters, in spite of the employment of children, women, and newly-arrived immigrants for long hours at low wages in dark, poorly heated and badly ventilated factories. Cotton mills provided jobs for many previously not gainfully employed. Conditions of work were similar or superior to those experienced in household or agricultural labor. Heating, lighting, and ventilation were not different from those in the typical workers' homes. The factories were superior to the cellars and attics where the first spinning machinery was operated in the 1780's. Hours were no longer than work periods elsewhere, though factory labor lacked the rest periods and work rhythms of farm and home employments. While wages were low, the earnings of the women and children helped to meet living expenses. Rents and store provisions were relatively inexpensive. Though wages were often cancelled by store debts, the occasional cash payments made in balancing accounts were appreciated, for cash was scarce. The mill communities offered facilities such as company houses, stores, churches, and community centers which were not always available in the farming regions from which many of the workers had come.

In accordance with the contemporary belief in *laissez faire* the mill owners opposed any form of intervention that might interfere with freedom of contract, property rights, or initiative. They believed that their wealth and education bestowed upon them the responsibilities of paternalistic benefactors, and the right carefully to control the press, and the local, state, and national governments. Their authority was seldom challenged as detrimental. While citizens' rights had been recognized in the Bill of Rights, the value of participation had not been envisaged. The majority of the workers, the women and children, were not supposed to understand economic or social problems or to engage in politics. Few male employees could vote; property qualifications for voting were not abolished until after 1840, and sufficient real property could not be accumulated in the mill-owned villages.

Nevertheless, working conditions did not escape criticism. Individ-

ual workers resented their employers' paternalism and discipline. Overseers were blamed for favoritism in awarding premiums or in making promotions or discharges. Workers complained that the long hours deprived them of leisure. They objected to changes in work assignments, wage cuts, heavier work loads, and unemployment. Home weavers were alarmed by the decreasing demand for their labor and the 50 to 60 per cent cuts in weaving rates. Bitterness increased when the wage reductions of the 1830's proved permanent and when immigrants were hired at depression wages after business became prosperous. The development of transportation facilities made it easier for workers to learn about conditions in other industries and areas. There were more contacts with reform movements for the employees of the mechanized and integrated mills by the Pawtuxet and Blackstone rivers than for the workers in the isolated mill communities in the interior of the state.

The few strikes or "turn outs" were only short-lived emotional protests that quickly proved ineffectual. Mill owners refused to grant strikers' demands and often did not give them back their jobs. Critical workers were dismissed without a certificate of discharge, a practice which amounted to a black list. That no conspiracy laws were passed and no union leaders were arrested indicated the limited nature of the labor movement in Rhode Island before 1840.

The majority of the factory workers took no part in the labor movement. Although women conducted the first factory strike in Pawtucket in 1824, they were organized with difficulty, while children were not organized at all. The Irish immigrants hired after the depression of 1837 were not interested in unions. The few men who might have used their skill as a bargaining advantage considered their jobs as temporary training for executive work, or found work elsewhere if dissatisfied. Some may have joined the Providence Association of Workingmen in the late 1820's, or the New England Association of Farmers, Mechanics and Other Workingmen in the early 1830's, but they left no records of their activities.

Prior to 1840 a small group of middle-class liberals, educators, and ministers, attacked child labor and the children's lack of education and recreation. Parents, not manufacturers, were blamed for child labor, and committees of investigation recommended that school laws be passed to force parents to send their children to school for at least twelve weeks a year.

Although liberal manufacturers believed that factory children should be educated and provided Sunday School classes in reading and writing, they opposed legislation, factory inspection, and even committees of investigation. The workers were unable to support the fight for school laws; the public was not interested. Reformers failed to persuade the legislature to enact regulations or to provide enforcement machinery.

However, the necessity for public schools and school laws had been brought to the attention of a larger proportion of citizens. Questions had been asked as to whether the social benefits of children's education might be more important to community welfare than the economic advantage which might be derived from their employment at low wage rates. Whether or not substandard mills should exist because they offered jobs to otherwise unemployed labor or whether or not child labor was economically justifiable were questions for another generation to consider.

* * *

From 1840 to 1900 leading firms mechanized, integrated, and enlarged their businesses. New machinery was installed, such as Jenk's ring spindle, the ring traveler, and stop motion devices. Steam power was adopted as more efficient and dependable than water power, and the industry shifted its location to Rhode Island ports and railroad centers to reduce the cost of transporting coal and to enjoy the coastal humidity beneficial to the production of fine cottons.

The need for more capital made it easy to start new businesses in prosperous years and encouraged consolidations. A few prominent Rhode Island families purchased, merged, and modernized competitors' plants. In the twenty years from 1870 to 1890 the number of independent establishments decreased from 139 to 87.

Work assignments were reorganized and unemployment increased as the mills were integrated, mechanized, and relocated. Only about half as many employees were hired as compared to the number of spindles installed between 1860 and 1890. Technical innovations required manual dexterity, not specialized skill. Skilled tasks were broken down into simple processes which could be mastered after relatively short periods of training. Women and immigrant workers were substituted for skilled men; women operators of spinning frames took the place of the male operators of the heavier mules. When

technical changes rendered jobs too arduous for women, immigrant men were employed at the same rates paid women. More workers were dismissed and further wage reductions were granted when out-of-state firms entered the Rhode Islanders' fine goods market.

Many Rhode Island managers still hired large families of children. As late as 1900 one-tenth of the 24,000 odd cotton mill workers were children under 16 years of age. The immigrants from the economically depressed areas in French Canada and from Western and Southern Europe had many children and they needed the income from their children's labor to supplement their meager wages. The availability of cheap labor helped delay the adoption of the new technical innovations that had enabled more resourceful firms to maintain their markets and to learn that child labor was economically disadvantageous.

In the 1840's and 1850's leading employers demonstrated that speedier and more accurate production resulted from improved lighting, ventilation, and temperature. Windows were made larger, and gas lighting supplanted whale oil lamps and candles. Dust blowers were adopted to eliminate somewhat the cotton lint that annoyed the workers. Slashers were substituted for dressers, and finishing rooms became cleaner and better ventilated. Safety devices were adopted to reduce accidents.

Gradually work periods were reduced from 12 to 10 hours when it was found that shorter hours increased productivity and lessened the inefficiency and strain caused by the heavier work loads, speedier machinery, and more constant attention required for machine operators. In 1853 a group of Rhode Island manufacturers voluntarily agreed to operate on an average of 69 hours a week. In the 1870's and 1880's hour reductions were granted, possibly to offset the Knights of Labor agitation for a ten-hour day, for additional leisure, and share-the-work employment.

The majority of the workers' wage rates remained relatively low, though skilled workers' earnings increased slowly. Wage reductions of from 10 to 15 per cent in depression years were not canceled even for skilled employees. In the 1850's and 1860's the weekly earnings of adult workers averaged from \$3 to \$4, while in the more prosperous 1880's average weekly wages ranged from \$9 to \$10 for male workers, \$7 to \$8 for women, and \$3 to \$4 for children.

While executives were determined to dominate their workers, they did not express the same spirit of benevolent paternalism that characterized the earlier manufacturers. They had fewer contacts with their employees as individuals and they lacked the earlier owners' practical experiences. New investors were more concerned with the immediate financial success of their ventures than the long-run improvements beneficial to employees. Human costs were overlooked in the effort to cut labor costs. The gap between the workers and their executives widened when immigrants were hired whose social, religious, and economic backgrounds were different from the native workers and their employers.

Community expenditures were curtailed after 1870. Necessary repairs were not made during depression years and were postponed thereafter. The newer groups of immigrant workers were less critical and did not demand improvements. Their need for employment was great; their standards of living were lower than the native workers. They had their own religious and social centers and did not utilize the community churches, Sunday Schools, and company stores.

Middle-class reformers and union leaders severely criticized the long hours, low wages, and child labor. Both craft and "uplift" unions endeavored to organize the workers. In prosperous times craft unions gained bargaining advantages and sought higher wages and shorter hours. In periods of unemployment the "up-lift" unions fought for the enactment of protective labor legislation and the establishment of cooperatives. The majority of the textile workers were neither interested in nor able to join craft locals; only a few spinners, weavers, and loom fixers were unionized. But the rapid adoption of new machinery tended to level the barriers of skill that had given the craft locals bargaining power. The facility with which employers could find substitute workers encouraged interest in the legislative reforms of the national all-inclusive "up-lift" unions, such as the New England Workingmen's Association of the 1840's, the National Labor Union of the 1860's, the New England Ten Hour Association of the 1870's, and the Knights of Labor of the 1870's and 1880's. Several members of the craft locals were local leaders under the Knights of Labor in the 1880's and officials of the United Textile Workers in the next century. Some mill workers received their first lessons in union methods when the Knights tried to organize the

women and unskilled workers. The highly skilled leaders of the craft locals scorned the political efforts and cooperative experiments of the "up-lift" unions, while the middle-class idealistic leaders believed that the craft unions selfishly accepted the *status quo* and neglected the well-being of the working class. Attempts to consolidate the skilled and unskilled groups were premature, for they were not ready for industrial unionism. Conflicts between each weakened both, encouraged dual unionism, and fostered the employers' anti-union programs. The unions lacked bargaining power and political strength; they seldom won strikes or political reforms.

Even though the majority of the factory workers had no immediate contacts with labor conventions or unions during much of the nineteenth century, the early union experience helped to bring reforms. It is possible that mill owners improved working conditions and shortened hours because they wished to prevent unionization patterned after the craft locals in Fall River or the Knights of Labor. The Knights' campaigns for labor legislation challenged the manufacturers' control over the press, politics, and their employees. That mill owners turned to trade associations for support of their vigilant anti-union opposition to labor reforms indicated the existence of labor agitation.

As early as the 1880's liberal reformers and labor leaders urged the government to limit hours, improve factory conditions, and enact more school laws. Because women and children were supposed to lack bargaining power, regulations were proposed to protect their health, welfare, and productivity. Men were not offered aid, as they were considered stronger bargainers and defenders of freedom of contract. By the 1880's employers were blamed for child labor as much as the parents. An 1883 law required that they keep records of their child employees' ages and education to help enforce the law that children from seven to fifteen years old go to school at least twelve weeks a year.

[to be concluded]

BLOCK ISLAND CEMETERY RECORDS

copied and arranged by

MRS. HELEN WINSLOW MANSFIELD

[concluded from April, 1955, v. 14, no. 2, inside back cover]

- Harley Roy Willis, 1886—
 Eliza G. Willis, his wife, 1886—
 Hannah Clarissa, died Oct. 1910, ae. 4 mos.
 Roy Willis, Jr., died June 1914, ae. 4 da.
 Baby Willis died Feb. 1918, ae. 4 da.
- Loren, N., 1857—1939.
 Mary E. Dickens, his wife, 1875—1949.
 T. Eldora, wife of Loren N. Willis and daughter of Otis P. and
 Hannah Sheffield Mott, died June 17, 1893, in 28th yr.
 Mildred, daughter of Loren N. and Mary E. Willis, June 8, 1898—
 June 16, 1901.
- John E. Willis, born Sept. 27, 1829, died Jan. 4, 1899.
 Hannah R. Mott, his wife, Oct. 6, 1832, died Mar. 8, 1914.
- Joseph H. Willis, born July 31, 1838, died June 25, 1916.
- Capt. Nathaniel L. Willis, died June 15, 1891, ae. 70 yrs., 1 mo.,
 24 da.
 Cornelia A., widow of Capt. Nathaniel L. Willis, died Oct. 26,
 1898, ae. 69 yrs., 7 mos., 13 da.
- Orlando F. Willis, 1857—1927.
 His wife, Sybil Milliken Willis, 1860—1885.
 His wife, Carrie E. Sprague, 1865—1950.
- Oscar H. Willis, July 23, 1866.
- Silas C. Hall, Aug. 7, 1875—July 25, 1941.
 Cora E. Willis, his wife, Feb. 5, 1881.
- Rufus Augustus Willis, May 1, 1850—Mar. 24, 1921.
 His wife, Phebe Eliza Dunn, Aug. 24, 1858—July 16, 1920.
 Their children,
 Wealthy C., 1879.
 Maudie H., 1883.
 Vernie C. E., 1892—1893.
 Rufus D., 1894.
 Loyal F., 1900.
- Helen L. Rose, wife of Rufus A. Willis, died Dec. 8, 1875, ae. 25 yrs.
 Vernie C. E., infant son of Rufus A. and Phebe E. Willis, died
 Mar. 15, 1892, ae. 3 mos., and 17 da.

- Capt. Sylvanus D. Willis, born May 26, 1818, died Dec. 7, 1883.
 Catherine W., wife of Sylvanus D. Willis, born Apr. 13, 1820; died
 May 24, 1887.
 Lydia M. Willis, daughter of Sylvanus D. and Catherine W. Willis,
 died Feb. 11, 1870, ae. 18 yrs., and 29 da.
- Sylvanus Willis, Mar. 20, 1885—Oct. 20, 1936.
 Abby Elizabeth Hull, his wife, Nov. 29, 1885.
 Their son, Clayton Stanley Willis, Oct. 24, 1911.
- William H. Willis, died May 14, 1859, ae. 32 yrs., 2 mos., 1 da.
 Waty R. Mott, wife of William H. Willis, born Sept. 27, 1829, died
 June 4, 1901.

WILSON

- Frank Gerard Wilson, born Dec. 28, 1889, died Oct. 1, 1904.

WRIGHT

- John G., of William and Lucy Wright, died Mar. 26, 1816, ae.
 18 mos.

IN MEMORIAM

To commemorate the loss of the Schooner Warrior on Sandy Point,
 Block Island, Apr. 9, 1831.
 This Tablet is erected by a friend who desires to perpetuate
 the memory of that sad event and to mark the place of Interment
 of those who were recovered from the sea.

Twenty one persons perished
 Seven were cast on this Island
 and are buried here, names unknown.

God moves in a mysterious way
 his wonder to perform
 he plants his footsteps on the sea
 and rides upon the storm.

ALLEN CEMETERY West Side

- Dea. Wanton Allen, died Mar. 21, 1856, ae. 55 yrs., 10 mos.
 Phebe C., wife of Wanton Allen, died Aug. 15, 1844, in 38th yr.
 Elizabeth M., wife of Wanton Allen, born May 31, 1808, died Oct.
 9, 1888.
- Samuel Allen, died Feb. 21, 1889, ae. 64 yrs.
 Rhoda A., wife of Samuel Allen, died Jan. 6, 1864, ae. 41 yrs.

DICKENS CEMETERY West Side

- Elizabeth, wife of Caleb Dickens, died Feb. 12, 1865, in 93rd yr.
 Hon. Luther Dickens, died Nov. 26, 1878, ae. 56 yrs., 1 mo., 29 da.
 Mary C., wife of Luther Dickens, died July 27, 1865, ae. 45 yrs.,
 1 mo., 5 da.
 Hannah S., wife of Luther Dickens, born Mar. 24, 1845, died Apr.
 12, 1893, daughter of Edmund B. and Mary A. Peckham.
 Raymond Dickens, died Dec. 15, 1885, ae. 83 yrs., 4 mos., 22 da.
 Isabella B., wife of Raymond Dickens, died May 2, 1850, in 61st yr.
 Lucy, wife of Raymond Dickens, died June 30, 1883, in 79th yr.
 Fannie, daughter of Raymond and Isabella Dickens, born Feb. 24,
 1827; died Oct. 3, 1895.
 Anderson B. Dickens, son of Raymond and Isabella Steadman
 Dickens, born Sept. 19, 1824; died Sept. 29, 1904.
 Loxey A., daughter of Anderson B. Dickens, died Apr. 6, 1892,
 daughter of Edmund D. and Annie Sprague.

ROSE CEMETERY near West Side Church

- Sacred to the memory of John R. Dodge who died Sept. 5, 1874,
 ae. 66 yrs., 1 mo., and 29 da.
 Sacred to the memory of Nancy R., wife of John R. Dodge, died
 Feb. 20, 1875, ae. 64 yrs., 7 mos., and 12 da.
 James O'Hara died July 1, 1912.
 Rev. Ezekiel R. Littlefield, 1815, 1891, ae. 76 yrs.
 Lucretia D. Littlefield, 1820—1899.
 Infant son of Rev. Ezekiel R. and Lucretia Littlefield, born Nov.
 19, 1850.
 Thomas Littlefield died Nov. 24, 1869, ae. 86 yrs., 4 mos.
 Mary, wife of Thomas Littlefield, died Apr. 16, 1866, in 83rd yr.
 Caleb L. Rose, Nov. 8, 1830—Oct. 24, 1880.
 Mother Peggy M. Rose, Nov. 20, 1832—Jan. 13, 1925.
 Caleb Rose, Jr., Nov. 22, 1863—July 5, 1885.
 Peggy R. M., daughter of Caleb L. and Peggy R. M. Rose, died
 Feb. 13, 1875, ae. 1 yr., 3 mos., 15 da.
 John Rose, Dec. 16, 1852—June 27, 1938.
 Caroline W., wife of John Rose, July 28, 1893, ae. 44 yrs., 15 da.
 Molly, his wife, Mar. 15, 1875.
 Rosina D. Rose, 1830—1887, ae. 57 yrs.
 Montgomery Rose, 1831—1912, ae. 71 yrs.
 Mimy, wife of Robert C. Rose, 1858—1901.
 Infant son of Robert and Mimy Rose died Jan. 7, 1875, ae. 2 da.

- Samuel D. Rose died May 21, 1861, ae. 34 yrs., 2 mos., 9 da.
 Anna C. Rose, 1870—19 .
 Susan L. Rose, 1872—19 .
 Enoch M. Rose, 1859—1940.
 Mary L. Rose, 1865—1940.
 D. H. Rose Fecit, 1925.

SAND'S CEMETERY in the Neck, Block Island, R. I.

Sacred to the memory of Ray Thomas Sands, Esq.
 who died Feb. 18, 1819, ae. 43 yrs., 5 mos., 13 da.
 A friend to the fatherless and widows, a mind filled with philan-
 thropy. His house was a home of Hospitality.

Sacred to the memory of Anna Sands who died Apr. 6, 1847, in
 her 77th yr.

In memory of Hannah T., wife of Peleg S. Thompson, who died
 Oct. 1, 1842, in 63rd yr.

Our Father, Peleg S. Thompson, died Dec. 1866, ae. 87 yrs.

SHEFFIELD CEMETERY in the Neck, Block Island, R. I.

In memory of Eliza Babcock who died Mar. 6, 1864, ae. 77 yrs.,
 10 mos.

Sarah, widow of Barber Peckham, who died Mar. 4, 1867, ae. 88
 yrs., 3 mos., 10 da.

In memory of Josiah S. Peckham who died Apr. 16, 1862, ae. 68
 yrs., 19 da.

In memory of Mrs. Hannah Peckham, wife of Josiah S. Peckham,
 who died Mar. 11, 1829, in 33rd yr. of her ae.

In memory of Ann Pickham, widow of Josiah S. Peckham, who
 died Feb. 27, 1887, ae. 96 yrs., 11 mos., 27 da.

In memory of Mr. Edmund Sheffield who died Sept. 14, 1812, ae.
 52 yrs.

In memory of Mrs. Susanna Sheffield, relict of Mr. Edmund Shef-
 field, who died May 18, 1829, in 70th yr. of ae.

George G. Sheffield, son of George G. and Eliza Sheffield, born
 May 19, 1824, died Mar. 22, 1878.

Hannah A. Sheffield, widow of George G. Sheffield, born July 3,
 1832, died Mar. 22, 1891.

Simon R. Sheffield, son of George and Hannah Sheffield, born Dec.
 12, 1857, died July 30, 1899.

THE RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY



NEW MEMBERS

March 29, 1955 — June 13, 1955

- | | |
|---|---|
| Mr. Roger E. Alcott
Manville, R. I. | Miss Mary Keefe |
| Mr. Herbert K. Allard
Saunderstown, R. I. | Mr. Edward D. Little
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Thomas F. Mahoney |
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Bertram H. Buxton, Jr. | Miss Joan Marion
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| Mrs. David Hamilton
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Mrs. Lena Frazier Thatcher |
| Mr. Ellsworth S. Harding | Mr. Leon E. Thompson
East Providence 14, R. I. |
| Mrs. Nolen Hussey
Wakefield, R. I. | Mrs. James A. Tillinghast
Saunderstown, R. I. |
| Miss Gertrude S. Keefe | |

EXHIBITION

Eighteenth century Rhode Island furniture,
silver, and paintings

July 18 to September 9