

# RHODE ISLAND HISTORY

VOL. 16, NO. 3

JULY, 1957

THE RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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

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THE CASEY HOUSE

Casey Farm, Saunderstown, R. I.

*Built around 1750, the Casey House was for many generations the home of one of Rhode Island's most distinguished families. It is now owned by the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities. The estate continues to be operated as a farm, and the house is open to the public.*

Photograph by Laurence E. Tilley

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## SOUTH AMERICAN PORTS IN THE FOREIGN COMMERCE OF PROVIDENCE 1800—1830

by EARL C. TANNER<sup>1</sup>

AT THE BEGINNING of the nineteenth century trade routes from Narragansett Bay to Europe, Africa, Eastern North America, and the Caribbean had been well traveled for a hundred years or more. Even the Orient since 1787 had become familiar to the aristocracy of the Providence merchant community. One great area, however, was almost unknown, the ports of South America remaining virtually inaccessible to American shipping because of rigidly enforced restrictions in favor of Spain and Portugal.

As the new century opened, the disruptive activities of Napoleon in Europe cut off the South American colonies from their home markets and their normal sources of supply. To meet this emergency colonial ports were temporarily thrown open, with or without royal permission, to foreign shipping. This opportunity was aggressively seized upon both by Providence merchants and by their rivals in other East Coast centers. They saw in the circumstances an opportunity to establish themselves in a new and promising area.

It was at this juncture that patriot elements in Spanish America began in earnest the military phase of their struggle for independence. Moving with the times, American merchants proceeded to consolidate their advantage, sustaining some casualties for which they were partly compensated by the enormous profits they earned. In Brazil events progressed differently, but with similar results.

<sup>1</sup>This article is a continuation of "Caribbean Ports in the Foreign Commerce of Providence 1790-1830," *Rhode Island History*, Vol. 14, No. 4, 1955 and Vol. 15, No. 1, 1956. The present article, like the former, is taken with minor alterations from the author's *Trade between the Port of Providence and Latin America 1800 to 1830* (typed Ph.D. thesis, Harvard University, 1951).



## BRAZIL

The regular foreign commerce of Brazil dates from a decree issued by the Regent John on January 28, 1808. He had just arrived in Brazil after a narrow escape from Napoleon's invasion of Portugal. Indeed it is said that as the royal vessels were putting to sea, Napoleon's army came into sight on the hills back of Lisbon. The Regent signalized his arrival in Brazil by abolishing a number of colonial restrictions including that on foreign commerce.<sup>2</sup>

It should not be supposed, however, that North American vessels had never visited Brazil before 1808. Brazilian ports were always hospitable to vessels in distress and before 1808 had granted over eighty American merchantmen permission to enter for refitting.<sup>3</sup> As early as 1785 Nicholas Brown of Providence dispatched a vessel to Brazil.<sup>4</sup> The further history of this venture is not known, but in 1801 the Providence ship *Rolla* was welcomed by the Portuguese viceroy, Dom Fernando José de Portugal, and granted fifteen days to refit—"with respect and hospitality for a friendly nation."<sup>5</sup> Another Providence vessel, the schooner *Pilgrim*, was granted similar privileges, but attempted to violate the Portuguese laws (presumably against illicit trading) and was confiscated. Her captain was sent, a prisoner, to Portugal, but was released upon arrival.<sup>6</sup> In all about thirteen Providence vessels called at Brazilian ports before 1808.<sup>7</sup>

After John's proclamation, the initiation of regular trade between the United States and Brazil was delayed for a year by the American Embargo Act. Finally, in 1809, large numbers of American vessels began to enter Brazilian ports. That year a merchant of unknown

<sup>2</sup>João Pandia Calogeras, *A History of Brazil*, translated by Percy Alvin Martin, Jr. (Chapel Hill, 1939), 56.

<sup>3</sup>Charles Lyon Chandler, "List of United States Vessels in Brazil, 1792-1805, Inclusive," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, XXVI (1946), 599-617.

<sup>4</sup>James B. Hedges, "The Brown Papers, the Record of a Rhode Island Business Family" (reprinted from the *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* for April 1941, Worcester, 1942), 12.

<sup>5</sup>Chandler, *loc. cit.*, 600.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, 613-614.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, *passim*. Since Chandler notes no vessels in 1806 or 1807, it is possible to add to his list the following (which are included in the 13 estimated arrivals) from the Providence impost book for 1807 in the Providence Customhouse Papers: brigantine *Mary*, Mar. 19, from Rio de Janeiro via Cayenne; ship *Favorite*, Apr. 30, from the Bay of All Saints; ship *Taber*, Dec. 10, from Rio de Janeiro.

name, but almost certainly from Rhode Island, wrote in a notebook his observations on doing business at the Rio de Janeiro customhouse. He complained "it is with the greatest difficulty that any information of a commercial nature can be obtained at this place. . . ." However, he went on to show himself familiar with detailed procedures, both legal and illegal. For example, "much saving can frequently be made in the duties, by getting the goods valued far below their actual cost . . . you may have also frequent opportunities of having your goods landed in such a manner as to avoid paying any duties . . . provided you use a little policy with the Officers, & provided also your Dispatch man . . . is well disposed." This matter of the dispatch man was a complicating factor, and the author concluded, "it perhaps would be the best means of avoiding all disputes, to agree to allow him a certain proportion of any saving made. . . ."<sup>8</sup>

The first vessel to return to Providence with a full cargo of Brazilian goods arrived in 1811.<sup>9</sup> Arrivals from that date to 1830 were as follows:

## ENTRIES AT THE PORT OF PROVIDENCE

## From Brazil

1811	1	1816	2	1821	2	1826	0
1812	2	1817	0	1822	2	1827	2
1813	1	1818	0	1823	2	1828	2
1814	0	1819	3	1824	0	1829	1
1815	0	1820	1	1825	2	1830	1

In addition, several Providence vessels undoubtedly traded at Brazilian ports en route to or from Europe or Asia.<sup>10</sup>

The major exports of Brazil (except for hides) were similar to the major exports of Cuba. It should be remembered, however, in comparing numbers of arrivals, that vessels in the South American trade were on the average much larger than those trading in the Caribbean and sometimes carried extremely valuable cargoes. After 1830 Brazil virtually ceased to appear in the records of Providence

<sup>8</sup>Anonymous *Notes and Observations on Commerce at The Rhode Island Historical Society* (call number vault mc-736), 97-99.

<sup>9</sup>She was the ship *Ann and Hope* and arrived Apr. 21, 1811.

<sup>10</sup>Providence papers sometimes carried maritime notices such as the following: "Left at Rio, Oct. 28, ship John Brown, Aborn, of this port, for India in 15 or 20 days." *Providence Patriot*, Jan. 19, 1819.



trade with Latin America, and Cuba was left in the undisputed ascendancy as supplier of sugar and molasses.

#### THE RIVER PLATE

This stronghold of Spanish monopoly was first breached in 1798 by a United States vessel, the *John*, of Philadelphia.<sup>11</sup> Captain Samuel Day took the *John* into the River Plate and boldly addressed a petition to the Spanish authorities, invoking a royal *cedula* of November 18, 1797, to the effect that neutral vessels might carry the products of any Spanish colony to any other Spanish colony. Having cited this *cedula*, Captain Day proceeded to request permission to sell a load of North American lumber and take Argentine products to Philadelphia in return. He pointed out that his cargo was much needed at the time in Argentina. The *cedula* was by no means intended to authorize trade with foreign countries, but nevertheless permission was granted. On November 29, 1798, the *John* sailed from Montevideo for Philadelphia.

Next year at least ten American vessels visited the River Plate.<sup>12</sup> Among them must have been the *Palmyra* of Providence, for she was back at her home port with a large cargo of Buenos Aires goods in March, 1800.<sup>13</sup> In 1801-1802 American merchant shipping at the River Plate continued to increase, some forty-three vessels being counted.<sup>14</sup> Then, as the following table of arrivals will indicate, a break in commercial relations occurred:

<sup>11</sup>Charles Lyon Chandler, "The River Plate Voyages," *American Historical Review*, XXIII (1917-1918), 816 ff.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, 820.

<sup>13</sup>Chandler states that nine vessels are known to have been at Montevideo and one at Buenos Aires in 1799. "The one known to have been at Buenos Aires during this year was the frigate *Palmyra*, which was admitted to Spanish registry at that city on November 26, 1799, by a decree issued on that date by the viceroy of the Rio de la Plata, the Marquis of Avilés. She was renamed *Nuestra Señora de Belén* and was sold to Pedro Duval for 16,000 pesos. On January 4, 1800 she was dispatched by him from Buenos Aires for friendly ports." *Ibid.*, 821. On Mar. 18, 1800, the ship *Palmyra* arrived at Providence from Buenos Aires. The coincidence of names and dates suggests that the "sale" of Chandler's "frigate *Palmyra*" may have been a mere formality.

<sup>14</sup>Charles Lyon Chandler, "United States Merchant Ships in the Rio de la Plata (1801-1808) as Shown by Early Newspapers," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, II (1919), 26 ff.

#### ENTRIES AT THE PORT OF PROVIDENCE

##### From the River Plate

1800..... 1	1808..... 0	1816..... 0	1824..... 1
1801..... 4	1809..... 0	1817..... 1	1825..... 1
1802..... 0	1810..... 2	1818..... 1	1826..... 0
1803..... 0	1811..... 3	1819..... 0	1827..... 0
1804..... 0	1812..... 1	1820..... 1	1828..... 0
1805..... 0	1813..... 0	1821..... 1	1829..... 0
1806..... 0	1814..... 0	1822..... 2	
1807..... 0	1815..... 0	1823..... 1	

Trade between the United States and the River Plate was contrary to Spanish colonial policy. That it was permitted at all was due to Spain's preoccupation with the Napoleonic Wars. In 1802 normal Spanish policy reasserted itself in the form of a campaign against foreign shipping. Vessels were seized and seamen imprisoned. The victims were filled with indignation. They had come, they said, in good faith, and they found themselves treated with contempt. Some of the innocent prisoners, it was asserted, were even forced to occupy "the same horrid apartments with the vilest malefactors and the mangled remains of executed assassins. . . ."<sup>15</sup> The result of this campaign was a sharp reduction in American shipping to the River Plate. In 1803 only ten or twelve vessels appeared; in 1804 still fewer.<sup>16</sup>

The years 1806 and 1807 were exciting in the history of the River Plate. The British, at war with Spain, made two major attempts to seize the area and were in actual occupation for a few months. During this period American trade with the River Plate enjoyed a temporary revival. Some forty American vessels were counted in the area, including at least four from Providence (though none returned directly to home port).<sup>17</sup> This revival of commerce was interrupted by the American Embargo Act<sup>18</sup> and again by the War of 1812. When trade resumed in 1817, Argentina was an independent nation.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>15</sup>"Memorial of the United States Citizens at the River Plate, Mar. 26, 1802," in the *Providence Gazette*, Jul. 10, 1802.

<sup>16</sup>Chandler, "United States Merchant Ships in the Rio de la Plata (1801-1808)," 26-27.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, 29, 50-52.

<sup>18</sup>Charles Lyon Chandler, "United States Shipping in the La Plata Region, 1809-1810," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, III (1920), 159 ff.

<sup>19</sup>Providence had a small part in the liberation of Argentina from Spanish rule. Thomas Lloyd Halsey of Providence lived in Buenos Aires almost continuously from about 1807 to some time in the 1830's. He was instrumental in supplying



From 1817 until 1825 a regular, though small scale commerce was maintained. The year of the last Argentine arrival at Providence was also the first year of an Argentine-Brazilian war over the possession of the East Bank of the River Plate. When this dispute was finally settled in 1828 by the creation of the independent Republic of Uruguay, Providence-Argentine trade was virtually extinct.

#### THE WEST COAST

Trade with the West Coast of South America is one of the most obscure chapters in the maritime history of Providence. Shipping to that area is difficult to trace because vessels rarely cleared from Providence for Chile or Peru. Instead they cleared for Canton or Batavia. It is frequently difficult and often impossible to determine whether vessels so cleared reached the Orient by way of the Cape of Good Hope or by way of Cape Horn. Fortunately it became increasingly common, when the western route was to be followed, to clear for "Canton via Cape Horn" or for "N. W. Coast and Canton." Another favorite clearance was "Gibraltar and Canton." In this case the vessels probably, though not necessarily, proceeded by way of the Cape of Good Hope.<sup>20</sup>

The return to Providence of vessels that had been trading on the West Coast of South America is even more difficult to trace. During the entire period from 1800 to 1830 only three entered Providence from Peru and Ecuador; none, from Chile. Instead, they sold their West Coast cargoes elsewhere and entered the port of Providence as arrivals from Canton or Amsterdam or New York. The history of Providence trade with the West Coast must, therefore, be pieced together from letters and occasional newspaper notices.

the patriots with large quantities of war materials including 1,600 guns, 450 barrels, and 25 cases of powder. Also, with a Col. John Devereux, he guaranteed a loan of 2,000,000 pesos to the regime of Supreme Director Pueyrredón. His other activities included the underwriting of privateers and the introduction of Merino sheep into Argentina. Sometime in the 1830's, he returned to Providence with a considerable fortune. Charles Lyon Chandler, "Thomas Lloyd Halsey," *Dictionary of American Biography*, VIII, 162-163.

<sup>20</sup>As late as 1804 a sea captain stated that no vessels had, as of that date, proceeded to the Orient by Cape Horn. William B. Weedon, "Early Oriental Commerce in Providence," *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* (Dec., 1907), 266. That this was not quite accurate is indicated by instances cited in Eugenio Pereira Salas, *Buques nortamericanos en Chile a fines de la era colonial (1788-1810)*, (Prensas de la Universidad de Chile, 1936).

American commerce with the West Coast was spearheaded, around the turn of the century, by whalers, sealers, and ships bound for the Columbia River. These vessels occasionally put into West Coast ports for supplies, repairs, and as much trading as could be managed. Their reception was sometimes cordial and sometimes, as in the case of the ship *Hazard* of Providence, extremely hostile.<sup>21</sup> The ship *Hazard* happened into Valparaiso in 1802, a bad year for American shipping on both coasts.<sup>22</sup> The episode was described by a contemporary as follows:

It seems that Captain Rowen of the *Hazard* had ventured by permission of the Ga. 1 to go into Valparaiso for Water &c. after which they demanded him to give up the arms he had on board which was refused and finally under various pretenses sent an armed rabble on board and plundered him of the quarter part of his Cargo killing one Man on board and wounding many others—After which offered him the Ship which was refused unless they would pay him for damages. In this situation the ship and crew remained.<sup>23</sup>

There the report ends, but it may be added that the *Hazard* got away and eventually reached Canton.<sup>24</sup>

In the years immediately following, Providence shipping to the Orient was fairly heavy, an average of some four vessels a year going out until the War of 1812. It is probable that some of these sailed with cargoes destined to be exchanged in Chile or Peru for silver and copper to be taken to the Orient. Spanish colonial authorities became more independent as contact with Spain became more difficult. Then in 1811 Chilean patriots seized control of the country and proclaimed foreign shipping not only permissible but welcome. An American agent was received in Valparaiso, and a visiting American frigate was welcomed with a twenty-one gun salute.<sup>25</sup> Unfortunately

<sup>21</sup>Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Maritime History of Massachusetts* (Boston, 1921), 62.

<sup>22</sup>A full account of the *Hazard's* difficulties at Valparaiso is in Richard J. Cleveland, *A Narrative of Voyages and Commercial Enterprises* (Cambridge, Mass., 1842), 163-176.

<sup>23</sup>John Lippitt, Providence, R. I., to T. H. Perkins, Boston, Mass., Dec. 21, 1802, Nightingale & Jenckes papers.

<sup>24</sup>J. and T. H. Perkins, Boston, Mass., to William F. Megec, Providence, R. I., Apr. 23, 1805, Nightingale & Jenckes papers.

<sup>25</sup>William Spence Robertson, *Hispanic-American Relations with the United States* (New York, 1923), 188; Charles Lyon Chandler, *Inter-American Acquaintances* (Scwanee, Tenn., 1917), 75, 77; William Miller Collier and Guillermo Feliú Cruz, *La Primera misión de los Estados Unidos de América en Chile* (Santiago de Chile, 1926), *passim*.



the War of 1812 prevented American shipping from taking full advantage of this new opportunity. In 1814 an imperial force, operating from Peru, reoccupied Chile. Fragmentary evidence suggests that despite the increasingly attractive possibilities in Chile, the great majority of Providence vessels proceeding to the Orient continued to use the Cape of Good Hope route.<sup>26</sup>

Regular trade between Providence and Chile was first placed on a firm basis in 1817 when the country was permanently liberated from Spanish rule by the armies of General San Martín advancing across the Andes from Argentina. After 1817 Spanish authority was never re-established in Chile, though the Coast was for a short time under Spanish blockade. In 1818 the balance of naval power passed from the royalists to the patriots, for in that year the British naval officer, Lord Cochrane, offered his services to San Martín. A small fleet was equipped and Cochrane soon did so much damage that San Martín was able to make plans for a sea-borne invasion of Peru, stronghold of imperial power. In September, 1820, he sailed north and occupied the small Peruvian seaport of Pisco. A few months later he occupied Callao, port of Lima.<sup>27</sup> Though Peru was not effectively freed until 1824 and Callao itself was reoccupied by the royalists from 1824 to 1826, regular trade relations between Peru and Providence date from the first liberation of Callao in 1821. Guayaquil, an area which was liberated by Bolivarian armies in 1822 and which until 1830 was part of Great Colombia, was seldom visited by Providence vessels.

The only vessels to arrive at the port of Providence directly from the West Coast between 1800 and 1830 were as follows: one from Guayaquil in 1824, one from Callao in 1825, and another from Callao in 1827. It may fairly be assumed, however, that at least twenty to twenty-five additional vessels proceeded from Providence to the West Coast between 1800 and 1830, mostly in the years from 1817 to 1830.<sup>28</sup> Some of these vessels remained for many months

<sup>26</sup>Book of entries and clearances; manifests — both in Providence Custom-house papers.

<sup>27</sup>For general information on the history of Peru, see Jorge Basadre, *Historia de la República del Perú* (Lima, 3d ed., n.d.).

<sup>28</sup>Estimate based on number of vessels cleared for "Canton via Cape Horn" or "NW Coast and Canton;" on occasional newspaper notices; and on letters in the Nightingale & Jenckes papers and in the Carrington letterbook for 1821-1823 at The Rhode Island Historical Society.

on the coast; others traded from Chile and Peru to China and back. Such were the general outlines of the West Coast trade.

#### EPISODES IN THE WEST COAST TRADE

Soon after San Martín's liberation of Chile, the ship *Lion* of Providence entered Valparaiso harbor. She had been preceded by the brig *Rambler* of Providence and by several other vessels from America and Europe. Among the latter were a number of English merchantmen loading wheat for Rio de Janeiro. At that time the Spanish navy was still a force to be reckoned with as may be seen from the following observations by E. T. Jenckes, clerk of the *Lion*:

We feel no small uneasiness from the Spanish blockading squadron which consists of the *Venganza* 44 and some smaller vessels. They chased in the *Ida* & the *Adeline* (both *clippers*) & a few days since came into the harbor close under the forts, made a tack round & stood out, a fresh breeze from the harbor every day enabling them to do it with impunity. This she has done twice since we have been here, and a few days since in plain sight she captured a ship bound in. . . . We have our guns loaded with grape when she is off & every preparation made to resist any attempt in boats to cut us out.<sup>29</sup>

Though Cochrane had not yet arrived, the patriots had sent out privateers and had brought in a prize ship with a cargo worth \$300,000. In view of the many dangers to American shipping and of the considerable number of vessels involved, it seemed strange that the United States Navy did not furnish some protection. "Every-one wonders," wrote Jenckes, "why we do not have a frigate to protect our trade in these seas as it is very important and the English have one for half the same trade."<sup>30</sup> This need was soon filled, and for many years the United States Navy patrolled the West Coast of South America.

A Providence ship, the *Louisa*, had particular reason to be grateful for timely assistance received from the U. S. frigate *Macedonian*. In 1820, before Callao had been liberated by San Martín, the *Louisa* attempted to enter that port in order to trade with the royalists. She was seized by the Chilean navy and carried into the port of Huasco. At this point Captain Downes of the frigate *Macedonian*

<sup>29</sup>E. T. Jenckes, Valparaiso, Chile, to Samuel Nightingale, Providence, R. I., Nov. 5, 1817, Nightingale & Jenckes papers.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, The USS *Essex* had been on the Coast in 1813. Chandler, *Inter-American Acquaintances*, 77.



came to the rescue.

Captain D. informed the master of the *Louisa*, if he would bring his ship out, he would protect him, in consequence of which, by the assistance of the Captains of some of the English detained vessels, he cut his cables, and stood out under the guns of the *Macedonian*, from whom she received 2 men and proceeded on her voyage.<sup>31</sup>

Thus American shipping, harassed by both royalists and patriots, was protected by the United States Navy.

The appreciation of the American residents in Chile for naval protection is indicated in the following extract from an address to Captain John Downes of the frigate *Macedonian* on the occasion of his recall to the United States in 1821:

In the unsettled state of the country since your arrival in this ocean conflicting interests have recently arisen and the belligerents have in many instances infringed on our neutral rights. Your perseverance, zeal, & unremitting attention to the interests of your countrymen has protected our persons & property, has made our flag respected and has convinced every real American that in every instance and in the many delicate and trying situations in which you have been placed that warm feelings of humanity and a heart and hand devoted to your country has been your constant guide.<sup>32</sup>

Two years after this address was written, Lord Cochrane, having completed his mission, withdrew from the Chilean navy. In a proclamation he expressed his "heartfelt satisfaction" on the opening up of those "vast provinces" formerly dominated by Spain. "The Squadron which maintained the monopoly," wrote Cochrane, "has disappeared from the face of the Ocean and the Flags of Independent South America wave everywhere triumphant protecting that intercourse between Nations which is the source of their Riches, Power, and Happiness." To those few who "were anxious to avail themselves of accidental circumstances presented during the contest" Cochrane pointed out that restraints which had been imposed were temporary and "for the general good."<sup>33</sup>

<sup>31</sup>Wm. F. Rogers, Boston, Mass., to Saml. Nightingale, Providence, R. I., Jun. 25, 1821, Nightingale & Jenckes papers. See also E. T. Jenckes, Valparaiso, Chile, to Samuel Nightingale, Providence, R. I., Feb. 20, 1821, Nightingale & Jenckes papers.

<sup>32</sup>Americans in Chile to Capt. John Downes, Valparaiso, Chile, Mar. 9, 1821, copy in Nightingale & Jenckes papers.

<sup>33</sup>Lord Cochrane, Quintero, Chile, to the Merchants of England and other Nations trading in the Pacific, Jan. 4, 1823, copy in the Nightingale & Jenckes papers.

In these early years of Chilean and Peruvian independence American merchantmen encountered difficulties, not only on the high seas, but also in port. In 1822, for example, the Chilean government determined to raise the tariff. This step and the manner in which it was taken was much resented by American merchants and resulted in a formal protest to the American commercial agent in Chile. Some idea of the American colony's consternation can be gained from the following extract from a letter written by E. T. Jenckes to his uncle, Samuel Nightingale of Providence:

Since my last, the Government have given us time to amuse ourselves in any manner we please — as they have taken into their heads that we worked more than was for their profits. They consequently, with the utmost coolness, shut up the Custom House and public offices while they are deliberating on the best method of getting more duties. It would surprise one of our driving Yankees who had never seen anything of the kind to observe how little they think of stopping all commerce for a couple of months, considering it a matter of little consequence & wonder at our getting into a passion about it — This state of things has been since the middle of September & we do not know how much longer it will continue, but as they have just nicely painted all the Offices, I imagine they are waiting for them to dry. They do not permit a package to be carried from one town to another or to be landed or shipped. Some vessels have been waiting near 2 mo. to land & others 6 weeks for permission to sail.<sup>34</sup>

The result of the Chilean legislature's deliberations was a new commercial code so "complicated and intricate" that it was thought to be "almost an entire preventive to all commerce."<sup>35</sup> Political and economic stability were not achieved in Chile until 1830. Up to that time foreigners and natives alike had to suffer from frequent and unpredictable changes.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>34</sup>E. T. Jenckes, Valparaiso, Chile, to Samuel Nightingale, Providence, R. I., Oct. 22, 1822, Nightingale & Jenckes papers.

<sup>35</sup>E. T. Jenckes, Valparaiso, Chile, to Samuel Nightingale, Providence, R. I., Dec. 14, 1822, Nightingale & Jenckes papers.

<sup>36</sup>In addition to political violence, Chile suffered from earthquakes. E. T. Jenckes was wounded in the severe quake of 1822 which nearly destroyed Valparaiso. His report on a minor tremor may be taken to illustrate this danger of West Coast commerce. "I was sitting 2 days since under a very large pear tree when a shock came on the ground. The pear tree was moved off about 8 inches & returned directly with a quick movement. The tree was not less than 10 feet in circumference. These shocks are not thought as much of here as a clap of thunder is with us, & it is only when the houses begin to tumble down that they



With all of these hazards went high profits, the sale of European and North American cargoes being only one of several sources of gain. The coastal trade between Chile and Peru offered at times extraordinary opportunities. In 1818, for example, the ship *Two Catherine's* of Providence, laden with wheat, cleared Valparaiso ostensibly for Rio de Janeiro. Instead she proceeded to the royalist port of Callao where it was estimated she could dispose of her cargo at a 500% advance. Her bonds of course were forfeited.<sup>37</sup> Later when the commerce became legal, smaller but still attractive profits were regularly made in the coastal flour trade, except when floods, as in 1822, caused the suspension of Chilean grain exports to Peru.<sup>38</sup> (News of crop failure was the signal for American vessels to load flour at Baltimore and proceed with dispatch to the West Coast.)

Another source of profits was the trade between Canton and the West Coast. As a rule the westbound cargo consisted mostly of silver and copper. The return cargoes consisted of assorted Oriental goods selected on the basis of market conditions in Chile and Peru at the time of sailing. Vessels known to be departing for China were, of course, deluged with small personal orders. E. T. Jenckes, for example, was requested to take a portrait to China to be copied by Chinese artists,<sup>39</sup> to have monogrammed shirts made by a Chinese tailor,<sup>40</sup> and to do numerous other such errands.

Trade with Peru was subject to vicissitudes similar to those which characterized Chilean trade of the period.<sup>41</sup> San Martín's liberating army sailed from Valparaiso on August 21, 1820, and anchored at Pisco on September 7. The campaign progressed slowly, and it was

are seriously frightened." Jenckes continues in another paragraph: "The manner and habits of the people are so quiet and contented & the climate is so fine that what would be dreadful in another part of the world for years is got over here in a month. They pray and promise most heartily while imminent danger lasts. But that over, those who can afford it build again their houses, while those who cannot make themselves a hut of mud and rushes and then dance and play the guitar as contentedly as if in their former & better habitation." E. T. Jenckes, Valparaiso, Chile, to Samuel Nightingale, Providence, R. I., Dec. 14, 1822, Nightingale & Jenckes papers.

<sup>37</sup>*Providence Patriot*, Jan. 13, 1819.

<sup>38</sup>E. T. Jenckes, Valparaiso, Chile, to Samuel Nightingale, Providence, R. I., Apr. 22, 1822, Nightingale & Jenckes papers.

<sup>39</sup>Chas. W. Wooster, Santiago, Chile, to Carlos Jinks, Valparaiso, Chile, Mar. 16, 1821, Nightingale & Jenckes papers.

<sup>40</sup>Federico Freundt, Santiago, Chile, to E. T. Jenckes, Valparaiso, Chile, Dec. 16, 1819, Nightingale & Jenckes papers.

July, 1821, before Lima was occupied; Callao, port of Lima, did not surrender until September, 1821. Even then the royalist army was by no means destroyed. Rather, it retired to the interior and remained a constant threat until December, 1824. From June 16 to July 17, 1823, Lima was actually reoccupied by the royalist army, and on February 18, 1824, a mutiny of the garrison at Callao placed that port again in royalist hands. A campaign under the leadership of Bolívar's lieutenant, General Sucre, culminating in the battle of Ayacucho in December, 1824, resulted in the virtual extinction of Spanish power. The port of Callao, however, remained in royalist hands until July 19, 1826.

From 1824 to 1826 Lima was without its seaport, but where high profits were to be had, commerce found a way. The tiny seacoast village of Chorillos became the scene of extraordinary activity which is described in a contemporary letter as follows:

Little did we imagine that this miserable village and wretched port was destined to see 70 sail of merchant vessels riding in its open roadstead at this period; but such is the fact and such is the crowd of foreign commerce that on the small projection of the landing place (now enlarged by the laudable exertions of the officers and crew of the Cambridge, British man-of-war) there is not sufficient space for the immense quantities of foreign products which are daily landing from the various ships through a continually high surf and in defiance of every obstacle. Such is the invincible and persevering spirit of commercial adventure. From this point, these articles in small parcels are conveyed up the high and almost perpendicular cliffs by a zig-zag road cut for the purpose, and in that operation the laborious and hardy *Borico* "tugs his weary day" for often a cruel and ungrateful master. From the heights, the goods are conveyed to Lima by the usual mule transportation and thence are distributed over the country at prices which, in the days of Spanish monopoly, would have excited wonder by their cheapness. No less than 40,000 barrels of flour from

<sup>41</sup>Few American vessels visited Peru before 1820, though they claimed the right to refit there in case of emergency. For an example of trade in 1804-1805, see Amasa Delano, *Narrative of Voyages and Travels* (Boston, 1817), 479-523. The same work has a section on Chile in 1800-1801. *Ibid.*, 274-368. A Providence vessel, the *Tyre*, apparently ventured into Lima in 1801. An account book of Uriel Rea, who was, perhaps, the supercargo or clerk, contains the entry in 1801 "Taken by the Government at Lima . . . \$700." A later entry states, "My Demand against the Spanish Government was not allowed by the Commissioners at Washington." Account book of Uriel Rea, The Rhode Island Historical Society.



the United States have reached Lima by this process during the last 6 months.<sup>42</sup>

Aside from the inconveniences trade with Peru was attended with unusual hazards during the temporary resurgences of Spanish power. Among the victims of Spanish vigilance at this time was the ship *General Carrington*, captured by the Spaniards off the coast of Peru on July 7, 1824.<sup>43</sup>

The campaigns of 1824 and 1825 and the final capitulation of Callao in 1826 inaugurated a period of somewhat greater stability. With the danger of Spanish reconquest practically eliminated the new nations of the West Coast were able to turn their attention wholly to constructive tasks of political and economic development. The commercial codes which they adopted, though sometimes irritating, did not seriously interfere with trade. In the late 1820's Chilean import duties ranged from 5% to 40% *ad valorem* with fairly moderate specific duties on sugar, tobacco, brandy, etc. Books, maps, musical instruments, horses, cattle, and a few other items were free.<sup>44</sup> Peruvian duties were higher with a base rate of 30% and a long list of items at 80%. Among the latter were brandy, soap, ready-made clothes, sugar, tobacco, saddlery, candles, and furniture. Books, printing presses, seeds, music, etc., were free.<sup>45</sup>

For the maritime history of Rhode Island it is fortunate that the opening of South America came at a time before Providence had succumbed to the competition of New York, and at a time when the mercantile community was led by men of the caliber of Edward Carrington. Soon after South America had become independent, the port of Providence was reduced to a minor role in the foreign commerce of the United States.

<sup>42</sup>Letter to the editors of the *Boston Patriot* quoted in the *Rhode Island American*, Dec. 2, 1825. The number of Providence vessels to visit Chorillos is not known. That at least two did so is indicated by the following maritime notice: "At Chorillos, June 11, brig Packet, Tyler, of Providence from Gibraltar, waiting to sell her cargo; ship Superior, Andrews, of Providence." *Rhode Island American*, Oct. 21, 1825.

<sup>43</sup>Survey of Federal Archives, Division of Community Service Programs, Work Projects Administration, *Ship Registers of Providence, Rhode Island, 1773-1939* (Providence, 1941), I, 390.

<sup>44</sup>*Rhode Island American*, Apr. 10, 1827.

<sup>45</sup>*Ibid.*

## NATHANAEL GREENE'S LETTERS TO "FRIEND SAMMY" WARD

edited by CLIFFORD P. MONAHAN and CLARKSON A. COLLINS, 3rd

[continued from April, 1957, v. 16, no. 2, page 57]

Spell Hall October 9th 1772

Dear Friend

A person must have an uncommon genius to write a panegyrick upon a Barren Letter, he must possess a surprising penetration to discover Beauties when they dont exist. Was I not acquainted with you I should imagin from the Language of your Letters, that you was a French Courtier Educated at Paris in the Art of Compliment. Surely you cannot mean to Flatter my Vanity, and its obvious my Letters are undeserving your praise. I hope you are too Generous to impose upon your friend, was I weak enough to give you an Opportunity. Where then is the defect in point of Judgment or Sincerity. I have no reason to think its the former and very little the latter. I know its common for us to be partial to our Friends. We often over rate their Actions. That which is but an indifferent act in another, appears glorious and important in them. We may be prejudiced as well for as against a thing; and this prejudice is often so secret and subtle in its operations that the Mind receives an insensible bias with out perceiving its Influence. Perhaps my Dear friend, this might be the case with you when you wrote your two last Letters, for they seemed to Breath an uncommon Spirit of Friendship, altho the Language appear'd to border upon Flattery. I wish it was in my Power to write you any thing that might please and improve you. I hope one Day to see you shine like a Star of the first Magnitude all glorious both Evening and morning. I lament the want of a liberal Education; I feel the mist Ignorance to surround me. For my own part I was Educated a Quaker, and amongst the most Superstitious sort, and that of it self is sufficient Obstacle to cramp the best of Geniuses; much more mine.<sup>13</sup> This constrained manner of Educating

<sup>13</sup>Not until 1773 did the Society of Friends take note of Greene's actions, which were contrary to the Quaker doctrine. After he had attended a military parade at Plainfield, Connecticut, near the Rhode Island border, we find in the records, "'At our monthly meeting, held at Cranston on the 5th of seventh month, 1773 . . . Whereas, this meeting is informed that Nathanael and Griffen Greene have (been) at a place in Connecticut of public resort where they had no proper business, therefore this meeting appoints Ephraim Congdon, Jared Greene, and Cary Spencer to make inquiry . . .'" And finally "'ye 30th day of ye ninth month,'" the records reveal, "'The matter referred to this meeting concerning Nathanael Greene and Griffen Greene, as they have not given this meeting any satisfaction for their outgoing and misconduct, therefore this meeting doth put



their Youth, has prov'd a fine Nursery of Ignorance and Supersticion instead of piety; and has laid a foundation for Form instead of Worship. It was not the original intention of the Friends to prevent the propagation of useful Literature in the Church, but only to prohibit their Youth from reading such Books as tended to make them Fools by industry; and in the midst of an appearing profusion of Knowledge to want common Sense. They considered Youth as the great Opportunity of Life, which Settles and fixes most men either in a good or bad course; and that the impressions then made were commonly the most durable, especially those which are bad. Youth is most certainly a time of Innocence when we have horror for Vice; which we never commit at first without doing Violence to our Nature. How our Souls Startles when we attempt to perpetrate a Crime prohibited by Laws both Human and Divine. I can well remember when I first began to make excursions into the Field of *Eniquity*. O! what conflicts have I felt in my Boosom between Virtue and Vice. If I were to Judge from the Operations of my own mind with regard to the Innocence of Youth, I should think that the first and most Natural thoughts of Men were to be honest and just. These were the Sentiments of the first Founders of our Society, and as that was an Age whercin Priest Craft prevaild, the most useful Branches of Literature was much neglected. For it was the Interest of the Order to Cultivate the Youthful Minds to be subservient to their After purposes. This they could not do without locking up all the Avenues and passages to Wisdom so that their Scholars had neither the Reason of Philosophers or the Affibility of Gentlemen. It was no difficult matter to educate their Youth in this sort seeing they had the entire direction of the Seminaries of Learning. Therefore their pupils came out of the Universities with a Starchness of behavior, sourness of looks, and full of Starved conceits, which made them haughty and imperious in their conduct. This false Zeal and ill breeding, under the Affectation of Learning, was what first disgusted our Society with Literature. For when they contrasted the Learned with the Laity, they observd an easiness of Address, softness of Speech and a freedom of thought in one; and nothing but Pedantry and Magisterial Grimace in the other; and as they found the Learned neither wiser nor better Men than the Laity The friends concluded that a Liberal Education was rather prejudicial than Beneficial to Society. Not rightly discovering where the Evil lay, they argued from the abuse to the disuse of the thing.

These were the Reasons why the Quakers cri'd down Literate it them from under the care of the meeting until they make satisfaction for their misconduct . . ." George Washington Greene, *The Life of Nathanael Greene*, (N. Y., 1871) v. 1, p. 69-70.

was not the most useful parts thereof, but only Vain Philosophy: and such Metaphysical distinctions as rather confounded than improv'd the understanding. They lookt upon plainness and Symplicity as inseperable marks of Truth, and that Religion, good sense, and humanity was a far better Armament to a man, than such a Stock of Philosophy, that only perplext and confounded him in a maze of improv'd Nonsense and Absurdity, which only Serv'd to fortify and make him impregnable against common Sense. These were the Sentiments of our Fore Fathers with regard to human learning, it was their intention only to lop off the dead Branches of Literature, as being altogether superfluous and useless. But Superstition and Ignorance increased in to the decay of Learning; and in the Country Churches they soon confounded the useful with the useless Branches of Literature, prohibiting the reading of all Books except the Holy scripture, Barckley's Apology, Fox Journal and a few others of the same tennor and date. This my dear friend was the foundation of my Education; and I believe youl agree with me, it requires an uncommon Natural Genius or a very free conversation, to get the better of such a constrained and corrupt education; Nature withheld the former from me and Fortune the latter, so that I remain without the Verge of Science, like Moses of old I can behold the Beauties of Canaan but Jordan prevents my entranse. My Father was a man of Industry and brought up his Children to Business. Early very early when I should have been in the pursuit of Knowledge, I was digging into the Bowels of the Earth after wealth, so that had Nature given me a Genius fit to cultivate an Acquaintance with the polite Arts, I have not had Opportunity for such an Acquisition. Besides there was no one to inspire me with Noble and generous Sentiments equally fit for Dominion or subjection. My Father was a man of great Piety, had an excellent understanding, and was govern'd in his conduct by Humanity and kind Benevolence. But his Mind was over shadow'd with prejudices against Literary Accomplishments. Notwithstanding all these Obstructions I have Read a few Books, but they have rather amus'd than improv'd me. After this explanation, I hope youl [be] less liberal of your praise, for praise unmerited is nothing but Ridicule in disguise. You are not indebted to me for any part of that manly dignity which you display. You are indebted to Nature for your Genius to your Father for an opportunity to Cultivate that Genius, to Mr. Manning<sup>14</sup> for Inspiring you with Noble and Elevated Sentiments to Mr. Arnold for holding A Lamp to direct your Steps through the Difficult paths of Science. If I deserve your praise it is for the steadiness of my Friend-

<sup>14</sup>James Manning (1738-1791), president of Rhode Island College (Brown) of which Ward was a graduate in the class of 1771.



ship for there is no one that Loves you with a more Cordial Affection.

I should be sorry that Mr. Varnum<sup>15</sup> through blindness of prejudice should give his Enemies an opportunity to reproach him justly. I should think my self happy if I could Open or let in any new rays of understanding that might discover his folly; for I love and esteem the man. But I should be sorry to disoblige him when I cannot serve him. Whoever goes about to reform the World undertakes an Office Obnoxious to malice and Often beset with great difficulties. It speaks a confidence of our own Capacity, that prompts us to set up for the School Master of Mankind and it infers a charge of Corruption or Ignorance in the Object out of which we mean to lead or whip them. Every man has a good conceit of him self and his own merit. He thinks him self undervalued by instruction and is provoked by correction. The confession of our weakness and that of anothers better sense is generally both contained in that of taking Advice, which is seldom taken for that reason. How my Dear Friend could you think me a suitable Person to correct the errors in a man of such exalted Talents as Mr. Varnum possesses.

I have lately had a Visit from the once celebrated Susa Harris. She enjoys but a poor State of health. She appears like a Gaudy flwr nipt by the pinching frost. I fancy she is not long for this World tho she flies Swiftly on the Wings of wild Desire after Matrimony.<sup>16</sup>

"How Rich How Valued once avails thee not  
To whom related or by whom begot  
A heap of dust alone remains of thee  
Tis all thou art and all the proud shall be."

There has been a Famous Preacher at Greenwich. He is a Gentleman of elevated Faculties, a fine Speaker; and appears by his Language to be a Lover of Mankind. I refer you to the Boys for further particulars for they wont wait a moment longer. Distribute my love where due Amen

N G

I wrote this after the Boys set out upon the Road I trust to your generosity for incorrectness.

<sup>15</sup>James Mitchell Varnum (1748-1789), a promising young lawyer at the time, two years later was colonel of the Kentish Guards, in which his friend Nathanael Greene served as a private. During the Revolutionary War Varnum rose to the rank of brigadier-general in the Continental Army.

<sup>16</sup>It is possible that Miss Harris was successful in her pursuit of matrimony. The *Providence Gazette* of December 26, 1772, carried a notice of the marriage of Miss Susannah Harris, daughter of Henry, deceased, and Captain Joseph Cooke.

Sunday Morning  
Dr Friend

Coventry January 25 1773

I Receivd your Kind Letter by your Aunt Greene<sup>17</sup> and your agreeable Essay by Brother Kitt and am sorry I am obligd to make an apology for not answering them sooner. I intend Writeing you by your Aunt but she was gone before I knew it. Kitt went a Week sooner than I expected. I thought I would not miss an opportunity so favourable as that of waiteing by your Father. I spent the Evening with him Mr. Marchant<sup>18</sup> and sundry other Gentlemen, at your Uncle Greens, and intended to have Wrote in the Morning, and returnd to Greenwich for that purpose. But he past my Lodgings just as I got up, By which means I have been deprivd of any opportunity till the present. One truth I can assure, it was not for want of Affection. I love and Esteem you as I ever did. So remote and hidden are the motives of our Actions even amongst the most Intimate Friends, that its necessary for us to possess the most Charitable Disposition towards them and their conduct through Life; otherwise we shall often injure them by Evil suspicions and groundless jealousies. We ought to Keep our Eye Single in vieweing each others Actions and weigh them in the Scales of Friendship with that Allowance that Human Nature in its imperfect state requires. Friendship being a strong and Habitu[al] Inclination in Two Persons to promote each others Happiness. We are Naturally lead to discharge all the important Duties with mutual Goodwill, and when any Actcidents or Occurrences happens that begets mistrust they will Lose their very Name in the Channel of Friendship, as small Brooks do theirs when they fall into Larger Rivers. But there are many Professors of Friendship who appear Like a well Drawn Picture to resemble its Original but wants that warmth and Vital Heat that Constitutes the finer feelings of the Soul. It is somewhat unhappy when we have made Choice of such a Friend, and no less difficult to maintain a good understanding, for they judge by events and not by Intentions. But I hope you and I act upon different Principles towards each Other, and that our Profession and Sincerity go hand in hand. I thank you for your Invitation to Ward Hall, But

<sup>17</sup>Aunt Greene refers to Catharine, daughter of Simon and Deborah (Greene) Ray, who was married to Governor William Greene (1731-1809), Justice of the Supreme Court, 1776; Chief Justice and Speaker of the House, 1777; Governor, 1778-1785. Governor Samuel Ward, Sammy's father, married Anna Ray, a sister of Aunt Greene, and General Nathanael Greene married her niece, Catharine Littlefield. Sammy married his cousin Phebe, Aunt Greene's daughter.

<sup>18</sup>Henry Marchant (1741-1796), a prominent Rhode Island lawyer and politician, was later a member of the Continental Congress. Marchant's father's second wife was Isabel Ward, Sammy's aunt, sister of Governor Samuel Ward. After his father's death in 1747 young Henry was brought up in the Ward family.



I should be guilty of imprudence, and unjust to my self to accept at this Time. It would give me a particular Pleasure to see you Here, and I can say with Pope "Come to Coventry and Enjoy over a Generous Bowl, the fest of Reason and the flow of Soul."

The Sound of the Hamer is once more heard in our Land, the Forge is now compleat, Long and tedious has been the Business, and has been rendered much more so for want of good and faithful hands.<sup>19</sup> Although we had some that deservd that Character, yet we had many that were like Old Co[torn] Dog that Shund Chores and Watcht meals. I am glad to hear your good Opinion increases upon a further Acquaintance with Kitt. I wish he may prove the happy Link to unite the two Families by the ties of Interest as well as Social regard.<sup>20</sup> Kitt informs that Hannah<sup>21</sup> thinks me guilty of unkindness and wanting in Friendship; I am sorry She should indulge a thought so unjust and Injurious to my Intentions. I am sure if I know my own Soul, Shees [she has] not a Friend on Earth thats more Affectionate toward her than I am, and I believe that neither distance of Time or Place will ever alter my regards. Remember me to her with that Cordial Affection that my Soul feels from a review of our past intercourse.

Kitt Sail'd last Sunday for Virginia, his last Charge after be[ing] under Sail was to be Frugal, Industrious, and to get Money if Possible. Brother Will<sup>22</sup> inculcates that Doctrine as much as if it was his Creed. Welcome and Patience<sup>23</sup> are just upon the Brink of Matrimony I hope

<sup>19</sup>The forge at Coventry, R. I., which had burned on August 17, 1772, had been rebuilt with the aid of a lottery granted by the Rhode Island General Assembly.

<sup>20</sup>Nathanael's brother Christopher proved "the happy link" when on December 23, 1773, he married Catherine, Sammy's sister.

<sup>21</sup>Hannah Ward, Sammy's eldest sister, was born April 12, 1749, and died unmarried September 8, 1774.

<sup>22</sup>William Greene (1743-1826) served in the Revolutionary War. He died unmarried at East Greenwich, R. I.

<sup>23</sup>Patience Greene, daughter of Samuel and Patience (Cooke) Greene, was born at East Greenwich, R. I., May 13, 1754. She married Welcome Arnold, son of Jonathan and Abigail (Smith) Arnold of Smithfield, R. I., at the home of her uncle, Governor William Greene, where Patience had lived since childhood.

"Mr. and Mrs. Arnold made their home in Providence, and resided on the corner of South Main and Planet Streets. Mr. Arnold was one of the five men in Providence who 'kept a carriage.' His wife is mentioned as a 'most beautiful and amiable young lady,' and before her marriage she was also honored with the attentions of Nathanael Greene . . . The two men were warm friends, and, according to family tradition, were both most affectionately attached to the Governor's niece, whose preference for young Arnold did not destroy friendship, as is so frequently the result of such experience, but seemed to more strongly unite them in their devotion to each other. The President of Rhode Island

to see you at Greenwich when that Event happens. I was yesterday at Providence and saw Mr. Harris and heard of Mr. Arnold both of which are Well. Judge Hopkins<sup>24</sup> inform'd me that the new Fangles Court at Newport was adjourn'd to May, and that one of the Gaspees People had sworn against me as being concern'd in the Destruction of Her.<sup>25</sup> This absurd Practice of Offering Large rewards will have pernicious Effects and be sensibly felt by many. The Temptation to Perjury is so Powerful that the People cannot easily resist it Tho the Law has Ordain'd that Oaths shall be administered with great Solemnity and accompanied with every Circumstances that tends to Inspire the Mind with Religious Reverence or Superstitious A[we]. Yet these Impressions are not strong enough to bind P[eo]ple of abandoned Principles to a Strict Observance of Truth. The Institution of this Court when taken in the Obvious View of all its consequences is justly Alarming to every Virtuous Mind and Lover of Liberty in America. There appears such universal declension of Publick and Private Virtue throughout the Nation, that I fear the Pr[etor]g[re]s and Liberties of the People will be trampled to Death by the Prerogatives of the Crown. Our General Assembly seems to have lost all that Spirit of Independence and Publick Virtue that has ever distinguisht them since their first being incorporated, and sunk down into [torn]

What will be the Issue of this Affair God only Knows. I expect Our General Assembly will be Stigmatid as a Pusillanimous Crew and Betrayers of the Peoples Liberties not only those within our own Jurisdiction but even all America for if this Court and Mode of Tryal is establish't into a Precedent it will naturally Affect all the other Colonies. If this Fellow should continue his Accusations against me I shall be call'd to the Bar as a Criminal would it not make you Laugh to see the Colonel stand in that Attitude. But I am Happy in having Witnesses to Establish my Innocence. Kitt Green & Cousin Griff Spent that Evening at my House, and Mrs Utter an Old Lady Sat up with me till near Twelve OClock. Kitt & Griff staid till 10 OClock Mrs. Utter

College, Mr. Manning, once remarked that he had spent an afternoon with two young men of such superior minds, 'that he was sure they would make distinguished figures in the world.' These young men were Nathanael Greene and Welcome Arnold . . ." Louise Brownell Clarke, *The Greenes of Rhode Island* (N. Y., 1903) p. 289.

<sup>24</sup>Stephen Hopkins (1707-1785), long-time political rival of Governor Samuel Ward, in 1773 was Chief Justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court.

<sup>25</sup>Although Nathanael Greene took no part in the burning of the *Gaspee*, he would probably have felt justified in doing so. The *Gaspee* had seized a sloop owned by Jacob Greene and Company, and shortly after the attack on the revenue vessel the Greenes brought suit against her commander, Lieutenant Dudingston,



saw me go to Bed, and my People saw me get up, and Griff<sup>26</sup> Saw me about Sunrise. We went to Providence together that Morning and as I live 13 miles from Providence and 12 from where the Schooner was Burnt it will be obvious at first Blush his Accusation is false. I should be tempted to Let the Sunshine through him if I could come at Him. I am going to Boston to morrow wish you was here to go with me. All Friends are well and so am I. Mr. Varnum is here a Bed, by whom I write, he and his Wife is coming to see you. I hear Nancy has had the Long Fever and remains very low wish She may be restord to Health soon Hannah I hear is Better and Caty has got very fat tell Her I will answer Her Letter at my return from Boston, remember me to all the Family. I shall always be proud to be reckoned amongst the number of your Friends and am with Esteem Yours

N G

P S I hope you can Read it but I doubt it

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East Greenwich March 2, 1773

Friend Sammy

I embrace this Opportunity by Mr Leonard Duson to write you, not because I have any thing to write, but to fulfill my Promise. Mr Arnold<sup>27</sup> and I arrived at Littlerest about 6 o'Clock the Evening after we left your House, we Lodgd that Night at Nathan Gardners,<sup>28</sup> by Virtue of the Invitation of John Hazzard, and set out next morning for Home, which was Sunday, and I believe will be rememberd by the Name of the Cold Sunday for half a Century. We Dind at Lodowick Updikes,<sup>29</sup> where Tom Arnolds delicate feelings was put out of Tune by Miss Lydia

<sup>26</sup>Griffen Greene (1749-1804), a first cousin of Nathanael, was one of the partners in the Greene Forge at Potawomut. He was General Greene's aide-de-camp while he was Quartermaster-General of the Revolutionary Army in 1778. In 1788 he moved with his family to Marietta, Ohio.

<sup>27</sup>Thomas Arnold (1751-1826) was a brother of Welcome Arnold (see note 22). He and Samuel Ward, Jr., were both members of the class of 1771 at Brown. After his graduation he entered the legal profession in which he had a successful career, serving as chief justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court, 1809-10, and as a trustee of Brown, 1800-1826. He married Mary, daughter of Obadiah Brown of Providence.

<sup>28</sup>Probably Nathan Gardiner (c. 1712-1792) whose daughter Sarah married John Hazard (1746-1813), son of Benjamin.

<sup>29</sup>Lodowick Updike (1725-1804) lived at "Smith's Castle" on his ancestral estate at Cocumscussoc, near Wickford. The house, site of the first white settlement in the Narragansett Country, has many important historical connections. It is now preserved by The Cocumscussoc Association.

Gardners<sup>30</sup> appearing in her Night Cap. Her Person and appearance was so different from his expectations that he could not help forming some of Swifts durty Ideas. We got that Night as far as Potowomut the Land of my Nativity, where we receivd a Hearty welcome, from their desire to Learn my success in the New London Expedition. We spent Monday at East Greenwich at Mr Nat Greens where we was joined by Mr Hitchcock and Tuesday the cry was every man to his Tent, O Israel. I could not prevail on Mr. Arnold to go to Coventry then, but Obtain'd a promise of a Weeks Visit very soon. I wish Fortune, for once, would shew us she can be Kind, and favor us with your agreeable Company at the Time. I flatter my self we Should form a very Happy Society. No news of Kitt or Perry<sup>31</sup> I Long to see their Faces. Your Friends are all well in these parts, and if I thought it would not feast your Vanity, I would inform you, you are much enquired after. Make my Compliments agreeable to all the Family, particularly Miss Hannah who I wish to see to make Acknowledgement for favours done me, that I were Ignorant of till very lately

Yours Nath Greene Jr

This Letter is in the Scotch Stile of particulars

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Greenwich Sunday Evening 11 OClock  
[May 30, 1773]<sup>32</sup>

Friend Sam

I receivd your Letter inclosd in a Line to your Sisters. you see its late when I begin, and youl excuse me for being short. Kitt saild for Maryland Wednesday last. Joy go with him, and Guardian Angels protect and secure him from the innumerable Evils incidental to Human Nature. Ring the Bells backward Cry fire, the Church is in danger. There has been a play acted in Providence, known by the Name of the unhappy Orphan. Joseph Ruscl<sup>33</sup> acted Monemia, Mr. Halsey<sup>34</sup>

<sup>30</sup>Lydia Gardiner, daughter of John and Mary (Taylor) Gardiner, was a younger sister of Abigail (Gardiner) Updike, wife of Lodowick Updike.

<sup>31</sup>Perry, youngest of the six Greene brothers, was born in 1749 and died in early manhood. He served in the Revolutionary War.

<sup>32</sup>This letter has been published previously in "Providence Theatricals in 1773" by S. Foster Damon, *Rhode Island History*, v. 4, no. 2, April 1945. The date of the letter is established by a newspaper notice of the play.

<sup>33</sup>Joseph Russell (1732-1792), one of the leading merchants of Providence in the second half of the eighteenth century. He was a member of the Rhode Island General Assembly and a trustee of Brown University.

<sup>34</sup>Thomas Lloyd Halsey (1751-1838), a prominent merchant, was French consular agent in Rhode Island during the Revolution. His fine, brick mansion on Prospect Street in Providence is still standing.



Polid[ore]. Mr. Harris Castelio, Mr. Bloget<sup>35</sup> Shamont. I have forgot the under Characters, but it is said they performed inimitably well, and to the satisfaction of all the Spectators. They had Hackers Hall,<sup>36</sup> with regular Scenes formed for that purpose, all tastily and in good order. You say there's nothing new under the Sun, this is new, for its the first attempt ever made, in this Colony, by its Inhabitants. Various are the Sentiments with regard to its Consequences, but the Priests and Levites, of every Order cries out against it, as subversive of Morality, and dangerous to the Church. I was in Mr. Arnolds Office a few Days ago, he has a pretty Law Library, and promises himself a fine run of Business. I wish his success may equal his expectation. Thank you for your Compliment upon my Military Dignity, and thank you again for the ridicule of its Author. He is vain above measure, and empty beyond Conception. I was almost Offended with Mr. Varnum for such a freedom before the supreme Court of the Colony. General Meeting News and all other Neighbourly Occurrences refer you to the Girls for Particulars not another word

N Greene Jr

<sup>35</sup>William Blodgett was later an officer during the Revolution, serving as aide-camp to General Greene in 1776-77. He died at Hartford, Conn., October 10, 1809.

<sup>36</sup>This hall, owned by Joshua Hacker, was on South Main Street near the foot of Power Street. For many years it served as a center for the social activities of Providence. It was one of the buildings destroyed in the great fire of 1801.

#### RHODE ISLAND PORTRAIT SURVEY

THE RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY is establishing a card file of portraits of Rhode Island persons, where students as well as the public may find a record of pictures whether they are in the Society's headquarters, in public buildings, or in private hands. There are already several lists of portraits available in various public institutions, but those portraits in private hands should by all means be included in the Society's survey.

Volunteers from various parts of the state are needed to carry on this work. Work sheets will be supplied by the Society. If you are interested in this project or have any questions or suggestions, please call The Rhode Island Historical Society. Telephone: DE 1-8575.

#### NEW MEMBERS

March 1, 1957 — April 30, 1957

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continued on back cover





## 29. TEA TABLE

*Cherry*

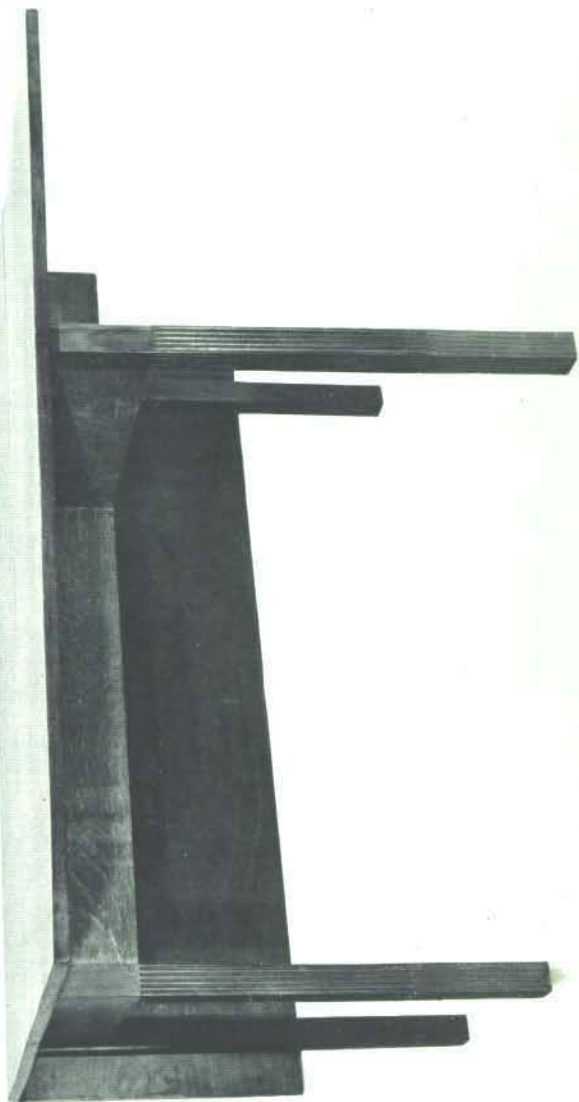
Connecticut or Rhode Island 1770-1785

There are two features that set this table apart from those which follow the usual designs: first, the twelve-sided top, with its appropriate moulded edge; second, the turning of the column of the pedestal with an unusual flattened ball and adjacent turnings.

To place its origin is difficult. Without a comparable table or one with similar features for guidance, one must conclude that it could have been made either in Connecticut or Rhode Island.

Ex-collection Julia D. and Franklin R. Cushman





### 30. DINING TABLE

(ONE PART OF THREE)

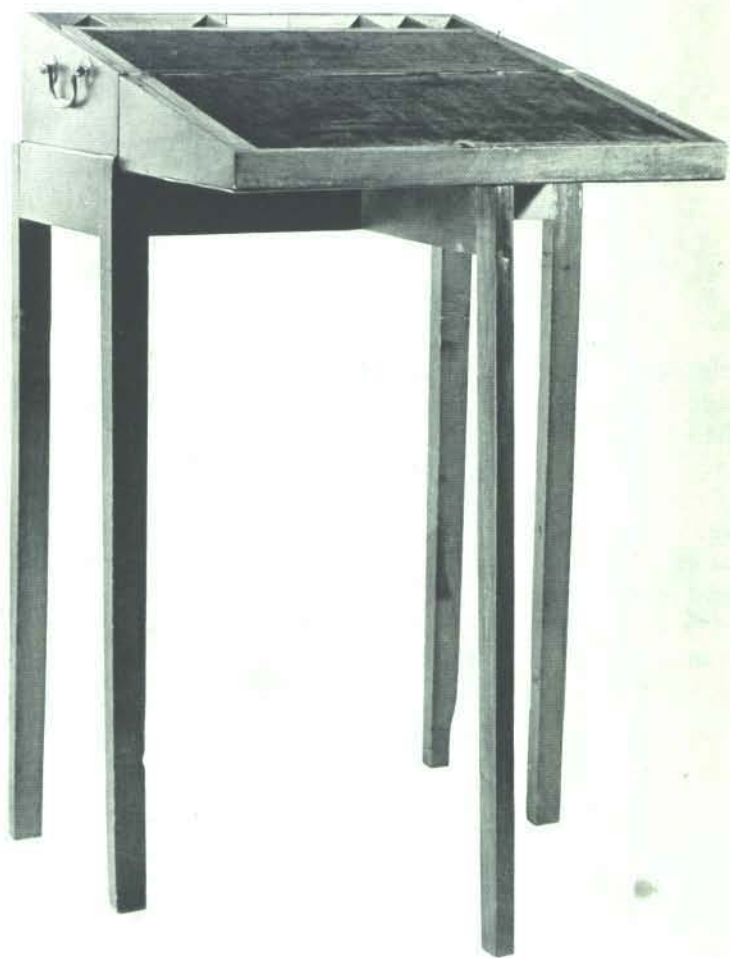
*Mahogany*

Newport, Rhode Island, 1780-1785

Relatively simple square-leaved mahogany tables of this type were made in considerable numbers by the Townsends and Goddards. The sole embellishment often consisted of the stopped-fluting of the legs. Two or three drop-leaf sections, put side by side with the leaves up, provided a means of increasing the seating capacity of the dining room table. This one is the center section of a three-part table, which was made for John Brown. At a later date the legs were shortened and a brass collar affixed. These were recently removed and the legs restored to their original length. Practically all of these tables were made of very dense, dark mahogany. The secondary woods were oak and maple. Usually chestnut was used rather than oak.

Bequest of Grace (Herreshoff) Sperry





### 31. DESK BOX ON STAND

*Mahogany*

New England 1790-1800

In an age when a gentleman sometimes wrote during his lifetime as many as 8,000 letters, longhand, writing equipment was an essential part of his furnishings, both at home and on his travels. Desk boxes of the type shown here provided not only a writing surface but also space for paper, ink, pens, etc. The two parts of the writing surface, covered with cloth (sometimes it was leather), are hinged so that each may be lifted to gain access to the storage space below. The handles on the sides were for convenience in travel. The stand is original and was probably used only in the home. When away from home, the writer simply placed the box on a convenient table.





### 32. LIGHTHOUSE CLOCK

Made by Simon Willard c. 1800

In the October, 1945, issue of *Rhode Island History*, Elisha C. Durfee discusses in some detail this and other clocks made by Simon Willard. In design it is supposed to be copied after that of the "Eddystone Lighthouse" which, in Willard's time, was the first landfall on a trip from America to England.

With respect to the clock itself, Durfee writes, "He [Willard] made very few of these clocks. They were produced in two sizes, of which the Society's example is the larger. The movements are of brass and run a week, striking one blow on each hour. In order to make the drop run the clock for the full period (one week), the mechanism is highly geared and the weight is very heavy."

This model was designed to be a table clock and, as such, "it is unique among antique American clocks."

Ex-collection C. Prescott Knight



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