



# RHODE ISLAND HISTORY

VOL. 26, NO. 1

JANUARY, 1967

PUBLISHED BY THE RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
FIFTY-TWO POWER STREET, PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND 02906

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ISSUED QUARTERLY AT PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND  
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*Windmill Cottage after a Snowstorm*

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## WINDMILL COTTAGE and LONGFELLOW

by PAUL R. LADD

WINDMILL COTTAGE is not 375 years old, but it is the combined age of the cottage and windmill which were joined by the great American poet Henry W. Longfellow. Separately the cottage has had a life span of about one hundred seventy-five years and the windmill more than two hundred years. According to the history of the mill it was situated near the old saltpeter works in East Greenwich, Rhode Island, and ground grain during the American Revolution. As a mill it met its demise sometime before 1870 when it was purchased by Longfellow, moved from across West Street and "married" to the old cottage which union thereafter was known as Windmill Cottage.

Longfellow's association with East Greenwich and Windmill Cottage began some years earlier. In April 1866 he purchased the cottage on Division Street and after only twelve days of ownership he presented this home to Professor George Washington Greene by deeding it to Greene's wife and "after her death to their children."

Longfellow knew full well that Professor Greene had to be protected from losing the property, for Greene apparently was improvident. For many years, moreover, Longfellow sent Professor Greene fifty dollars each month, which sum in those days had considerable purchasing power. The explanation of all this beneficence goes back to the early days of Longfellow and Greene, who as young men in Italy saw much of each other and developed a lifelong friendship.

Now, let us go back to the time when the cottage was a cottage and the mill was a mill. On October 23, 1926, Mrs. Adelaide Knight Hodgman became the owner of Windmill Cottage, at which time her husband, William Hodgman, was president of the Title Guarantee Company of Rhode Island. Mrs. Hodgman had bought the property at auction. The house and mill of Windmill Cottage lay directly



across the street opposite the entrance to Fyrtre Hall, the estate of the Hodgmans. It was only natural, therefore, that the Title Company should delve into their records and come forth with a chronological title abstract which dates the ownership of the property from 1800 to Christmas 1928 when this title record was presented to Mrs. Hodgman.

To establish the exact early history of Windmill Cottage, however, may take a little more researching. Colonel Thomas Allen, a native of East Greenwich who was familiar with East Greenwich history and who studied building types and architecture, expressed the belief that the cottage was built around 1790. However, the title abstract reads that "on June 3, 1800, John Pierce Sells one quarter acre of his farm 'on which I now dwell' to Martin Nichols, Mariner." Then it reads further that "Probably [and I think that we should underscore probably] soon after this date the house was built, for by 1805 the dwelling house and land had had three mortgages." Moreover the tract of land on which the house now is located consists of three quarters of an acre and from where and how this additional land came about is mentioned nowhere in the title record. Moreover another conjecture appears here in the record which states "Apparently he was unable to keep up the interest for he was obliged to sell for only fifty dollars." The sum of fifty dollars will perhaps bear looking into further. Also there were others in the history of Windmill Cottage who owned the house a shorter time than five years with no mention of mortgages or interest payments.

The new owner is William Greene, the first cashier of the Rhode Island Central Bank, the first bank in East Greenwich, and was the son of Captain Benjamin Greene of Warwick. He kept the property but three years when he sold to Franklin Greene, son of Elihu Greene who was a brother of General Nathanael Greene.

On November 15, 1811 Ethan Clarke buys the place. He was the past president of the Rhode Island Central Bank and lived a great many years in the General Varnum House [now maintained as a museum by the Varnum Continentals of East Greenwich].

Jeremiah Gardner was the next owner, purchasing the property in 1818 but soon sells to the guardians of Ray Clarke in the year 1833. After Clarke's death the property was sold to Horace Tillinghast on July 16, 1847.

The next owner (as noted previously) is a distinguished one, Henry

W. Longfellow, the great American poet; but he is the owner for only twelve days for on March 31, 1866 he gives it to Catherine V. B. Greene, wife of George W. Greene. There is a provision that after her death it is to go to her children.

"Professor George Washington Greene, who was the grandson of General Nathanael Greene, was an author of some note and one of his friends was the poet Longfellow," who often visited in the old house. The first floor of the Windmill part of the house served as a study for Professor Greene and Longfellow used an upper floor as his bedroom when a guest and possibly the third floor room when he wanted a "study" room for work or quiet.

"For many years it [Windmill Cottage] stayed in the Greene family but finally was sold at public auction on April 26, 1907, to Mary Greene Chapin."

In 1915 it was sold to Henry Eldredge who sells in 1923 to Gilbreth Brown and then on October 23, 1926, it became the property of Adelaide Knight Hodgman.

When the present occupants bought the property from the Hodgman estate, the executor, Mr. T. I. Hare Powell, and his wife, a daughter of the Hodgmans, presented the Ladds with the title abstract of Windmill Cottage. Paul R. and Helen D. Ladd became the owners on June 30, 1936, and thirty years later they still occupy this historic house.

Longfellow may have had Windmill Cottage in mind when he wrote *The Builders*, a stanza of which reads:

All houses where men have lived and died  
are haunted houses, Through the open doors  
The harmless phantoms on their errands glide  
With feet that make no sound upon the floors.

Ethan Clarke, a one-time owner, deserves some additional mention. Besides being the first president of the Rhode Island Central Bank he also was a founder and trustee of East Greenwich Academy. He had one daughter, Anna Maria Clarke, who married Nathanael Greene, son of General Nathanael Greene. They had two sons, Nathanael Greene and George Washington Greene who became the Professor Greene of Windmill Cottage.

An excerpt from the will of Ethan Clarke mentions his grandson



George Washington Greene as follows:

As for 20 years I have devoted much of my time and money to save the property of my son-in-law Nathaniel [*sic*] Greene, for the benefit of his children, also having so far saved at least 30,000 dollars and \$4000 of my own being used to save this property of my son-in-law. I hope that when this is known by my grandsons, Nathaniel [*sic*] and George Washington Greene, that this will satisfy them.

There were a few families who, though not owners, were occupants of Windmill Cottage. These include the Charles Eldredge's (whose forebears operated the mill and lived in the house); Mr. Sharon Brown, a professor of English at Brown University, and Mrs. Colin Makepeace, who before her marriage was a Nightingale. There doubtless were others who are unknown to the writer of this article.

Windmill Cottage had more than a passing association with Longfellow. The relationship began and continued for many years, because of his attachment to Professor Greene.

Continuing all through its life there has been a literary and cultural atmosphere created by authors, historians, painters, musicians, educators, and other artistic and creative personalities. One can conclude quite definitely, however, that these literary and cultural aromas had their beginnings with the poet Longfellow and the historian Greene.

When Longfellow bought the cottage, which became the home of Professor Greene by gift, Longfellow wrote to Greene as follows:

In worldly matters I send you Deeds, not words, better to speak, good deed and word intermingled. On account of the weather I could not go to the Notary Public (in this case the recording Angell of Rhode Island, as you will see by his signature) until yesterday, when the whole matter was settled, signed, sealed and delivered, and if you have as much pleasure in having it done as I have in doing it, this will be a pleasant Easter.

Of the Windmill, Longfellow wrote to Greene on November 25, 1870, as follows:

My dear Don Quixote —

I am delighted with the idea of presenting you a Windmill. When it is fairly set up in your garden, your neighbors will think you insane, for who would think of having a windmill in his garden, unless he already has one in his head. Still I hope you have made sure of it and only wish I had a similar one among my apple trees to serve as a

summer house. Your contemporaries will say you are mad and your biographer that you were a miller.

Some other references to the Windmill in letters from Longfellow to Greene are as follows:

Nov. 29, 187—“I enclose a cheque and wish you joy in your Windmill. . . .”

July 18, 1875—“As soon as you can tear yourself from the arms of your beloved Windmill, I hope you will come to Cambridge. . . .”

July 30, 1875—“And the Windmill with its folded wings and the stones that grind no more—That was a happy thought, if it makes you happy. . . .”

Dec. 25, 1875—“A Merry Christmas to all in the Windmill Cottage. . . .”

April 18, 1880—“I have written several poems of late, one of which ‘The Windmill’ I send you. You will see at a glance that it is not *your* windmill, for yours is like a butterfly with its wings pulled off. . . .”

Without doubt the poem is about the windmill of Windmill Cottage but he felt constrained to say “it is not your windmill” for the poem refers to the mill’s “sails” three times, whereas “yours is like a butterfly with its wings pulled off.” We include the first two stanzas of the poem *The Windmill*.

#### *The Windmill*

Behold a giant am I	I look down over the farms
Aloft here in my tower	In the fields of grain I see
With my granite jaws I devour	The harvest that is to be
The maize and the wheat and the rye	And <i>I fling to the air my arms</i>
And grind them into flour.	For I know it is all for me. . . .

The title of this article could well be the *Romance of an Old House* for romance is intermingled with the associations that fill the history of Windmill Cottage. We will now turn to some of this romance along with other literary references and “connections” with Windmill Cottage.

On September 29, 1880, Longfellow wrote to Mr. J. D. Fields from which letter I quote: “The visit to East Greenwich was to attend the wedding of Katherine Greene to Rev. William Brenton Greene and a beautiful wedding it was, an ideal village wedding in a pretty church. The Windmill Cottage of our friend Greene resplended



with *autumn* flowers. In one of the rooms was a tea kettle hanging on a crane in the fireplace. So begins a new household."

Of the same wedding Maud Howe Eliot, daughter of Julia Ward Howe, wrote to me on May 7, 1939, and I quote:

Dear Mr. Ladd:

I have read with great interest your article in the May number of the *American Home* about Windmill Cottage. I was last there at the wedding of my cousin, the daughter of George Washington Greene, to her cousin also named Greene. It was a lovely *summer*<sup>1</sup> wedding. I went from Newport with my mother Julia Ward Howe. Mr. Longfellow was there and I think Charles Sumner,<sup>2</sup> and my mother's brother, my Uncle Sam Ward. He and Longfellow between them for many years contributed to the support of Mr. Greene, a gifted writer, and devoted friend of Longfellow's. In my recent book, published a year ago by Macmillan, *Uncle Sam Ward and His Circle*, there are frequent mentions of Greene in the correspondence between Ward and Longfellow.

Of this same wedding Maud Howe Eliot also wrote in her book *This is my Newport*, as follows, and I quote:

The Wards and the Greenes were closely related and as mother kept open house to kinsfolk of every degree, they were frequent visitors. We made many trips to East Greenwich, on the mainland, where we were entertained at the house of Lt. Governor William Greene. In Greenwich too lived George Washington Greene, the historian. He was an exquisite man with the softest voice, the most courtly manner. He was the lifelong friend and correspondent of Longfellow to whom he dedicated his *magnium* [sic] *opus*, *The Life of Major General Nathanael Greene*, in three volumes. My last impression of him was at the wedding of his daughter to her cousin William Brenton Greene. Mr. Longfellow came from Cambridge for the ceremony. We left the two old friends deep in talk as we drove away, going over the old days when they were in Naples together as lads in 1812.

In a letter to the poet, Greene refers to this time:

It was then that you unfolded to me your plans of life and showed me from what deep cisterns you had already learned to draw. From that day the office of literature took a new place in my thoughts.

<sup>1</sup>Mrs. Eliot referred to the wedding as a *summer* wedding, although Longfellow referred to the *autumn* flowers.

<sup>2</sup>In Lincoln's cabinet.

Among the literary references another Rhode Island author, Mrs. Emily Eldredge Saville who wrote *Memories in a Garden*, refers to Windmill Cottage in her book.

Professor Greene dedicated his history of Rhode Island to his mother, and it reads:

TO

ANNA MARIA GREENE

My Dear Mother

You bear your ninety-three years so lightly that I invite your attention to a new volume of mine with as much assurance of your sympathy as when I cowered and wondered over my first picture book an infant on your knee. For your sympathy is as quick and as warm as it was then, and your memory goes back with unerring certainty to the men and the scenes of almost a century ago. Your eyes have looked upon Washington, and your tenacious memory can still recall the outline of his majestic form.

The first time that I ventured to send forth a volume to the world, I set upon the dedication page the name of my father. He has been dead many years. You still linger behind, and long may you linger. Long may those fresh memories which give such a charm to your daily life continue to cheer you and instruct those who have the privilege of living with you. They have seen life imperfectly who have not seen what a charm it wears when the heart that has beat so long still lends its genial warmth to the still inquiring mind.

Reverently and affectionately your son,  
GEORGE W. GREENE

In more contemporary literature we find reference to Windmill Cottage and its personages.

Van Wyck Brooks in his book *New England—Indian Summer*, chapter 11, page 25, wrote:

George W. Greene of R.I. who had spent twenty years abroad served for eight years as Consul at Rome. Longfellow and Greene had met at Naples in the faraway days of their youth, near Virgil's tomb and Sanazzaro's ashes and Greene was at work on the admirable memoirs of his grandsire, the great Nathanael Greene of the Revolution. In Italy he had collected materials for Prescott and with his gentle manner, discreet and suave, he was rather like some old Italian house priest. He seemed to know all the Italian poets by heart and

when he visited Longfellow, whom he adored, Howells was always invited to join the circle. . . .

And one of our own Rhode Island poets (a former resident) Winfield Townley Scott wrote the poem *The Tree in the Wall* at Windmill Cottage June 11, 1934.

Mr. Scott, in sending a copy of the poem to me, wrote: "This is the poem you asked for. I'm sorry it's not better. . . . I couldn't seem to get away from a Robert Frostian style . . ."

The poem reads:

#### THE TREE IN THE WALL

They wanted the young tree and they wanted a straight wall;  
They built the stone true to their line so the tall  
Slight beech had to stand encased in right rock, or else fall.

It must be one or the other, as they should have known:  
Either tree to go down pressed in the hard will of stone,  
Or the Sprung wall spilling over when the tree had grown.

And here the old tree has swelled round the younger.  
Stone may have inspired beech to grow stronger;  
Anyway, you can see the wall won't hold much longer.

The owners who piled and knit these granites with care  
Are gone; and for us rocks sprawl, trunk shows bare;  
Those next after us are sure to find only the tree there.

The tree in the wall was toppled and destroyed by the hurricane of 1938, but the poem remains as does the repaired wall.

A letter from Miss Edna Greenwood, an antiquarian, who has donated rare and valuable Americana to the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C., referred to Mr. Scott in a letter as follows:

We are still looking for you and Mrs. Ladd here at Firestone Farm and I wish that you could persuade Winfield Scott to come with you. I want him to meet Esther Forbes, as I think she would appreciate his *Timothy Dexter* book that he has written and could help get it published. She is with Houghton Mifflin and in a strategic position to do so.

Another poem which has crossed my path is entitled *The Legend of the Mill* by F. Burge Smith, which avowedly is about the mill of Windmill Cottage. A footnote to this poem says:

The old mill is situated in East Greenwich, Rhode Island, and is attached to and made part of the house of Professor George W. Greene, one of our well-known authors, and the grandson of General Greene of Revolutionary fame.

This poem which tells the life story of the mill which became part of a house, starts as follows:

#### THE LEGEND OF THE MILL

The corn was rustling on the hill,  
In the gentle Summer wind;  
The Miller sat in the old brown mill  
Waiting his grist to grind;

Waiting for sun, and waiting for rain,  
According to God's own plan,  
To ripen the beautiful golden grain,  
And bring it to food for man. . . .

In reviewing more of the contemporary period I will turn to a lighter vein for a few anecdotes and experiences.

First I will mention Professor Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Dana, a grandson of the poet, who visited Windmill Cottage and kept up a correspondence with us. In a letter of March 9, 1942, he enclosed a paraphrased poem, *The Midnight Ride of Santa Claus*, and wrote: "It was good of you to give me that beautiful photograph of the brook in your New Hampshire retreat. I only wish that you had sent your poem with it which I am sure must have been better than those verses of mine."

Marion Nichols Rawson, an artist, illustrator and author, who was especially well known in Providence and Rhode Island visited Windmill Cottage with some other "girls." Mr. Ladd was anxious to have the property at least make a good impression and (perhaps at the behest of his wife) the yard was tidied up quickly by filling the old well house with paraphernalia and tools with the following results:

A note from Mrs. Rawson the next day to "Dear PL" which included the verse:

There was an ancient well curb  
Upon a shady lawn . . .

so the following day Mrs. Rawson received a sequel from "PL" which



read:

Until one day when city gals  
To rural parts were bound  
Gathered at ye ancient house  
And snooped and snook around . . .

From Marion Rawson came a rejoinder to which she remarked: "Since there can be no creditable answer to this simple question we hope the farmer lad will not strain to invent one. We are simply looking after the Preservation of New England's antique waters."

I found a little billet doux  
The day I went to town  
'Twas from a local farmer lad  
Of reasonable renown . . .

M. N. R.

One day Mrs. Ladd answered the doorbell and there stood a priest and a Chinaman. The priest said, "Is this Mrs. Ladd? I am Father Iannetta and this is my son Kenneth." After a bit of bewilderment, the priest explained that Kenneth the Chinaman was his adopted son and that Mr. Ladd had told him when he called at his office, that Mrs. Ladd would be glad to show him Windmill Cottage. Father Iannetta had written a book entitled *Longfellow and Montecassino*, a copy of which he presented to the Ladds. In response to some photographs of Windmill Cottage, which the Ladds sent to Father Iannetta, he wrote the following gracious letter:

My dear Mr. Ladd,

Many grateful thanks for your generous gesture in having these special and welcome photographs made to my great delight. If ever I revise or deal in a second edition, these views of the Greene Home in East Greenwich will be of inexpressible value to me and to any reader of the booklet.

I hope to be able to find some information relative to the history of the Windmill and I intend to extend my research into this matter until I know more of its origin and history—

Very sincerely and gratefully yours

(Rev.) Sabatino Iannetta

A veritable parade of interesting and notable people have enjoyed the flavor or romance of Windmill Cottage besides those who have written about it. It has been the scene of many gatherings for an

evening of charades. The Rushlight Club of America has held two of its meetings at the house. This club has as its objective "to shed light on the lights of the past. It is well known of course that Professor Greene and Longfellow were members of the Dante Club which, however, met in Cambridge and which still holds an annual meeting according to Mr. Valencourt, director at Longfellow (Craigie) House.

Windmill Cottage is now furnished with antiques and hand-crafted materials of which a bulletin of the Rushlight Club stated "many beautifully stenciled pieces were admired throughout the house, as well as woven materials, fine hooked rugs and hand-dipped candles, all examples of Mrs. Ladd's talented craftsmanship."

An article which appeared in the *R.I. Pendulum* on the Windmill, signed "Barbara," included this paragraph.

The present owners, Mr. and Mrs. Paul R. Ladd, bought Windmill Cottage from the Hodgman estate June 30, 1936. Inside they've put furniture that seems to belong to the house. One feels that they care for the old cottage not alone for its history or past occupants but as the lovely old home it is. I for one hope it stays in their hands longer than it has in any of the former owners, for the Windmill Cottage seems to have come into its own again.

Windmill Cottage is sufficiently historic and antique to lend itself to public notice. It has its own fan mail and its newspaper articles and photos. Ripley's *Believe it or not* has used Windmill Cottage twice in the last several years. *Johnny Cake* pictures and special articles have featured Windmill Cottage. Radio stations and magazines have carried items and articles on this home. Numerous tourists and artists stop to photograph or sketch the house as they do with covered bridges.

Is it any wonder then that there is an undiscovered "buried treasure" at Windmill Cottage about which there is an interesting story?

Where else but in such a house would carpenters uncover a large pewter charger in the dome of the Windmill?

Where else but in the yard of an old house would one find Indian relics and artifacts and old hardware used in pioneer days?

Where else would one find a pane of glass in the attic with an invitation to a fifteenth wedding anniversary cut on it?

Where else would the Airedale of the house be treated with a cup of coffee by the local doctor and an ice cream cone at the drugstore each day on his return trip to school with the children?



BRAMANS OF WASHINGTON COUNTY, R. I.

by HAROLD MINOT PITMAN, F.A.S.G.

THE VERY FIRST RECORDED BIRTHS in South Kingstown, Rhode Island, v. 1, p. 1, are those of seven Braman children who, one might think, were lost orphans, since no parents are ascribed to them, a very unusual record. Two of these children, James and Joseph, are called *Jr.* in later conveyances, leaving in doubt whether the father was James or Joseph. This doubt, however, is resolved by a loose-leaf typed insertion found in Book 2 of Births, Marriages and Estrays in the office of the town clerk at South Kingstown. This insertion is a list of the marriages performed by Rowse Helme, justice. It here appears that "James Braman, son of James Braman" married 3 December 1722 Elizabeth Carpenter. Therefore a James Braman was the father of the following children, presumably born in South Kingstown, but possibly some at North Kingstown or elsewhere.

- i. JANE, b. 28 Oct. 1695; m. West Greenwich, R. I., 5 Oct. 1718 Thomas Draper.
- ii. JAMES, b. 12 Nov. 1697; m. South Kingstown, 3 Dec. 1722 Elizabeth Carpenter, daughter of Solomon Carpenter whose will (South Kingstown Town Council and Probate 4:318) dated 30 Apr. 1750, proved 10 Oct. 1750, leaves a bequest to Elizabeth Braman. They had a son Solomon Braman, b. 2 July 1723; m. 9 Apr. 1744 Content Mumford, according to Gustav Anjou's typescript.
- iii. MARY, b. 4 May 1700. No further record.
- iv. JOSEPH, b. 24 March 1703; m. South Kingstown (V.R. 1:70), 27 June 1725, Abigail Allen, b. South Kingstown (V.R. 1:70) 29 Nov. 1700. She was probably daughter of Christopher Allen, who died in 1739, and who married in Boston "according to the forms of the Church of England" in 1687 Elizabeth Legouche or Segouche [name illegible] "of Little Compton" (North Kingstown V.R.).

The children of Joseph and Abigail (Allen) Braman, the first six recorded at South Kingstown 3 Dec. 1739, the last recorded there "at his request" in March 1767 (V.R. 1:27) were:

- a. SARAH, b. 19 Feb. 1725.
- b. ABIGAIL, b. 23 Dec. 1727.
- c. JOSEPH, b. 23 Feb. 1729.
- d. ANN, b. 12 Aug. 1731.
- e. THOMAS, b. 23 April 1734; m. South Kingstown 26 Jan. 1755

Elizabeth Grinell.

- f. JOHN, b. 2 May 1737.
- g. PAUL, b. 4 July 1743. He was probably the Paul Braman who m. Martha — and d. Berlin, Rensselaer Co., N.Y., in 1826.
- v. BEN JAMIN, b. 3 April 1705; m. Charlestown, Rhode Island, 28 April 1729 Martha, daughter of Henry, Jr., and Constant Hall (Westerly, Rhode Island Land Ev. 5:270 and Will Lib. 2:216).
- vi. JOHN, b. 15 Mar. 1707. No further record.
- vii. FREELove, b. 11 Jan. 1708; m. Westerly, Rhode Island (Town Meetings and Marriages 3:247) 28 Oct. 1734 Thomas Brand (not Beard as in Arnold's *Vital Record of Rhode Island*. There was a Brand family in Westerly at that time but no Beard family).

Having thus disposed of the children, what of their ancestry? According to the above-mentioned typescript by Gustav Anjou the Rhode Island Bramans had a long line of French progenitors, beginning with a Guillaume Bremen who was living in Ponthieu, Picardy, in 1273. He records a fairly well-authenticated lineage for eight generations to a Jean Bremen, bapt. (no place given) 11 Dec. 1496, d. "Ledesham" (meaning Ledsham), Yorkshire, England, 1546; m. 3 Aug. 1528, Celeste de Gros, who, Anjou says, emigrated from Brielle, Holland, to Ledsham and left a will dated 28 Aug. 1546. A reference to this will and its contents would be welcome. He is supposed to have had a son Henry who, Anjou says, came as a Huguenot with his parents to Ledsham with a wife Suzanne Hurst "at an early age." This Henry he says had many children baptized at Ledsham, one being a Thomas, bpt. Ledsham 4 Nov. 1565, m. 3 Sept. 1613 Jane daughter of Thomas and Dorothy (Church) Alcock of Kippax Parish, Yorkshire. This Thomas had a son Thomas b. (not baptized) 12 July 1614; m. 3 Nov. 1647 Jane, daughter of John and Catherine (Butler) Kingsley. The published Ledsham Parish Register has no record of any Bremens, Bramans or Braymans. Since it does have a long record of baptisms of children of a Henry Bramham who did have a son Thomas, baptized 4 Nov. 1565, it is evident that Anjou converted a Bramham record into Braman, not a likely corruption on the name Bremen. In any case there is no record of the birth or baptism of a Thomas Bramham or Braman in or about 1614 and nothing whatsoever to show or even intimate that Thomas Braman of Taunton came from Yorkshire. Hence the whole Anjou fabricated lineage may be entirely disregarded.



Thomas Braman (Brayman) was in Taunton, Plymouth Colony, by 1652 and took the oath of allegiance there in 1657. He died before 1666, when his widow, Jane Brayman m. there (Taunton V.R. 2:59) 26 March 1666 Samuel Holloway by whom she had (Plymouth Col. Rec.) Hannah, b. March 1667; Samuel, b. 14 Sept. 1668; Nathaniel, b. 2 July 1670; Esther, b. 14 May 1673; and John, b. 24 Feb. 1674.

Thomas Braman's supposed sons were James, Joseph and Thomas. Of these Joseph, m. Rehoboth, Mass., (V.R. 1:58) 9 Sept. 1681 Sarah Savage and had a daughter Experience, b. Rehoboth 10 Nov. 1682 and a son John, b. there 22 June 1685 (V.R. p. 553). Thomas m. Taunton 20 Jan. 1685/6 Hannah Fisher (*N.E.H.G. Reg.* 17:233) and had Thomas, b. 2 Dec. 1686 and Daniel, b. 13 Oct. 1688. According to Anjou, James was born 7 May 1650 (no reference or place given), m. (according to Anjou) Jane, daughter of Job and Jane (Crandall) Badcock and was father of the James who m. Elizabeth Carpenter.

That James Braman who married Jane Babcock (Badcock) date unknown, was father of the seven "lost" Bramans is probably correct, since his two oldest children were named Jane and James. However it is unlikely that the James Braman, husband of Jane Babcock, was son of Thomas of Taunton, especially as Thomas's son James, according to Anjou, was born in 1650. He would have had his first recorded child, Jane, in 1695 at the age of 45 and the last, Freeloze, in 1708 at the age of 58. This is possible but not probable.

It is more likely that the James Braman, father of the "lost" Bramans, was the James Braman of North Kingstown who was a minor in 1692 when his guardian, Capt. Jeffrey Champlin, took court action to protect the rights of his ward to some land in North Kingstown (North Kingstown Probate Liber 5:4). This James was probably born about 1672 and is probably the James who married Jane Babcock. He could not have been son of Joseph and Sarah (Savage) Braman or of Thomas and Hannah (Fisher) Braman, as he would then have been much too young to have had a child born in 1695. He could have been, and probably was, the son of James, son of Thomas Braman of Taunton, who, Anjou says, was born 7 May 1650, and the elder brother of Joseph and Thomas.

The Anjou typescript is in The Rhode Island Historical Society (Gen. Mss. Room: B 731). "Braman (Brayman) family as compiled by Gustave Anjou of American Genealogical Society. Original manuscript owned by Chester A. Braman, 580 Park Avenue, N.Y. City."

PETER EDES'S REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
RHODE ISLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 1787-1790

by IRWIN H. POLISHOOK  
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[concluded from October, 1966, inside back cover]

THE MARCH 1788 SESSION OF THE LEGISLATURE<sup>58</sup>

WEDNESDAY [April 2], A. M. Both Houses were formed and proceeded on the business of the session.

A committee was appointed to examine and count the votes returned upon the proposed Constitution for the United States, who reported, "that there were 288 Yeas, and 2,580 Nays, the whole number being 2,868" — from whence it appeared that not one half of the Freemen had voted, there being upwards of 7,000 Free Citizens in the State,<sup>59</sup> and therefore it could be no vote. The report was however received, and a letter was drafted agreeably to order and subscribed by the Governor, transmitting this vote to Congress as the determination of this State upon the Constitution, also stating the reasons for adopting a mode, different from that recommended by the general [Federal] Convention.<sup>60</sup> As a palliation of this irregular procedure, it was conceded in this letter that there was a deficiency in the confederation, and a willingness expressed to grant unto Congress unlimited power for the regulation of commerce, collecting

<sup>58</sup>*Newport Herald*, April 10, 1788.

<sup>59</sup>Edes's figures on the vote are at variance with the official count which gives 2,708 opposed to the constitution, with 237 in favor. In either case, the majority against ratification was clearly overpowering. Faced with certain defeat on the issue, the federalists decided to boycott the referendum on the constitution. In this way, the weakness of the federalists in Rhode Island would not be put to the test of public humiliation. The 2,708 votes against the constitution was a close approximation of the electoral majority of the Country Party throughout this period; the opposing mercantile forces never gained more than approximately 1,200 votes. In the election of 1787, for example, the Country Party candidate for re-election as governor, John Collins, received 2,969 ballots, while his mercantile opponent, William Bradford, received 1,141. The 4,110 freemen who cast their votes for governor provided the largest turnout of the entire Confederation era. A fifty per cent showing in almost any election, local or state-wide, was a large turnout for Rhode Island.

<sup>60</sup>The text of Governor Collins's letter may be consulted in Collins to the President of Congress, In General Assembly, April 5, 1788, State Papers of Rhode Island, Mss., National Archives, 604-610; Rhode Island Records, Mss., Rhode Island State Archives, vol. 13, 472-473; or Bartlett, *Records*, X, 291.



impot, excise, etc.

A motion was made by Mr. [Henry] Marchant (*of Newport*) "that a Convention of this State be called, agreeably to the recommendation of the general [Federal] Convention and of Congress, to deliberate upon the proposed Constitution," but it was rejected by a majority of 27.

A motion was made from the opposite quarter of the House, by JOHN SAYLES, Esq. of Smithfield, "*That the House should proceed to appoint a committee of our BEST MEN to frame a Constitution for the United States, and transmit the same to Congress*"; but it was not attended to. The majority felt the keen sting of merited ridicule, by this indiscreet motion of their staunch friend; they were doubtless never more convinced of the utility of nocturnal Conventions, to organize the proceedings of the ensuing day.

The Committee of the Society of Friends prayed that the consideration of their Memorial for the Repeal of the Tender and Limitation Acts, might be referred to May sessions; but the sense of the House was for acting on it immediately, as while pending, they said it tended to depreciate the currency. Upon the question for the Repeal of the Tender of Paper money at par, it was rejected by the usual majority; the Limitation Act was repealed . . .

The Bill pending before the House for an equal representation (as it was wrongly called) was moved for discussion, but after much debate it was referred [defeated].

An Act passed limiting the payment of the third quarter part of [the] six per cent. state notes to the tenth of May current, when a forfeiture should be incurred if the paper money was not taken by the holders of them . . .

Saturday evening [April 5], when the House was very thin, the petition and instructions from Newport and Providence, praying that a Convention might be appointed, and the memorial from the society of Friends for the repeal of the Tender and Limitation Acts, were ordered to be thrown off the table . . .

#### THE JUNE 1788 SESSION OF THE LEGISLATURE<sup>61</sup>

The LAST QUARTER part of State Notes consolidated to specie value, and orders upon the Impot for the interest arising thereon, is

<sup>61</sup>*Newport Herald*, June 19, 1788. Edes did not print a detailed commentary on the proceedings of the May 1788 session of the General Assembly.

to be forfeited if the holders of them do not apply within one month from the rising of the Assembly and receive the paper emission at its nominal value. Those who have received the first or second quarter, are indulged in receiving the third and last quarter, provided they apply within the time above prescribed . . .

Upon an order for the publication of an Act in the news-papers, the *Newport Herald* was excepted with great temper and warmth.<sup>62</sup>

A Bill was drafted for consolidating *four per cent.* notes to specie value, and paying them in the paper emission at the nominal value, but was referred to [the] next sessions.

The wants of the INVALIDS obliged them to assail the House again for their stipends. Their mutilated trunks and marks of penury and distress wounded sensibility in its tenderest parts, and would have excited sympathetic feelings in the Savage, that it was natural to suppose there would require no eloquence to enforce their claims, especially when superadded to this, we find their allowance was by virtue of an act of Congress, and was to be paid by each State where these unhappy objects belonged, merely for their conveniency, and the amount is to be credited the State in the Continental account; it therefore increased our astonishment that there should be an opponent. Their demands however met with much difficulty in the course of their sessions. To pay them the real value of their stipend

<sup>62</sup>The militancy of the *Newport Herald* was an issue before the legislature on many occasions. In response to his exclusion from the publication of the laws of the legislature, Edes declared: "That if they [the Assembly] were unwilling their Acts should be so fully known, as they are by the extensive circulation of this paper, an exclusion of pay will not prevent the publication of them, as the publisher of the Herald will do it *gratis*, from this consideration, that a general information of governmental proceedings, constitutes a grand palladium against encroachments.

"If an expectation of checking free disquisition of PUBLIC MEN or MEASURES could be the motive, he assures the public that the HERALD will still continue an unshaken supporter of the patrons of liberty, order and justice, and a keen scourge to the sons of anarchy and fraud.

"In making these declarations, the publisher of the Herald with sincerity adds, that he feels no pleasure when there is a necessity to *reprehend*; nor is he flattered when there is a theme for satire, for it will be his highest pleasure to see the halcyon days return when *praise* shall supplant *censure*. It is an EPOCH he presages not far distant, for a tyrannical paper system [the Stamp Act] laid the basis of American independence and a fraudulent one [in Rhode Island] pointed out the necessity of a Federal Constitution.

"Thus GOOD cometh out of EVIL."



seemed dissonant to the major voice; to pay them in paper at its nominal value, was not only repugnant to justice, but to humanity. To obviate this, a motion was made by Mr. [Thomas] *Joslyn*, and seconded by Mr. [Job] *Comstock* (both leading members of the majority) to pay their balance in INDENTS,<sup>63</sup> under the idea that it was a currency of the United States; if it was depreciated (say they) let the continent make it good to them. The motion was highly condemned by the minority as introducing a speculation of the basest kind, not only upon the credit of the United States, but upon the unhappy sufferers; besides, if the speculation was just, would Congress allow us the charge in specie when we paid Indents that cost but 2s., 6d., in the pound to the Invalids at their nominal value? A vote was however insisted upon and taken, but to the honor of the House the motion was negatived. A motion was then made to make grants of certain stipulated sums in the paper emission on *Account*, which passed in the affirmative; these grants are about three times the nominal sum that was due . . .

The officers and waiters were paid their fees, at the rate of six for one, without hesitation . . .

Upon the question of Adjournment a leading member who had been violently opposed against the New Constitution, urged a short adjournment as it was probable we should be called upon in regard to the New Constitution. To obviate this reason it was moved that a Convention should now be appointed to meet at some distant period, but the motion was not noticed . . .

#### THE OCTOBER 1788 SESSION OF THE LEGISLATURE<sup>64</sup>

The two Houses were not organized until Wednesday [October 29]. A controversial election and private business engrossed their attention until Thursday [October 30], when it was moved in the Lower House that provision should be made, for the payment of the State Notes issued on an interest of four per cent., the principal of which amounts, as by a report of a committee, to £46,011, 4s., 6d. In the course of this debate the House appeared much divided in sentiments. Some of the leaders in the Majority urged a payment of them with fifteen shilling paper currency for every twenty expressed in the notes; others of the same party were for paying them off in

<sup>63</sup>The term "indent" refers to federal certificates issued in place of interest on the national debt of the United States.

<sup>64</sup>*Newport Herald*, Nov. 6, 1788.

currency at par agreeably to the mode pursued in discharging the six per cent. notes. The members in the minority moved that the holders of them should be paid in the currency at the rate of six for one, the exchange of it being so established by the House in the payment of all accounts for services now done government; but this motion, after lengthy debates, was negatived, and that for discharging them at par with paper currency was adopted by a large majority. The majority were, however, much divided with regard to the mode of payment. Some of them were for an immediate payment of the whole sum, observing that they had been a source of uneasiness to the State, and nothing short of the discharge of them would restore peace to government.

As the mode of payment in currency at par was therefore fixed, and nothing further could be obtained for the holders of them, and these notes having been the ostensible plea of the necessity of a paper currency, and tender, the minority moved accordingly the question for their immediate payment. To induce an acquiescence with this proposition, they proved from the State of the Treasury that there was £43,000 in the Treasury which with the tax of £30,000, payable in December, would far exceed the amount of the notes and grants made at this session; besides, from the report of the Treasurer it appeared that in the discharge of [the] six per cent. notes, not one half had been demanded, the holders having refused to receive so depreciated a payment, and it was to be presumed that many of the holders of the four per cent. notes would refuse receiving the money from the same principle. But some members of the majority were more wary, contested [in favor of] the payments by installments, and upon taking the question it was carried by the usual majority to pay off only the one fourth part in the two months, and if not demanded within the same time to be forfeited. And thus is procrastinated the payment of the public debt — a striking proof that the discharge of it was not the principal object with the majority. Like a tub to amuse the whale, some part of it will be politically retained to throw out at the next elections to induce the people to reappoint them to complete so glorious a work.

An act passed authorising the General Assembly to make payment of balances that were forfeited on six per cent. notes, to such holders of them only who had manifested a disposition to comply with the



orders of government, by having received a payment in part in currency.

Collectors of taxes were directed to receive four per cent. notes of ten pounds value or under that sum in payment of the tax now collecting.

On Friday [October 31] a motion was made for the appointment of a Convention to consider the proposed Constitution . . .

On Saturday [November 1] this business was reassumed, and after a very lengthy debate, the question was put and lost, there being 40 Nays, 14 Yeas, [a/ 26 majority against calling a Convention.

Immediately after this decision, it was moved that the Tender Law, so far as it respected private contracts, should be repealed. In support of the motion it was observed, and not denied, that the money was passing at the rate of eight for one, and that the Assembly, in the present session, had, in repeated instances, made grants to the amount of above £12,000, at a discount of six for one; but upon taking the question, there were 40 Nays, 15 Yeas, [a/ 25 majority against repealing the tender . . .

At the close of the session a motion was made for referring the letter<sup>65</sup> from the New-York [Ratifying] Convention to the people, and that it should be recommended to them to empower their Deputies to appoint Delegates to meet with those which might be appointed by the State of New-York or other States to consider and determine the proposed amendments to the Constitution of the United States of America. This act was intended as a substitute for the calling of a [Ratifying] Convention. And notwithstanding the impropriety and absurdity of the measure which appeared in the course of the debates, it was carried by the usual majority.

The Hon. Jonathan J. Hazard, and John Gardner, Esqrs. Delegates to Congress, were requested to take their seats in that Hon. Body . . .

<sup>65</sup>The above letter was a proposal by the New York State Ratifying Convention which suggested that the states convene a second Federal Convention for the purpose of amending the Constitution of 1787 before it became operative. The plan was forwarded to Rhode Island in a circular letter from Governor George Clinton.

#### THE DECEMBER 1788 SESSION OF THE LEGISLATURE<sup>66</sup>

There was not a sufficient number of members to make a quorum until THURSDAY [January 1], when agreeably to the order of the last sessions, the deputies were called upon for their instructions from their respective towns in regard to Governor Clinton's letter that was referred to them for advise. Upon examination, it appeared that only thirteen of the towns then represented, had complied with the recommendation, eight of which were in favour of a [second] general [Federal] Convention,<sup>67</sup> and five for a State Convention, agreeably to the recommendation of Congress. Meetings had been held in the other towns, but the deputies of these reported, that their constituents declined giving any instructions, upon the principle of adhering to the articles of Confederation, and an aversion to all [any] amendments [of the Constitution of 1787].<sup>68</sup> Upon the instructions being read, a motion was made "for calling a State Convention." The majority though divided in other respects now united in opposition to this measure, [so] that upon the question being put it passed in the negative, there being 34 Nays, 12 Yeas, [a] 22 majority against calling a State Convention. The Majority suffered the business to rest here, without making any motion relative to the subject.

Friday [January 2], it was moved, that the holders of the four per cent. notes should be paid the whole of the principal and interest in the paper emission at par on or before the first of March next, and that in case of neglect their demands should be forfeited. This was carried in the Lower House in the affirmative by the usual majority. The Upper House non-concurred with regard to the time, and sent it down with an amendment to "the first of May," but the Lower House adhered to their vote, [and] the Upper House finally concurred with them. By this order the whole of the State debt contracted before or during the war will be paid off by the first of March next. As this has been the declared object of our late public measures, the honest part of the community may hope for a repeal of the iniquitous tender law, and a change of system to secure unto them their remaining property and to render us once more respectable . . .

<sup>66</sup>*Newport Herald*, Jan. 8, 1789.

<sup>67</sup>The manuscript records of the towns show that nine town meetings instructed their deputies in the Assembly to vote in favor of the convocation of a second Federal Convention.

<sup>68</sup>This significant sentence expresses the sense of the town meetings that Rhode Islanders were opposed to the Constitution of 1787 even if it was amended.



THE MARCH 1789 SESSION OF THE LEGISLATURE<sup>69</sup>

WEDNESDAY [March 11], the two Houses were formed. No public letters being received since the last session, and no public or private business of moment presenting, the day passed without any transactions of consequence.

THURSDAY [March 12] was employed in hearing private petitions.

FRIDAY [March 13], agreeably to the order of the day a motion grounded on the instructions from the town of Providence, for the calling a state Convention to consider of the proposed Federal Constitution, and also for the repeal of the law making the paper emission a tender in all cases, was now attended to. These respective motions were ably supported, and the necessity of their being passed seemed so fully established, as not to be controverted by Machiavelian sophistry; but the majority, in consequence of a nocturnal convention the night before, combatted the arguments in a new manner, to wit, by observing a fixed silence. No facts however stubborn, no observations however severe, on our impolitic antifederalism or the iniquitous tender law, could arouse them to a free discussion. Upon the arguments being closed in favor of each motion, the question was immediately demanded by members in the majority.

Upon the motion for calling a State Convention, etc. there were 36 nays, 19 yeas. So the question was lost by [a] 17 majority.

Upon the motion for repealing the tender there were again 36 nays, 19 yeas. So the question was lost by [a] 17 majority.

SATURDAY [March 14], a motion was made for levying a tax of £20,000. The only pretence for this extraordinary tax was, that a new gaol was to be built in the county of Washington; it was however proved to the House, that there was about £40,000 of the paper emission now in the treasury, which was abundantly sufficient for every exigence of government. But the real motive, though not publicly avowed, but which leaked out of the nocturnal convention was, that in consequence of the paper money having rapidly depreciated, it was necessary to check a final stagnation of it, until after they had secured their approaching election. The motion of the tax accordingly passed.

*The forfeiture of State notes*, issued on an interest of six per

<sup>69</sup>*Newport Herald*, March 19, 1789.

centum, when the holders have taken out part of the amount, and the whole of the notes upon an interest of four per centum, is *suspended until the 8th of May ensuing*; and the Treasurer is authorised to pay unto holders of such notes, the nominal sum in paper if demanded within this period; if not demanded, the forfeiture to take place. This extension of liberty to the public creditors, to receive one twelfth part of their demand, was said to be done only as a favor to the delinquents; but we may not conclude that this apparent clemency was manifested rather from motives of popularity than a friendly regard to the injured creditors.

A motion was made for *permitting the mortgagors*<sup>70</sup> to pay into the treasury the money loaned [to] them by [the] government with the interest due thereon, but it passed in the negative.

As the last effort in this last session to secure the honest and helpless from the further fraud of *Know Ye's*<sup>71</sup> and *Bills in Equity* [i.e., paper currency], the minority presented a Bill for repealing *so much* of the act for the emission of paper as *authorised persons to tender the paper where no execution was against them, and also for putting a stop to the redemption of mortgages with the paper emission, and at the same time lengthening the period for redemption*, but it was negatived . . .

THE MAY 1789 SESSION OF THE LEGISLATURE<sup>72</sup>

Our Legislature hath undergone but few changes by the new Election, a large majority of the old members being returned. The minority have however gained strength . . .

Instructions from Newport and Providence were presented to the Speaker [Joseph Stanton, Jr.] and read, urging the immediate appointment of a State Convention to adopt the Federal Constitution, in pursuance of which their members made a motion to carry the same into effect. On Saturday [May 9] agreeably to order, this motion for a State Convention was taken up, when it was moved

<sup>70</sup>This is a reference to those who accepted paper bills emitted by Rhode Island. The paper money system operated as a land bank, where government-authorized paper bills which had the capacity of legal tender were exchanged in loans on real property twice the nominal value of the currency.

<sup>71</sup>The derogatory term "Know Ye" is taken from the first two words of the public notice required as part of the legal process under the paper money system whereby debts might be discharged in the event a creditor refused to accept paper bills.

<sup>72</sup>*Newport Herald*, May 14, 1789.



by Mr. [Samuel J.] Potter of South-Kingstown, and seconded by his colleague Mr. Jonathan J. Hazard, "that this question should be postponed to the next session in June," in order that they might have time to collect the sentiments of their constituents again upon this interesting subject, declaring, that if a majority of them should be for its adoption they should not oppose it. The minority after observing upon the evils which were accrued by delays,<sup>73</sup> yet to manifest their disposition for harmony with their fellow-citizens, agreed to the last motion without a division, and Thursday of the next session is appointed for discussing and determining this question, and also another for the repeal of the Tender.

Saturday [May 9] P. M. A bill was offered to the House by the Speaker purporting to levy and collect an Impost on all goods, etc., imported into this State, agreeably to the Impost that may be laid by [the United States] Congress, and the proceeds thereof to be paid into the State Treasury and subject to the appropriation of the Assembly.

The bill being read, a motion was made for postponing it to the next sessions; but upon taking the yeas and nays the house was divided equally, and the Speaker [Joseph Stanton, Jr.] turned it in the negative so the bill was now taken up. Notwithstanding the absurdity of the bill in adopting an act of a foreign jurisdiction [i.e., the United States], that was yet in embryo, as the system of our commercial regulations, and especially of a body whom we had repeatedly disdained to join, notwithstanding these, the bill passed by a large majority . . .

#### THE JUNE 1789 SESSION OF THE LEGISLATURE<sup>74</sup>

THURSDAY [June 11], agreeably to an order made at the last session, the motion for calling a State Convention to consider of the

<sup>73</sup>At the time of this meeting of the General Assembly Rhode Island had become a foreign nation because of the commencement of the new federal government organized under the Constitution of 1787. Congress assembled and began its operations, after delays, during the first week of April 1789. George Washington was inaugurated the first President of the United States on April 30 in New York City. The operation of the new government gave a greater urgency to the problem of the Constitution of 1787. Additionally, there was abundant evidence that the United States would utilize economic and military sanctions to force Rhode Island to ratify the constitution and rejoin the Union.

<sup>74</sup>*Newport Herald*, June 18, 1789.

Federal Constitution was resumed. The instructions that had been given by some towns, and two memorials from private citizens on this subject were read. As a preface to a candid discussion of this important question, a member arose and gave a detail of our unhappy situation, the injuries that daily arise, and the ruin that would ensue to our commerce and to the State at large, by adhering to our past policy. On the other hand he clearly pointed out numerous real advantages that would result from an adoption of this measure; it would be a step towards returning harmony. But no one arose on the opposite side. A silence ensued for some time, until the Speaker [Joseph Stanton, Jr.] demanded if they were ready for a vote, when a member from Portsmouth (who was in the opposition) replied, that they were ready. So indecent a mode of deciding upon questions in which the house were divided, brought up a member in the minority, who attacked them upon their predetermined silence. Some of them were instructed by their towns to urge every reason against the calling a Convention, and yet the members from those towns had offered none, but were ready to vote without a desire of hearing all that could be said in support of the motion. He [one of the federalist minority] must therefore presume that they had no reasons in objecting; if they had, they were ashamed or too ignorant to make them known. This attack aroused the leading character of antifederalism [Jonathan J. Hazard?] and a depreciated paper money. He talked about and about the Constitution without adducing a single argument against it, or an observation to the point. The chief aim of his speech seemed to be to keep alive and continue those jealousies, which he and his party had fomented in the agricultural interests against the mercantile. No other member on that side arose; the minority had only to state the reasons and urge the necessity for an adoption of the motion and submit the question, which was lost by a majority of 11.

Notwithstanding the failure in this motion, the minority brought forward another for the repeal of the tender. They observed that the paper had depreciated to 20 to 1, and that the whole of the State Debt was, by nominal payments and forfeiture, obliterated, that the reasons which were formerly offered against a repeal of that fraudulent law now ceased. But the motion was lost by a majority of 7 . . .

The Invalids were allowed the paper at 12 for 1 upon account . . .



THE SEPTEMBER 1789 SESSION OF THE LEGISLATURE<sup>75</sup>

WEDNESDAY [September 16]. His Excellency the Governor [John Collins] opened the business of the sessions by a SPEECH to both Houses, of which the following is a very accurate transcript.

Mr. Speaker,

IT is with great reluctance I have called you together at this time; but I tho't it was necessary that something should be done. I was informed by a member of this house — indeed by a number of members — that the majority of this house last session thought it would be necessary to be called together as soon as the impost act ordered by [the United States] Congress should take place, and as the busy season of the year seem'd to be a little over, I thought it was my duty to call you together; so I hope you will do what is necessary to be done. I hope the first thing you take up will be to do something with the revenue law which was passed the last session. There seems to be a difficulty in the matter. The collectors have called upon me to advise them what to do and I thought it my duty to call you together to see what can be done. I hope it will be your first business to try to do something with that law, to make it complete, so that we may *go on*, and the collectors may know what to do. It has made me very uneasy. Nothing ever gave me so much pain by being left *uncomplete* for laws unexecuted or unrepeal'd destroy the very nerves of government!

THURSDAY [September 17] — A Bill was presented by Mr. Jonathan J. Hazard, enacting that the several towns meet in town-meeting on the third Monday of October next, to consult on the propriety of the Assembly's convening a State Convention to consider of the Constitution of the United States, and to instruct their Deputies accordingly. This Bill being laid on the table for consideration, a motion was made, *to recommend to the several towns the appointment of Delegates to meet in Convention at East Greenwich on the [blank] day of [blank] to consider and determine on the afore-said Constitution, agreeable to the recommendations of the late General [Federal] Convention and the late Congress.* Upon this motion being made, the framers of the bill for instructions, brought it on for immediate discussion, and urged it as a previous motion; upon the question which should be acted on first, it was carried for the

<sup>75</sup>*Newport Herald*, Sept. 24, 1789.

hearing of the bill [for instructions by the town meetings] by a large majority. In discussing this bill very lengthy debates took place on the propriety of it. The preamble was exceptionable to many, as it conveyed by implication, a censure on the late Congress, and stated as facts what were not strictly true; some amendments were offered to it, but the bill passed in its original form, and the motion for a convention was thereby lost.

A bill was presented and passed for collecting the interest due for last year, on the bank of paper [money] loaned, appointing trustees for the counties of Providence, Kent and Washington, to collect the same in their respective counties, and authorising the Treasurer [Joseph Clarke] to collect from the other counties [Newport and Bristol]. The bill enacts, that all bonds for interest due and unpaid, shall be put in suit at the next Court of Common Pleas (after they become due) in the counties where the debtors dwell; and authorising the trustees to sue for the same and receive half lawful fees, as Attornies [*sic*] in said actions.

Mr. [John] Sayles and Mr. [Andrew] Waterman, members from Smithfield, introduced into the house two bills, one of which was an act levying a duty of tonnage on ships or vessels, the other imposing duties on goods, wares, and merchandise that hath been or shall be imported into this State after the first day of August last, and providing for the collection of the same. These bills were copied from the [United States] Congressional acts *mutatis mutandis* [with the necessary changes]. After the first reading of them, it was moved, that they be referred to October sessions; but the question was lost by a large majority. The tonnage bill was then taken up, and engaged the attention of the house during the remainder of the day.

FRIDAY [September 18]. The tonnage bill was resumed, and after much debate was withdrawn. The impost and collection bill was then taken up, and after some alterations respecting the drawback, the allowance to the officers, and the retrospective clause, passed by a large majority . . . The act takes effect from the rising of the Assembly, when all goods, wares and merchandise, imported into this State, excepting from either of the twelve States that were in union with us, are subject to the same duties as by the Congressional act. The monies arising therefrom are to be paid into the State Treasury, and are yet unappropriated.



SATURDAY [September 19]. An address or letter to the Congress of the United States was sent down from the Upper House and concurred with by the Lower House, and the Governor was directed to sign and transmit the same. Of which the following is the substance.

The critical situation of our affairs engages us on their behalf and of their Constituents to make these assurances.

We joined with the United States, and spent our treasure and lost our blood in the common cause; and we did not separate ourselves from the confederation.

We are a handful, but we have been accustomed to a democratical government, and don't chuse to part with our liberties. The Government of the United States it is true doth but in a small degree look like the British Government, from which with the expense of our blood and treasure we dissolved their connection, and all the officers from the most important downward are of unbounded confidence, but there is danger in the precedent.

Some amendments are proposed which we like well enough; but we shan't be clear to adopt it till it needs no alteration, or while it may be altered by nine States which may not be a majority of the people.

After we got through the war we were wretchedly embarrassed, and we tried to get rid of them; but the monied interest did not favor our [paper money] plans as they did at New-York and South-Carolina; but the fermentations, and collisions of parties will go down by and by, and we hope things will grow better.

We are a commercial people, and our prosperity depends on our commerce. We hope the United States will not consider us entirely as foreigners. We shall not interfere with their revenue acts, but rather encourage them; and are making preparations to pay our quota of the principal or interest of the domestic and foreign debt from time to time as the United States may call for it.

Attached to the United States by kindred and consanguinity we should be glad to enter into a treaty of commerce with them, and we shall not without reluctance look to any other power for that commercial intercourse, which might be naturally expected from them . . .

A bill was presented to suspend the tender of paper money, and substituting articles to discharge debts, etc. which was referred to

next sessions.

An act passed suspending the tender of paper money until the next sessions . . .

#### THE OCTOBER 1789 SESSION OF THE LEGISLATURE<sup>76</sup>

Agreable to an act of the former Assembly, instructions were given by the towns, on the subject of calling a State Convention to consider of the proposed Constitution for the United States. These being delivered in and read, the result of them may be collected from the decision on a motion made for calling a Convention. The yeas and nays were taken without much debate, as the members conceived themselves bound by their instructions. There were 17 Ayes, 39 Noes, [the] Majority against calling a Convention, 22.

Notwithstanding this majority against it, we are well assured that a majority of the members present, wished the adoption of the Constitution, and were only restrained from expressing their sentiments, by their instructions . . .

#### THE JANUARY 1790 SESSIONS OF THE LEGISLATURE<sup>77</sup>

The principal object of this session was to deliberate again upon the propriety of recommending the appointment of a Convention, to consider and decide on the New Constitution. The prejudices which had long been operated against a liberal discussion of it, sensibly lessened, and the principles which gave existence to a party, being as fully accomplished as they could be, opposition must cease. In addition to these, the accession of all the other States to it,<sup>78</sup> had thereby dissolved that union which once connected us with them, and left us without friend or ally. It now became a question of great magnitude, and accordingly engaged general attention.

On FRIDAY [January 15], in the Lower House, Mr. [Benjamin] Bourne (a member from Providence) moved the appointment of a Convention, for the purpose of deliberating on the expediency of adopting the Constitution of the United States, and presented a Bill

<sup>76</sup>*Newport Herald*, Nov. 5, 1789.

<sup>77</sup>*Newport Herald*, Jan. 21, 1790.

<sup>78</sup>The ratification of the constitution by North Carolina on November 20, 1789 had an important impact on the struggle in Rhode Island. North Carolina's re-entrance into the United States accentuated Rhode Island's isolation, and made more credible repeated intimations that the United States was ready to adopt severe measures.



in form, fixing the election of Delegates on the second Monday of February next, and their meeting in Convention at South Kingstown, on the fourth Monday of said month. This motion was seconded by Mr. [George] *Champlin* (of this town [Newport]) when an interesting and lengthy debate ensued. At noon the question was put, when there appeared: For the Bill, 34, against it, 29, and it passed by a majority of 5.

In the Upper House the Bill was taken up, which produced a message from them to the Lower House, for the instructions to the Deputies [by the Rhode Island town meetings on the issue]. After deliberation thereon, the Lower House determined that it was unconstitutional and unprecedented, and refused sending them, and communicated their reasons by two of their members.

SATURDAY [January 16] the application from the Upper to the Lower House for the instructions, was repeated. To obviate every reason that might be urged against concurring with the Bill, the Lower House rescinded their vote and sent them; after which a discussion of the Bill [to authorize a Ratifying Convention] took place in the Upper House, and at 8 o'clock in the evening, the question being put, it was non-concurred by a majority of one, the Deputy-Governor [Daniel Owen], there being four Assistants for, and four against. Those for concurring were Mess. [John] *Cooke*, [John] *Dorance*, [James] *Arnold*, and [Cromel] *Childs*.

On the return of the Bill with the non-concurrence to the Lower House, a message was sent from the Upper House by two of its members, proposing a conference; although the propriety of it was not conceded to, as the object of the conference was not disclosed, yet the Lower House, upon the principle of accommodation, agreed to it, and the conference accordingly took place. After much time spent in discussing the Bill, and proposing new motions to supercede it, the conference between the Houses broke up, without being productive of any thing.

The Upper House, after they withdrew, passed a Resolution for referring the Constitution again to the people at large, which was non-concurred by the Lower House by a majority of 14.

The Lower House then passed a Bill similar to the former for calling a Convention, only varying the time to a week later (that it might be in order as a new Bill). This was sent up with an adjourn-

ment of the Assembly to May. The Upper House non-concurred this Bill as the former; but instead of rising that day, proposed an adjournment to the next, which was agreed to by the Lower House.

SUNDAY [January 17], in the Lower House a third Bill was presented and moved (it varied only in time from the former two) . . .

On taking the question upon this Bill, there appeared: For it, 32, against it, 11. So it passed by a majority of 21.

In the Upper House there was a secession of one of the Assistants [John Williams] in opposition, so that when the question on this third Bill was put, the House was divided. It fell to the Governor [John Collins] to decide. Upon which his Excellency arose and made some very pertinent observations on the situation of the State, and the necessity of the measure; [Governor Collins] pronounced that it was for the interest of the people to concur with it, and therefore with decision he gave his voice for concurring, and the Bill passed to be enacted into a Law.

A Resolution passed, that his Excellency the Governor advise Congress of this appointment of a Convention, and request a further suspension of the Acts which affect our trade, from the probability of an adoption of the Constitution.<sup>79</sup>

In justice to the majority of members in opposition, we must say, that in debate they manifested great decency and coolness; and at the close of the question they exhibited a conciliatory disposition. Flattering presage of returning harmony!

<sup>79</sup>The Rhode Island Ratifying Convention met for its first session on March 1, 1790; the place of the convention was South Kingstown, an antifederalist town. Although federalist hopes were high that having won a great victory in securing the convening of a convention, the antifederalists would now quickly and gracefully adopt the Constitution of 1787, events proved otherwise. Not until the meeting of a second session of the Ratifying Convention in Newport did Rhode Island finally vote to rejoin the United States on May 29, 1790.





## BOOK REVIEW

*American Furniture, The Federal Period, in the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum*, by Charles F. Montgomery, N.Y., The Viking Press, 1966, 497 p., \$25.00

It is now possible for those interested in the twentieth century to return temporarily into Federal times in America and be inspired by Mr. Montgomery's definitive book on Federal period furniture. Providence residents especially will welcome the publication of this book, since this city alone, during its great maritime period (1790-1830), produced over a hundred cabinetmakers, of which half a dozen have recently come to our attention with the identification of the cabinetwork of the Rawson family, as well as through studies of the work of Thomas Howard, Jr., and John Carlile (Wendell D. Garrett, "Providence Cabinetmakers, Chairmakers and Allied Craftsmen," *Antiques Magazine*, October, 1966, p. 514). Not only students of fine furniture but also the casual collector will welcome the volume. Many Rhode Island families have inherited or collected pieces of Federal furniture, which is more often found than examples of the Queen Anne and Chippendale periods.

Since the publication in 1952 by the Winterthur Museum of *American Furniture, Queen Anne and Chippendale Periods*, by Joseph Downs, students of American furniture have looked forward rather impatiently to the appearance of this companion volume. In his foreword to Mr. Montgomery's book Mr. Henry Francis du Pont, the museum's founder, sums up the fascination that Federal furniture holds: "... small pieces with good lines... in their simplicity they often achieve greatness."

The author is well equipped by experience and training to produce a volume of the high quality already set by the museum. From 1954 to 1961 he was director of the Henry Francis du Pont Museum and since 1961 has been senior fellow in the Winterthur Research Program in Early American Culture, conducted jointly by the museum and the University of Delaware. Mr. Montgomery's enthusiasm has supplied the great stimulus necessary to produce a first-rate training program, which has sent curators to many museums and historical societies throughout the country. He sets such a high standard of research that many museums of American culture turn to Winterthur for answers.

The scope of the book is extensive. A large number of photographs — some five hundred individual pieces — cover the various kinds of furniture, their makers, and the prominence of each piece. In addition there are more than a hundred useful illustrations of carving details. Researchers will find the illustrations of makers' labels helpful.

Room settings, eleven in color, add interest and at the same time present a pleasant interpretation of the decoration and furnishing of a Federal room. Questions of advertisement terminology have been dealt with in such a way that we learn the terms of the times. For example, the *lolling chair* of the Federal period is the so-called *Martha Washington chair* of today.

The catalog proper is divided into sections grouping the furniture by form and locality with a clear and highly informative introduction before each

section. Captions for the fine clear-cut illustrations are short enough to conserve time and long enough to carry all the necessary information.

For the first time in the history of cabinetmaking literature the complex problem of identifying the provenance of ornamental inlays has been solved. Mr. Montgomery has produced an accurate colored chart, including over one hundred colored photographs, of stringing, banding, and decorative inlay forms assigned to various geographical areas. Microscopic identification of wood samples reveals the origin of the woods used in various areas.

Another new feature is the chart based on the study of a thousand pieces of furniture showing the frequency of use of primary and secondary woods in various parts of the country. It is particularly interesting to see that Rhode Island is included in the area of eastern Connecticut and south coastal Massachusetts.

Nor should one forget to mention two chapters of great academic importance: one on cabinetmaking as a business and the other on cabinetmakers' price-books in the Federal period.

Florence Montgomery has added a most needed and valuable chapter on upholstery and furnishing fabrics. She cuts through the maze of ancient terms and gives authoritative sources for the type of upholstery materials used on furniture demanding a particular fabric. This is a subject she knows well, and it will, we hope, develop into another Winterthur publication.

Mr. Montgomery has been indeed fortunate in being able to draw on so many labeled and otherwise identified pieces, which appear in many cases for the first time. The high point of the volume, in my opinion, is the chapter of "Connoisseurship" or the discriminating awareness of excellence, based on long study and the closest acquaintance with perfection. I find this emphasis long overdue on matters of furniture design and decoration. Students certainly will turn to this volume for profit and enjoyment. Those who are interested in the Federal period because of interest in our early national beginnings and in its elements of design growing out of an enthusiasm for the Roman Republic will find this book filling a basic need.

ELEANORE B. MONAHAN

The Rhode Island Historical Society





# THE RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY



## NOTES FROM THE SHELVES

Selected by NOEL P. CONLON

The narrow sidewalks, then as now, were hard to walk upon. There lived in the town a distinguished man, with a wooden leg. . . . He was, I suppose, one of the most individualistic of American thinkers, after Emerson, who was his contemporary; and having an acute desire for physical comfort, which marked all of his decent philosophy, he was as well content to do his thinking in Newport as anywhere else. He was not instinctively a yearner after European culture, even though the whole central emphasis of his education depended from Continental thought. It was — plainly and simply — his wooden leg. He couldn't walk on the Newport sidewalks without stumbling. He said "Drat it!" — or whatever the current semi-profanity may have required — and decided to go where the sidewalks were better. . . . This is a solemn fact, and it takes its place in history. Accompanied by his wife and his two small sons, Henry James the Elder left Newport for the colored ports of the eastern world chiefly because Thames Street wouldn't permit a handicapped philosopher to stroll at his convenience.

B. K. Hart, *The Sideshow of B. K. Hart*, edited by Philomena Hart, Providence, Roger Williams Press, 1941, p. 120 (R. I. Auth. H325b).

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I had occasion to go to the old capital (but let me add, that when, in a month's time, I have no occasion to go there I invent one, as all proud Rhode Islanders might) . . .

B. K. Hart, *The Sideshow of B. K. Hart*, edited by Philomena Hart, Providence, Roger Williams Press, 1941, p. 121 (R. I. Auth. H325b).

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To approximate my own enthusiasm for Rhode Island, you must overcome two hurdles. One of these is the social system under which the inhabitants live, and the other is the physical environment of that system.

Christopher La Farge, "Give Me Rhode Island," *House & Garden*, July 1949, p. 63 (R. I. Auth. L159g).