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RHODE ISLAND HISTORY

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Seth Luther (page 47) like his contemporary, artist Thomas Doughty, traveled rivers and roads beyond his native state.

Detail of "The Raft" by Doughty, MUSEUM OF ART, Rhode Island School of Design.

Moses Brown made his first move toward development of Rhode Island's textile manufacture in May 1788, almost two years before Samuel Slater's arrival in Pawtucket.

Water color portrait courtesy John Carter Brown Library, Brown University.

Textile Experiments in Rhode Island 1788-1789

*by Paul E. Rivard**

A machine, receiving at different times, and from many hands, new combinations and improvements, and becoming at last of signal benefit to mankind, may be compared to a rivulet swelled in its course by tributary streams, until it rolls along, a majestic river, enriching in its progress provinces and kingdoms — Sir Francis Bacon.

Technological retardation of the American colonies which developed in the eighteenth century was partially due to British attempts to prevent exportation of technical knowledge but also the result of seeming disinterest which Americans displayed in manufacturing. Distracted by war, then by new independence, often content to play out the traditional colonial mercantile role, many American merchants moved only timidly into the realm of industrial capitalism. Consequently, little knowledge of English textile technology crossed the Atlantic before the late 1780s — when disadvantages faced by American merchants in their own marketplaces were becoming obvious.

Great Britain's pre-eminent position in textile manufacturing may indeed have been born of necessity — a function of England's role in the colonial empire — but fundamentally the industry relied upon command of technology. While many important inventions developed in England during the eighteenth century, three stand out as particularly significant — Hargreaves' spinning jenny, Arkwright's roller spinning frame, and Kay's fly-shuttle loom. Upon these pieces of hardware, more than any other, the remarkable growth of English manufacture was based, and toward re-creation of these machines American merchants first turned their attention in the mid-1780s.

The first period of textile machine experimentation in America commenced in 1786 and culminated in successful introduction of Richard Arkwright's spinning technology to Pawtucket, Rhode Island in 1790. During these years experimentation was urged forward by concerned governmental agencies and increasing numbers of involved merchants in several states — especially where merchant wharves were being filled with low-cost British textile imports. Experimentation was further stimulated by increased immigration of European mechanics with varying degrees of knowledge and skill. The arrival in Pawtucket of Samuel Slater, most important of these immigrants, was the psychological and technical turning point of these early efforts — Slater's first eleven weeks in Rhode Island, from January 18 to April 5, encompassed both the conclusion of several years of experimentation and a new beginning for the American textile industry.

Most historical writers have chosen to treat Slater's efforts in 1790 as the birth of the American textile industry rather than the successful conclusion of a period of experimentation. Such a view has generally supposed that experimentation from 1786 to 1789 was a dead-end effort — an aborted sequence of machinery which contributed little or nothing to establishment of permanent manufacture. Supporting this conclusion has been the belief that successful technology was born through a feat of memory by Slater. Many eighteenth- and nine-

*Mr. Rivard is director of Pawtucket's Slater Mill Historic Site and Museum and editor of its monthly *The Flyer*.

teenth-century documents emphasize this view. Moses Brown's famous letter to John Dexter on October 15, 1791 noted that "I wrote to him [Slater] & he came accordingly; but on viewing the mills he declined doing anything with them, and proposed making a new one . . ."[1] Brown's letter to Slater — written when Slater was still in New York in 1789 — had noted that "An experiment has been made, which has failed, no person being acquainted with the business . . ."[2]

By the time of Slater's death in 1836 the critical role he had played in development of the textile industry was already generally recognized and Slater's first biographer, George S. White, had little difficulty securing testimonials casting him in the roles of both conceiver and midwife of the birth of industry. Typical of the comments solicited was that of William Anthony who wrote of Slater's arrival that "then all this imperfect machinery was thrown aside and machinery more perfect built under his direction."[3]

But despite the weight of this evidence — plus generations of secondary-source history — it remains clear that Slater's first weeks in Pawtucket not only marked the start of a new chapter of industrial history but conclusion of an earlier chapter. Machinery experiments started in Rhode Island before 1790 were not a closed sequence abruptly terminated by Slater's arrival — instead these experiments constituted a valid technical progression that led directly to Slater's first spinning machine.

An inventory of machinery located in Pawtucket — probably made early in 1790[4] — illustrates the extent to which textile machine experimentation had been undertaken prior to Slater's arrival:

Spinning Mill at Pawtucket	£170 . . 0 . .
Carding Machine & Whipping Frame	45 . . . . .
4 Spinning Jenneys . . . .@21	84 . . . . .
1 Warping Mill & Spools	7 . . 13 .
3 Roping Wheels	1 . 5
1 Small Jenney	7 . 10
8 Bobbin Wheels	3 . 12
12 Looms with Slays & Tackling	60 . . . .
3 Stocking Frames	80 . . . .
Singing Plate Brushes etc.	15 . . . .
pd towards the Callender	40 . . . .
Finishing Table, Convay, Tubs & Indigo House	3
Cotton Press Wool Picker Sorting Table Weights	15 . . . .
Scales and the Shop implimints	
1 Horse Cart . . Act	6
	550 . 9

This inventory begs an important question — what was the origin of these machines and what their impact upon emergence of the textile industry in Rhode Island? In seeking answers the machinery must be assessed by reference to a larger theatre of experimentation — specifically efforts to re-create British technology in America from 1786 to 1789. Even more specifically Rhode Island experiments should be related to experiments undertaken in Massachusetts during 1786 and 1787. The direct connection between Rhode Island efforts and those of Massachusetts is of particular significance because it was through this route that a machinery sequence was established — commencing with an inoperable model built in 1786 and concluding with Samuel Slater's work in 1790.

At least three notable developments in Massachusetts during 1786 and 1787 had direct impact upon the work of Rhode Island merchants and mechanics. The first and potentially the most important was construction of Arkwright-type machinery — a spinning frame and a carding engine — by two Scottish immigrants, Thomas and Alexander Barr, in 1786.[5] Financed with the aid of a £200 subsidy from the Massachusetts legislature through the efforts of Colonel Hugh Orr of East

1 Moses Brown Papers, RIHS Library.

2 December 10, 1789, quoted by George S. White, *Memoir of Samuel Slater* (Philadelphia, 1836) 73.

3 White, 63.

4 Moses Brown Papers.

5 White, 57. Robert W. Lovett, "Beverly Cotton Manufactory, or Some New Light on an Early Cotton Mill," *Bulletin Business Historical Society* 26 (December 1952) 219-220.

George Cabot was one of three brothers, wealthy merchants who supported America's first cotton spinning mill in Beverly, Massachusetts, 1787.

Memorial History of Boston, v. 3, ed. Justin Winsor (Boston, 1881).

Bridgewater, these became widely known as the "State's Models" and were left at Orr's house for display to any person who wished to see them. Representing the first introduction of Arkwright's technology to New England, these machines served an educational purpose under a serious handicap — the models were not operable. Consequently the sole clue to their management was the verbal description conveyed either by the Barr brothers or Hugh Orr.

The second Massachusetts experiment which affected Rhode Island was construction in 1787 of a spinning jenny by Thomas Somers, another recent immigrant from Great Britain. Also financed in part by the Massachusetts legislature and left in possession of Orr, this machine was a copy of a Hargreaves-type spinning machine. Although use of the jenny for cotton manufacture was destined to be short-lived, it too offered Americans a plausible spinning technology.

But the final and greatest influence provided from Massachusetts was psychological — establishment of America's first cotton spinning mill, the Beverly Cotton Manufacturing Company.[6] Launched in October 1787, the company employed horse power to drive carding machines and jennies of the type introduced by Somers who with James Leonard was overseer of the mill. Although supported by wealthy merchant interests in Beverly — including John, George and Andrew Cabot — and granted incentives from the Massachusetts legislature[7] — the company ultimately failed, but failure did not come early enough to discourage other experiments in New England. Instead, the company was acknowledged by Slater's first biographer, who noted that "Rhode Island caught her spirit of manufacturing from the Beverly Company, which had been formed in Massachusetts, and from this company she received her patterns of machinery and the mode of operating the machinery . . ."[8]

In spring 1788 knowledge of the Massachusetts experiments reached Rhode Island through direct contact of several mechanics who journeyed to East Bridgewater and Beverly and copied details of the machinery there. At least three mechanics were involved in direct transfer of information from these Massachusetts models to Rhode Island experiments — Daniel Anthony, employed by Providence merchants Andrew Dexter and Lewis Peck — John Bailey, associated with prominent Rhode Island merchant Moses Brown — and John Reynolds, friend of both Anthony and Brown and manufacturer of woolens in East Greenwich. Through these mechanics and merchants the first important spinning experiments were undertaken in Rhode Island. Aside from Dexter and Peck, who withdrew from experimentation after one year, all were

6 White, 52-60. Lovett.

7 Lovett, 220.

8 White, 53.

Quakers. Rhode Island efforts then, lacking governmental involvement seen in Massachusetts, could nevertheless rely upon a network of trust and communication provided by the Society of Friends.

Among the first to become interested in developing the textile industry in Rhode Island was Moses Brown, and through his efforts John Bailey visited Hugh Orr as early as May 1788. Bailey — well-known clock maker from Hanover, Massachusetts — inspected the state's models and proceeded to construct several "sets" — four-spindle modular units of which the larger machines were composed.[9] Moses Brown received two of these sets in November 1788 and added them in 1789 to a complete machine purchased from John Reynolds.

Because of the close communication between the Quaker mechanics, the early efforts of John Bailey were not kept secret and the clockwork gearing of his "sets" may have served as a model for other Arkwright spinning machines built in Rhode Island. William Anthony hinted at this possibility, writing in the 1830s about his father Daniel's first Arkwright spinning frame that "the first head was made by John Bailey . . ." Although there is no primary source documentation to substantiate this claim, the possibility is both reasonable and logical.

Bailey's sets were an important technical transfer but not addressed to the real crux of experimentation — an attempt to manufacture yarn. Like the Barr brothers' models, the Bailey sets may have proven to be more instructive than useful. It remained for two other men directly engaged in manufacture — Daniel Anthony and John Reynolds — to build Rhode Island's first operable spinning machines.

Anthony and Reynolds were manufacturer/mechanics in the business of making cloth. Earlier in 1788 Daniel Anthony had entered into an agreement with Providence merchants Andrew Dexter and Lewis Peck "to manufacture homespun cloth" but — on learning of the machinery erected in Massachusetts — their attention turned toward mechanizing the process. Meanwhile John Reynolds was engaged in a small woolen spinning and weaving operation in East Greenwich. In spring or summer 1788 Anthony and Reynolds traveled together to East Bridgewater and made drawings of the machinery located at Hugh Orr's. There they made drafts of the Arkwright-type spinning frame and possibly the carding machine and Thomas Somers' jenny.

Upon returning to Rhode Island Reynolds set to work re-creating the Arkwright machinery seen at Orr's but Anthony — working for his partners

Quaker craftsmen and merchants worked in close-knit accord on early Rhode Island textile experiments.

Old Quaker Meeting-House, Lincoln, R. I., Providence Plantations for 250 Years, *by Welcome Arnold Greene (Providence, 1886).*

Dexter and Peck — decided to set aside Arkwright designs in favor of the jenny introduced by Somers and in use at the Beverly Company. Quite possibly Anthony also visited the Beverly manufactory at this time. It developed, therefore, that Rhode Island's first operable spinning machine was not a copy of the Arkwright state's models but of the simpler Somers jenny. Composed of twenty-eight spindles, Anthony's jenny first operated in a private dwelling but by late spring 1789 moved to the Market House chamber in Providence where Daniel's son Richard spun yarn on it. Together with several others subsequently built — five listed in Almy and Brown's inventory — this jenny provided Rhode Island merchants with an interim solution for yarn spinning. Even as experiments continued with Arkwright patents during 1789 and 1790, the jenny would provide yarns necessary to keep merchant experimentors in business.

While carding, roving, twisting and winding continued to be done by hand, successful employment of the jenny marked the first triumph of English industrial technology in Rhode Island and the resulting psychological impact was considerable. Further, construction of the jenny broadened the base of involvement by drawing upon yet other local mechanics — notably Richard Anthony who built the wooden framework of his father's machine and Daniel Jackson who made the spindles and brass parts.[10]

While Dexter, Peck and Anthony were working on the jenny in Providence, John Reynolds moved ahead on the Arkwright spinning frame and a carding machine in East Greenwich. As early as November 8, 1788, he could write to Moses Brown that "my card will be ready next week, & the Spinning Fram also by the middle of the week it will be fit to work with." Although next week probably came and went without the machines in true operation, both were indeed finished before the end of 1788 and were offered for sale to Moses Brown.[11] Apparently Reynolds never made any serious attempt to employ the machines designed for cotton and used as his reason for selling them his determination to stick after all to manufacture of woolens — to which, it might be added, the jennies were better suited.

Since no real manufacturing took place with use of Reynolds' machines, it is difficult to assess their accuracy or importance. Since they were offered for sale, we must conclude that they were considered to be of value. The carding machine, almost certainly, was a failure — a dead-end effort which appears not to have exerted any influence on other carding experiments — and Moses Brown didn't buy it. The spinning machine, however, six sets of four spindles each, was the first full-sized Arkwright built in Rhode Island and remained an important model until the coming of Slater.

In spring 1789 Daniel Anthony finally got to the job of building his Arkwright spinning frame, statistically the same as Reynolds' — twenty-four spindles of six sets. This second Arkwright-type machine built in Rhode Island was an important model until 1790.

While Anthony was engaged on the Arkwright frame, his partners Dexter and Peck contracted with another local Quaker mechanic, Joshua Lindley, to build a carding machine apparently based upon the design employed at the Beverly Company — a "roller" type card which works cotton between rollers turning in different directions. In 1790 the cards at Beverly were described — "two large cylinders of two feet diameter move in contact, and upon them other cylinders of different diameter."[12] This type operated on sound enough principles which have continued to the present day in the woolen industry and in treatment of waste cotton. The Arkwright later introduced by Slater was of different design which did not utilize the roller series. Lindley's card may in fact have been quite different from the one built by Reynolds if the latter was based upon the Barr brothers' design rather than those at Beverly.

Men who made working parts for these machines were for the most part craftsmen in the local community and especially within the Quaker community. While an extensive involvement of local craftsmen is not always obvious by reference to surviving records, it is well illustrated by a surviving list of bills incurred by Dexter and Peck in construction of their second spinning jenny, a sixty-spindle machine built early in 1789[13] —

9 John Bailey to Moses Brown, November 20, 1788, Moses Brown Papers. Bailey to Moses Brown, May 18, 1789, cited by Lovett, 220.

10 White, 62-63.

11 John Reynolds to Moses Brown, November 8 and December 22, 1788, Moses Brown Papers.

12 *Diary of William Bentley*, cited by Lovett, 225.

13 Moses Brown to Andrew Dexter, Account, May 18, 1789, Moses Brown Papers.

Nathaniel Gilmores Bill forging 60 spindles and other Iron Work . . . . . 3. l. 9		
8lbs of Steel for Spindles 10 7		
		3. 8. 9
Elijah Bacons Bill for Stuff		*18. 9*
Oliver Carpenters Bill for 60 Whirls .		*10.*
Daniel Jacksons Bill		*4.13. 9*
Joshua Lindleys Bill		*11. 8. 3*
Cash paid for Wire at Several times . .		*3. 9*
James Burrells Bill		*2. 8. .*
Job Danforth's Bill for Stuff		*8. 6*
Cash paid for pulleys ¼do for Wire & Line 6		*1.10*
ditto paid for ½gro Screws 11 do 5 doz do.2/4.		*3. 3*
		24.4.10

Unquestionably each of the craftsmen involved in construction of the jenny brought some specialized knowledge to the task. Wooden framework was made by Lindley, also employed in building the carding machine. Jackson — who had made carding machine parts for John Reynolds — shows up at work on this jenny, presumably making copper parts. Gilmore was obviously a blacksmith, while Carpenter was a woodworker who fitted Gilmore's spindles with wooden whirls. The existence of skilled craftsmen such as these was essential to any machine-making capability and was no doubt a major factor which led to successful machine spinning in Rhode Island.

Moses Brown followed closely the efforts of Reynolds and Anthony during winter 1788-89 and by April he had concluded to actively enter the business of cotton manufacture. He began boldly by purchasing all of the major machine experiments built in Rhode Island, except John Reynolds' carding engine. This group of machinery included John Reynolds' twenty-four spindle spinning frame, Daniel Anthony's frame of the same size, Joshua Lindley's incomplete carding machine, and Dexter and Peck's twenty-eight and sixty-spindle jennies. By this time most of the machines owned by Anthony, Dexter and Peck had been moved to a Pawtucket mill or to the cellars of some nearby houses. After buying the machines, Brown had Reynolds' frame moved up from East Greenwich and set to work by water power along with the Anthony frame. Here — in rented space of Ezekiel Carpenter's fulling mill — the major textile experiments in Rhode Island would be made and here first successful employment of the Arkwright technology in America would take place.

In a quick month then, Moses Brown acquired all important machinery available locally — a move to have immediate and long range effects. Of immediate importance, the Rhode Island textile industry now became substantially a Quaker monopoly. In the long range this would provide the Quaker connection in other leading seaports to facilitate marketing of goods by providing a system of credit and trust generally lacking in the American economy. Brown moved immediately to establish a corporate vehicle for the enterprise and in May consigned the business to a new partnership composed of his son-in-law and nephew — William Almy and Smith Brown.[14] Like their predecessors Dexter and Peck, Almy and Brown were concerned with making and marketing cloth and mostly conducted business from their Providence offices. To them the perfection of machinery seemed no doubt an unfortunate nuisance. Moses Brown remained the active force directing efforts to perfect existing machines and to build new ones.

Further development commenced immediately with an attempt to complete construction of Lindley's carding machine. At first it was believed that only production of proper card clothing would finish the job, but by autumn the carding engine was still inoperative and Brown was forced to conclude that redesign of the entire machine would be necessary. In November and December major new parts were produced, including six cylinder frames made by Quaker Oziel Wilkinson whose blacksmith shop was located only yards from the fulling mill.[15] Production of cylinder frames supports the conclusion that Lindley's was indeed a full-roller card of the type introduced at the Beverly company. Work also proceeded during the summer and fall on the construction of at least one new jenny and a doubling machine. As new machines were built, the list of me-

14 Several years after Slater's arrival Smith Brown was replaced in the company by Moses Brown's son Obadiah.

15 Almy & Brown to M. Brown for Sundries out of O. Wilkinson's Account, 1789-1790, Moses Brown Papers.

16 Before a command of spinning technology was achieved in 1790 Slater had caused to be built a drawing machine, a roving frame, and two carding machines.

17 Moses Brown Papers.

chanics involved steadily grew. New faces around the fulling mill included Seril Dodge, a brass worker who produced spindles — William and David Angell, woodworkers who produced roving wheels and bobbins — Robert Hutson, who made various loom parts and jennies — and Sylvanus Brown, who made patterns and wooden machine parts. These and others, plus Wilkinson and many of the old gang from Providence, constituted a growing circle of involvement and expertise.

Little progress was made however on the Arkwright-type spinning frames during 1789. After moving Reynolds' frame to Pawtucket, Brown added on the two sets that he had purchased from John Bailey in 1788. But beyond this initial effort very little was done; the major effort continued to go to the workable jenny technology. An attempt was made to operate the Arkwright machines by water power but this apparently only further emphasized their imperfection. Yarn was produced on the Arkwright frames but not in a profitable manner. Actually the imperfection of the spinning frames was probably not the major reason for the failure of the experiment. Instead the biggest problem may have been the absence of a series of preparation machines to supply the spinning machine with the proper raw materials — the Arkwright technology encompassed an entire series of machines and in 1789 Almy and Brown had only one of them.[16]

The obvious need of all the experiments was an experienced mechanic who had firsthand knowledge of machines and their management. Involvement of local craftsmen — while it broadened the base of technical understanding — was no substitute for the knowledge of someone with direct experience.

Understandably the early manufacturers in Beverly, Worcester, New York, New Haven and Pawtucket competed for the services of the small trickle of European mechanics coming to America in 1789. In this regard, Moses Brown's Quaker connections served him well— while he and Reynolds were anxious that manufacture should be "kept clost," they were more than willing to share knowledge gained from these immigrant mechanics and indeed to share employment of the mechanics themselves. This willingness to co-operate within the Quaker community, together with unwillingness to be too helpful outside this community, is well illustrated by a letter from John Reynolds to Moses Brown on May 18, 1789 —

Esteemd Friend I recd thy kind favour, but it is not Convenient for me to hier any person at present. I shall Keep on in my little way. I wish to get a Spinner and I do expect Walker but should he be taken from me I must be content. I advised him to work for thee as thou Could pay him. I sayd nothing about Dexter.

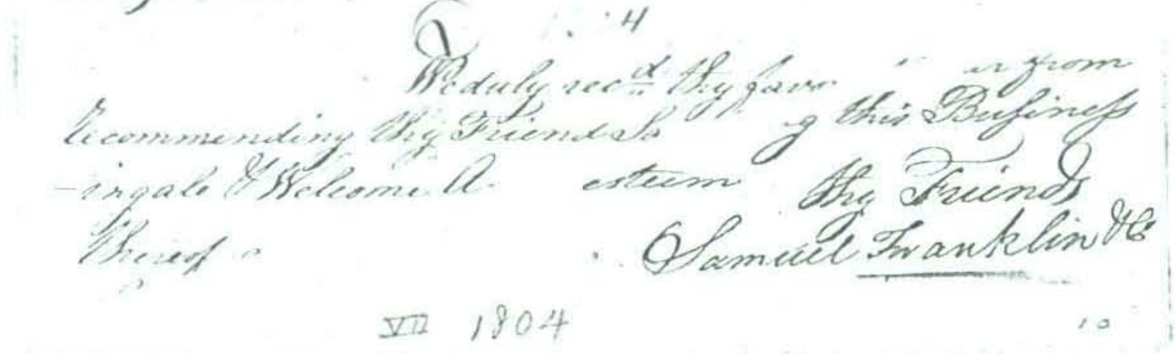
Reynolds wrote again on August 24 —

Esteemed Friend. Jann Fieldene applyed to me for work & Informed me she understood Spinning on a Jenny etc. — my card and Jenny not ready. I am not in much Hurry to get them finnished at present if thou should find her to understand the Business so well I thought it would be agreeable to thee Imploy her and when I am ready I should like to Imploy her if we can agree. In hast Conclud thy friend . . .[17]

A number of immigrant mechanics and machine operators certainly made significant contributions to the emerging body of technical knowledge, but most of them are remembered in name alone. Still others were responsible for work that can be well docu-

Quaker connection in other seaports would provide Rhode Island's growing textile industry with a system of credit and trust generally lacking in the American economy.

Moses Brown Papers, v. 7, no. 1804. RIHS Library.


Respected Friend
Moses Brown
New York March 6th 1790
We duly rec'd thy favr
recommending thy Friendship
esteem thy Friends
Samuel Franklin & Co
VII 1804

mented but outside the mainstream effort to perfect the technology of spinning and weaving — men such as John Fullem who built stocking knitting machines for John Reynolds in 1788[18] and Herman Vandausen who conducted a calico printing business in East Greenwich during the same period. Largely dead-end efforts, their work reflected the broadening interest in all aspects of textile manufacture.

The first important mechanics to arrive in Rhode Island during 1789, Joseph Alexander and James MacKerris — two English weavers — brought an intimate understanding of weaving with the fly-shuttle loom. Although a loom of this type had been built in Massachusetts as early as 1787, that effort apparently made no technical impact in Rhode Island. Based on Alexander's work, together with that of MacKerris who went to work in East Greenwich and of John MaGuire — pirated from the Beverly Company — Almy and Brown quickly achieved a technical command of contemporary English weaving. Alexander — employed by Almy and Brown to weave 390 yards of corduroy during the summer of 1789 — built Rhode Island's first fly-shuttle loom. Almost immediately construction of similar looms and training of operators commenced, and most of the twelve looms later listed in Almy and Brown's inventory were probably fly-shuttle looms.

But technology of spinning continued to be Almy and Brown's major concern, evident in their contract drawn with Joseph Alexander—

. . . Said Alexander also covenants to procure a Spinner on a Jenny that will spin workmanlike make yarn as fine as six skains & upwards to the pound during said Term for which said Brown & Almy is to pay her, or his order to her at the rate of six-pence per pound and to furnish her board & Lodging, and at the expiration of said term he and the Spinner are to give them the refusal of further employment at the same rate others will give them.[19]

Both Alexander and MaGuire were sent to Boston on errands to procure spinners. One subsequently employed was Thomas Kenworthy "formerly of England but late of Boston" who signed on June 6 "to weave and spin" for one year. Kenworthy's contract — reflecting both the need for experienced operators and the desire to keep their knowledge restricted for the employer's use — called for the spinner to

. . . give to the said Brown & Almy and their apprentices any and every information and assistance in his power respecting the business of spinning on Jennys either in Cotton or wool weaving of every kind with which he is acquainted, and to no other person or Persons but such as they direct during the same term . . .[20]

That Almy and Brown and John Reynolds learned a great deal from these immigrant mechanics cannot be doubted, but largely the efforts of Moses Brown to improve the manufacture were frustrated — the new workers proved highly independent and the competition for skilled people led to frequent desertions, transgressions, and a tendency for applicants to exaggerate their abilities. Further, the only technical input received seems to have involved looms and jennies. Consequently the carding machine was not much improved and work on the Arkwright frames was suspended after warp yarns had been produced unprofitably for a short time. Moses Brown later wrote of his discouragement with the quality of these early employees, "I had found the undertaking much more arduous than I expected, both as to the attention necessary, and the expense, being necessitated to employ workmen of the most transcient kind, and on whom little dependence could be placed . . . ."[21]

Such was the state of textile manufacturing efforts in Pawtucket at Samuel Slater's arrival. Fresh from upwards of eight years in the employ of Jedediah Strutt, Slater was easily the most knowledgeable mechanic and manufacturer to emigrate to America and the first high-level defector from the British textile manufacturing establishment. Unlike his predecessors, he had an intimate knowledge of the Arkwright machines, their management, and their construction.

Slater left England because he believed the industry was expanding so rapidly that it would soon be overdone. No doubt it was with this in mind that the underdeveloped nature of American manufactures seemed promising. But the retardation of American manufacturers was due not only to lack of manage-

18 John Reynolds to Moses Brown, October 1789, Moses Brown Papers.

19 Agreement Between Moses Brown, William Almy and Joseph Alexander, May 20, 1789, Moses Brown Papers.

20 Indenture between Moses Brown, William Almy and Thomas Kenworthy, June 6, 1789, Moses Brown Papers.

21 Moses Brown to John Dexter, Oct. 15, 1791, quoted by White, 84.

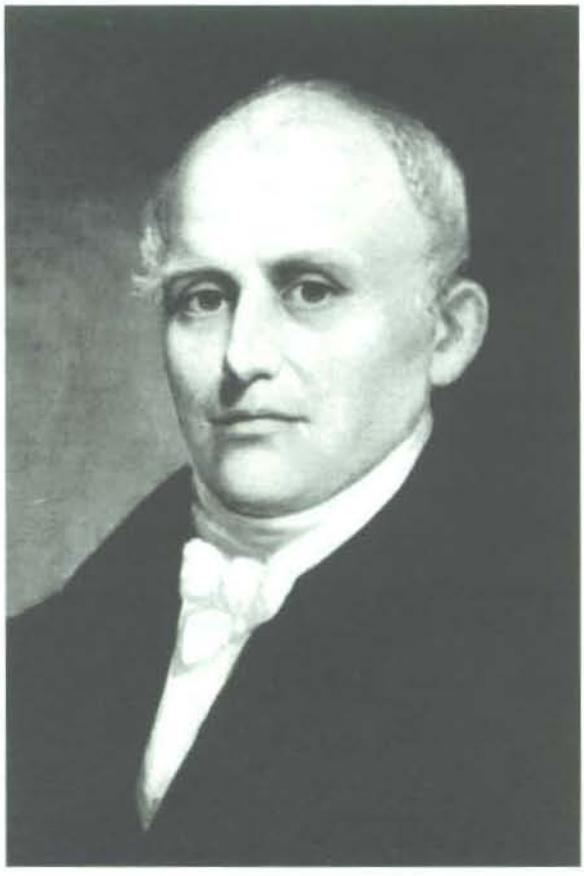
ment experience but to lack of machines of manufacture — a handicap Slater may have underestimated. By all accounts Slater was greatly disappointed with the condition and utility of the machinery which Moses Brown showed him in the fulling mill in Pawtucket, not the reaction of a man who had recently stolen out of England with plans for spinning machinery carefully memorized. Instead it was the reaction of an established manufacturer — intent upon self-improvement — who had encountered an obstacle to his success.[22]

The machinery located in Pawtucket was from the outset a serious obstacle to the partnership of Almy and Brown and Samuel Slater. From Slater's point of view it was essential that the expenses incurred producing or buying these various machines be removed from the debit account of any new partnership involving himself — Slater simply did not want the albatross of this debt on his shoulders. From this point of view we must assess Slater's condemnation of the entire group of machines — he wanted them off the books and so they had to be discredited. Moses Brown on the other hand was loath to "turn in" this machinery on the strength of Slater's promises alone — instead he wanted proof of Slater's abilities and re-use of any parts already bought and paid for. Slater's first eleven weeks in Pawtucket were a period of trial in which he labored to demonstrate his knowledge, and Almy and Brown grudgingly struggled to protect their investments.

In this atmosphere Slater set into motion the first Arkwright-type spinning machine. Very likely it was built neither entirely from memory nor entirely from scratch but, rather, a modification of one of the machines Slater found when he arrived — probably Daniel Anthony's frame of twenty-four spindles.'[23] This first machine — built as Moses Brown later noted, "using such parts of the old as would answer"[24] — Slater's proof of competence — was completed during February and March 1790.

Too little time passed and too few parts were produced by local craftsmen in the employ of Almy and Brown for this first spinning machine to have been anything but a modification based heavily upon an existing model. But modifications made were substantial and during these months Oziel Wilkinson and his sons produced many parts for a twenty-four spindle machine — six pairs of hinges, six rollers, six spinning shafts, six latches, two dozen roller irons, and twenty-four spindles.[25] The machine which emerged from these modifications convinced Almy and Brown of Slater's ability and was acceptable to Slater as one to be used by him in the manufactory. When a new contract was drawn between Samuel Slater and Almy and Brown, a proof of the existence of a working machine at that time was provided by

During his first eleven weeks in Pawtucket Samuel Slater labored to demonstrate his knowledge of spinning machines to achieve partnership with Almy and Brown.



Detail of portrait, courtesy Pawtucket Public Library.

22 Disappointment is a thread which runs through all secondary sources on Slater and apparently had its origin in White. "Moses Brown told me, that when Samuel saw the old machines, he felt downhearted, with disappointment — and shook his head . . . ."(74).

23 Anthony's machine seems more likely since the Reynolds frame had probably been extended to thirty spindles by addition of sets made by John Bailey.

24 Moses Brown to John Dexter, October 15, 1791.

25 Almy and Brown to Oziel Wilkinson, Account, 1792, Moses Brown Papers.

the agreement to "extend the spinning mills, or frames, to one hundred spindles."[26] Pursuant to the terms of the contract only two additional frames were built with a total of only seventy-two spindles.

A most significant aspect of Slater's activities during 1790 was the close contact which existed between him and other skilled mechanics in the employ of Almy and Brown. While none of the immigrant jenny spinners appears to have been particularly useful to Slater, the cadre of metal and woodworking mechanics who had been spasmodically engaged on the experiments during 1789 remained on the payroll during 1790. The best remembered were Oziel Wilkinson and Sylvanus Brown, but the list also included Daniel and Richard Anthony, Daniel Jackson, John Field, William Tefft and others.

Beyond manufacture and assembly of machine parts under Slater's guidance, it is difficult to know what specific influence these mechanics had upon development of new spinning machinery. But it is not hard to conclude that their involvement was considerable, especially since Slater and his helpers were in daily personal contact. Away from the workshop, the house of Oziel Wilkinson was the seedbed of planning and talk concerning the machines. Not only was the house home for Oziel's five sons — who would become the region's pioneer full-time machine builders — but it was sporadically boarding house for many of the mechanics employed by Almy and Brown on the cotton mill project, including Samuel Slater himself. Topping the guest list was Richard Anthony, apparently the most experienced jenny operator and mechanic and a close friend of the Wilkinsons. "When I was a boy," he later testified, "I was intimate with Abrm and Isaac Wilkinson and used to visit and play with them in Pawtucket. In the summer of 1789 I commenced working in Pawtucket and run thirty six cotton spindles in the Fulling Mill on the west end of the lower dam on the River and the following winter I worked with Saml Slater making Cotton machinery by hand."[27]

The case of Anthony, though better documented than others, was probably not unique — Almy and Brown's accounts during 1790 indicate participation

Carding cotton with wire-toothed brush to disentangle the fibers was a laborious hand operation.

Sketch from Eighty Years' Progress of the United States (*Hartford, Conn., 1868*).

by a wide body of mechanics. Whether or not machines constructed before Slater's arrival were dispensable, the men who built them were not.

Perhaps the important role played by local mechanics can best be illustrated by the case of the carding machine — by far the most troublesome which Slater attempted to re-create. The earlier carding machine built by Joshua Lindley, then rebuilt by Oziel Wilkinson and others, was basically different from the model developed by Slater. The Lindley card — apparently similar to those at the Beverly Company — was a roller-type, while Slater's was a "flat top" similar to the type that became the mainstay of cotton manufacture throughout the nineteenth century. Moses Brown himself spoke of the carding machine in his 1791 letter to John Dexter, noting that Slater's machines were still imperfect for

26 Agreement between William Almy, Smith Brown and Samuel Slater, April 5, 1790, White, 74.

27 Deposition of Richard Anthony, Sergeant's Trench Case Papers, Federal Records Center, Waltham, Massachusetts. "Sergeant's Trench," *Flyer* 2:10 (October 1971) 10.

want of other machines "such as cards of a different construction from those already made and remade over."

The carding machine was Slater's nemesis during 1790. It is important to note that the card — the only machine on which Slater encountered serious technical difficulties — was also the only machine that required mechanical assistance from outside the local community. The big problem with the carding machine was production of card clothing — brush-like material composed of many fine wire bristles set in leather. To make this Almy and Brown ultimately turned to another of their Quaker associates, Pliny Earle of Leicester, Massachusetts. Again Almy and Brown had turned to the most knowledgeable mechanic they knew and trusted — Earle knew how to set card wires or teeth in leather and had machines constructed to do this for the manufacture of hand cards. Sometime before June 28, 1790, Slater visited Earle and agreed that he should make the card clothing. Some alterations in Earle's machinery were necessary to do the job, so delay was inevitable — only after five months, numerous letters sent, and trips to Leicester by Slater was the clothing delivered and even then it didn't work.

Producing a working carding machine was the major hold-up in the institution of successful Arkwright spinning in Pawtucket — and the reason was less a lapse of Slater's memory than technical failure on the part of the local mechanic and his tools. In other areas, where local experience was greater, work progressed without delay. By the end of March 1790, Oziel Wilkinson had already produced most major parts for Slater's roving and drawing frames and additional spinning frames. Wilkinson and other mechanics involved, we should remember, had produced spindles, whirls, bobbins, gears, rollers and cylinders before Slater's arrival — even the nomenclature of these machine parts had entered the account book vocabulary.

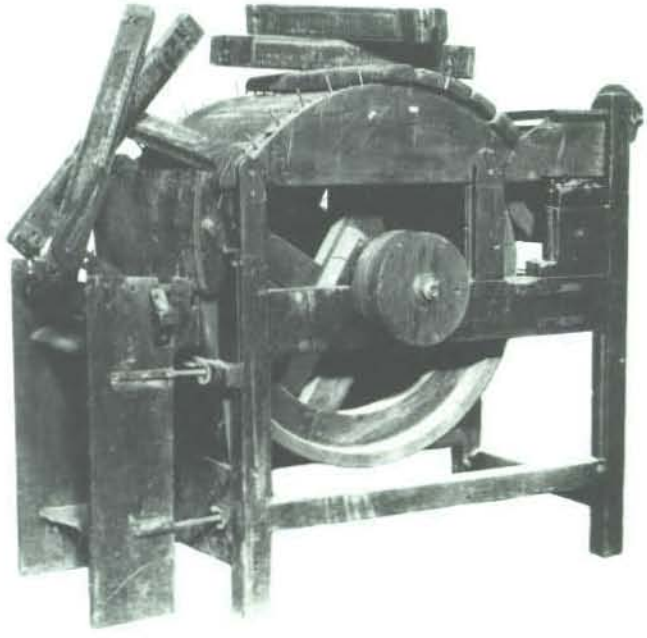
Clearly, the major difference between production of spinning, drawing, and roving frames on the one hand and of the carding machine on the other, was the ability of local craftsmen to produce necessary parts on a timely basis. That they were largely able to do this is perhaps a credit to their adaptability, but since there is no record of any particular difficulty encountered in producing the pieces we might assume that much of the trial and error work of manufacture had in fact preceded Slater.

The famous historical portrait of Slater — extracting every last detail of Arkwright machines from memory and working in a tightly shuttered workshop for fear that patterns might be stolen — is not supported by documentation. While it is true that Slater was much concerned that others might learn and thereby profit from seeing the machines, there was little he could do to avoid this prospect — entirely too many mechanics were involved.

The "birth" of America's textile industry in Pawtucket during 1790 came as a result of several years of experimentation based on the state's models in Massachusetts and machines at the Beverly Cotton Manufacturing Company. Slater — providing a quantum jump of knowledge — brought already commenced work quickly to conclusion and in so doing utilized whatever parts of earlier machines could be serviceable and whatever local skills could be brought to bear on the project, skills developed through experimentation in the community during 1788 and 1789.

Samuel Slater's carding machine, complete with wire-toothed leather card clothing, is treasured today in the nation's Smithsonian Institution.

Photograph, Smithsonian Institution.



Of all twenty-four states, the right of free suffrage was denied only "in our little seven-by-nine State," Seth Luther told his 1833 Providence audiences.

Comprehensive Atlas . . . by T. G. Bradford (N. Y., 1835).

Seth Luther — The Road from Chepachet

*by Carl Gersuny**

One of the authentic protagonists of the trade union movement in the 1830s, Seth Luther participated in the Rhode Island free-suffrage crusade and for his part in the Dorr rebellion was imprisoned at Providence and Newport. After release he devoted much time to lecturing on Rhode Island affairs, traveling widely from 1843 to 1845 to promote Dorr's cause and free suffrage.

Committed as insane in 1846, Luther spent his last seventeen years as an inmate in various asylums. After his death in 1863, an obituarist — giving no credence to the aphorism against speaking ill of the dead — voiced the antipathy Luther had incurred among conservatives:

He was a natural radical, dissatisfied with all existing institutions about him, and labored under the not uncommon delusion that it was his especial mission to set things right . . . . He had considerable talent for both writing and speaking; but he was too violent, willful and headstrong to accomplish any good. Soon after the troubles of '42 he became insane and was sent to Dexter Asylum, where he remained until 1848 when Butler Hospital was opened for patients. He was then removed to that institution by the city, where he remained for eleven years; thence to Brattleboro [Vermont Asylum] where he has just closed his worse than useless life.[1]

The "troubles of '42" and their aftermath played an important part in that "worse than useless" life which has received but little attention since it ended.[2] The obituarist's harsh judgment may have been premature, and study of Luther's career may be instructive. The principal objective of the present effort is to present a view of Luther's path from the suffrage encampment at Chepachet to the end.

Born at Providence in 1795, son of Thomas and Rebecca Luther, Seth had a common school education and learned the carpenter's trade from Caleb Earle — who was to gain prominence in commerce and politics, including service as lieutenant governor from 1821 to 1824.[3]

In 1817, at twenty-two, Seth Luther "descended the Ohio River, 500 miles, in a little pine skiff, 8 feet long and 3 feet wide, in company with two other men. We rowed the skiff cross-handed the whole distance, and were nine days on the passage to Cincinnati. I had to return on foot 300 miles. There being no steamboats in which to ascend the river as now."

So commenced the pattern of a peripatetic life for — shortly before the end of his travels — he claimed to have journeyed about 150,000 miles in thirty years. In 1834 he had already accounted for nearly one third of that mileage — "travelling about 45,000 miles, in and about 14 of the United States, including a visit to the frontiers of Upper Canada and East Florida." Whether or not his claims of distance were exaggerated, his was the life style of a wayfarer. He put great stock in being observant, writing that nothing among the works of man and nature was beneath his notice, and envying the domestic felicity of frontier people whose hospitality he received —

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1 *Providence Journal* May 4, 1863.

2 Louis Hartz, "Seth Luther: Story of a Working-Class Rebel," *New England Quarterly* 13:3 (Sept. 1940) 401-418. Edward Pessen, *Most Uncommon Jacksonians: Radical Leaders of Early Labor Movement* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1967) 87-90. Marvin E. Gettleman, *Dorr Rebellion* (New York: Random House, 1973) 19-21.

3 Records of Commissioners Appointed by General Assembly in June 1842 to Examine Prisoners Arrested during the Late Rebellion, Providence, 1842, MS., John Hay Library, Brown University. *Biographical Cyclopedia of Representative Men of Rhode Island* (Providence, 1881) 192.

"I have delighted after a journey of 40 miles per day on foot, in the vast, gloomy, and grand forests of the West . . . to enter the hospitable log cabin of the hardy pioneer . . . and listen to this well-told tale of hardships endured, of difficulties surmounted and domestic happiness obtained by perseverance . . . . O that for me some home like that might smile."

His encounters with blacks were related in positive terms — "He seemed by his conduct and conversation to speak to my heart and say 'Am I not a man and a brother?' The honesty of some of these poor creatures would make a State Street note-shaver *blush* if such an impossiblity could occur."

As for Indians, he reported visiting in Wyandot log huts and receiving "from their hands a cup of cold water when in my utmost need, when almost perishing with intense thirst, without being told 'get you gone, paleface,' as we sometimes say to them 'Get you gone, Indian dog.'"[4]

Back in the East in the 1830s, Luther worked in cotton mills and as a house carpenter. Encounters with conditions of emergent industrialism led this articulate working man to participate in the early organizing activities of labor. His first speech — *An Address to the Working Men of New England on the State of Education and on the Condition of the Producing Classes in Europe and America with Particular Reference to the Effect of Manufacturing (As Now Conducted) on the Health and Happiness of the Poor and on the Safety of Our Republic* — delivered in Boston, Charlestown, Cambridgeport, Waltham, Dorchester, Portland, Saco and Dover — went through three editions in the eighteen-and-a-half-cent pamphlet in which it was published.[5]

One of the founders of the Boston Trades Union in 1834, Luther participated in 1835 in writing a widely distributed circular calling for establishment of a ten-hour work day which contributed to a strike in Philadelphia. He was active in the National Trades Union until its collapse during the 1837 depression.[6] In 1833 he had joined the Rhode Island suffrage movement, protesting the fact that no citizen of Rhode Island, whatever his standing or whatever duties he may perform to his country, can vote for his rulers unless he own a freehold estate worth one hundred and thirty-four dollars or be the eldest son of such a freeholder. Members of the Rhode Island free-suffrage committee referred to themselves as "humble mechanics" — William J. Tillinghast, Barber — Lawrence Richards, Blacksmith — William Mitchell, Shoemaker — Seth Luther, Housewright — William Miller, Currier — and David Brown, Watch and Clock Maker — who corresponded with political leaders outside the state concerning the rights of suffrage.

Part of Luther's involvement included an address delivered in the old Town House at Providence on April 19 and April 26, 1833, expressing awareness that "many in the community entertain bitter prejudice against me . . . . First I am charged with the unpardonable sin of being a poor man. But this would not have been so heinous if I had made no exertions against the oppressions under which poor men, women and children labor." He pointed out that of all the twenty-four states, the right of free suffrage was disputed and denied only "in our little seven-by-nine State." In Luther's view, being taxed and obliged to render service without consent was the crux of the issue.

I should like to ask the question if it was the right of British subjects not to be taxed without their consent before the Revolution and the General Assembly now tax twelve thousand citizens of this state directly or indirectly without their consent, what has that body of men gained by the revolution but a change of masters in that respect?

Not only was there taxation without representation, but those disfranchised were also denied justice in the courts because only freeholders and their eldest sons could serve on juries. Thus "if life, liberty or property of one of the disfranchised is taken from him, it is not done by his peers, and is consequently

4 Seth Luther, *Address on Origin and Progress of Avarice and Its Deleterious Effects on Human Happiness* (Boston, 1834) 11-12, 38-39.

5 Second edition (New York, 1833) 35. See also Luther, *Garland of Gratitude* (Providence, 1842) 10.

6 John R. Commons et al. *Documentary History of American Industrial Society*, v. 6 (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark, 1910) 94-99, 235.

7 Luther, *Address on Right of Free Suffrage* (Providence, 1833) xi, xiv, 3-21.

8 Gettleman, 29.

9 Luther, *Address Delivered before Mechanics and Working-Men of Brooklyn on Celebration of Sixtieth Anniversary of American Independence* (Brooklyn, 1836) 18.

10 New York, July 23, 1840, MS., New-York Historical Society.

11 *New Age and Constitutional Advocate* April 2, May 14, 1841.

12 *Providence Journal* July 30, 1842.

unjust." A remedy must be sought, "Peaceably if we can, forcibly if we must."[7] Yet that remedy was not yet at hand. The initiative passed from the "humble mechanics" to the Constitutional Party, which in turn collapsed in 1837.[8]

During 1835-1836 Luther visited New York, Albany, Newark, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington in connection with trades union activities.[9] Another gap follows in available information but in 1840 he turned up in New York where he wrote to Albert Gallatin for advice.[10] By the following spring he was back in his native state in the thick of the campaign. That he did not fit the conventional mold for men of his time was felt by allies as well as by scornful adversaries. A writer in the pro-suffrage *New Age and Constitutional Advocate* reported that money had been raised "for the purpose of employing the somewhat eccentric Seth Luther to lecture on Suffrage in different parts of the State." Somewhat eccentric or not, Luther received favorable notice after one such speaking engagement from a correspondent of the same newspaper.

On April 27, 1841 Luther addressed a capacity audience at a theater in Newport and "a more truly patriotic republican lecture has not been heard in this town since the days of the revolution." The address lasted two and a half hours with but one interruption to reprimand some hecklers — when he uttered his slogan, "Peaceably if we can, forcibly if we must," to hissing from "lordly landholders and noted aristocrats" who stopped their disturbance when Luther pointed out that they were "hissing at the very words of their forefathers of the revolution."[11]

Little more than a year later, the attorney general lodged a complaint against Luther, among others, to the effect that

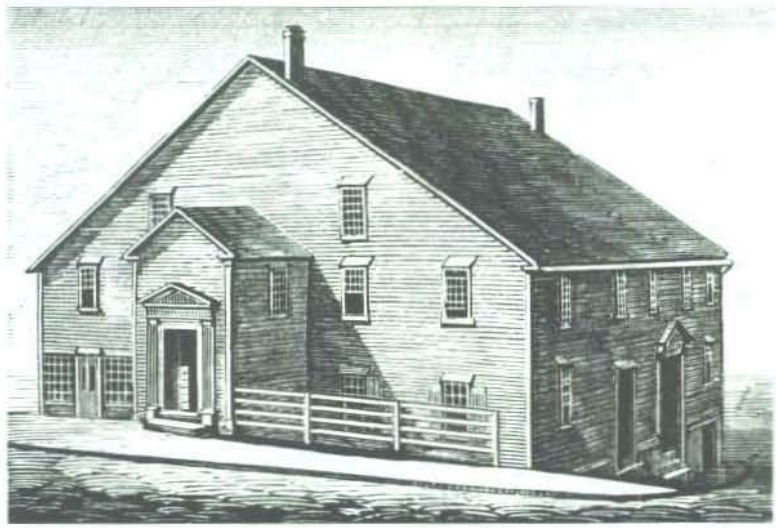
On the 17th day of May, A. D. 1842 and at divers other times, between that and the 24th day of June, A. D. 1842, with force and arms, Seth Luther of . . . Providence, housewright . . . wickedly devising and intending the peace of said State to disturb on the said days, unlawfully, maliciously and traitorously did compass, imagine and intend to raise and levy war, insurrection and rebellion against said State . . . and with a great multitude with force and arms did falsely and traitorously and in a warlike and hostile manner, array and dispose themselves with the intent the peace of said State to disturb, and to overthrow and destroy the government and laws thereof.[12]

Activities that caused Luther to incur the attorney general's displeasure were recorded by commissioners appointed for examination of prisoners. While Luther refused to answer questions concerning others — he said he would rather lose his life than turn state's evidence — he did respond concerning his own part in the rebellion.

I had been to Chepachet working occasionally and left the 17th Monday night the arsenal was attacked hearing Gov Door wanted help, found his forces at a house on Federal Hill, I heard the troops were going to the arsenal. Was detached as one of the guards and went with the cannon. I left about sun-rise and got my breakfast at the Hoyle Tavern . . . . I think I staid in town 'till next Sunday morning. I went to the entrenchment to see the breast work on Federal Hill in the afternoon. . . . Saturday night before I went

The old Town House in Providence was scene of lectures by Seth Luther, Housewright, member of the Rhode Island free-suffrage committee.

Providence Plantations for 250 Years *by Welcome Arnold Greene (Providence, 1886).*



out I was at my father's house. . . . Sunday I went in Federal Hill, talked some and about noon went to Chepachet and finished my work. After that I went to work for different people. I went there to obtain work, as I knew I could get none in Providence on account of personal enemies . . . . From that time I acted as Clerk . . . to the Camp. I received and expected no appointment from Mr. Door, I kep a record but left it at the camp, took nothing with me from the camp but some papers taken from me at Woonsocket . . . . I was at work for Mr. Atwell previous to the Chepachet difficulty, to remodel his parlor.

After suffrage forces dispersed from Chepachet, Luther spent the night in a barn to keep out of the rain and was arrested the next day four miles from Woonsocket. "They gave me some cider and crackers and cheese. All the guards treated me well 'till some Providence Cadets came and treated me in the most outrageous manner." At the conclusion of interrogation Luther stated that Governor Dorr's government was the only one in the state. "The prisoner says he acted conscientious toward God and man in this business."[13]

Testimony of two witnesses at the Dorr trial corroborated parts of Luther's account. Richard Knight said he "went in and saw a man with no hair on, who was called secretary. They asked me several questions and the answers were noted down in a book. Understood the secretary was Seth Luther." Another testified that "Seth Luther was there. He talked of the object of the assemblage. He said a large number of men were coming on, with Mr. Dorr at the head."[14]

Luther was brought to Providence with twenty other prisoners. "We were exhibited through the streets in triumph to glut the vengeance of the most cursed aristocracy that ever disgraced humanity." He noted that one guard detailed to march next to him did not belong to the higher orders because "the delicate nasal organs of the flower of Algerine chivalry would not permit them to march side by side with a 'dirty House Carpenter.'" After arrival at the state prison—"that accursed abode of Murderers, Forgers and others who had commited crimes of the deepest dye" — "We were . . . ushered into cells prepared for *convicts!* 12 and 13 in a cell; and three or at most four straw beds, yard wide, thrown in each cell. The first night of incarceration was a horrid, horrid one indeed." Luther had been taken to prison on the day of his father's interment at North Burial Ground and "was denied the privilege of attending the funeral or of a farewell glance at his venerated remains."[15]

At the end of July, when prisoners who had been held under martial law were turned over to civil authorities, Luther and four others were transferred to the county jail in Newport. The *Providence Journal* reported that

When the order came for the release of the "illustrious" Seth previous to his being arrested by the Sheriff, he showed some signs of alarm, lest he should be turned adrift from his comfortable quarters, without shelter for his head. He accordingly expressed gratification when taken before the justice, at being further provided for at the expense of the State, and spoke of the pleasure he anticipated in spending the summer in a place of fashionable resort like Newport.[16]

Some of "illustrious" Seth's concerns while imprisoned in Newport that summer have been preserved in his letters to Walter S. Burges. On August 19 he inquired about lecture manuscripts and other papers in possession of various landlords to whom he owed money — three dollars to the landlord of the Manufacturers Hotel in Providence and five dollars and a quarter to a tavern keeper in Boston — "I told them that under present circumstances that it was impossible for me to pay it and requested them as a great favor to let me have the Articles in question as necessary to my defense."

On September 5, he thanked Burges for pecuniary assistance and inquired about the manuscript of his "Garland of Gratitude" which he had sent to the Suffrage Ladies for publication. He complained that some who "fled the field of Suffrage when the least sign of danger was apprehended" are being "garlanded" by the Ladies, "leaving us *poor* devils to bear the brunt of the battle and get the State prison and jails vermin and all for our reward." He heaped scorn on turncoats and threats against those who wronged

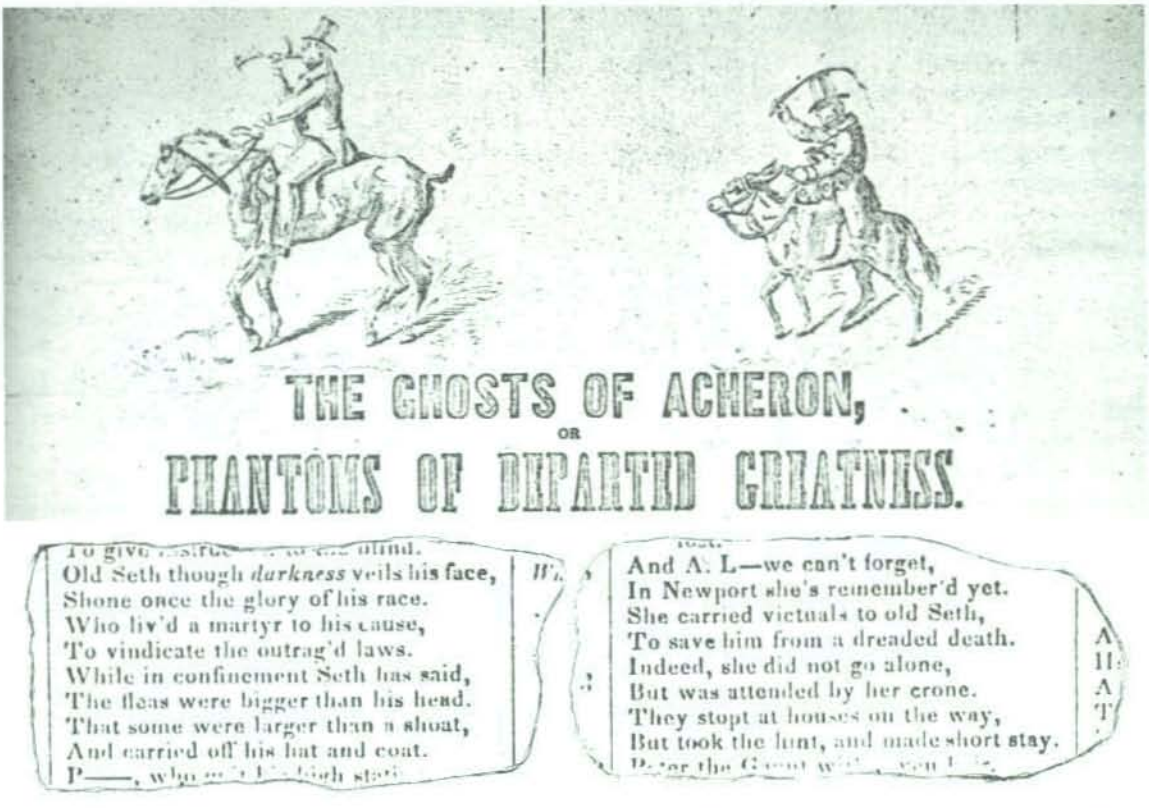
13 Records of Commissioners, 100-104.

14 *Rhode Island — Interference of the Executive in the Affairs of*, 28 Cong., 1 sess., Rep. No. 546 (1844) 884-86.

15 *Garland of Gratitude*, 8-11. *New Age and Constitutional Advocate* Nov. 17, 1842.

16 July 30, 1842.

Luther's account of his imprisonment was satirized in an unsigned epic ridiculing Dorr's followers mostly indicated by initials only. One copy of the broadside with inked-in names and occupations identifies Old Seth as Luther "vagrant Lecturer" and his friend as Abby Lord "Impudent Miliner."



Portions of broadside, n.d., n.p., RIHS Graphics Collection.

his friends — "A quill is my cannon and facts, stubborn facts my ammunition. With this ammunition I am well supplied. I have a long account to settle with some of the clovenhearted leaders as they style themselves."[17]

Later in the autumn, attempting to escape, Luther set fire to his cell, rushed out when the jailer went to get water, and "ran as far as the State House before he was retaken by the jailer. He blackened his face so that he might pass for a negro and tied up his bed in the shape of a man."[18]

In March 1843 the prisoners in Newport petitioned Governor King for release upon taking and subscribing an oath of allegiance and posting bond for their good behavior. Luther's petition was not acted upon immediately, but by March 22 he was out of jail, causing the perennially antagonistic *Journal* to warn

Luther — the illustrious Seth Luther is again at large! Tremble, ye malicious and cowardly Algerines — ye ironfooted oppressors of the people, tremble! Lo, the champion of freedom, the jail-burner is among you. He roams amid your castles, overflowing with patriotism and strong beer. Ferocious as a wolf, courageous as a lion, and subtle as a fox, he again appears upon the field, a perfect — ass. We sin against him no more. Nay, if he is a cracked-brained, noisy, loafing fool, we will not proclaim the fact to the world — that we won't.[19]

17 Luther to Burges, Aug. 19, Sept. 5, 1842, MS., John Hay Library.

18 *Providence Journal* Nov. 17, 1842.

19 *Providence Journal* March 22, 1843.

After release, resuming his travels as an orator, he announced in the *Boston Post* in April that he was offering a course of lectures —

Seth Luther — A voice from the Algerine dungeons — Secrets of Rhode Island prison houses unveiled! The undersigned, who has been tortured in the dungeons of modern Algiers for nine months for the offense of believing in the Declaration of Independence, most respectfully informs the public that . . . he will deliver a Lecture introductory to a course on Rhode Island Affairs in the Town Hall, Charlestown, Massachusetts on Wednesday, April 19th at 7½ o'clock. Ladies and gentlemen who feel an interest in the fortunes of a down-trodden and despotism-crushed sister State are respectfully invited to attend. Admission free. The lecturer will depend on voluntary contributions for expenses and compensation, if any shall be deserved in the estimation of the audience . . . . The undersigned has been treated in the most cruel and unjustifiable manner during his incarceration. He has been handcuffed and yoked to a fellow prisoner — beaten by the jailer — taunted and tortured in almost all possible ways — driven to despair, distraction and desperation, and to the verge of the grave . . . . Chains similar to those worn by the undersigned will be exhibited.[20]

At the August 1843 term of the Supreme Judicial Court in Newport the attorney general "declared that he would no longer prosecute" the indictment against Luther, who went to Baltimore later that month.[21] Within forty-eight hours after his arrival there, sympathetic individuals raised forty dollars to enable him to return to the West, and "Chief Justice Taney contributed to the wants of the Traitor the 'Undersigned'." Luther spent the winter of 1843-44 in rural Bond County, Illinois and reported that "my mind had been extremely impaired by my confinement."

In summer 1844 he spent eight weeks in Cincinnati, apparently working as a carpenter and trying in vain to elicit support for Dorr. "The whole west is astir with indignation about Governor Dorr (with the exception of Cincinnati, Ohio . . . . Could not get the Democrats to move at all in the matter.)"[22] After leaving Cincinnati he reported that he crossed Indiana on foot and spoke on September 2 in Illinois.

The largest meeting of the People ever to come together in this State assembled in Jacksonville, Ill. on Tuesday week. The number of people present was about ten thousand . . . . who are resolved that the despot Henry Clay shall not rule over them. . . . During the time the speeches were being delivered at the main stand, THOMPSON CAMPBELL ESQ. Secretary of State, MR. MILLER of Schuyler and MR. SETH LUTHER of RHODE ISLAND addressed the people in another part of the ground. The thunders of applause came rolling up from this quarter to the main stand, giving evidence that these speakers were also telling the truth in the right way.

On September 6 he addressed a Democratic meeting at the State House in Springfield, with the governor in attendance.[23] From Springfield, Luther wrote that there was great interest in the West concerning the Rhode Island suffrage movement and the imprisonment of Dorr. He claimed that

Thousands are ready, able and willing to march on Rhode Island armed equiped and provisioned to the rescue of Governor Dorr if necessary. Will craven hearted Rhode Islanders let him remain incarcerated. I tell you Sir if he is not unconditionally liberated, *and that too in short order, Rhode Island will be desolated even as was Moscow when the Head Quarters of Napoleon were in the Kremlin. Woe! Woe! Woe! to the Whig Algerine is heard in thunder tones, sweeping over the vast Prairies of the West. Curses both loud and deep on the Whigs of Rhode Island and their approbator, Clay, reach me on every breeze from all points of the Compass.*

He reported that he had been "supplied with plenty of funds . . . by the friends of Dorr, Polk and Dallas" and that his physical and mental health were improving.[24]

Back in Providence in July 1845, he wrote two letters to Dorr, who had been freed in the interim. The first was a cryptic message, "Sir Beware of *mere Politicians* of the City of Newyork." The second — on the eve of his departure on another western trip — is a lengthy complaint about sufferings "aggravated to an unspeakable extent by the conduct of men who ignobly forsook you, in the darkest hour, and who now fawn about you and claim to stand in the front

20 Reprinted *Providence Journal* April 18, 1843.

21 Court Records, Newport, R. I.

22 Luther, Springfield, Ill., to Burges, Sept. 7, [1844], MS., John Hay Library.

23 *Illinois State Register* Aug. 30, Sept. 13, 1844, Illinois State Historical Library.

24 Luther to Burges, Sept. 7, [1844].

John C. Calhoun's attitude toward the national Democratic party's possible 1844 support of Dorr was reported clearly in Luther's confidential note to his Rhode Island leader.

Harper's Encyclopedia of United States History, v.2 (N.Y., 1907).

ranks of your friends, while those who stood fast by you on all occasions . . . are cast out." Many of these false friends were enjoying the patronage of the Polk administration while Luther felt ignored.

One *of your friends at least, has suffered more than any other man except yourself in the dungeons of Rhode Island. That friend traveled on foot, mostly, nearly four months in Indiana, Illinois and Michigan to advocate your rights and our rights while you Sir were languishing in a wretched cell. That friend has ever under all circumstances stood by you and the cause! No suffering however appalling, even to the borders of the grave has had any effect to chill his zeal, or for a moment induced him to cease his exertions in your behalf and the cause of Democracy. Where are your inveterate enemies and your false hearted friends* now? *Enjoying the patronage to which I have alluded! Where is that firm and faithful friend of which I have spoken? He is Sir suffering all the pangs of abject poverty and men are holding office procured by your sufferings and by his, who would not lift a finger to save your friend the writer from starvation.*

Of one falsehearted recipient of patronage Luther said "I'd rather be a *dog* and bay the moon than *such* a democrat" — perhaps the paraphrase from *Julius Caesar* was part of the orator's stock in trade — and concluded by telling Dorr "it is your duty to see that he is thrown over board."

Luther again traveled to Baltimore and thence on foot to Dayton by way of Pittsburgh, Wheeling, and Columbus, where he gleaned some intelligence concerning the Democratic convention of the previous year which he communicated to his chief —

Feeling as ever an undying personal and political attachment to you, I feel it a duty to you and the cause for which we have suffered to give you any information relative to Rhode Island Affairs which I may possess. On my arrival at Columbus Ohio, I had an interview with Col. Medary. He gave me some information about the Baltimore Convention which I think it necessary you Sir, should know. A conversation took place in Committee between Col Medary and Mr. Calhoun upon Rhode Island. The Col wished to introduce Resolutions into the convention sustaining our party. Mr. C would not hear anything of it and said if the convention sustains Dorr that John Q. Adams would offer Resolutions in the House to the effect "that the Southern blacks had a right to form a constitution also. Col Medary told him if that sentiment was known to be that of the Southern Democrats they would immediately loose the support of Northern working men. If they *must be kept in political bondage to hold the blacks in slavery, the Northern Working Men would leave Southern men to look out for themselves, while they, the North would take care of their own affairs." I asked Col Medary if he considered this in the light of confidential conversation? He said he did so, and therefore he had not published it. You Sir will of course consider this letter in the same light. I have not, neither shall I make it known to any other person.*

He concluded by indicating that he was headed farther west and warned Dorr again against false friends "who forsook you in the darkest days of despair some of whom are now fawning about you like puppies."[25]

By winter 1846 he had returned to New England and to the ten-hour movement revived during this period of economic recovery. At a convention in Manchester, New Hampshire in March Luther was appointed to a "committee of correspondence on Ways and Means to carry the Ten-Hour System into effect."[26] Two months later, after war had been declared against Mexico, he wrote to President Polk to volunteer his services in the armed forces —

The Undersigned, hereby offers himself, as a Volunteer, to enter the Service of our Country, in the Capacity of Clerk, in the Army or Navy of the United States, of which you Sir, are Commander in Chief.

My honored Father, having served his Country, under Command of our Glorious Washington*; and having, myself, served in the late Revolution in the State of Rhode Island, under Command, of* Governor Thomas Wilson Dorr*; and whereas I* have *ever been, and believe I ever* shall *be, as ready, to serve my Country, as was my honored Father, Thomas Luther, who died a Pensioner of the United States, at the age of nearly 88 years*

Therefore; if the President please, I wish him, to accept my services, either as Clerk, or in any other *station, which my experience, years, talents, and capacity may designate me as fit. The undersigned, is fifty years old; and has traveled about One Hundred Fifty Thousand miles, within thirty years, in the United States. He is* well *versed in the General Geography of the Country, and familiar with the* History *of the Country, from the Landing of the Pilgrims. He is inured to hardships, fatigue, and suffering; and* fully believes *that, he can, render service to the Country, during the War with Mexico.*[27]

Two weeks later he secured a letter of recommendation from Marcus Morton, former governor and then collector of customs in Boston, who wrote the secretary of war that despite limited personal knowledge he had no doubt of Luther's integrity, patriotism and democratic principles and "if you can give him any situation adapted to his capacity, I have no doubt he would serve his country with as much zeal, fidelity and disinterestedness as any other man."[28]

On June 4, 1846, in a bizarre message — someone, perhaps the addressee, wrote on the cover that "Poor Seth's intellects I fear are in an erratic state" — Luther addressed

Governor Thomas Wilson Door
My ever beloved
Commander in Chief

. . . . . .

I leave Boston for Mexico on Tuesday next. If I live long enough to start. Route
From Boston . . . to Pittsburg or Wheeling thence by land or water, to St. Louis, thence to the Halls of the Montezumas I guess! "if the President Please." I have one letter from General John McNiel to James K. Polk. "Who is James K. Polk?"[29] . . .

Departure was thwarted, apparently by the arrest of Luther during an attempted bank robbery. Its report in the *Northern Star and Farmers' and Mechanics' Advocate* is a sad epilogue to Luther's life at liberty in the world of affairs.

Seth Luther. *The nation it appears must lose the services of this "distinguished" individual! Wishing to replenish his pockets, previous to leaving for the Rio Grande, Seth marched into the State Bank, Boston, armed with a sword and demanded a* thousand dollars *in the name of President Polk. He was taken into custody. Seth always believed in the agrarian doctrine of the division of property.*[30]

On June 15, Luther was committed to the Lunatic Asylum in East Cambridge[31] where he remained until November 11, when the city fathers of Providence sent for him, for it was to their care that he was entrusted for the remainder of his life. From then until November 30, 1848 he was a workhouse inmate in Providence at Dexter Asylum, one of whose builders had been Caleb Earle, the master carpenter from whom Luther had learned his trade. "The idiots and others mentally unsound were provided for, so far as possible, at the Dexter Almshouse, but the

25 Luther to Dorr, July 5 and 27, 1845. Luther — Dayton, Ohio — to Dorr, Sept. 20, 1845. MSS., John Hay Library.

26 Commons, v. 8, p. 83.

27 Luther to Polk, May 23, 1846. MS., National Archives, Record Group 107.

28 Morton to W. L. Marcy, June 2, 1846. MS., Morton Letterbooks, Massachusetts Historical Society.

29 Luther, Boston, to Dorr, MS., John Hay Library.

30 June 20, 1846.

facilities for their care were necessarily crude and limited. The almshouse became so crowded by 1847 that it was proposed to restrict the number confined in it to children and such permanent residents as sickness and misfortune had reduced to poverty. In that year, however, the Butler Asylum for the insane was opened and the insane were transferred to it, the city paying for their board, thus relieving the Dexter Almshouse."[32] After his commitment, the *Republican Herald* speculated that the *Providence Journal* "will not be able to extract any more sport or capital from his aberrations unless it pursue him within the walls of his confinement," a supposition that was to be refuted by the obituarist cited at the beginning.[33]

Luther was among the first patients at Butler Hospital, a landmark on the road toward humane treatment of the mentally ill. Of the first sixty-two patients admitted, Dr. Isaac Ray found only eight whom he considered curable. Luther proved not to be one of them. Thirty-two of the original patients, including our protagonist, were supported by the city at the rate of two dollars per week.

The only record thus far discovered of Luther's years at Butler confirms that he was unmarried. He was discharged as unimproved on November 30, 1858, his residence listed as Providence. Now that he had been removed from the political arena his occupation on the hospital record was listed as "politician" rather than his self-designation of house carpenter. If he wrote anything during his eleven years at this pioneering hospital, it was probably lost.[34]

Over the years, the minimum fee at Butler increased from the original two dollars per week to $2.25 in 1850, in 1853 to $2.50 and from 1854 until his discharge, the city had to pay three dollars per week for Luther's upkeep. This expenditure later drew the wrath of the *Journal's* obituarist — "The tax-payers of this city . . . whom he loved so to abuse and defame, have been at the entire expense of his support for nearly twenty years, thus adducing another striking illustration of the familiar fact that those who wage the most relentless war upon society . . . are the first to become the recipients of its bounties and charities."

During the economic recession of 1858, the city administration, beset with rising welfare costs, decided that three dollars per week at Butler Hospital was excessive. Luther and several other patients were accordingly transferred to the less expensive Vermont Asylum in Brattleboro. There he spent the remainder of his life which ended on April 29, 1863.

Against the abuse of the *Journal's* obituary, Luther was defended in the *Providence Daily Post* — "Poor Old Seth Luther. We knew him well — he was a natural-born Democrat. . . . He hated a miser as Old John Brown hated a slave-holder . . . . He did not embrace Dorrism as many of its followers did, because it promised promotion; it had been his political creed all his life. But the excitement proved too strong for him . . . . His brain gave way and he became a raving maniac." After a long quotation from the *Journal* obituary, the *Daily Post* continued:

We pity the man whose soul can be so callous to every generous throe of human nature to speak thus of a dead political opponent . . . . "His worse than useless life." Who presumes "to pass judgment?" "Stand aside for I am holier than thou." . . . If we were disposed to imitate the Journal in its censoriousness, we might give the names of many of our citizens . . . whose lives are quite as useless and much more detrimental to the public than was Seth Luther's. But we forbear; the object of this calumny has passed forever from the seasons of the earth and beyond the influence even of the Providence Journal and its junto. He struggled hard while living, and honestly, against what he deemed power and oppression; what may be the results of the force which he exerted in the great drama of human life we will not pretend to decide.[35]

Luther had sought a ten-hour work day and rights for labor unions. Later the eight-hour day and collective bargaining came to be taken for granted. He had been active in the suffrage movement and the Dorr rebellion. Subsequently, property requirements for voting were eliminated, although those for financial town meetings remained until 1973. Posthumously, Seth Luther became something he never was in life — a winner.

31 *Boston Evening Transcript* June 22, 1846.

32 Howard Kemble Stokes, *Finances and Administration of Providence* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1902) 186.

33 June 27, 1846.

34 *Report of Trustees of Butler Hospital for Insane, January 1848* (Providence, 1848) 6-7, and patients' records.

35 May 7, 1863.

President Duncan Hunter Mauran.

The Rhode Island Historical Society

One Hundred Fifty-second Annual Meeting

The one hundred fifty-second annual meeting — held in the Society's Library, 121 Hope Street, Providence on February 3, 1974 — was called to order at 3:30 p.m. by Joseph K. Ott, president.

Minutes of the 1973 annual meeting were accepted as printed in *Rhode Island History* 32:2 (May 1973).

Townes M. Harris, Jr., treasurer, reported a deficit of $33,486.93 adjusted to approximately $16,500. His report was accepted as read.

The nominating committee's report by Leonard J. Panaggio, chairman, was accepted and its slate of officers declared elected. Members then stood in silence as Mr. Ott read the necrology for 1973.

The following amendment to the by-laws was approved —

It is hereby proposed that the constitution of the Society be amended as follows:

Article VII, entitled Executive Board, to read: Sec. 1. There shall be a Board of Trustees (formerly Executive Board) which shall consist of the officers of the Society, and the Chairman of each of the Standing Committees . . .

The Board of Trustees (formerly the Executive Board) shall control by vote, the accession and/or the disposition of any objects of the Society, whether by purchase, gift, sale, trade, or in the case of major objects, loans, after the appropriate Standing Committee shall have referred its decision to the Board . . . The balance of Article VII to remain the same.

The purpose of these changes is essentially to conform to the standards set by the accreditation commission of the American Association of Museums.

Annual reports were given by the past president, the librarian, and the director. Duncan Hunter Mauran acknowledged his election as president with brief remarks.

The meeting closed after an interesting and enthusiastically received lecture — "Samuel Slater: Industrial Genius or Robber Baron?" — by Paul E. Rivard, director of the Slater Mill Historic Site and Museum.

Respectfully submitted,
BRADFORD F. SWAN,
Secretary

Annual Report of the President

It has become customary for presidents to retire after three years of service. For me this has come all too quickly. I give up the gavel with a certain small amount of relief — as there has been a considerable amount of time and energy spent on Society affairs — but frankly with a great deal of regret. I've enjoyed every minute. It has given me, and I trust the members, great satisfaction to see this Society continue to grow and become a smoother, more far-reaching organization without sacrificing its personality.

Our society has achieved many milestones in the past three years. We celebrated its 150th anniversary in a memorable manner. We now own approximately 8400 square feet of land adjacent to the library should we need to expand. I do not think there is any question of that eventual need nor our desire to meet it. A group known as Friends of the Society has been started, whose annual gifts make possible many things. The very existence and success of this group spurs other financial support, as it shows our members and friends really care. We are grateful for the increased assistance from the State of Rhode Island. The Board of Trustees has been given final authority over our property and its committee structure enlarged to allow more interested and qualified people to serve. Those people elected here today represent the most capable group assembled in memory to help guide us in the next few years. Almost no one asked to serve by the nominating committee declined the chance, a great compliment to this Society. We have created an honorary position, Fellow of the Society, to acknowledge those who have demonstrated their abilities in Rhode Island history. Many other things have happened, some obvious, some not, that are important to our Society's image and achievements.

Necessary to these successes is a dedicated and hard-working staff; we are glad to have one. On behalf of the Board of Trustees and the members I would like to thank all staff members for their efforts, and particularly to thank our director for his tireless and enlightened leadership.

Those who know me well realize I am seldom at a loss for an opinion or comment. Today is no exception, and I would like to offer some personal remarks on a few aspects of our Society's future.

Landmarks and milestones. An early photograph of the building now housing the Library shows neighboring land purchased for expansion. Masterly planning prepared John Brown House for the 150th anniversary ball.

We all recognize the value of volunteer help to an organization such as ours, and we are grateful. Officers, chairmen, members of committees, and many others contribute their time and skill. The annual giving drive requires dozens of hard-working people. Our 150th anniversary ball — a masterpiece of careful planning — was run almost entirely by interested friends of the Society. Almost ten years have gone by since planning began for our furniture exhibition of 1965. That too was done primarily by volunteers, and its catalog became a standard reference on Rhode Island cabinetwork. Other efforts, both scholarly and social, could be mentioned. Among all these people are many with great knowledge and ability. It would be a shame if we did not recognize the potential of these volunteers in planning more frequent exhibitions and events. It is a partnership of staff and unpaid friends that has helped this Society so much in recent years.

On the horizon is the Bicentennial. The Society already has considerable scholarly work in process that represents real contributions to the study of our history. However, it may be wise to ask ourselves if our members and the people of Rhode Island do not expect something of a more visible and popular nature in addition. There are many possibilities; we invite your suggestions. Time for planning and organization is already beginning to run short.

Finally it is important to realize as we go forward that our financial resources are not endless. For the future we must return to a balance of income and expenditures in our regular operations.

I would like to thank our members for the opportunity to have served as president. There is a new president now, and I hope these same good people will support him as they have supported me.

JOSEPH K. OTT

Annual Report of the Librarian

The past year has been fruitful — several projects completed, new programs begun. Deborah Richardson, appointed curator of film archives — replacing Barbara Humphrys who accepted a post with University Film Study Center at M. I. T. — accessioned more than 300,000 feet of film, developed a more efficient storage-retrieval system, and edited *Rhode Island Film Retrospective — A Manual for Teachers*, generated by a seminar sponsored by our Society and Providence College to train high school teachers in use of film for their classrooms. Ms. Richardson also observed the filming of *The Great Gatsby* in Newport and reports that Paramount Studios may give us stills and out-takes from the film. Since so many Rhode Islanders participated in the movie, these will be an exciting addition to our archives.

Seeking ways to make potential users aware of our film collection, Ms. Richardson prepared three screening reels for a class from Rhode Island School of Design and conferred with Brown University historians regarding the value of film as documentation and teaching aid. She also helped prepare an article about the film archives for *East Bay Window*, December 5, 1973 — magazine supplement of the Phoenix Times newspapers.

Marsha Peters, curator of graphics, made great strides in organizing our voluminous collection of photographs and introducing new classification which rationalizes storage and retrieval. Ms. Peters' work was greatly facilitated by three new blueprint cases generously donated by Catherine Morris Wright. Insufficient space — a problem all our curators face — had become critical in the graphics department.

Ms. Peters also assisted over 300 patrons, accessioned thirty-eight new collections, and arranged "Portraits in Copper," exhibition of William Hamlin's press, plates and engravings at Slater Mill Museum. Two of the year's books included photographs from Society collections — Marvin Gettleman's *Dorr Rebellion* and Edward Lewis' *Blackstone Valley Line* — while other publishers, particularly British firms, requested material.

Our manuscripts division continued to be a center of great activity, with Nathaniel N. Shipton, curator, reporting addition of sixty-one new collections — more than two-thirds of them gifts. Miss Frances K. Talbot gave her family's papers which record Talbot and Arnold family marine, industrial, and commercial pursuits from 1721-1790. Other notable private papers included thirteen Eddy family diaries, Lippitt family papers, and Reynolds family papers. Among important individual items were a record book of the Kent County Female Anti-Slavery Society, a Moses Brown deed, and a Thomas Sessions letter book (1813-1814). Three historical institutions gave collections to the Society — Slater Mill presented old mill records; John Carter Brown Library transferred its Hazard-Peace Dale manufactory records; and Varnum House gave thirty-eight miscellaneous account books from 1761 to 1913.

Henry A. L. Brown deposited an important collection of John Brown Francis material. The Wanskuck Company — unusual for a still active firm — deposited business records dating from 1863 to 1915. Two churches added to their archives — First Baptist Church in America placed seventy shelf feet of records assembled from four different locations about town, and Plymouth Union Congregational Church gave five additional volumes of its records.

In keeping with efforts to build a solid Rhode Island business collection, most Society purchases were in that area. Two sets of DeWolf manuscripts totaling ninety items enlarged that collection by a good ten percent. There followed fourteen account books of Thurston & Son's general store in Hopkinton, 1744-1871; Warren Insurance Company marine records, 1801-1847; and an unusual set of accounts kept by Sterry Jenckes' horse stable in Cumberland, 1811-1872.

Our book collection increased by approximately 806 volumes, most noteworthy certainly the William Marchant library which arrived with the Marchant papers. Other large collections were given by Bradford F. Swan, Mrs. James A. Tillinghast, and Harris Arnold. The Short Story Club deposited its library of members' published works to make them more accessible to researchers.

Most heavily used by our patrons, the book collection is the least accessible because our holdings are not accurately listed in the catalog. After considerable discussion with librarians from other institutions as well as members of staff and library committee, we decided to completely recatalog the entire collection, using Library of Congress classification with some modifications to meet our special needs. While this process will take many years and will cause some inconvenience to our patrons, it will insure that eventually our books will be properly arranged and easily accessible.

Marcia LeFranc, my assistant, and I cataloged 1,082 volumes during the year, both new books and some previously in the collection. Other responsibilities as librarian prevented this figure from being higher. A full-time cataloger is vital if the collection is to be accessible within a reasonable length of time. A conservative estimate puts our total books at 100,000

volumes. At our present rate we will have a well cataloged library just in time for the tercentennial in 2076. Needless to say, we do not expect to be present for the celebration.

While much work is done in simply maintaining what the Society already possesses, it does not seem prudent to cease collecting until we clear up our backlog. Our collections are so good because former librarians actively collected contemporary as well as earlier materials. If we do not maintain their high quality of collecting, we will be failing in our responsibility to future researchers and to this Society. The library staff, in consultation with the library committee, has therefore been deeply involved in developing collecting policies for future as well as for past and current materials. Collecting is our most important function and one in which our members can be tremendously helpful.

You have probably noticed that I occasionally put requests for certain items in our newsletter. Since your response has been good, I plan to continue this practice. However, if you have materials — books, manuscripts, photographs, etc. — that you think we may be interested in, or know of someone who does, please advise a member of the staff or board of trustees. If the Society is to have a truly great collection, that will require interest and support of all members.

Obviously our purpose is not only collection and preservation but also dissemination. For the second year in a row, the number of visits to the library exceeded 6,000 — thirty-five percent college students and scholars; fifteen percent high school students, journalists and general public; fifty percent genealogists.

Use of the library by local college students has increased over the past three years, to the Society's benefit as well as to their own. Generally these students produce work of good quality, so we try to obtain copies of their papers whenever possible. If the body of the paper does not always receive an "A," its bibliography is often very useful. Among topics which students and scholars investigated this year — Greek Revival architecture, the Transit of Venus, the Sprague empire, child labor, antislavery, John Russell Bartlett, and the ever popular Dorr Rebellion.

In addition to her daily work of assisting researchers, answering telephone and mail requests, Nancy F. Chudacoff, Reference Librarian, gave tours and special lectures to both high school and college groups and worked with high school students and teachers on projects involving Rhode Island history. Last year I commented that our citizens were poorly informed and little interested in their state's history. This past year we have experienced a great demand from area teachers for programs concerning state and local history. The large number of library users and the volume of letters make it impossible for the reference librarian and other staff members to devote adequate attention to the needs of these teachers. The Society should perhaps consider, for the future, an additional staff member who can devote full time to arranging traveling exhibits and to working with both students and teachers in the schools.

Mrs. Chudacoff has also been compiling bibliographies, an important undertaking in any library but crucial in one so poorly cataloged as ours. Among those completed were "Providence Newspapers on Microfilm, 1762 to the Present" and briefer bibliographies on the Brown family, Indian sites, Providence, the China trade, and Roger Williams. Mrs. Chudacoff also researched and arranged an exhibit on the publishing career of Sarah Goddard.

In addition to regular duties, library staff members have actively participated in numerous professional conferences and seminars. In October this Society and Providence College hosted the fall meeting of New England Archivists. Nearly all members of our staff were involved in its planning or sessions.

The library staff has been assisted this year by several excellent student assistants, three on special programs from local colleges — Nancy Rosser from Rhode Island College, Katy McWhirter from Rhode Island School of Design, and Carol Ann Schmidt from the University of Rhode Island. From Neighborhood Youth Corps have come Robin Carvalho, Lori Coppolino, Manuel Santo and Wayne Carvalho. For the third year in a row Miss Irene Eddy has volunteered her services dismounting and unfolding manuscripts, and Mr. Joseph K. Ott continued his work on the Providence Custom House Papers. Mrs. Gail Doland and Mrs. Judith Gonicberg began giving time this year. Special thanks to members of the library committee — particularly to outgoing chairman Malcolm Chace, III — who have made invaluable contributions to overall planning and direction of the Library.

NANCY E. PEACE

Annual Report of the Director

Today marks the conclusion of the term of office of Joseph K. Ott, whose three years as president have been eventful and productive. Under his leadership we celebrated our sesquicentennial, highlighted by a notable lawn festival and a memorable ball. Mr. Ott recruited key volunteer leaders for those successful occasions. He steered our board of trustees through the process of setting up our annual giving program and devoted a great deal of time to seeing that its initial effort was a success, helping once again to enlist most of the key personnel.

Beyond official duties, Mr. Ott has spent countless hours in historical research and in the process helped to organize some of our largest manuscript collections. His knowledge of Rhode Island antiques and decorative arts has been called upon repeatedly to bail us out of difficulties when the absence of a professional museum curator and a flood of curatorial questions threatened to swamp us. It has been a privilege to work alongside Mr. Ott on behalf of the Society. His presidency — a significant one for the cause of Rhode Island history — will continue to be productive as initiatives begun during his term bear returns. We are grateful and pleased that he will continue to serve in several important capacities.

Warmest thanks to other members of our board of trustees and members of our committees, to Museum and Library volunteers, and particularly to our small army of fund solicitors, for diligent attendance and support. The staff, of course, continues to receive my heartfelt gratitude and admiration. To those who have conducted their assignments in unheated or makeshift, crowded areas of our buildings, special acknowledgment for holding out until we could make the necessary accommodations.

The past year was the tenth in a decade of unparalleled growth. Ten years ago the generous bequest of the late Dr. Dudley A. Williams coincided with a successful capital fund drive enabling the Society to purchase and outfit this building for its Library. The ensuing move of library materials from John Brown House in turn put into motion the project to restore that building as a house museum. The landmark loan show of Rhode Island furniture arranged by Mr. Ott and Mr. Monahon in 1965 and the fastidious restoration program under John Kirk and Antoinette Downing set high standards that have brought to the house the national attention it so richly deserves. Generosity of heroic proportions by donors like Norman Herreshoff resulted in large quantities of original John Brown furnishings being returned to their respective places. Activities of our 150th anniversary in 1972 — lawn festival, ball, Providence meeting of the American Association for State and Local History — and the forthcoming exhibition of the Society's painting collection have sustained this momentum.

Deriving from that impetus while adding to it have been other developments. In the area of publications we have added a newsletter and specialized guides and handbooks like our bibliography and subject guide to Providence newspapers on microfilm 1762 to the present and our film manual for teachers; we have published a major museum catalogue of our paintings; and we are of course engaged in the long-range project of the Papers of General Nathanael Greene.

Further areas of Society growth are volunteer and intern programs; school tours; participation as a central element in the state Historical Preservation and Bicentennial Commissions; and annual giving campaigns waged by our officers and members. Fundamental to such growth and a reflection of it has been expansion of our full-time professional staff which now stands at twelve. To fuel all this advance our budget has had to double and redouble in the past decade. In 1963 our annual operating cost was $50,000; in 1968 over $100,000; and this year it is approaching twice that amount.

Frequently we are asked why it costs so much to do what we do, while others continue to ask just what it is that we do. The basic answer is that it takes considerable time, talent, and money to preserve, protect, and make available library and museum collections that total more than ten million dollars, and even this response does not go far enough.

Many people suffer from the notion that all we need to know about our history has already been found out. A popular fiction imagines some grey-haired old gentleman scholar sitting down fifty or sixty years ago, organizing all the

. . . to preserve, protect, and make available library and museum collections that total more than ten million dollars.

Providence Journal Bulletin *photograph.*

facts, and coming up with something that faintly resembles Field's *State of Rhode Island* in three capacious and rather reassuring volumes. The reality is something quite different.

We don't know all we need to know about Rhode Island history. In spite of considerable investigation there are still many unexplored and unanswered questions about our colonial history; the state's history from 1790 to 1900 is barely sketched out; for the twentieth century we have practically nothing at all. The critical reality is that in many cases the very materials needed to write our history haven't yet been collected.

So — one of the vital tasks we are performing is an aggressive, thematic collecting of basic ingredients needed to create state and town histories. Actually, collecting is too mild a term — rescue and salvage would be more precise. Natural deterioration and ignorant or unsympathetic actions by individuals result in destruction which is robbing us of documents and museum objects which would illuminate our past.

If there were no professional staff here, there would be no Sayles Finishing Company archives — no Henry Marchant papers — no Jamestown Ferry records — no Del Sesto papers. Hundreds of important documents which have annually leaked out of the sieve-like records program of the state would have been lost. There would be no film archives, no Greene Papers project, no paintings catalogue. That is where the money goes. This is not a sedentary staff conducting "dial an ancestor" or "rent a term paper" services. When we're not on the move around the state talking to individuals and organizations about saving their records, we are at our desks cataloging hundreds of thousands of mosaic pieces which comprise what we now have rescued of Rhode Island's past. That's what we do. Our central concern is what historical societies are all about — the history of our area.

In years to come we intend to do more of the same. Our goals and needs reflect these directions. For your interest I would suggest the following —

To accommodate the continuing growth of our library collections it is desirable as soon as possible to add another stack floor to the Library. Planning ought to begin soon on library expansion by utilizing space now occupied by houses at 115 and 117 Hope Street.

To preserve our museum collections in a more stable environment, John Brown House ought to have humidity control and air conditioning added to its heating system.

To improve access to John Brown House for tours and meetings, parking space on or adjacent to the property should be a high priority.

Lecture hall and exhibit space is essential if we are ever to begin to interpret and display great quantities of Rhode Island's history which we cannot accommodate in our existing facilities.

Staff needs require attention. At present we are without any professional museum personnel. The quality of our collections and exhibits will begin to suffer unless we obtain a curator soon. An education person who could coordinate our school program both at the Society and in the schools along with lecture programs on various interest levels would also be an immense help. With the addition of a book cataloger, our library staff would be rounded out.

Partial funding has been received to publish Bradford F. Swan's edition of "Letters of Roger Williams." We are seeking an additional ten thousand dollars to move this work to press.

These then are capital and operational challenges I see for the near future. On the basis of our performance of the past ten years, I am confident that we shall meet them. I am grateful for your past support and, on behalf of our officers and trustees, warmly welcome you to continue to participate in rescuing and understanding Rhode Island's history.

ALBERT T. KLYBERG

NECROLOGY 1973

Mrs. Harvey A. Baker
Miss Phyllis E. Baker
Miss Florence A. Bray
Mr. Robert M. Brayton
Mr. Alfred Buckley
Mr. Alton C. Chick
Mrs. E. Donaldson Clapp
Mrs. Earl B. Dane
Mrs. William Jones Hoppin Dyer
Mr. Byron M. Flemming
Mr. William A. Gardner
Mr. William A. Greenlees
Mr. Robert E. Jacobson
Mrs. Atwood Knight
Mr. Arthur H. Lans
Mr. W. Easton Louttit
Mrs. J. Harry Marshall
Miss Ethel Merriman
Dr. Robert C. Murphy
Mrs. Edward C. Parkhurst
Mr. Andrew P. Quinn
Mr. Stowell B. Sherman
Miss Nenona Hope Smith
Mr. Richmond Viall
Mrs. W. Frederick Williams, Jr.

Statement of General Fund — Revenues and Expenses
Year ended June 30, 1973

REVENUES:			
Dues		$ 34,320.00	
Contributions:			
General	$ 17,473.00		
Corporate	150.00	17,623.00	
State of Rhode Island		21,000.00	
City of Providence		2,000.00	
Patriotic societies		270.00	
Admission income		1,435.38	
Outside services		11,279.09	
Transfers from other funds for current operations:			
Consolidated endowment income	40,821.89		
Restricted funds	2,101.10		
General Fund — allocated surplus	78,281.78	121,204.77	
TOTAL REVENUES			$209,132.24

EXPENSES:		
Salaries	73,286.88	
Pension	9,694.24	
Social security taxes	7,257.09	
Director's discretionary fund	861.54	
Supplies	2,264.05	
Telephone	2,898.39	
Postage	778.55	
Membership	2,213.19	
Fund drive	3,927.42	
Library	2,453.17	
Investment fees	3,234.68	
Museum	393.54	
Newsletter	1,761.43	
Publications	11,439.53	
Heat, light, and housekeeping	6,562.07	
Grounds	6,202.00	
Buildings	4,239.58	
Insurance	2,944.00	
Group insurance and Blue Cross	3,225.72	
Microfilm	700.00	
Outside services	10,234.60	
Professional fees	4,450.00	
Miscellaneous	913.75	
Equipment	2,401.97	
Special projects — General Fund allocated surplus	78,281.78	
TOTAL EXPENSES		242,619.17
EXCESS OF EXPENSES OVER REVENUES		($ 33,486.93)

BEQUESTS are a way of making continuing support for the Society possible. In so doing one honors not only the past, but the future and oneself as well.

The following suggested form may be used for a general bequest:

I give and bequeath to The Rhode Island Historical Society, a Rhode Island charitable corporation with offices at 52 Power Street, Providence, Rhode Island, the sum of Dollars (and/or the securities or other properties described herein, namely,), to be used for general purposes.

Officers and Committee Members elected at the 152nd Annual Meeting to serve until the Annual Meeting in 1975

Duncan Hunter Mauran, *president*
George C. Davis, *vice president*
Lawrence Lanpher, *vice president*
Bradford F. Swan, *secretary*
Dennis E. Stark, *assistant secretary*
Townes M. Harris, Jr., *treasurer*
Thomas R. Adams, *assistant treasurer*

FINANCE
John W. Wall, *chairman*
Foster B. Davis, Jr.
Michael A. Gammino, Jr.
Clarke Simonds
Charles C. Horton
James F. Twaddell

GROUNDS AND BUILDINGS
Clifford S. Gustafson, *chairman*
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Harold Ingram, Jr.
Thomas M. Sneddon
Mrs. Henry D. Sharpe
Mrs. Norman T. Bolles
William N. Davis

JOHN BROWN HOUSE
Mrs. George E. Downing, *chairman*
Winslow Ames
Mrs. John A. Gwynne
Norman Herreshoff
Frank Mauran, III
John Nicholas Brown, *ex officio*

LECTURE
Leonard J. Panaggio, *chairman*
Dr. Marguerite Appleton
Richard B. Harrington
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Howard P. Chudacoff
Henry A. L. Brown
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Mrs. S. Bradford Tingley
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Winslow Ames
Norman Herreshoff
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Joseph K. Ott
Mrs. Albert Pilavin

PUBLICATIONS
Stuart C. Sherman, *chairman*
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Mrs. Philip Davis
Wendell Garrett
Norman W. Smith
Charles Neu
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LIBRARY
Franklin S. Coyle, *chairman*
Mrs. Sydney L. Wright
Malcolm G. Chace, III
Albert E. Lownes
Matthew J. Smith
N. David Scotti
Blake Byrne

AUDIT
Donald W. Nelson, *chairman*
William A. Sherman
Robert H. Goff

The Board of Trustees is composed of the officers; chairmen of the standing committees; members at large Robert A. Riesman, Patrick T. Conley, Norman T. Bolles and Joseph K. Ott; the director; and Elliott E. Andrews, state librarian, *ex officio*.

Early this year Marsha Peters, graphics curator, arranged a display of the Society's extensive collection of prints by William Hamlin, early Rhode Island engraver. Here she helps Andrew Lindh of Old Slater Mill operate Hamlin's own press to print three-dollar bills of 1810 as souvenirs. The exhibit was shown at Slater Mill Museum and John Brown House.

Photograph by John C. Meyers, Pawtucket Times.