

# RHODE ISLAND HISTORY



VOLUME 37: 1    FEBRUARY 1978



RIHS Library

*Spring, 1861. Troops of the First or Second Rhode Island Regiment in Exchange Place, Providence, preparing to leave for the front.*

# R H O D E I S L A N D H I S T O R Y

Published by

THE RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
52 POWER STREET, PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND  
02906 and printed by a grant of the  
STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE  
PLANTATIONS, J. Joseph Garrahy, Governor.

Dennis E. Stark, *president*  
Robert J. McKenna, *vice president*  
Robert B. Lynch, *vice president*  
Richard F. Staples, *secretary*  
Sarah T. Dowling, *assistant secretary*  
Karl F. Ericson, *treasurer*  
Stephen C. Williams, *assistant treasurer*  
Albert T. Klyberg, *director*  
Clifford P. Monahan, *director emeritus*

Carl Bridenbaugh, *fellow of the Society*

#### PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

E. Andrew Mowbray, *chairman*  
Henry L.P. Beckwith, Jr.  
Francis Chafee  
Nancy F. Chudacoff, *ex officio*  
Patrick T. Conley  
Wendell Garrett  
Seebert J. Goldowsky, M.D.  
Robert Allen Greene  
Glenn W. LaFantasie  
Charles O'Donnell  
Norman W. Smith

#### STAFF

Nancy Fisher Chudacoff, *editor*  
Noel P. Conlon, *managing editor*  
Helen Kebabian, *picture editor*

Issued Quarterly at Providence, Rhode Island,  
February, May, August, and November. Second  
class postage paid at Providence, Rhode Island.

*The Rhode Island Historical Society assumes no  
responsibility for opinions of contributors.*

#### Table of Contents

Ambrose E. Burnside  
and Army Reform, 1850-1881  
*by Donna Thomas* 3

Covenants of Grace, Covenants of  
Wrath: Niantic-Puritan Relations  
in New England  
*by Glenn W. LaFantasie and  
Paul R. Campbell* 15

156th Annual Meeting 24

VOLUME 37 NUMBER 1 FEBRUARY 1978

*Rhode Island History* (1942- ) and its predecessors  
*Rhode Island Historical Society Collections* (1918-1941)  
and *Publications Rhode Island Historical Society* (1893-  
1901) are available in microform from Xerox University  
Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan  
48106. (313) 761-4700. Please write for complete infor-  
mation. Articles appearing in this journal are abstracted  
and indexed in *Historical Abstracts* and *America: History  
and Life*.

ISSN: 0035-4619



RIHS Library

Burnside captioned this wartime photograph: "Taken without my knowledge. Mr. Brady had finished with us and I sat down on a sack of oats to read a paper some one had handed me. When he (Mr. Brady) told the operator to take us. He came and sat in the group. You will recognize the other two as Richmond and Goddard with one of the little orderlies (Jarvis) sitting on a box. Rub this out please after reading it." Mathew B. Brady, who with his staff of cameramen documented the Civil War in thousands of photographs, is seated directly facing Burnside.

## Ambrose E. Burnside and Army Reform, 1850-1881

by Donna Thomas\*

Most Americans remember Ambrose E. Burnside either for his spectacular defeat at Fredericksburg in 1862 or for his striking whiskers. Some Rhode Islanders may recall that he served his adopted state both as governor and United States senator. Yet he was more than that, something often forgotten by twentieth-century observers, since he left few papers relating to anything except his Civil War career. Despite his controversial military service, and many modern historians' assessment that he lacked ability for high command, he was a respected figure of his era. He came to prominence as a volunteer general during the war to save the Union, and it was natural for him, since he had been a commander, to continue his interest in the army. The little known but highly important fact about Burnside is that he devoted much effort to the cause of army reform. Although his efforts did not bring immediate success, he kept the cause alive, thereby paving the way for major reforms which finally came a generation after his untimely death.

Burnside's activities and interests are testimony to his important role during the post-Civil War period. Typical of his energy is a remark made to his old West Point classmate, former Confederate general Harry Heth, during a reunion in 1867: "I am now Governor of Rhode Island; that takes but little of my time." Burnside promptly found other ways to fill that spare time. In addition to serving three terms as governor (1866-1869) and one completed term as senator (1875-1881), he was president of the Providence Locomotive Works and director of the Narragansett Steamship Company.

His out-of-state interests included directorship of the Illinois Central Railroad and presidencies of two other roads, the Cincinnati & Martinsville and the Indianapolis & Vincennes. He often had business in New York City and kept an office there during part of the first post-war decade. He was never too busy, however, to follow activities of Union veterans' associations, such as the Grand Army of the Republic, the Loyal Legion, and of course the Society of the Ninth Corps, formed from his old command. Sometimes he merely lent his name to a cause — in 1871, he accepted the presidency of the new National Rifle Association, that emphasized rifle skills for both soldiers and civilians. Burnside's activities and interests in the years after he left the Union army gave him important places in politics, business, and veterans' affairs.<sup>1</sup>

A general turned politician soon learned to cultivate veterans' votes, but Burnside's military interests and his concern for army reform were more deeply rooted than that. After all he had graduated from West Point in the class of 1847 and had planned to make the army his career. His first years as an artillery officer were relatively uneventful, spent on occupation duty in Mexico and at Fort Adams, Rhode Island. When his battery was transferred to New Mexico, Burnside became interested in military reform, specifically in weapons improvement.<sup>2</sup>

Although he had once participated in a sabre charge — against Apaches, no less — Burnside realized that Napoleonic weaponry had become outdated by the 1850s. Acutely aware of the draw-

\*A Ph.D. candidate at University of Florida and editorial assistant for *Florida Historical Quarterly*, Donna Thomas wishes to acknowledge help of Professor James F. Findlay, University of Rhode Island.

backs of government-issue muzzle-loaders, he determined that a more hardy weapon capable of rapid fire was sorely needed. He began to design a new rifled carbine sometime during 1850-1851. By late 1851, several duty assignments later, he had developed a breechloader that neither overheated nor lost its effective range with prolonged use. While on temporary duty at Washington, he perfected its design and supervised production of a few test models from his blueprints.<sup>3</sup>

Convinced that his carbine was a significant advance, Burnside returned to his battery, reassigned to Newport, in spring 1852. While stationed at Fort Adams for the second time, the newly-promoted first lieutenant married a Providence belle, Mary Bishop, and gave serious thought to his future. In November 1852 he resigned his commission to establish his own business, the Bristol Rifle Works. It had taken him more than four years to attain his sole promotion; perhaps the typically slow progress of an army officer's career convinced him that he could play a more vital role as a military inventor. But he retained strong military ties as a major general of Rhode Island militia during 1855-1856 and as a member of West Point's board of visitors in 1856.<sup>4</sup>

In 1857 the army held tests for breechloading rifles designed to determine which if any available models were suitable for federal service and should be purchased by the government. Burnside's carbine was among those tested. The board of officers that conducted the tests, while skeptical of breechloaders' effectiveness in battle, recommended that Burnside's weapon be adopted by cavalry and light artillery. This recommendation was important, since a \$90,000 Congressional appropriation for firearms would most likely be awarded to the manufacturer of the recommended weapon. Unfortunately, the War Department's contract for only 300 Burnside carbines resulted in bankruptcy for the Bristol Rifle Works.<sup>5</sup>

Financially ruined and deeply disappointed, Burnside left his wife and Providence behind and journeyed to the Midwest early in 1858. He hoped that his West Point engineering skills might find him a construction job on the railroads. Through the help of an army friend and future Civil War superior, George B. McClellan — then vice president of the Illinois Central Railroad — Burnside received a cashier's job in that road's land office in April.

Soon reunited with his wife, he began to enjoy better times. He paid off all the debts of the Bristol Rifle Works, earned promotion to treasurer of the railroad, and received a transfer to New York City, where he was working when news arrived of the fall of Fort Sumter.<sup>6</sup>

Burnside's military career resumed abruptly with Lincoln's call for 75,000 volunteers. In spring 1861, Governor William Sprague, an old friend from militia days, appointed Burnside colonel of the First Rhode Island Infantry. He commanded a brigade at Bull Run in July, receiving a commission as brigadier general of volunteers less than a month later. A successful foray against the North Carolina coast earned Burnside his second star.<sup>7</sup> He embarked on an erratic military career which would include second Bull Run, Antietam, Fredericksburg, the Knoxville campaign, a stint as commander of the Department of the Ohio in which he tangled with anti-war Democrats, Grant's Virginia campaign in spring 1864 and, finally, condemnation and eventual vindication for the disastrous battle of the Crater during the siege of Petersburg. A controversial general, Burnside was never far from public view.

Whatever the public's opinion of him as a general, Burnside's troops regarded him as a fair and concerned commander. Veterans of the Forty-eighth Pennsylvania Infantry remembered that he checked mess-tents for cleanliness and for food quality and quantity, an action guaranteed to please enlisted men in an army which gave no training or official status to its cooks.<sup>8</sup> During the sea voyage to North Carolina, he impressed his officers by remaining on deck in stormy weather, hailing the other transports to determine the welfare of his command.<sup>9</sup> "Old Burny" — as the Ninth Corps called him — did not limit his concerns to white troops, unlike most other Union generals. His fourth division was black, and he had personally selected them and made sure they received special training for the Crater assault. The battle of the Crater was a Union defeat mainly because General George Meade, commanding the Army of the Potomac, refused to allow blacks to make the charge, substituting a white division not prepared to "go over the top."<sup>10</sup> Perhaps Burnside's soldiers, both black and white, sensed that their general realized that a commander's fame rests on the perseverance and loyalty of his followers. In 1863,

the general told a Cincinnati audience, excited over Union successes during the Knoxville campaign, that had gathered to praise him —

"Thousands of men in the ranks deserve the credit that is given to the leaders. Many of them — foreigners — have no relatives on this side of the Atlantic who will ever hear of them again, yet they fight for the country they love. I owe all my success to this patriotism, and I have never been more truly sensible of it than during my last campaign. For one, I shall never forget what is due to the men in the ranks."<sup>11</sup> Years later, this realization would lead him to support several important reforms for enlisted men of the regular army.

Burnside resigned his volunteer commission shortly before the war ended and did not experience firsthand disruptions involved in the transition from victorious army to undersized occupation force. Doubtless, the general's experiences from 1847 through 1852 led him to sympathize with young regular officers who, after successful war careers in which many earned the rank of general of volunteers, once again found themselves lieutenants or captains assigned to scrubby frontier outposts or isolated county seats in the deep South. Figures tell the story well. In 1865, the victorious Grand Army of the Republic numbered slightly over 1,000,000. The reduction of 1866 slashed the postwar army to 57,000. By 1875, when Burnside entered the Senate, most of the occupation troops had been removed from the South, and the army retained a force of only 25,000 to protect the coasts and police the Indian frontier. This figure remained stable until the Spanish-American War.<sup>12</sup>

The post-Civil War army was wracked by tensions, as it had been in Burnside's days as a young subaltern. Staff and line quarreled constantly, and staff department chiefs, who sometimes held their posts for decades, remained in Washington, cultivating friendships in Congress. These staff officers acted as lobbyists, in blue and gold braid, for their own and their departments' interests, to the neglect of the rest of the army. As in antebellum times, the commanding general battled with the secretary of war over control of the army. General William T. Sherman, who assumed command upon Grant's election to the presidency, moved army headquarters from the

**"Come in and Stop the Draft."**

**SECOND WARD RECRUITING OFFICE.**

Great Inducements for Men to Come Forward and Serve their Country!

**\$50 Cash paid when sworn in! and  
\$183 Cash Paid when ordered to  
leave the State!**

Also **\$4** per week from the city.

**\$13 per Month from United States.**

Citizens Bounty Fund now amounts to \$50 per man, making total pay for 9 months at present time \$473. If the \$70,000 is raised, the Citizens Bounty will be increased about \$35, or total amount of pay for nine months about

**508 Dollars!**

**Please Walk in and Sign the Books!**

Major WM. H. GORHAM,  
ROBERT E. LOW,  
Recruiting Officers.

Kearney, Anthony & Co's Post Cylinder Press, Washington Buildings.

*RIHS Library*

*Generous salaries promised to Civil War soldiers, as in this 1862 broadside, were whittled to practically nothing in the post-war years.*

capital city to Saint Louis in a fit of pique, just as General Winfield Scott had moved headquarters to New York City during his feud with Secretary of War Jefferson Davis in the 1850s. Once again, various staff departments, line commands, and branches of the service struggled for the shrinking appropriations which an economy-minded Congress tossed to them. Reconstruction policy which the army was designated to implement, remained a controversial issue throughout the first postwar decade. The army made few influential friends, but many important enemies, as a result of the southern occupation. To complete the confusion that the army felt regarding its place in American society, Congress and the executive both were inconsistent in their approaches to Indian policy. Often, the army was

left to attempt its own solution to that problem as best it could. Invariably, bluecoats from generals to privates were damned either by western Indian-haters or eastern humanitarians as the result of any course they pursued in the West.<sup>13</sup>

For enlisted men, transition from large volunteer force to small regular army meant return to living conditions that many considered barely human. The antebellum army had been notorious for its stern discipline. During the war, volunteer regiments in which officers and men were often neighbors helped relax disciplinary rules somewhat. But after 1865, prewar punishments resumed within the military justice system that meted out different punishments to offending officers than to enlisted men guilty of similar crimes. Indeed, military courts often gave wildly varying sentences for the same crime. As one soldier wrote in 1877, "No wonder Private Bayonet loses faith in justice, when he finds that Private Ramrod receives only one month's imprisonment for precisely the same offense for which he received three."<sup>14</sup>

Bad, monotonous food, summed up in the cavalry chant "Forty miles a day on beans and hay in the Regular Army — O!" plagued the irregularly paid and rarely rotated commands on the frontier. Civilian snubs bedeviled soldiers assigned to coastal or reconstruction duty. The public tended to stereotype enlisted men as ignorant foreigners, "down-and-outers" who would not work, or violent toughs. And, after years of faithful service, not retirement pensions but the dubious charity of a Soldier's Home awaited aged and unfit enlisted men.<sup>15</sup>

For black soldiers, segregated into two cavalry and two infantry regiments with white officers, the snubs were particularly fierce, both from civilians and from other soldiers, including those officers who would rather be mustered out than serve with the "buffalo soldiers." Despite their relatively low desertion rates and their faithful service, black troops could not compete for officers' commissions and, until the mid-1880s, were barred from artillery and staff departments because white officers, including Grant and Sherman, believed that specialized skills were beyond their abilities.<sup>16</sup>

Neither blacks nor whites could expect much material gain in an army career. Pay was extreme-

ly low. Privates received a total of \$13 per month, corporals \$15, most sergeants \$17, and those few enlisted men who ranked as senior sergeants or other highly trained specialists between \$20 and \$34. These pay scales remained constant until the turn of the century. When low pay is added to low status, poor living conditions, and few opportunities for advancement, it is hardly surprising that desertion rates ranged between seven and thirty-two percent of total enlisted strength during the first twenty years after Appomattox.<sup>17</sup>

When Burnside entered the Senate in 1875, his military experience made him an obvious choice for assignment to the military affairs committee. His first task as a member of that committee was to investigate impeachment charges against Secretary of War William W. Belknap, who had been accused of receiving kickbacks on Indian traders' appointments.<sup>18</sup>

Burnside's long-range objective was similar to that assumed by powerful Ohio Congressman James A. Garfield — to counter the tendency of Democrats, often the majority party in the House during the 1870s and 1880s, and economy-minded Republicans to slash army appropriations below subsistence levels. Opposition to the army included ex-volunteer generals such as Senator John A. Logan and Representative Benjamin Butler, who had personal grudges against the regular army, as well as southern Democrats, many of them ex-Confederate officers, angry over federal Reconstruction policies. Many northern Democrats, too, felt that the army had countenanced Republican fraud in the South on election day in 1876. Against such formidable opposition to the army, Civil War heroes such as Burnside and Garfield found it necessary to use their prestige to rally pro-army forces both within and outside Congress.<sup>19</sup>

To underscore the seriousness of congressional opposition to the army, one need only point to events of 1877, when Congress — still upset over the 1876 presidential contest — adjourned without voting a routine pay bill for the army. Every officer and enlisted man in the regular army went for five months without pay. Only after the 1877 railroad strikes, in which widespread disturbances by underpaid workers in several urban areas frightened businessmen and demonstrated the potential of troops as riot police, was a special





RIHS Library

Ambrose E. Burnside

session of Congress convened to pass the long-overdue pay act.<sup>20</sup>

Pay cuts, especially for officers, threatened the army during the 1870s. Representative Henry Banning, Democrat and ex-Union general, proposed a reduction of \$100 per year for junior officers in 1876, contending flippantly that "small salaries are best for young officers who know little of the real value of money. It teaches them to avoid extravagance and practice economy." At the time, yearly salaries ranged from \$1,400 for infantry second lieutenants to \$3,500 for colonels, perhaps half of what other college-trained men in civilian vocations, could earn. Only the shock of the Custer massacre saved the army from these pay cuts.<sup>21</sup> Proposed pay reductions, force reductions of the 1860s and 1870s, and lack of an appropriation bill 1877 underscore the difficulties faced by Burnside, Garfield, and their allies.

During his entire congressional career, Burnside took the usual senatorial interest in minor military issues, such as individual relief bills involv-

ing soldiers or parts of the army such as the pay department, and long-denied promotions.<sup>22</sup> Unlike most members of Congress, he went beyond these matters. His first major effort at reform in spring 1878 involved black enlistments. He wanted to open all branches and departments of the army to blacks. His attitudes on race seem to have been quite enlightened; perhaps personal experiences account for this. His decidedly friendly relationship with his black valet, Robert Holloway, lasted for thirty years, from Burnside's artillery days to the end of his life.<sup>23</sup> The general's service with black troops during the Civil War convinced him that the prejudice which confined them to segregated units was irrational as well as unfair. The navy had allowed blacks to serve with whites. The army, he felt should follow suit:

*The position of an enlisted soldier in the United States Army is the only position not freely open to our colored citizens, and I can see no reason why they should not be as free in this respect as in all others. If the colored people are fit for soldiers at all they should be enlisted for any duty for which they may be personally qualified . . . It is objected that the mingling of colored soldiers with white ones would be a hardship to the whites. I can see no justice in this argument. If it is a hardship to the white citizens of our country to associate with the colored citizens in the performance of public duties, and if the rights of colored men are to be restricted, then the rule should apply to all public positions . . . What would be thought of a statute which would require that four specified states should be represented by colored senators?*

Burnside also argued that rights of whites to enlist in black regiments were unconstitutionally curtailed, an argument rather effective against Democratic opponents of his bill.<sup>24</sup> Black leaders differed on the enlistment issue, though, with some spokesmen claiming that if no regiments were reserved for black servicemen, recruiting officers would refuse to enlist any blacks. Burnside eventually changed his mind; he and other Republicans were shocked by the mutilation of a black West Point cadet in 1880 and determined to protect black soldiers from similar abuse, even if segregation were the only means to achieve this end.<sup>25</sup> That dilemma remained unsolved for nearly three quarters of a century, until President

Harry S. Truman desegregated the United States Army by executive order.

In 1880 Burnside focused on another problem that perennially faced enlisted men. Since the early days of the republic, no retirement pension, for any length of service, was available to aged soldiers. In 1851 a Soldiers' Home was established, the upkeep of which came out of soldiers' pay. Officer retirement was introduced only in 1861, when Congress finally realized that the regular army's generals, men well into old age, could not lead armies into the field against the rebellious South.<sup>26</sup> In the years that followed, officers and concerned civilians, Burnside among them, debated merits of various retirement schemes as a way to ensure that talented and youthful officers could find promotions to field- and general-officer rank. Rarely, however, did observers concern themselves with men in the ranks. Burnside had considerable sympathy for enlisted men, whose problems included both the retirement issue and attempts to discharge all married men, even those who had received the required permission before marrying. Congress thought that an army with neither a retirement system nor any enlisted men with dependents would be cheaper to run, even though such provisions would drive out many good soldiers.<sup>27</sup>

Some soldiers sensed that Burnside cared about their plight. He received a letter in 1878 from Sergeant Hugh McDonald, an infantryman stationed in Michigan, whose family was threatened by the attempt to bar reenlistment of, and provide no retirement pension to, married men. McDonald's friends had told him that Burnside would listen, and the sergeant pleaded to the former general:

*I ask you in the name of God, do something for us. I have given the best years of my life to my country. I have three beautiful children whom I idolize, and if I am thrown on the world the poor-house will be my lot, and death sooner than that. At least allow all who have re-enlisted as married men to remain in the army as long as they wish.*<sup>28</sup>

A bill, introduced by the military affairs committee in 1880, attempted to deal with part of Sergeant McDonald's problem, enlisted retirement. Burnside had hoped to include retirement provisions for privates as well as for non-com-

missioned officers, for in the small post-Civil War regular army it was entirely possible for a man to serve several enlistments honorably without receiving even a corporal's chevrons. The committee, however, more concerned with the cost of pensions, rejected Burnside's view. Yet when the bill, that provided retirement pay for sergeants and corporals with thirty years' service, went to the senate floor for debate, Burnside spoke in its favor:

*The retired list created by this bill will be very small, as very few non-commissioned officers live to serve thirty or thirty-five years. These men could not have remained on duty and served as non-commissioned officers for thirty years without being good men, and the same amount of industry, faithfulness and bravery in civil life would have given them competencies of some sort. They are unable to take care of themselves now; and here we are, higgling at the passage of a law which will probably put sixty or one hundred of them on the retired list. We were not actuated by such feelings when the country was in danger.*

Burnside added a warning to his fellow senators in words which summarize his attitude toward army reform: "It is to the interest of this government to have an efficient Army, and what we must look to when legislating for the Army is not so much what their services are worth in dollars and cents, as how to keep up the *esprit de corps* in the Army."<sup>29</sup> But despite its modest provisions, the retirement bill failed. Enlisted men had no retirement system until 1885.<sup>30</sup>

Burnside's most ambitious attempt at army reform began in 1878, when House minority leader Garfield won approval for a joint Senate-House committee to investigate and report on army reorganization. Because of the interest which Burnside, Garfield and Lieutenant Colonel Emory Upton took in the project, the resulting report outlined the most thorough plan for army reform of the era. Garfield had recently published an article on reorganization in the *North American Review*, that included statements from several noted generals, Sherman among them, on the need for reform. All stressed inadequacy of the system then in use, which separated the staff from the line commands making it responsible only to the secretary of war, and pointed to the Prussian general staff system as a more efficient model.



James A. Garfield

RIHS Library

Garfield's thinking was inspired by Sherman's protégé, Colonel Upton, a young Civil War hero and an expert on organization of European and Asian armies.<sup>31</sup>

When Congress voted to form the committee of two senators and five representatives on May 15, it was natural for Burnside to be chosen. That he became its chairman doubtless pleased Garfield, especially since Burnside had already proposed an amendment to the appropriations bill that was intended to begin reorganization of the army.<sup>32</sup> Burnside's Civil War notoriety and his strong interest in reform guaranteed that his committee's report would receive ample publicity.

The joint committee began its work in July at the capital city and continued at White Sulphur Springs, Virginia. From the first, Burnside must have realized that compromises would be necessary. While he and three other members, Senator Preston Plumb and representatives Horace Straight and Harry White, were Republicans, the Democratic members included two ex-Confederate generals, Senator Matthew C. Butler and Repre-

sentative George Dibrell, whose constituents bitterly remembered the army's role in Reconstruction. The seventh member was none other than Henry Banning, nemesis of the army.<sup>33</sup>

With this composition, the slender Republican majority in the Senate, and Democratic dominance of the House, no wonder the committee "deemed it good and sufficient to conduct the proceedings with closed doors." Unfortunately, the closed sessions make it impossible for historians to pinpoint the roles of each member in shaping legislation which eventually emerged. After ten days of hearings, during which soldiers and civilians alike testified, the committee adjourned for the season. Meeting again in New York City in mid-November, it worked out its differences behind closed doors. Burnside submitted the committee's report to Congress on December 12, 1878.<sup>34</sup>

That report summarized the massive army reorganization bill, which contained 724 separate sections, including a section which listed the articles of war. The bill, and relevant commentary from army officers, was printed in a large volume early in 1879. Its very bulk led an unsympathetic commentator writing for the *Nation* to quip, "The bill to reduce and reorganize the Army . . . is alarming in size as well as in some of its content." Sherman, in a letter to his second in command, General Philip H. Sheridan, was more to the point: "The bill is so infernal long that it offers a vast surface for attack." Sherman's point was valid, but Burnside and the committee envisaged development of a "condensed and complete military code" that was sorely needed by the army of the 1870s. Eventually, Burnside gave in to criticism and withdrew all but seventy sections dealing specifically with reorganization.<sup>35</sup>

The reorganization bill showed the influence of Banning and the southerners. The size of the enlisted force, excluding the Signal Corps, was set at 25,000. The general officer contingent was to be reduced to two major generals and four brigadier generals by leaving vacancies unfilled, and ranks of general and lieutenant general were to be abolished upon retirement of the war heroes who held them, Sherman and Sheridan. The committee planned to reduce the number of regiments, making the line more compact. Although the artillery would retain all five of its regiments, the infantry

would be cut from twenty-five to eighteen and the cavalry from ten to eight. A total of 333 officer slots would be eliminated in that move.<sup>36</sup> These provisions pleased the economy-minded.

Other proposed changes were relatively uncontroversial. No major changes were proposed for the Signal Corps and Corps of Engineers, two branches that had extensive civil duties. Regimental chaplains were authorized for infantry and cavalry regiments, replacing the inadequate system of post chaplains. Enlisted men were promised their pay at monthly intervals or as close to such as possible at frontier posts; although the men were supposed to be paid monthly under regulations in effect during the 1870s, that was rarely the practice. Some senior sergeants were to receive pay raises, and sergeants and corporals were offered \$20 and \$16 per month respectively, as a way to retain good non-commissioned officers.<sup>37</sup>

The storm of protest over the reorganization bill came largely from staff departments that felt badly treated by its provisions. Both Burnside and Banning believed the staff to be oversized and top-heavy, and they recommended it be trimmed. The adjutant-general's and inspector-general's departments, two powerful staff bureaus, were to be merged into a "general staff," a reform urged by Colonel Upton. The consolidated department would number six fewer officers than the two separate bureaus. Although no similar merger was planned for the quartermaster's department and the subsistence department, which handled supplies, the two were to be reduced by a combined total of fifty-four officers. In like manner, the pay department was scheduled to lose seventeen of its staff and the medical corps would lose eleven surgeons. The ordnance corps felt particularly hard hit; it would lose forty-nine of its officers and its authorization to manufacture arms and ammunition as well. Staff departments found ready allies in post traders, merchants who held exclusive government contracts to sell goods at isolated posts, inevitably at inflated prices. The Burnside bill abolished their offices, doubtless to the delight of frontier garrisons, whose members, both officers and men, were constantly in debt to post traders.<sup>38</sup>

The bill also provided a detailed system for officer retirement that enraged those older officers

who wished to spend the rest of their lives on active duty, as in the antebellum army. The plan, which definitely shows Burnside's influence, required retirement at age sixty-two for all colonels or below who had served at least twenty years. A "reserved list" was established for officers between the ages of sixty and sixty-two who had served the minimum twenty years; these officers could be assigned to active duty, at the army's option. Field- and company-grade officers over sixty-two but with less than twenty years service as officers were to be discharged and given a lump-sum gratuity based on their service. Generals could remain on active duty until age sixty-five. Provisions were also made to discharge or retire officers who were physically or mentally unfit.<sup>39</sup>

Officer promotions were to be governed by seniority within each branch of the service, such as infantry or artillery, rather than within each regiment, as was the case under existing regulations. Furthermore, candidates for promotion to the rank of major or above would have to pass an oral examination administered by a board of three



General William T. Sherman



RIHS Library

General Philip H. Sheridan

senior officers.<sup>40</sup> These provisions, coupled with the proposed retirement system, attempted to remove obstacles to promotion that had kept many talented officers in junior grades until well into middle age. However, the bill threatened many older officers, who feared retirement, and much of the powerful staff.

The army was split over the merits of the bill, with many officers publicly choosing sides. General Sherman favored the Burnside bill, as did Upton. General John Schofield — destined to command the army within a decade — believed “the bill merits the cordial support of the Army.” The staff, of course, opposed its own reduction, and staff departments offered considerable dissent against retirement provisions. Adjutant General E.D. Townshend stated flatly, “The present system is good enough.” The most influential opponent of the bill within the army was General Sheridan, who said: “As to the reorganization of the army under the bill, I cannot give it my

cordial support. I think the present organization is good and well suited to our western frontier.”<sup>41</sup> The army was far from agreement on issues raised by Burnside’s bill.

Division of opinion was intense within Congress. Banning’s strong support of the bill split Democrats in the House, where the vote, taken after several days of debate, was close, but the bill was defeated, 95 to 90. Meanwhile, in the Senate, Burnside led the fight for the bill. Sections relating to roles of the commanding general, the secretary of war, and the president in the chain of command, came under sharp criticism by both senators and influential publications like the *Nation*. To charges that the bill infringed on constitutional roles of the two civilian officials, Burnside retorted that his bill would limit the president’s power to appoint staff officers no more than that over any other appointments. “Under this bill he cannot appoint an officer in the staff departments unless he is in the Army . . . Otherwise, they [the appointments] will be left entirely to the will of the President . . . at the solicitation of friends outside the Army.”<sup>42</sup> Despite the efforts of Burnside and his supporters, the Senate had not approved the bill by the time the House had rejected it, even though Burnside had withdrawn all sections that did not deal with reorganization.

During the first week of February 1879, in the wake of the House version’s defeat, Banning moved that the seventy reorganization sections of the bill, the version still under senate consideration, be attached to the army appropriations bill, then on the floor. Banning’s tactic succeeded on February 8, by a vote of 101 to 91, a comfortable margin. Now Burnside had a second chance in the Senate.<sup>43</sup>

The senate appropriations committee, led by James G. Blaine and William Windom, stalled. Claiming that their heavy workload prevented a thorough review of merits of the proposed amendment, they recommended that it be dropped. Burnside exploded in frustration: “There has been a hue and cry against this bill from the very moment it was reported. Where has that cry come from? Much of it from the staff bureaus of the Army . . . I must say that some of these officers have gone beyond the line of duty, particularly in Washington, which has almost turned itself into a

bureau of newspaper correspondence." On February 22, the Senate finally voted on the amendment, killing it by a lopsided 45 to 18.<sup>44</sup> Congressional attempts to reform the army failed, to be abandoned for nearly a generation.

During the late 1880s and 1890s, reformers within the army took the initiative. Under their prodding, significant reforms, including a general staff, came at last in 1903. Burnside, no doubt, would have wanted to aid their effort during his second senate term, to which he had been elected in 1880. But he died suddenly in fall 1881, three months before the new Congress met. Indeed, the early 1880s marked a changing of the guard; all the major reformers of Burnside's day were gone. Garfield, from whom Sherman and Upton expected good things, became president in 1881, only to fall victim to an assassin the same year. Upton, plagued by fits of depression probably resulting from a brain tumor, killed himself that spring. Sherman, approaching old age, retired from the army and from public life in 1883, passing on the commanding general's post to Sheridan, who continued to oppose staff reforms.<sup>45</sup> When long-awaited reforms came, few of the Civil War generation remained to celebrate them.

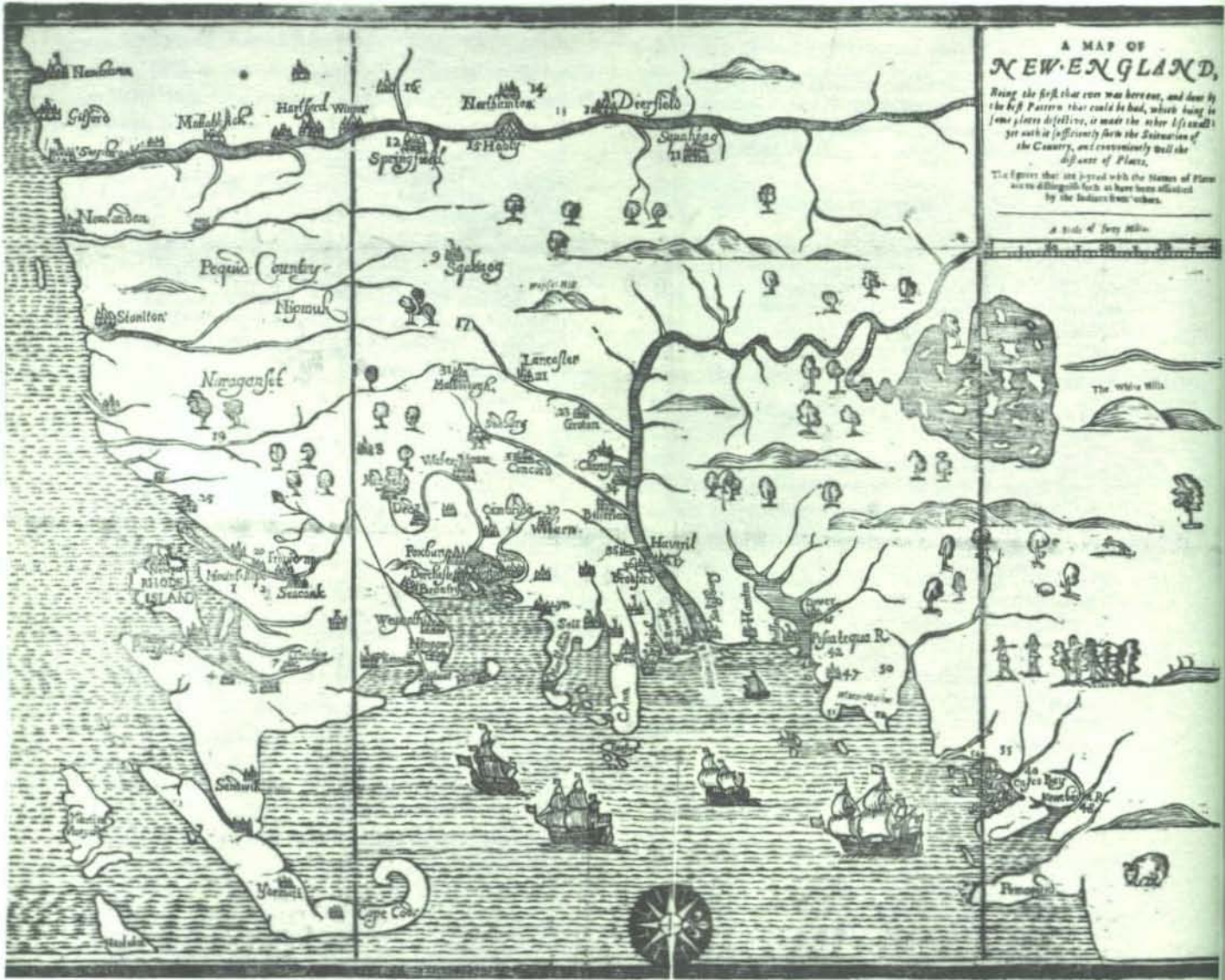
Burnside has been aptly described as "ill-starred" by military historian Robert Utley. As his Civil War career has received severe criticism, so have his attempts at army reform been scorned. "Among the more immediate causes for the failure of the [reorganization] bill was the less than skillful way in which Burnside, particularly, represented it in the Senate," wrote Bernard Boylan of the 1878-1879 attempt. His judgement, based mainly on the length of the original bill, demonstrates how easy it is to denigrate a lost effort.<sup>46</sup>

As we have seen, Congress contained large elements which opposed almost any conceivable form of standing army, and the army itself was divided on the reform issue, since powerful staff departments realized that reforms would jeopardize their virtual independence of line commands. Perhaps no one could have succeeded under those circumstances. In the wake of the Spanish-American War, Congress, disturbed by staff-line wrangling during that brief conflict, again debated modernization of the army, with reformers adopting proposals from Burnside's bill. Again, the staff and its allies in Congress and within the

officer corps united to ensure defeat of reforms. Even with greater public interest in the army, and without old antagonisms that memories of Reconstruction and bitterness over Indian policy had caused in the past, the reform bill failed.<sup>47</sup> Is it so surprising that Burnside's attempt met defeat?

Perhaps the key to the reorganization bill lies in Burnside's personality. He was attracted to the long-range view, which dictated that a complete military code be devised, a major reform in itself. If the bill became oversized in the process, he would risk that. From his days as an artillery lieutenant through his years in the Senate, Burnside demonstrated the same tendency to look toward the future. He realized that breechloading rifles would come to dominate warfare, and he invented a practical, dependable model for his country's forces. He understood that racial prejudice hurt the efficiency and spirit of the army, and he tried to do something about it, anticipating his government by three quarters of a century. He saw the need for enlisted retirements and raised the issue. And he knew, from his own experience, that the army must be modernized by reforming both the staff and line. He was truly unusual because he understood these things and acted upon them at a time when few others cared what became of the army. The army survived the doldrums of its dark age intact because a few Civil War heroes had lent their prestige to the army's cause and defended its *raison d'être*, raising issues that became the basis of future reforms. Burnside, despite the failure of his reform efforts, deserves recognition for his role in modernization of the United States Army.

- 1 Benjamin Perley Poore, *The Life and Public Services of Ambrose E. Burnside* (Providence, 1882) 271, 265-68, 295, 319. For a sampling of business activities, see the day-book and letterbook, Burnside Papers, RIHS Library.
- 2 A brief modern introduction to his career is Knight Edwards, "Burnside: A Rhode Island Hero," *Rhode Island History* 16: 1 (January 1957) 1-23.
- 3 Poore, 72-73.
- 4 Poore, 78-79.
- 5 Poore, 83-88.
- 6 Poore, 87-90.
- 7 Poore, 93-137. Burnside's own account of the North Carolina campaign is reprinted in Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel, eds., *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, 4v. (New York, 1884-1887) 1: 660-669.
- 8 Oliver C. Bosbyshell, *The 48th in the War* (Philadelphia, 1895) 47.
- 9 Poore, 126-127.
- 10 Poore, 238-263, contains a useful selection from documents, including the report of the joint committee on the conduct of the war, that relate to the Crater.
- 11 Poore, 223.
- 12 Russell F. Weigley, *History of the United States Army* (New York, 1967) 567.
- 13 Two modern studies that skillfully summarize the army's problems during this period are Weigley, 253-292, and Robert M. Utley, *Frontier Regulars: The United States Army and the Indian, 1866-1891* (New York, 1973) 10-68.
- 14 Jack D. Foner, *The United States Soldier Between Two Wars: Army Life and Reform, 1865-1890* (New York, 1970).
- 15 Foner, 13-75. Don Rickey Jr., *Forty Miles a Day on Beans and Hay: The Enlisted Soldier Fighting the Indian Wars* (Norman, Okla., 1963) passim, the best and most entertaining study of daily life in the post-Civil War army.
- 16 Foner, 127-147.
- 17 N. Hershler, *The Soldier's Handbook* (Washington, 1884) 21. Foner, 223.
- 18 Poore, 322-323.
- 19 For an overview of politics in Burnside's senate years, see John A. Garraty, *The New Commonwealth, 1877-1890* (New York, 1968) 220-276. The classic account of the disputed election of 1876 is C. Vann Woodward, *Reunion and Reaction: The Compromise of 1877 and the End of Reconstruction* (New York, 1956).
- 20 For background on the riots, see Robert V. Bruce, *1877, Year of Violence* (Chicago, 1970), especially 309-311, which discusses the army's role.
- 21 Utley, 19, 61-64. *Congressional Record*, 44 Cong., 1 sess., p. 2038. Banning's views on the army are fully expressed in House Report 354, 44 Cong., 1 sess. (Washington, 1876).
- 22 *Congressional Record*, 44 Cong., 1 sess., p. 232; 2 sess., p. 1276.
- 23 Poore, 70-71, 136-137.
- 24 *Congressional Record*, 45 Cong., 2 sess., pp. 2190-91.
- 25 Poore, 358. *Congressional Record*, 46 Cong., 2 sess., p. 1276.
- 26 Foner, 72. Weigley, 229-230.
- 27 Foner, 13. Utley, 88-90.
- 28 Senate Report 555, Part 2, *Reorganization of the Army*, 45 Cong., 3 sess. (Washington, 1879) 450-51.
- 29 *Congressional Record*, 45 Cong., 2 sess., p. 2190.
- 30 Foner, 84.
- 31 James A. Garfield, "The Army of the United States," *North American Review* 126: 2, 3 (March-April, May-June 1878) 193-216, 442-465. For the Garfield-Sherman-Upton relationship, see Stephen E. Ambrose, *Upton and the Army* (Baton Rouge, La., 1964) 114-118.
- 32 *Congressional Record*, 45 Cong., 2 sess., p. 4180.
- 33 For brief biographies see House Document 783, *Biographical Dictionary of the American Congress, 1774-1927*, 69 Cong., 3 sess. (Washington, 1928), pp. 667-68, 769, 903, 1417, 1578-79, 1690.
- 34 Senate Report 555 [Part 1], 45 Cong., 3 sess. (Washington, 1878) 1-2.
- 35 [G. Mallery], "The Burnside Army Bill," *Nation* 28: 3 (January 16, 1879) 42. Sherman to Sheridan, December 30, 1878, Sheridan Papers, Library of Congress. Senate Report 555: 2. *Congressional Record*, 45 Cong., 3 sess., p. 714.
- 36 Senate Report 555: 2-3.
- 37 Senate Report 555: 3-4.
- 38 Senate Report 555: 2.
- 39 Senate Report 555, Part 2, *Reorganization of the Army*, 45 Cong., 3 sess., pp. 4-5 (section 40); pp. 417-420 present Burnside's views on retirement.
- 40 Senate Report 555, Part 2: p. 51 (sec. 107, 111).
- 41 Senate Report 555, Part 2: pp. 78-79, 503-504. *Congressional Record*, 45 Cong., 3 sess., p. 905. Senate Report 555, Part 2: pp. 265-272, 444-446. Senate Miscellaneous Documents, 46 Cong., 1 sess., no. 14.
- 42 *Congressional Record*, 45 Cong., 3 sess., p. 1041; 299-300. Mallery 42-43.
- 43 The complicated history of the bill is detailed in Bernard L. Boylan, "The Forty-Fifth Congress and Army Reform," *Mid-America* 61: 3 (Summer 1959) 173-186.
- 44 *Congressional Record*, 45 Cong., 3 sess., p. 1758-1760.
- 45 Foner, 77-113. Weigley, 313-322, 287. Poore, 387-89. Ambrose, 136-150.
- 46 Utley, 63. Boylan, 185.
- 47 Graham C. Cosmas, "Military Reform After the Spanish-American War: The Army Reorganization Fight of 1898-1899," *Military Affairs* 35: 1 (February 1971) 12-18.



Courtesy John Carter Brown Library, Brown University

From William Hubbard's A Narrative of the Troubles With The Indians in New-England, Boston, 1677.



## Covenants of Grace, Covenants of Wrath: Niantic-Puritan Relations in New England

by Glenn W. LaFantasie and Paul R. Campbell\*

Since 1676, when William Hubbard and Increase Mather took quills in hand to write their histories of King Philip's War, historians have argued about the underlying significance of Indian-white relations in New England.<sup>1</sup> The historiography of this relationship has filled volumes of fact and fantasy. During the past twenty years sides have been drawn — Puritan apologists versus Indian defenders.

But historical literature to the greatest extent has avowed a decided favoritism for the Puritans. In 1958 Douglas E. Leach presented a sympathetic view of Puritans withstanding the treachery and tragedy of Indian frontier warfare in *Flintlock and Tomahawk: New England in King Philip's War*.<sup>2</sup> Seven years later Alden T. Vaughan, in his *New England Frontier: Puritans and Indians 1620-1675*, concluded that "Puritans followed a remarkably humane, considerate, and just policy in their dealings with the Indians."<sup>3</sup> Leach and Vaughan quickly became the most notable of the Puritans' modern defenders. Their books were well-written and critically well-received. Moreover, their conclusions carried the respectability of sound scholarship, a quality noticeably missing from earlier antiquarian accounts.

Before long, however, a new scholarly interest in the American Indian, coupled with a resurging social concern for the plight of native Americans and a forcefulness in Indian affairs by Indians themselves, awakened historians to a "new" Indian history, one that would concentrate more on red men and less upon how whites had developed and implemented Indian policy. As a result inter-

pretations of Leach and Vaughan have come under severe attack. Their most provocative critic, Francis Jennings, questions the reliability and sincerity of Puritan writings and records. "As for Puritans," Jennings declares, "I have found no substantiation for the filiopietist portrayal of them in a semi-divine state superior even to the humanity of the garden variety of civilized people."<sup>4</sup> Using benefits of combined anthropological and historical methodologies, Jennings depicts Puritans as landgrabbers and hypocrites who couched their actions in a rhetoric of justification that disguised their real intentions — total subjugation of the native population of New England.

Although Jennings tries to set the historical record straight, his study is flawed by the polemics of his unmerciful attack upon the Puritans and by his inability to retain a sharp focus on the Indians themselves. Interestingly, his book suffers from the same deficiencies that plague the works of Leach and Vaughan: too much about Puritans, too little about Indians. To make matters worse, the arrow Jennings aims at his Puritan target misses the mark. His dogmatic rejection of the veracity of Puritan writings strains his credibility. Other historians, he contends, "accept the Puritans' documents as gospel. I have regarded the sources as the writings of persons with interests to serve and have interpreted them accordingly."<sup>5</sup>

Despite the shortcomings in Jennings' interpretation (surely *some* Puritans told the truth), his anti-Puritanism puts him squarely on the side of the Indians. As a critic of the Puritans, he stands as an Indian defender. Predicting that

\*Mr. LaFantasie and Mr. Campbell are visiting lecturers at Providence College.



Increase Mather

RIHS Library

some readers will find his version of history "incredible," Jennings surmises that "Indians will not share in such incredulity; they have long known that pens could be as forked as tongues."<sup>6</sup>

One historian, reviewing Jennings's book, proclaims that "the historiography of Indian-European relations will never be the same."<sup>7</sup> Of that there is no doubt. But the change is not in the actual historiography (other scholars have castigated the Puritans, albeit with less invective); rather, the age-old historiographical pendulum has begun to sweep toward the opposite point of its arc.<sup>8</sup>

Admittedly, this trend is long overdue. Historians too often have neglected to study New England Indians apart from the role they played in obstructing or disturbing expansion of whites into new territories. Indians have been shadows on the land, cast for only a brief time, who vanished quickly from the historical panorama. Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., writing in 1971, heralded

the need for a fresh point of view in historical writings about Indians. "American Indian history," he directed, "must move from being primarily a record of white-Indian relations to become the story of Indians in the United States." Historians must move "Indian actors to the center of the stage" to make "Indian-Indian relations as important as white-Indian ones have been previously." Such a concentration would produce a "new Indian history" that would "fuse the general and recurring in Indian history with the uniqueness of the stories of specific individuals and the social and cultural entities in the multitude of tribes."<sup>9</sup>

One recent article that attempts to follow Berkhofer's model for the writing of Indian history is Timothy J. Sehr's "Ninigret's Tactics of Accommodation — Indian Diplomacy in New England 1637-1675."<sup>10</sup> Sehr complains that "Indians have seemed far too passive while history has appeared far too simple." It is not difficult to determine which side of the pendulum's parabola Sehr likes best. He notes that historians too often "have ignored the actions of Indians who had to adopt strategies to deal with the white 'problem.'"<sup>11</sup> He moves from this premise and examines various means that Ninigret, sachem of the Niantic Indians of Rhode Island, used to prolong and protect autonomy in his confrontation with dominating tendencies of English colonists.

Like Jennings, Sehr is firmly on the Indians' side. But by omitting the malediction that permeates Jennings's work, Sehr succeeds in detailing the methods Ninigret used in his diplomacy with Puritans of Massachusetts and Connecticut. He also maintains an unwavering concentration upon his subject. He does not lose sight of Ninigret and the Niantics by digressing about Puritans. In fact, Sehr has very little to say directly about Puritans. What he does say, however, leaves some definite impressions, none of which are particularly complimentary toward the English. Hence Sehr's study, even inadvertently, characterizes Puritans as diametric enemies of the Indians who encroached upon Ninigret's domain, "split his tribe, deprived him of much of his power, and made his claim to his land tenuous."<sup>12</sup> Though his arrow lacks the sharpness of Jennings's, when Sehr takes aim he faces the same target.

Sehr's synthesis reveals relatively imperceptible drawbacks in Berkhofer's idealistic model for the writing of Indian history, especially as the model and its fulfillment pertain to the Indians of New England. While it is not impossible to write, for example, about Niantic Indian history by injecting — as Berkhofer desires — "more of the Indians into it,"<sup>13</sup> the same history cannot be written by keeping whites out. The chronicle of the Niantics and most New England Indians has become intertwined with the history of relations with whites. Perhaps if Ninigret's diplomatic tactics had succeeded, the story may have been different. The Niantic sachem, as Sehr points out, failed to maintain his autonomy. The sheer fact that Ninigret had to deal at all with whites, even by trying to isolate himself and his people, meant the histories of both groups had already meshed in many ways.

Reality cannot be changed. Historians cannot even begin to reconstruct the history of New England Indians without relying solely on white sources of information. We are forced to perceive New England aborigines through the theocratic prism of the Puritan mind. In short, the history of native Americans in early New England takes the form of a history of Indian-white relations because that is what extant sources tell us about. We do not, for instance, know how Ninigret or his people spent each day of each year. What we know about Niantic culture and language and lifestyle — well, for that matter, *everything* — is gleaned from the writings of whites who came in contact with them. Anthropologists help round out the story and archaeological evidence fills some other gaps. Even the mixture of methodologies and disciplines, as Jennings has shown, can expand our knowledge about Indians. But most information comes from records kept by whites.

Indian-white relations, by necessity, represent the single most important segment of seventeenth-century New England Indian history. The inability of historians to focus exclusively on Indians is less their own failure than an unavoidable result of the content of available sources. This is not to say, where New England Indians are concerned, that Berkhofer's model history — a truly *Indian* history — can never be written. It does, however, indicate difficulties in moving away from the topic of Indian-white relations — a topic that has

been a magnet to historians for three hundred years.

The records demonstrate that the history of Indian-white relations was not a simple story of good versus evil from either a red or white point of view. It was a complex interchange, an intricate interaction of distinct cultures. On both sides, assuredly, injustice and misunderstanding occurred.

Unfortunately too many historians writing about Indian-white relations in early New England ignore the fact that the story has two sides. Bernard Sheehan maintains that the study of Indian-white relations must include "the sensitive perception that the human condition, civilized or savage, is always a pattern of intricately connected elements, that the pattern has its limits, and that the limits set off one society from another."<sup>14</sup>

Another historian, Francis Paul Prucha, takes the point one step further. He observes that "it is customary to insist that we grasp something of the worldview of the Indian cultures (because we instinctively know they are different from our own), and we try not to judge one culture by the norms of another. What is forgotten is that we must also understand past white societies and not assume that [these societies] can be understood and judged entirely by the norms and values of the 1970s." More important, says Prucha, "if our goal is not to condemn or to praise but to understand, it is necessary to be more fully conscious of the historical context in which events in Indian-white relations took place."<sup>15</sup>

Studies of relations between Indians and whites in New England have merely perpetuated the tradition of choosing sides, forming battle lines, and letting arrows or musket balls fly. Critical examination of each culture, red and white, and the affect each had on the other, has not been a primary concern. For instance, Douglas Leach blatantly indicts Indians for instigating King Philip's War — despite conflicting evidence.<sup>16</sup> Alden Vaughan states bluntly, without apology, that his book examines "Puritan ideals and institutions" and concentrates "on the acts and attitudes of the Puritan toward the Indians" without attempting "to account for the actions and reactions of the natives." Francis Jennings admits that his study attempts to probe the fallacious propaganda, which later became accepted ideol-

ogy, of invading Europeans.<sup>17</sup> Although the conclusions of these historians differ, their studies share the common pitfall of lopsided history by considering the relations of Indians and whites from a vantage point that only analyzes single cultures rather than integrated cultures in conflict.

Even Timothy Sehr, in his worthy examination of Niantic diplomacy, emphasizes that Puritan reaction to pride and insolence of the Niantics "established the pattern for future responses" but he neglects to explain the pattern's nature and cause. Sehr stresses that "Ninigret's conduct reinforced the English conviction that his pride made him a character to watch closely" and later provided the basis for a hardening of English prejudice against the sachem.<sup>18</sup>

The sources do reveal a number of instances that span the greater part of three decades in which Puritans commented upon Ninigret's insolence and lack of respect for the English.<sup>19</sup> Were Puritans simply proud themselves, too proud to accept defiance of a heathen? Were they truly bent upon subduing Ninigret because of prejudice? What may have been the cultural reasons for Puritan policy toward the Niantics?

Answers to these questions certainly cannot be found in a blind defense of Puritans or by styling them "courageous, humane [or] brave."<sup>20</sup> Puritan records provide some clues that help to explain their actions. Historical sources also reveal certain patterns that were manifested in Puritan policy toward Niantics, policies that emerged from within the context and culture of American Puritanism.

In 1654, as the specter of war between the United Colonies and the Niantics threatened New England, Roger Williams wrote to the General Court of Massachusetts: "The cause and root of all the present mischief is the pride of two barbarians, Ascassassotic, the Long-Island sachem, and Ninigret, of the Narragansett. The former is proud and foolish; the latter is proud and fierce."<sup>21</sup> Arguing with Roger Williams was a favorite pastime for Puritans. On this issue, however, they probably showed enthusiastic agreement. Ninigret's pride, as Puritans saw it, was a stubborn thorn.

Puritans reacted to Ninigret's "insolent carriage" because it underscored the sachem's auton-

omy and also because it was a characteristic that Puritan society deemed repulsive and sinful. Beliefs were sustained by tenets of Biblical scripture and the order of society was based upon the precept of fundamental law. Pride and insolence, according to Puritan doctrine, had no place in their own society. Thomas Hooker, founder of Connecticut, put it succinctly: "Thou that knowest and keepest thy pride and stubbornness and thy distempers, know assuredly thou dost jostle God out of the throne of His glorious sovereignty, and thou dost profess, not God's will but thine own." Small wonder that Puritans reacted negatively to the pride of America's native inhabitants. Within their own order these traits could be severely punished. One Massachusetts law ordained that "if a man have a stubborn or rebellious son . . . which will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother . . . then shall his father and mother . . . lay hold on him and bring him to the Majestrates assembled in Court, and testify unto them . . . ; such a son shall be put to death."<sup>22</sup> Ninigret's pride was not unlike that of a rebellious son. And often Puritans came close to punishing the sachem according to their own code of law.

Puritans believed that their own law was preferable to native customs. This they took for granted. Within the conflict of cultures, Puritans saw no reason why they should respect the "uncivilized" customs of the natives. English laws and Christian doctrine would prevail. Unsurprisingly, Puritans reacted negatively not only to the pride of Ninigret, but also to the insolence of Miantonomi of the Narragansetts, Uncas of the Mohegans, and other sachems of various tribes.<sup>23</sup>

Puritans also complained about Ninigret's casual attitude toward treaties and covenants; they often cited his lack of regard for specific provisions in these covenants. This manner provided the justification for Puritan efforts to force his compliance. The Puritan notion of the supremacy of covenants dictated their response.

Society and its relationships, according to Puritans, were based upon a premise that "all relations which are neither naturall nor violent, but voluntary, are by vertue of some covenant." Free consent was of primary importance in a covenant but freedom of the individual depended upon limitations imposed by state, church, and family.<sup>24</sup> John Winthrop believed that it was "the na-

ture and essence of every society to be knitt together by some Covenant, either expressed or implied."<sup>25</sup> The order of society comprised certain dual relationships that were agreements and that constructed a hierarchy of authority and subjugation. When Ninigret broke his covenants with the Puritans, he breached a solemn agreement. Puritans were aghast at Ninigret's repeated violations of covenants. To a Puritan, as Perry Miller explains, the covenant was "the strongest tie by which he [could] ever be bound."<sup>26</sup> To Ninigret, it was a piece of paper that he may or may not have understood.

A covenant with God was the core of Puritan theology. John Cotton, a Puritan minister, explained that "if we give our selves to be bound to this service, if we come to God, submit our selves to him in all things, to do with us as hee pleaseth, and as shall seem good in his sight, submitting our selves to be ruled and squared by him in all things, hee shall have our whole hearts to do with us what he will; here is the Covenant made up between God and a good Christian."<sup>27</sup> This concept was not limited to Puritan theology — it influenced every facet of Puritan life, including governmental relations with Ninigret and other Indians.

Of especial importance was Puritan understanding of sanctification. Salvation was the result of good behavior rather than the cause. Puritans believed that God had made a "covenant of works" with Adam in which God offered salvation as the reward for obedience. When Adam broke God's laws, he severed the bonds of the covenant, corrupting himself and all his descendants forever. God, however, interceded and showed His mercy by granting a "covenant of grace." This covenant promised salvation for faith rather than obedience. The covenant, according to Puritan preacher Thomas Shepard, was "the midst between both God's purposes and performances, by which and in which we come to see the one before the world began, and by a blessed faith . . . to enjoy the other, which shall be our glory when the world shall be burned up and all things in it shall have an end." Good works were not a means toward the desired end — sanctification. Rather, faith that produced good works led to salvation.<sup>28</sup>

The Puritan covenant of grace had a double

effect upon the policy of relations between Puritans and Niantics. On one hand, Ninigret's transgressions against the social covenants he had made with Puritans jarred their sensibility and understanding. On the other, Puritan commitment to the theory and importance of covenants, and especially a belief in the covenant of grace, provided a model for handling Ninigret's disobedience and for developing policy based upon persuasive principles of Puritan theology.

In July 1645, the commissioners of the United Colonies sent out a call to raise a military force to protect Uncas, the Mohegan sachem, from attacks launched by Narragansetts and Niantics. They considered "the Nyanticks as the chief Incendiaries" of the Indian war. But the Puritans were not reacting merely to Ninigret's "proud and insolent passages." What equally angered the Puritans was that the Niantics had "in many ways injuriously broken and violated" covenants made with the English and the Mohegans.<sup>29</sup> Despite the threat of Puritan wrath, despite the conviction that Ninigret's transgressions must be rectified somehow (and that "somehow" was quickly being translated into "by force"), despite the call for troops and instructions to commanders and provisions for supplies, the Puritans then — amazingly — sat back, as if to reassess the situation, and decide to make any effort that would keep peace rather than resort to military might.

Why the sudden change in policy? Puritan opinion and emotions had already solidified. Why, in the midst of preparing for war, did the Puritans balk and begin to follow a totally different course of action?

Actually it was not a change as such and what appears today as a shift in policy was the logical continuation of coherent policy. It was also the logical extension and application of Puritan belief in the covenant of grace.

The decision to make peace rather than war echoed belief in the covenant of grace. Faced with Ninigret's open defiance and violation of agreements, Puritans had reacted with scorn and rebuke. As though envisioning themselves a deity, Puritans agreed that Ninigret should be punished for his perfidy. Just as Adam had broken the covenants of works with God, so had Ninigret violated a covenant of works with the Puritans. Obviously this covenant of works, based upon a

concept of complete obedience as God's covenant with Adam had demanded, proved ineffective and abortive. Therefore, Puritans sought to establish an efficacious covenant of grace with Ninigret, in the same manner that they believed God had offered the covenant of grace to Adam.

Surely this could not be accomplished by waging war against the Niantics. Hence the commissioners of the United Colonies instructed Edward Gibbons, commander-in-chief of the colonies' military force, to reach a peaceful settlement of differences with Ninigret because it was the "earnest desires of the commissioners if it may be attained with justice honor and safety to procure peace rather than prosecute war." The commissioners advised their commander "to use means to draw on such a peace which you have hereby power to treat of and conclude."<sup>30</sup> The United Colonies were authorizing their commander-in-chief to agree upon a new covenant with Rhode Island Indians, a second chance as God had given Adam.

Puritan idealism, however, did not cloud the realities of their situation. Raising an army was necessary not only to threaten the Narragansetts and Niantics but also to show that the English adhered to their covenants which compelled them to protect Uncas of the Mohegans. If they failed to keep the letter of the law, bound as they were by covenant with Uncas, then "no Indians will trust the English if they now broken engagements, either in the present or succeeding generations." Gibbons never acted upon his instructions, however, for as a result of other peace offerings made by the Puritans the Narragansett sachems and a deputy of Ninigret entered into a new truce with Uncas and the United Colonies. The show of armed strength by the Puritans had worked to keep the peace at least for a little while longer. After the peace conference concluded in September 1645, William Pynchon of Springfield wrote to John Winthrop that the new covenant surely "was the Lords doing and it ought to be marvelous in our eyes, and to be acknowledged with all thankfulness."<sup>31</sup>

Puritan response, based upon adoption of principles of the covenant of grace, slowly developed into a pattern of policy toward Ninigret. By September 1646, Puritans became convinced that Ninigret and the Narragansett sachems had al-

ready broken the covenant made a year earlier by failing to pay a specified sum of wampum to the English for Pequot Indians held under the jurisdiction of Rhode Island Indians. Even relations between Niantics and Narragansetts had broken down with each side accusing the other of sundry offenses. Further, it became evident to the English that Narragansetts and Niantics had been dealing with Mohawks, another direct violation of the covenant. Angered, and in no small way confused by these developments, the commissioners of the United Colonies thought they had "a cleare way open to right themselves accordinge to justice by war." Yet no troops were raised, no commanders appointed. Instead the commissioners decided that "to show how highly they prize peace with all men" no action should be taken until "a declaration . . . should be sent from the Massachusett and under the hands of all the Commissioners." The declaration was indeed sent and it reminded the sachems of their obligations under covenants made with the English. It warned Rhode Island Indians that "the Commissioners and Colonies doe justly render them a perfidious and treacherous people and accordingly in their owne season they should proceed against them" if they refused to rectify their breach of faith. No immediate action, however, was taken.<sup>32</sup>

By June 1647 Ninigret made it known that he wished "to be reconciled to the English." On August 3 he visited the Puritans at Boston and agreed "to give the Colonies due satisfaction in all things" and to pay the wampum owed the English. Ninigret hoped that the commissioners of the United Colonies would "see his reallity in keepinge Covenants and tearmes of amity with the English." Following repeated delays, and continued attacks by Narragansetts and Niantics against Uncas, the commissioners in 1648 once again warned Rhode Island Indians that they had failed to live up to their agreements. Although the language of the message was strong, and though the commissioners privately agreed to call a special meeting if necessary "to provide for the safety and the Colonyes, and vindicate the honor of the English in performance of their Covenants to Uncas," no action was taken.<sup>33</sup>

Accusations, in one form or another, continued to be leveled against Ninigret. English fear of Ninigret and rumors of the Niantic sachem's at-



*Title-page illustration from Hubbard's history.*

tempts to confederate with Mohawks or the Dutch propelled Puritan reactions and policy. Interestingly, Puritan response always seemed to follow the same pattern. They consistently would accuse Ninigret of breach of covenant, inform him of his transgressions, and threaten to impose compliance. Still, coercion never came. Year after year the English avoided war with Ninigret even though their attitude toward him had grown intemperate and prejudicial.

Though Puritans often made angry threats of war, they instead followed a policy that preserved peace. Even in the heat of controversy and misunderstandings, they consistently offered alternatives, compromise, or new covenants with the Indians before acting upon any threat of coercion. In 1650, for instance, the commissioners of the United Colonies again had reached an apex of frustration that brought a warning to Rhode Is-

land Indians — namely, that failure to comply with covenants would necessitate “preparations and provisions for warr.” The war, of course, never happened. By 1651, Puritans even showed a willingness to compromise their position by placing limitations on payment of wampum owed by the Indians and by restricting that payment to a period of only ten years. This was done in the hopes that it would “ease [the Indians’] sperits in Reference to this Just burthen and to engage them to an inoffensive and peacable Carriage not onely towards the English Collonies but to the [other] Indians amongst whom they live.”<sup>54</sup> Belief in the covenant of grace provided a model for behavior that inspired Puritans always to offer Ninigret another chance.

During summer 1653, Ninigret attacked Montauk Indians on Long Island precipitating another crisis. The Montauks had become tributaries of the English following the Pequot War of 1637. Ninigret claimed that the Long Island Indians had murdered a Niantic. As usual, the Puritans were not satisfied with Ninigret’s explanations for his actions. The English thought he gave only “proud peremtory and offensive Answares” and they believed that “the forbearance and lenity of the Collonies doth but encrease his insolence and our danger.” After first disagreeing, the United Colonies finally declared war against Ninigret.<sup>55</sup>

But the pattern of policy was reasserted. Just as they had done in 1645, the commissioners sent a plea to Ninigret asking him to appear before them “to compose and end all differences.” Again Puritans growled threats of war but spoke words of peace. Ninigret refused to appear. As a recourse, the commissioners carefully instructed their military commanders to first determine if Ninigret would agree to certain terms before any troops invaded his land. Once more the Puritans seemed to extend a covenant of grace to Ninigret. If Ninigret would comply, the commissioners thought it inexpedient “to begin the warr upon him barely for the non paiement of the Tribute.” Should colonial forces fail to effect a new agreement, troops were empowered to “make fair warr without exercising crewelty.”<sup>56</sup> Torn between their desire to maintain order, to punish Ninigret for his defiance, and yet to establish a lasting peace with the Indians, the Puritans followed a course that revealed their strength and power but that

also allowed the opportunity to secure a truce without bloodshed.

The same policy had worked, so they had thought, in 1645. In 1654 it fizzled. Colonial troops discovered that Ninigret had fled into the swamps for protection. The expedition failed to obtain Ninigret's compliance. Samuel Willard, commander of the troops, managed only to get Ninigret's promise to give up Pequots under his jurisdiction. The soldiers went home without a new covenant in hand; but they also returned without fighting a battle.

It is true that Willard was chastised by the commissioners for not achieving goals of the expedition desired by the United Colonies. Yet, significantly, the commissioners then decided to drop the matter and not to press Ninigret further. Instead of sending another armed expedition, they chose simply to keep a close watch on Ninigret's movements and to position a patrol vessel in the waters between the Niantic sachem and the Montauks on Long Island.<sup>37</sup> In the end the Puritans seem to have realized that their policy, based on the model of the covenant of grace, would not work.

Although Puritan policy toward Niantics followed the example of their belief in the covenant of grace, and although it was at times conciliatory, it was not at all times fair. The commissioners of the United Colonies occasionally suspected Ninigret of misdeeds he never committed. Prejudice against Ninigret often sparked Puritan fears.<sup>38</sup> Anxieties of life in the wilderness, desires to sustain an English identity, rigors of their society and religiosity, and conflict of cultures that was an inherent part of Indian-white relations, all served to foster and reinforce Puritan paranoia. Puritans began to see an Indian lurking behind every tree. In many respects, the necessity of dealing with native inhabitants of New England transformed the Puritan dream for a new Zion into a nightmare.

At their best, Puritans tried to treat Indians — Ninigret included — with justice, at least as far as their own understanding allowed them to impose their values of justice upon native cultures. At their worst, Puritans deceived the Indians, decimated their tribes, enslaved them, and practically stole their lands — all with a convenient rationale that such policies were just and were executed in

the name of God's will. If it is true that the Puritans made covenants of grace with the Indians, it is likewise true that they created covenants of wrath and deceit.

Among the more nefarious schemes concocted by the Puritans was mortgaging of Narragansett and Niantic lands in 1660, which was nothing more than a land grab by a group of Puritan leaders collectively known as the Atherton Company. The Atherton partners, as one historian explains, succeeded in "extorting the title to the whole Narragansett Country from the befuddled Indians."<sup>39</sup> Another stain on the Puritan record of Indian-white relations was made in blood, first in the Pequot War and later in King Philip's War. The English seem to have vented their accumulated anxieties by almost annihilating the greatest proportion of the Indian population in New England.<sup>40</sup>

It is difficult, therefore, to defend Puritan policy toward Indians in general or Ninigret in particular. But understanding that policy, recognizing its complexities, and attempting to explain its motivation may lead to a far more balanced notion of Indian-white relations in the seventeenth century. For if the symbolic importance of the Puritan belief in a covenant of grace reveals more about ways that some early New Englanders developed policy toward the Indians, it also helps to show why Indians faced odds that ultimately could not be beat. The covenant of grace may have inspired Puritans to make concerted efforts toward preserving peace. But the theory of covenants also compelled Puritans to enforce obedience to the rule of law — their law. By the end of King Philip's War, the Indians of southern New England discovered that there was no doubt about who would prevail.



- 1 William Hubbard, *A Narrative of the Troubles With the Indians in New-England* (Boston, 1677). Increase Mather, *A Brief History of the Warr With the Indians in New England* (Boston and London, 1676) and *A Relation of the Troubles Which Have Hapned in New-England By Reason of the Indians There* (Boston, 1677). Anne Kusener Nelsen, "King Philip's War and the Hubbard-Mather Rivalry," *William and Mary Quarterly* 27 (Oct. 1970) 615-629.
- 2 Douglas E. Leach, *Flintlock and Tomahawk: New England in King Philip's War* (New York, 1958).
- 3 Alden T. Vaughan, *New England Frontier: Puritans and Indians 1620-1675* (Boston and Toronto, 1965) viii.
- 4 Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (Chapel Hill, 1975) 180.
- 5 Jennings, *passim*; 181.
- 6 Jennings, vii.
- 7 James P. Ronda, *American Historical Review* 82 (Feb. 1977) 169.
- 8 Wilcomb E. Washburn has few kind words to say about the Puritans or their defenders. Washburn, "The Writing of American Indian History: A Status Report," in Norris Hundley, ed., *The American Indian* (Santa Barbara, Calif., 1974) 7-8. Washburn, *The Indian in America* (New York, 1975) 83-84, 129-132, 282-283.
- 9 Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., "The Political Context of a New Indian History," in Hundley, 101-102, 124-125.
- 10 Timothy J. Sehr, "Ninigret's Tactics of Accommodation — Indian Diplomacy in New England 1637-1675," *Rhode Island History* 36:2 (May 1977) 43-53.
- 11 Sehr, 52, 43.
- 12 Sehr, 52.
- 13 Berkhofer, 101.
- 14 Bernard W. Sheehan, "Indian-White Relations in Early America: A Review Essay," *William and Mary Quarterly* 26 (April 1969) 285.
- 15 Francis Paul Prucha, "Doing Indian History," in Jane F. Smith and Robert M. Kvasnicka, eds., *Indian-White Relations: A Persistent Paradox* (Washington, D.C., 1976) 7.
- 16 Leach, *Flintlock and Tomahawk*, 48-49. Leach's later study, *The Northern Colonial Frontier, 1607-1763* (New York, 1966) 56. For an opposing interpretation see Wilcomb E. Washburn's review of *Flintlock and Tomahawk* in *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 82:4 (Oct. 1958) 473-474.
- 17 Vaughan, *New England Frontier*, v, vii. Jennings, v.
- 18 Sehr, 43-44.
- 19 John R. Bartlett, ed., *The Complete Writings of Roger Williams* (Providence, 1866-1874) 6: 78-79. David Pulsifer, ed., *The Records of the Colony of New Plymouth in New England* (Boston, 1855-1861) 9: 41, 54, 87; 10: 96, 98, 126, 148-150, 171-172, 192.
- 20 The description is borrowed from Samuel Eliot Morison, *Builders of the Bay Colony* (Boston, 1930) vi.
- 21 John R. Bartlett, ed., *The Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations in New England* (Providence, 1856-1865) 1: 296.
- 22 Hooker quoted in Perry Miller, ed., *The American Puritans: Their Prose and Poetry* (Garden City, N.Y., 1956) 157. "The Laws and Liberties of Massachusetts," in Alden T. Vaughan, ed., *The Puritan Tradition in America 1620-1730* (New York, 1972) 167.
- 23 Vaughan, *New England Frontier*, 186. *Records of the Colony of New Plymouth* 9: 51; 10: 192.
- 24 Quoted in Edmund S. Morgan, *The Puritan Family: Religious and Domestic Relations in Seventeenth-Century New England* (New York, 1966) 26.
- 25 Quoted in Edmund S. Morgan, *The Puritan Dilemma: The Story of John Winthrop* (Boston and Toronto, 1958) 93.
- 26 Morgan, *Puritan Family*, 26, 28. Perry Miller, *The New England Mind, the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass., 1954) 375.
- 27 Quoted in Perry Miller, *Errand Into the Wilderness* (Cambridge, Mass., 1956) 85.
- 28 Shepard quoted in Miller, ed., *American Puritans*, 148. For a brief summary of Puritan theology see Morgan, *Puritan Family*, 1-28.
- 29 *Records of the Colony of New Plymouth* 9: 54, 50.
- 30 *Ibid.*, 9: 38.
- 31 *Ibid.*, 9: 54, 44. Allyn B. Forbes, ed., *Winthrop Papers* (Boston, 1929-1947) 5: 45.
- 32 *Records of the Colony of New Plymouth* 9: 74-76.
- 33 James K. Hosmer, ed., *Winthrop's Journal* (New York, 1908) 2: 326. *Records of the Colony of New Plymouth* 9: 87, 89, 118-119.
- 34 *Records of the Colony of New Plymouth* 9: 168, 207.
- 35 *Ibid.*, 10: 96, 126. Sehr, 50.
- 36 *Ibid.*, 10: 115, 132.
- 37 *Ibid.*, 10: 147-148, 150.
- 38 Sehr rightly notes "that Puritan mistrust . . . harden[ed] into prejudice." Sehr, 44.
- 39 James N. Arnold, ed., *The Records of the Proprietors of the Narragansett, Otherwise called the Fones Record* (Providence, 1894) *passim*. Richard S. Dunn, *Puritans and Yankees: The Winthrop Dynasty of New England 1630-1717* (Princeton, N.J., 1962) 111.
- 40 Vaughan, *New England Frontier*, 150-154. Leach, *Flintlock and Tomahawk*, 245.

## The Rhode Island Historical Society

### *One Hundred Fifty-sixth Annual Meeting*

On January 29, 1978 at 3:30 p.m. at the Library, president Duncan Hunter Mauran called to order the one hundred fifty-sixth annual meeting.

Members present approved minutes and reports of the 1977 annual meeting as printed in *RHODE ISLAND HISTORY* 36: 1 (February 1977).

The treasurer, librarian, museum curator and director each presented a report, printed in full below. The director also made a presentation to Noel P. Conlon, recently retired after twelve years with the Society.

All present stood in silence while Mr. Mauran read names of members who had died during the preceding year. Mr. Mauran then addressed the members in a report printed below.

Bayard Ewing submitted the report of the nominating committee and its slate as presented was duly elected.

Incoming president Dennis E. Stark made a presentation to outgoing president Mauran. Mr. Stark briefly addressed the members; his remarks are printed below.

After the meeting adjourned, members moved to the John Brown House for a reception and opening of a new exhibit.

Respectfully submitted for  
DAVID W. DUMAS  
*Secretary*

### *Annual Report of the President*

The Society is alive and moving but there still remains much that has to be accomplished. Although we have brought our budget under control, cash flow continues to be a major problem. (This is money expended before it is received.) The other villain which has hurt us, like the rest of society, is inflation. Our costs are going up faster than our income. These factors have added an extra degree of difficulty to the management of the Society. We can be thankful that it is so ably managed by Albert T. Klyberg and his staff. They have done an outstanding job. However, we will need the continuous and unremitting support of our members to maintain these standards.

We know that in the future we are going to have to make increased investments in Aldrich House and in the Library which is running out of space.

The Society was extremely fortunate to receive three bequests this year. Lawrence Lanpher \$1,000, Miss Margaret Stearns \$10,000, and Mrs. William Davis Miller \$30,000. Their thoughtfulness is very much appreciated.

I also wish to thank our many volunteers and dozens whose help make the operation of the Society possible and to thank Benjamin L. Cook, Jr. for heading up the annual giving campaign.

DUNCAN HUNTER MAURAN

### *Annual Report of the Treasurer*

Last year I reported that I saw positive trends in our financial picture, but that we had a long way to go. These trends have continued into the fiscal year ending in June and the calendar year just concluded.

An increase in our appropriation from the State of Rhode Island of \$35,000 has provided a major addition to the tripod of general support. Our membership dues income and our annual giving from members were each up several thousand dollars from last year. Our endowment, the third leg of support, showed an increase of about fifteen thousand dollars despite the need to sell stock from time to time to cover cash flow overdrafts in our accounts.

The cash flow problem is perhaps the single culprit we must try to conquer. As in any other enterprise we pay our bills monthly and payroll regularly. Our income, however, comes in in clumps at different points in the year creating peaks and valleys in our accounts.

This past year, delays in receiving federal grants and foundation support caused a cash flow problem as did delays in receiving income from rental properties. There were two apartment units at the Gaspee house which were not rented throughout the full period.

Other unusual expenses such as emergency major repairs to the main gas heater at John Brown House caused some unexpected expenses.

On the whole, however, the actual deficit was approximately fifteen thousand dollars out of a budget of nearly \$300,000. The current budget forecasts a deficit of six thousand dollars, which may grow to ten, but the members certainly have the capacity to help us respond to this challenge by helping us recruit new members and by supporting the annual Friends campaign more vigorously than before.

We are in a challenge grant period with the National Endowment for the Humanities. The grant rewards us with one federal dollar for every three new ones we raise ourselves. Also, I would be remiss if I did not call your attention to our need to increase our endowment through bequests. Since July we have received the bequests Mr. Mauran will speak about, but these intentions, just realized this year, were made many years ago. There are a variety of bequest giving programs that are now available. We would be happy to talk to you at any time about direct gifts to our endowment or about deferred giving programs with special tax advantages through a mechanism offered by the Rhode Island Foundation.

I have enjoyed the opportunity to serve as the treasurer of the Society, and look forward in the years ahead to working with you in other capacities.

GEORGE H. CICMA

**RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
*Statement of Support, Revenue and Expenses*  
 Year Ended June 30, 1977

PUBLIC SUPPORT AND REVENUE:	Current Funds		Fixed Asset Fund	Endowment Fund	Total All Funds
	Unrestricted	Restricted			
Public support:					
Contributions	30,975.63	33,474.82	201,966.00	2,004.00	268,420.45
Comprehensive Employment Training Act Funds	7,020.68				7,020.68
Legacies and bequests		50,000.00			50,000.00
Grants	<u>57,500.00</u>	<u>91,354.47</u>			<u>148,854.47</u>
Total public support	<u>95,496.31</u>	<u>174,829.29</u>	<u>201,966.00</u>	<u>2,004.00</u>	<u>474,295.60</u>
Revenue:					
Membership dues	42,937.00				42,937.00
Investment income	85.55	555.62		91,537.47	92,178.64
Realized gain (loss) on sale of investments				(8,973.78)	(8,973.78)
Rental income (net of rental expenses of \$18,380.23)	5,462.36				5,462.36
Program fees	19,088.07				19,088.07
Loss on sale of fixed assets			(4,000.00)		(4,000.00)
Total revenue	<u>67,572.98</u>	<u>555.62</u>	<u>(4,000.00)</u>	<u>82,563.69</u>	<u>146,692.29</u>
Total public support and revenue	<u>163,069.29</u>	<u>175,384.91</u>	<u>197,966.00</u>	<u>84,567.69</u>	<u>620,987.89</u>
EXPENSES					
Program services:					
Library program	107,326.81	31,134.37	3,843.27		142,304.45
Museum program	40,667.03	83,948.53	2,589.01		127,204.57
Publications program	32,320.48	65,474.98	40.50		97,835.96
Education program	<u>14,718.00</u>				<u>14,718.00</u>
Total program services	<u>195,032.32</u>	<u>180,557.88</u>	<u>6,472.78</u>		<u>382,062.98</u>
Supporting services:					
Management and general	33,481.64	1,000.00	402.58	10.00	34,894.22
Fund raising	<u>25,076.93</u>		<u>100.64</u>		<u>25,177.57</u>
Total supporting services	<u>58,558.57</u>	<u>1,000.00</u>	<u>503.22</u>	<u>10.00</u>	<u>60,071.79</u>
Total expenses	<u>253,590.89</u>	<u>181,557.88</u>	<u>6,976.00</u>	<u>10.00</u>	<u>442,134.77</u>
Excess (deficiency) of public support and revenue over expenses	<u>(90,521.60)</u>	<u>(6,172.97)</u>	<u>190,990.00</u>	<u>84,557.69</u>	<u>178,853.12</u>

### *Annual Report of the Director*

The presidential election campaign for the year 1800 was perhaps one of the most hotly contested and vituperative this country has seen over the years. Wild charges and slanders were exchanged freely between the camps of Thomas Jefferson and John Adams. Jefferson, particularly, felt the sting and bite from New England clergy, who didn't think much of his deist theology or his French political ideas. The man was not fit, they argued, to govern the country. There were reports that some clergy took direct action against Jefferson in their ministry: supposedly a Jeffersonian supporter arrived in one church with a new son ready to be baptised as "Thomas Jefferson

Smith," but the minister allowed that the choice of name was utterly inappropriate for a son of New England and promptly baptised the child "John Adams Smith."

Responding to such treatment and other irregularities, Jefferson wrote to his friend Dr. Benjamin Rush of Philadelphia that "I have sworn upon the altar of God, eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man," thus adding another forceful phrase to the American litany of liberty of conscience that was fashioned in large part in ports and plantations around Narragansett Bay in the time of Roger Williams.

Of course it has always been a major irony in Jefferson's personality that his ideas about tyranny over the mind did not extend logically to his actions and policies concerning slavery and Indian affairs. Perhaps it's a lesson on the

fallibility and weakness of mankind — even among some of its most magnificent examples — that inconsistencies, contradictions and blind spots can exist beside great intellectuality, humaneness and spirit. It is ironical further that in Rhode Island, the Jefferson sworn against all forms of tyranny was supported principally and successfully by a party organization in Bristol which had received in exchange for its political support the promise of an independent customs house. The meaning of this arrangement was of course that a separate customs house, independent from surveillance of either Providence or Newport, and whose officers would be appointed from suggestions submitted by the De Wolfs, would provide easy and uninterrupted transactions between Bristol, Rhode Island and the De Wolf slave-labor sugar plantations of Cuba.

One form of tyranny over the mind, however, that Jefferson and those of us in historical societies can join in opposing is that which prevents an individual from obtaining information about himself or herself or about the history of the community in which we live. For certainly it is a form of tyranny to deny access to information which tells us and those who come after how and why our surroundings developed and changed the way they did. For these are things which tell us who we are; they form and shape our identity as much as the genetic traits passed on by our parents. Information about our environment's traits and tradition is at the center of what local historical societies and museums are all about. If we are to respond intelligently to conditions, rules, and problems we have inherited, then as a birthright we must be able to explore and understand the origins of our social and political order.

Denial of access to our state and local history is not the work of a tyrannical conspiracy. There is no conscious policy directed towards erasing the recorded tape of time. Yet barriers to access do exist and the fact that they are circumstantial or inadvertent make them no less real, no less insidious or pernicious.

Barriers to our past include such hurdles as not having enough trained collectors and gatherers who know what things should be kept for future study: here we speak not only of historical documents and records, but of representative three dimensional objects which reflect our culture and those which preceded us and should be housed in museums. Another barrier is lack of large enough places to store, house and preserve these things that must be saved. Neither our Library, nor the record repositories of our state are large enough or staffed enough for the job. Modern conservation and preservation techniques are costly and all too often not utilized. Lastly, the other significant barrier to our past is the inability and incapability to transform our preserved objects and information into useable components for our daily lives.

With the resources it has been given the Rhode Island Historical Society makes a daily assault on all of these barriers. I would like to report briefly on our efforts and results for the year just concluded. We have performed each of the three functions essential to a full historical society program: we have collected library and museum

materials pertaining to Rhode Island; we have performed a conservation and preservation function in the professional management of these collections; and we have attempted to reveal the significance of the collections through various forms of interpretation: tours, talks, lectures, forums, exhibitions, and publications.

Our librarian and curator have reported in detail about their departments' programs. In addition to library and museum, our program areas also include education, publications, and consultation or extension. The following slides will illustrate educational programs. While we are viewing them I would like to offer these statistical data about the audience we serve:

Our principal audience is the more than three thousand individual members who receive our newsletters, magazine, and miscellaneous mailings.

Attendance at events and lectures was as follows:

<i>Last year's winter forum:</i>	120
<i>Sunday afternoon lectures:</i>	345
<i>Fall and spring evening classes:</i>	240
<i>Turn of the century garden party:</i>	1,123
<i>Fall membership week (10 events):</i>	357
<i>Christmas reception JBH:</i>	350
<i>John Brown House tours and meetings:</i>	5,956
<i>Library research visits:</i>	6,000

Putting on these educational events required a major effort; the principal planners were Pam Fox and Leslie Henshaw. We regret that Leslie is leaving us to take a major volunteer position in the community. We shall miss her energy, skill, effectiveness and style. I am pleased that Kate Waterman, my secretary, has agreed to take Leslie's place.

What made the past two years' education programs so vital to our efforts was that they maintained our outward visibility superbly while we were planning and working behind the scenes to transform Aldrich House into a history museum showcase. Also behind the scenes but contributing enormously to all our efforts was the work of our buildings and grounds staff consisting of Cliff Cone, Carl Papino, and Jeff Quaranta. It seems hardly necessary to underscore that behind the program efforts were the administrative tasks of coordination, management and development. To those who have shared that responsibility with me from the third floor of John Brown House I would like to extend additional recognition: Leslie, Kate, Fred Chase and Helen Gower.

The above report does not encompass all our activities, however. In the area of publications, Dick Showman and his team have nearly completed volume II of the *Papers of General Nathanael Greene*. Four solid issues of our quarterly *RHODE ISLAND HISTORY* have been published. With the *PROVIDENCE JOURNAL* we sponsored publication of David Patten's *ADVENTURES IN A REMEMBERED WORLD*; we published Professor Conley's *DEMOCRACY IN DECLINE*, and volume I of our forum series lectures is at the press. At this time I would like to recognize an individual who has contributed so much to the quality of our publications program over the years, Noel P. Conlon. Just retired from the staff, Mr. Conlon

has been copy editor of *RHODE ISLAND HISTORY* and a participant on the Nathanael Greene Papers. He worked on Professor Conley's manuscript. Throughout he has been a keen editor and an able teacher.

As in other years we provided our professional services on a consultant or extension basis. Members of the staff served on the Historical Preservation Commission, State Records Advisory Board, Heritage Commission, Consortium of Research Libraries, Rhode Island Committee on the Humanities, and others. We took on interns and apprentices, and we taught in various academic settings.

Finally, the year has been one of creating management tools: a new auditing system, a new accounting process at the Rhode Island Hospital Trust Bank, refinements in our table of organization, and planning tools like our work program. We discovered for instance that in our effort to account precisely for land, buildings and collections we owned that they totaled upwards of fifteen million dollars and that our endowment was a little over one million dollars; or in other words that a source representing 9% of our wealth was responsible for supporting 91% represented in land, buildings and collections. Many of our trustees were amazed at the size and value of the heritage trust represented by the society's holdings. I think they began to recognize such a responsibility could not be taken lightly or managed casually. We are in a sense a community bank. A bank of historical objects and records; we can't leave our vaults unattended any more than any other bank would. We need to pay our managers a professional wage for the services they perform, in proportion to the responsibilities they bear.

One of the elements missing from our new accounting system, however, is the placing of a dollar value on the principal product of our activity — service. How can it be measured? How can it be represented or quantified? Moreover, thousands of hours of volunteer time of the board, of committees is inadequately reflected. The work of the staff is magnified many times over by the energies which ripple out into the community from the efforts of our volunteers. The membership and those who represent it as officers are still a vital partner in this work. No matter how sophisticated our measuring device, there will still be values and products that are undefinable.

But historians have, as reporters of the scene they write about, more often than not used impressions rather than cold, scientific data as a way of transmitting truth. And so I turn to this technique of impressions for my final observations on this year's work. Two, perhaps, stand out in my mind as indications that our assault on barriers to historical understanding is having some effect. One impression is that of turning the corner of Hopkins and Benefit Streets last fall as a group of fourth graders were leaving the Stephen Hopkins House and beginning their walk to John Brown House as part of our education program. Their teacher had dressed boys in vests and tri-cornered hats, girls wore long granny gowns and mob caps. The effect was dramatic; they were transported back into the past, they were living an historical moment, their imagination was unchained. It reminded me of an eight year old boy some thirty years ago who had a similar

experience in his home town which had been part of an event concerning George Washington and Nathanael Greene. Magical moments of insight can have lifelong effects.

The other impression was a celebration of joy we shared the other day with Mrs. Rowena Stewart and Professor Larry Sykes of the Rhode Island Black Heritage Society, which had been successful in securing seven Edward Bannister drawings for its collections. A mutual happiness and sense of common victory that flowed between our staffs, as we recognized an important part of this community's heritage had been rescued and brought home safe, marked a breach in another kind of barrier.

I therefore report that it is my impression we are doing what we were set here to do; that this century and a half old institution is as young and vibrant as it was when it advertised in the *PROVIDENCE AMERICAN* of September 3, 1822 for anything pertaining to the history of Rhode Island. One of those who responded to that advertisement was Colonel Christopher Lippitt who sent the Society a memoir of his service in the American Revolution. Nat Shipton, our manuscript curator, found this document the other day amid uncatalogued miscellaneous materials. Possibly it's the very first item we were given. That it is now properly catalogued represents still another breakthrough.

Now for those of you who would like to share in our enterprise I invite you at the conclusion of our meeting to take one of the forms at our pamphlet rack, upon which you can list and return to us the names of friends who might like to join us in our efforts.

Thank you for your attention.  
ALBERT T. KLYBERG

### *Annual Report of the Librarian*

In the last few weeks I've invested some time in thinking how I might make this year's Library report different from the last—perhaps more interesting, more amusing, more literary. Should I open with a limerick or maybe a quotation about the role of libraries in history, or history in libraries? Should I show slides, recite statistics? How could I describe how hard staff and volunteers worked, what our accomplishments were, or our goals for this year 1978?

Now that you are anticipating some exciting new departure, let me quickly report that, in the end, I decided that my position as a librarian meant that it was up to me simply to make information available to you. For our job at the Library is to make information available and in my report for 1977 I want to tell you briefly how we did our job.

In handling information at the Library we are basically engaged in three processes—acquiring information, processing it for use, providing it to those who need it. Let me focus first on acquisition.

To begin, the kind of information we seek to acquire is defined for us by the nature of our institution—the Rhode Island Historical Society. We collect all printed, manuscript, and graphic materials relating to Rhode Island history and genealogy. And from a slightly wider perspective we also collect selected historical and genealogical materials about New England.

We collect library materials in three ways, each of which depends on you, our members, and on other generous people. The first way, which involves relatively little direct initiative on our part, is through gifts of materials. The author of a genealogy on a Rhode Island family donates a copy of her newly-published book. A man in Scituate gives us account books, kept by his great-grandfather who owned a general store. In 1977 the library added some 500 printed items from over 170 donors, 42 manuscripts collections, and 80 graphics collections in this manner. Of particular significance was John Nicholas Brown's gift of the journal of Simeon Thayer, a long lost account of Captain Thayer's 1776 march to Quebec. Helen Roelker Kessler and Nancy Lyman Roelker made important additions, including a letter to Nathanael Greene, to our Greene family papers. Reverend DeWolf Perry augmented our business collections with Benjamin Bourne and Abel Jones papers. And Mrs. George C. Scott donated her vast collection of genealogical working papers.

A second way in which we acquire library materials is by what we call field work, or contacting people throughout the state about donating their Rhode Island material. If we hear of a club or organization we may call the president and ask if the group is interested in donating its inactive records. We visit individuals moving from house to apartment who may want to give family records. Field work represents a large investment in staff time and, frankly, with our small staff we have not been able to do as much as we would like. We rely on you to help us out whenever you hear of a potential donor or an interesting collection.

Thirdly we acquire library materials by purchase. We identify material for purchase by reading catalogs, flyers and book reviews. Once again we rely on our members to inform us of material offered for sale.

Last year we spent almost \$1,800 on books (58% of this was for genealogical books), almost \$900 for manuscripts and \$350 on graphics. Where does the money come from? A small amount comes from direct donations to the Library book fund. In addition some people give us books which are duplicates or which do not fit our collecting policy, with the understanding that we will sell the books at auction and use the money for purchases. The bulk of the acquisitions fund in the last few years, however, has come from auction of materials which are duplicates culled from the collections, or books which do not concern Rhode Island or New England. This money is now almost exhausted and in the new fiscal year we will have to find new sources for funds.

With available funds we were able last year to purchase every newly published history and genealogy concerning Rhode Island as well as most out-of-print items. What we have not been able to afford are many New England

materials. In manuscripts and graphics we have purchased some important materials but we have had to pass up many—especially high-priced graphics. Next year, however, even published Rhode Island materials may not be within our reach unless new funds are found.

Each acquisition, of course, means that we must have space to house material. As I indicated last year, one of our most important acquisitions for the future must be more space.

I look forward to working with Mr. Stark and the board, to begin planning for a new library wing. We had a taste of what the planning will involve, as well as what the results may be, when we worked, last year with Raymond Lareaux, a graduate architecture student at the Rhode Island School of Design. Ray had asked to design a library addition for his graduate project. I spent many hours with him, and staff members submitted their own plans to Ray. While the final result was somewhat disappointing, we did gain valuable experience in thinking about the space and facilities we would like to have.

We have run out of space, not only to house our library materials, but to house our staff as well. Several years ago we made space for our cataloging department in the reading room. This year we had to expand cataloging activities even further into the reading room. Our business archives people continue to work in the book stacks. Happily we were able to make one improvement in work space last year when Cliff Cone and his crew redesigned and refurbished the graphics area.

Adequate work space for staff is essential because we need room to perform the second of our information processes—cataloging and arranging. All materials received by gift or purchase are recorded, or accessioned, by Doris Sher in the librarian's office. After accessioning, the material goes to our cataloging, manuscript, or graphics departments for processing. For books this means cataloging, or giving each book an identifying number and set of descriptive cards so that readers can find the book by author, title or subject. For manuscripts collections, we compile a written description called an inventory or register, and corresponding cards. Graphics collections are treated like manuscripts with inventories or registers and cards, while individual graphic items are placed in name or subject files or by dates, in the case of broadsides.

Ideally, we would like to process all our new acquisitions shortly after we receive them. But because our predecessors devoted most of their time to collecting rather than processing, our current staff must divide its time between new materials and a one hundred and fifty-five year back log.

We firmly believe, however, that attention to processing materials is one of our primary tasks. Processing involves transferring materials to proper safe storage containers to assure their long-term preservation. It also means using systems to organize the material so it will be easily available. If we did not carry out our responsibilities in this area we would be no more than a warehouse.

Processing statistics in our cataloging division again represent an important increase in accessibility of printed materials. With the help of Florence Manni and Belsada

Taylor, a cataloger and clerk funded by a special project grant from the Providence Comprehensive Employment and Training Act Administration, our cataloging division, headed by Tevis Kimball, cataloged 3,700 volumes represented by an addition of over 10,000 cards to the catalog. Ursula McFarland, cataloging assistant since December 1975, left in June.

In addition we were fortunate in obtaining the cataloging expertise, one day a week on a volunteer basis, of Mr. Kay K. Moore, retired head cataloger from Brown University. A genealogist as well as a cataloger, Mr. Moore has begun recataloging our family history collection. Judith Paster a graduate student at Simmons College library school also volunteered in the cataloging department.

In our manuscript division Nat Shipton processed forty-two collections. The figure for manuscripts is deceptive since a manuscript collection can have anywhere from two to two thousand items.

Nat's work in the manuscript department was happily augmented by gracious volunteers and diligent student interns and work-study students. Miss Irene Eddy, a six-year volunteer veteran, was joined by Mrs. Dora Vaughn, Mr. Robert Trim, Jeff Osborne, Mrs. Betty Greene and Bonnie Buzzell. Mr. Joseph K. Ott is often on hand to help out in the manuscript division when Nat devotes his one day a week to the Greene papers. Kate Dunnigan, Drew Cayton, David Williams, graduate interns provided by Brown University's history and American Civilization departments, and Scott Green from Rhode Island College, processed several important collections and worked on our own archives.

We are now a year and a half into a three year grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to arrange and process our vast business collection. With help from Michael Zuckerman, business archivist Harold Kemble accomplished a major task in 1977—sorting and arranging nearly 300 shelf feet of Sayles Finishing Company records including over 1100 volumes.

In graphics, Marsha Peters and her assistant, Helen Kebabian, with help from student interns, processed several important photographic collections and continued to log newfilm. Graphics also benefited by assistance from capable interns and work-study students: Leo Blackman and Abby Cohen from Brown, Norine Cashman from University of Rhode Island and Debra Stephens and Denise Harris from Rhode Island School of Design.

Marsha Peters, our capable graphics curator for five years, left the staff in November. I am pleased to announce that Helen Kebabian has been appointed to fill Marsha's position.

Tracy Thurber continued his work on our currency collections. Mr. Frank Crowther worked on our postal collection and Marsha LeFranc, formerly with our staff, spent the summer here as a work-study student.

I mentioned earlier that in processing, the staff must divide its time between old and new materials. In addition, staff time must be divided between processing and our third major information function—public service. Public service, in essence, is the end result of the two other

functions—acquisitions and processing. For it is helping those that visit, write, or telephone that we succeed in making information available. The Library was used over 6000 times in 1977 with over 1000 new users. One thousand wrote letters requesting information. And bells rang continuously in the reading room as 4500 people telephoned. Susan Blain, reference assistant since May 1976, left in August. Charles McNeil, her able replacement, helped those who visited and kept up with the flood of calls and letters. Georgeanne Lima also assisted in the reading room.

While the number of visits and letters remained almost the same as in the bicentennial year, the number of telephone calls almost doubled. Although this jump could be attributed to last year's cold weather which kept people indoors, I would like to think it resulted from increasing enhancement of the Library's image as *the* place to call for information about Rhode Island's history.

For our staff, public service takes other forms than helping those who visit, call or write. We try to provide information and draw attention to our resources through special programs both in and out of the Society. In May and again in October, Tevis Kimball and I gave a seminar on using our genealogical resources. The October program, part of membership week, also featured a session on our business records with Michael Zuckerman and Nat Shipton, one on graphics with Marsha Peters and one on newspapers.

Marsha Peters edited a film from our collection for presentation on WJAR-TV. She introduced the film in five episodes and commented after. Marsha lectured at Brown University and participated in a panel at the American Studies convention in Boston. She also authored an article on the use of photographs for *AMERICAN QUARTERLY*.

Staff members also represented the Society in a number of professional organizations and activities. Participation in these organizations benefits the Society in two ways. Staff members can acquire valuable information in a continuing educational process. In addition we have opportunities to spread information about Society programs and services.

I represented the Society last year in the Consortium of Rhode Island Academic and Research Libraries and participated in activities of the Rhode Island Library Association. I was also appointed to serve on the State Advisory Council on Libraries and the Steering Committee for the 1978 Governor's Conference on Libraries and Information Science. Harold Kemble attended the Society of American Archivists conference in Salt Lake City. Harold, Nat and I also attended meetings of New England Archivists. Tevis Kimball served as membership chairman of the Special Libraries Association Chapter in Rhode Island. Charlie McNeil took the genealogical courses taught by David Dumas last fall and represented the Society at Rhode Island Genealogical Society programs.

I have spent much time in my six years with the Society gathering and reporting statistics. I would like to conclude not with *statistics*, but with an *impression*, with which I hope those 6000 visitors, 1000 letter writers and 4500

telephone callers would agree. Most of the time, I think, we are able to provide some or even all of the information they needed. And that's what we were all about in 1977.

NANCY F. CHUDACOFF

### *Annual Report on Museum Staff and Activities*

This year saw major changes in the museum curatorial staff. Ann LeVeque, formerly associate director of Galleries of the Claremont Colleges, became curator in charge of collections and exhibitions. Laura Roberts, who is currently working on her master's thesis for the Cooperstown graduate program in museum studies, became assistant curator in charge of education early in the fall. Susan Edelman, one of our enthusiastic summer interns, was hired as chief tour guide and researcher. The three new staff members together with assistant curator Ed Gregory, who designs and installs our exhibitions, and registrar Tom Brennan make up the museum staff.

This year John Brown House had nearly 6000 visitors. Of those almost 2000 were fourth graders participating in children's tours specially devised by volunteers from the Providence Preservation Society and jointly administered by them and the Rhode Island Historical Society. This year the Historical Society staff was able to participate directly in the children's tours and next year the Society will take over full responsibility of administering the fourth graders' trips with assistance from the volunteers who initiated and designed the program.

Additional educational activities included the regular spring and fall series of four-week classes which offered to members and the public experiences in chair caning, the study of genealogy, military history, ceramics, and Providence history among others. Four heavily attended lectures by Harold Sack, Elizabeth Casey, Anthony Agostinelli and Wendell Garrett enriched our program this year, and the Forum series, continuing its progress through history, covered the Romantic Era this year.

A highly successful college internship program was conducted during the summer which was of great mutual benefit to the Society and to the ten student volunteers who spent their summer vacation learning and working under the direction of the Society's staff. The students, who came from nine different institutions including Brown, Smith, Yale, University of Rhode Island and others, worked in three major areas. A research group, under the direction of student Michael Probert, compiled a 300-page history of Rhode Island during the often neglected period of 1860 to 1940. A second group, interested in historic interpretation, conducted and developed tours of John Brown House and installed a display which described the house during the occupancy of Marsden Perry. The third group worked with our registrar cataloguing objects and improving collection storage.

Individual staff members continued and completed various projects during the year. Ed Gregory designed and installed at John Brown House an exhibition organized by

former curator Christopher Campbell, entitled "The Generous Decade," which featured major gifts to the Society's museum collections during the past ten years. In addition to his duties as designer, Mr. Gregory has been overseeing the renovation of Aldrich House, which will provide within the next year new museum space, lecture hall, reception room, classrooms, offices and collection storage space. Most major structural work has been completed with the carving out of the reception area from what used to be the old kitchen. An excellent intrusion and fire alarm system has been installed together with a fine emergency lighting system. Major electrical work remains to be done, and this will be followed up with final plastering and painting.

Tom Brennan has begun to establish a classification and retrieval system for the thousands of objects and records in the Society's collections. We hope this system will aid researchers, scholars and staff members in using the collections. He has also established a program photographing all new acquisitions and will be enlarging our slide collections to assist lecturers and others interested in studying our holdings. As ever, his work continues in cataloguing a backlog of objects to be recorded and improving old and inaccurate records.

Laura Roberts, though new to the staff, has already established a training program for guides at John Brown house. First to complete the course is a group of college students who will begin conducting tours shortly. Several of these students are also doing research on objects in the collections, and one student will be doing work at the Society for college course credit. Once again, we all wish to thank our volunteers who have been an enormous help and are the mainstay in our guide program. Especially we would like to thank Maria Benavente, Esther Masouda, Clara McQuaide, Sarah Steiner, Daniel Sugerman, guides, and Dorothy Budlong, receptionist. Laura will be launching a major recruiting program to build up the guide staff this coming spring and already has people clamoring at her door eager to begin training.

Nearly forty gifts have been made to the museum collections this year including paintings, silver, costumes, furniture, military uniforms, children's toys, tools and household implements. A major conservation project is near completion as the last of eighteen flags has been sent to the Textile Museum in Washington, D. C. to be cleaned, mended and mounted.

The museum staff, having just caught its breath after a busy and productive year, looks forward to turning the major portion of its energies and attention to production of the opening exhibition at Aldrich House. Indeed almost all members of the Society's staff will be involved in one way or another with this major exhibition, which is being funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. We predict that this will begin a long series of interesting and instructive exhibitions on Rhode Island history, hope it will bring more members to the Society and, with development of special programs for school children, will help to produce new history enthusiasts among the young.

ANN LeVEQUE



## NECROLOGY 1977

DeForest W. Abel  
 Norman V. Ballou  
 Ferdinand Bray  
 Mrs. Walter G. Brown  
 Hazard Brownell  
 George B. Bullock  
 Vincent F. Capaldi  
 Mrs. John S. Chafee  
 Mrs. Ernest Clayton  
 Harry K. Cross  
 Doris Dashew  
 Mrs. Malcolm P. Decker  
 Harold Norman Flint  
 George E. Downing  
 Marshall N. Fulton, M.D.  
 Robert H. Goff  
 Mrs. Joseph W. Greene, Jr.  
 John A. Gwynne  
 Miss Susan W. Handy  
 H. Stanley Howe  
 Mrs. H. Stanley Howe  
 Mrs. Karl P. Jones  
 Mrs. DeWitt T. Keach  
 Lawrence Lanpher  
 Elwood E. Leonard, Jr.  
 Mrs. Colin Makepeace  
 Mrs. Frederick Mason  
 Miss Gladys M. Mickle  
 Mrs. William Davis Miller  
 Mrs. John P. Morgan  
 Dana Rice  
 Carroll H. Rickard  
 Mrs. F. Snowden Skinner  
 Charles H. Smiley  
 Rev. Howard F. Smith, Jr.  
 Edward S. Spicer  
 Miss Margaret Stearns  
 Mrs. Richmond H. Sweet  
 Mrs. Ralph B. Taylor  
 Mrs. John H. Wells  
 Rodman E. Westgate

## President-elect's Remarks

The new president, Mr. Dennis E. Stark, told members attending the annual meeting that he wanted to accomplish four things in his remarks. First, he wished to express thanks to certain individuals and groups. Secondly, he planned to review the accomplishments of the historical society to date. Thirdly, he wanted to indicate to the Society certain challenges and opportunities that he saw ahead. And fourthly, he intended to tell members the important role they could play to help the Society continue its progress.

Mr. Stark began the thank yous with Mr. Duncan H. Mauran, retiring president. In appreciation for Mr. Mauran's three years of service and upon behalf of the Society's members, the board of directors, Mr. Klyberg, and the staff, Mr. Stark presented Mr. Mauran with a silver medal with the seal of the Society on one side and the burning of the Gaspee on the other.

Next, Mr. Stark expressed his appreciation to the nominating committee and to the membership for electing him president. He also expressed his appreciation to his fellow officers, board members at large, committee chairmen, and committee members who had offered to serve with him. His final thank you was to Mr. Albert Klyberg and the staff for the excellent job they have done and continue to do in administering affairs of the Society.

The most important accomplishment of the Society's 156-year history, Mr. Stark said, was accumulation of its various collections of historical evidence conservatively valued in excess of \$12 million. Through the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. John Nicholas Brown, the Society owns John Brown House, one of the most outstanding house museums in the country. During the administration of George C. Davis the Society acquired, renovated and opened the Library on Hope Street. During Joseph K. Ott's administration the Society acquired Aldrich House with an endowment from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

The publications program of the Society continues with *Rhode Island History* and special projects including the Nathanael Greene papers.

Notwithstanding all these accomplishments, Mr. Stark noted that much remains to be done. Opening of Aldrich House and its first exhibits should occur in fall 1978. This additional space should allow the Society to show more of its collection and to be more relevant to a larger proportion of the state's total citizenry. The Society should be able to tell the story of Rhode Island's nearly 350 years of existence rather than just twenty-five years represented so well by the John Brown House.

Mr. Stark indicated that the Library's future was perhaps the most important issue to be resolved in the next few years. The questions of collecting interests and building space must be given very careful thought.

Mr. Stark stated that it is very important for the board of directors to review salary scales for all of its staff and to identify resources needed to properly compensate each of them.

Members, Mr. Stark said, can be most helpful by continuing involvement in the Society's affairs and by per-

suading more people to become members. He indicated that they also can help by increasing their own financial support, especially through the Friends' Campaign. He expressed the Society's gratitude for increasing support from the State of Rhode Island and asked members to encourage the legislature to further increase our appropriation of state funds.

Mr. Stark noted that the endowment is an important provider of financial stability and of ongoing income and asked members to remember the Society in their wills, both in terms of physical possessions for our collections, and economic resources to increase the endowment. He reported that the Society is participating with the Rhode Island Foundation in their new pooled-income fund. Members may transfer resources to the fund, receive approximately six percent income for two persons' lives, and have funds transferred at the death of those individuals to the Foundation's general fund with the income to come in perpetuity to the Society.

Continued support and willingness to work on special projects of the Society, including the annual Spring Garden Party, was very important, Mr. Stark said. He encouraged members to continue attending the Society's exhibits, to use the Library, and to bring friends and visitors to see John Brown House, our special exhibits and programs.

Mr. Stark closed by stating that "the most important thing all of us can do is to continue to believe in the value of history and to support the Rhode Island Historical Society in every way we can." He said that he was very proud to be the Society's new president and pledged his very best efforts as we begin our 157th year to work with members, board of directors, committees and staff in this most worthwhile endeavor.

DENNIS E. STARK

### *Gifts to Endowment*

*The Rhode Island Historical Society has depended on the generosity of its members and friends for financial gifts as well as historical materials. Attorneys and trust officers will assist and advise a donor at the time estate plans are developed. Additional information is available through the Society.*

*With an arrangement through the Rhode Island Foundation it is now possible to make a charitable gift to the Society which is both tax deductible and invested by the Foundation to return income to the donor during his or her lifetime and to one other beneficiary. Thereafter the income derives to the Society. In addition to receiving a charitable deduction, the donor bypasses all capital gains taxes while possibly actually increasing spendable income. The Society benefits by obtaining long term support to maintain our museum and library objects.*

*More information may be obtained by writing the Secretary, Rhode Island Historical Society, 52 Power Street, Providence, RI 02906.*

### **Officers and Committee Members elected at the 156th Annual Meeting to serve until the Annual Meeting in 1979**

Dennis E. Stark, *president*  
Robert J. McKenna, *vice president*  
Robert B. Lynch, *vice president*  
Richard F. Staples, *secretary*  
Sarah T. Dowling, *assistant secretary*  
Karl F. Ericson, *treasurer*  
Stephen C. Williams, *assistant treasurer*

#### FINANCE

James F. Twaddell, *chairman*  
Robert V. Bianchini  
Earl D. Chambers  
Foster B. Davis, Jr.  
Charles C. Horton  
Peter G. Lisle  
Duncan Hunter Mauran  
Clarke Simonds  
Stephen C. Williams

#### AUDIT

William A. Sherman, *chairman*  
John H. Drury  
Dwight H. Owen

#### MUSEUM

Mrs. Edwin G. Fischer, *chairman*  
Mrs. William H. D. Goddard  
Norman Herreshoff  
Mrs. Robert Homans  
Mrs. Lawrence Lanpher  
Christopher H. Little  
Christopher Monkhouse  
Joseph K. Ott  
William Parsons  
Mrs. Albert Pilavin  
Daniel R. Porter  
Mrs. Peter J. Westervelt

#### LIBRARY

David W. Dumas, *chairman*  
Mrs. James A. Baar  
Margaret Farrell  
James Findlay  
Joseph Fogarty  
Mrs. Rufus C. Fuller  
Victoria Lederberg  
Philip B. Simonds  
Mrs. C. Richard Steedman  
Samuel A. Streit  
Tracy G. Thurber  
Mrs. Sydney Wright

#### PUBLICATIONS

E. Andrew Mowbray, *chairman*  
Henry L. P. Beckwith, Jr.  
Francis Chafee  
Nancy F. Chudacoff, *ex officio*  
Patrick T. Conley  
Wendell Garrett  
Seebert J. Goldowsky, M.D.  
Robert Allen Greene  
Glenn W. LaFantasie  
Charles O'Donnell  
Norman W. Smith

#### LECTURE AND EDUCATION

Leonard J. Panaggio, *chairman*  
H. Richard Carbone  
Howard P. Chudacoff  
M. Rachel Cunha  
Cora Lee Gibbs  
Richard B. Harrington  
William M. MacLeod  
William G. McLoughlin  
William D. Metz  
William H. Robinson, Jr.  
Florence P. Simister  
Rowena Stewart  
Ellicott Wright

#### GROUNDS AND BUILDINGS

Clifford S. Gustafson, *chairman*  
H. Cushman Anthony  
David W. Chase  
William N. Davis  
Harold Ingram, Jr.  
Richard A. Sherman  
Thomas M. Sneddon

#### GENEALOGY

Henry L. P. Beckwith, Jr., *chairman*  
Mrs. Axel A. Christensen  
Gilbert H. Doane  
David W. Dumas  
Mrs. Oscar J. Greene  
Henri Leblond  
Bruce C. MacGunnigle  
Albert A. Remington III  
Robert S. Trim

#### MEMBERSHIP

Anthony J. Agostinelli, *chairman*  
Edwin C. Brown  
Mrs. Henry N. Chaffee  
Margaret Deignan  
Mrs. A. Hunter Dupree  
Mrs. Arnold L. Hayes, Jr.  
Georgina Macdonald  
Mrs. Dwight H. Owen  
Talbot Rantoul  
Thomas M. Rhine  
Arthur S. Robbins  
Ronald G. Tracey

#### BUDGET

Karl F. Ericson, *chairman*  
Edmund C. Bennett II  
George H. Cicma  
John H. Drury  
Alfred B. VanLiew  
Stephen C. Williams

#### LONG RANGE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

J. Joseph Kruse, *chairman*  
Vincent J. Buonanno  
Mrs. James N. Byers III  
Karl F. Ericson  
Mrs. Robert E. Grant  
Stephen D. Hassenfeld  
Henry E. Kates  
Thomas M. Leahey  
Frank Licht  
Joseph W. Ress  
Mrs. Dennis J. Roberts II  
Mrs. Bruce G. Sundlun  
Henry F. Tingley, Jr.

The Board of Trustees is composed of the officers; chairmen of the standing committees; members at large Albert Carlotti, Johns H. Congdon, M. Rachel Cunha, Alan P. Cusick, George C. Davis, Antoinette F. Downing, John H. Drury, Joseph K. Ott, Daniel R. Porter, Talbot Rantoul, Matthew J. Smith, Mrs. Peter J. Westervelt; the director; and Elliott E. Andrews, state librarian, *ex officio*.