

RHODE ISLAND HISTORY

WINTER / SPRING 2017 VOLUME 75, NUMBER 1





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Published by
The Rhode Island Historical Society
110 Benevolent Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02906–3152

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RHODE ISLAND HISTORY (ISSN 0035–4619)

On the cover:

Rhode Island tourism officials did not mention the state’s amusement parks when promoting Rhode Island’s attractions. Rocky Point, in Warwick, shown in this 1913 postcard, was a favorite of Rhode Islanders in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Rhode Island Historical Society Collections, Postcards-G1160-Box 12-Warwick-Rocky Point. RHi X17 2835.

RHODE ISLAND



Welcomes You

“Discover Beautiful Rhode Island”: State Promotion of Tourism from 1927–2015

PATRICIA RAUB

IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY AMERICA, ONLY A SMALL MINORITY OF wealthy people traveled for pleasure; in contrast, today most Americans regularly engage in some form of leisure-time travel. In the process, tourism has become a multi-billion dollar industry with a significant impact upon the national economy as well as the economies of most U.S. states. Rhode Island is no exception to these trends. Priding itself as “America’s First Vacationland,” Rhode Island now counts tourism as one of the state’s largest private sector employers and a leading generator of revenue. Over nearly a century, a series of state agencies have promoted Rhode Island to both domestic and foreign travelers. This article traces the State of Rhode Island’s efforts to attract visitors, beginning with tourism marketing undertaken by the Bureau of Information in 1927 and continuing through recent activities of the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation, established by the General Assembly in 2014. ¶

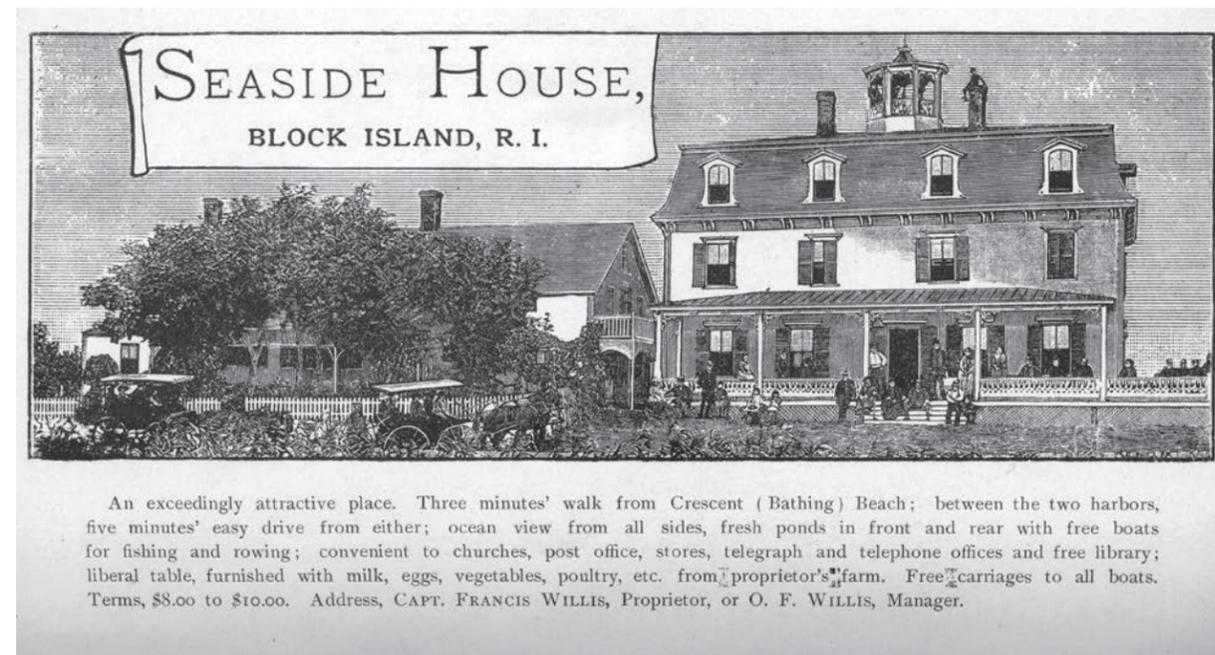
Cover of a magazine promoting Rhode Island tourism in the late 1940s. The publication, “Rhode Island Welcomes You,” was published by the office of the Secretary of State in 1947. Rhode Island Historical Society Collections, RHi X17 2830.

While public officials primarily view tourism as a major contributor to a state's fiscal health, it has more than economic significance for social historians. Tourism serves as a template upon which are inscribed broader social transformations, such as shifts in attitudes and behavior regarding race and gender, the growing commodification of culture, changes in work and leisure patterns, evolving notions of history, and the impact of major historical events and technological developments upon lifestyles. Thus, tracing the evolution of state tourist promotion in Rhode Island over nearly nine decades brings these larger changes into sharper focus and allows us to better understand the history of the state.

The Development of Tourism in Rhode Island: "America's First Vacationland"

Summer visitors were attracted to Newport, Rhode Island, even before the American Revolution. Many were wealthy planters anxious to escape the pestilential heat of the South and the West Indies by spending July and August in a healthier location. Nevertheless, the number of travelers was low: throughout the eighteenth century and well into the nineteenth century, only a few people had the income or leisure to travel for pleasure, and, moreover, journeying from one place to another was uncomfortable, arduous and often fraught with danger.

With improvements in transportation and travelers' accommodations in the United States, the number of people vacationing for pleasure slowly but steadily increased. Elite travelers in the early nineteenth century often visited scenic locations such as Niagara Falls and the White Mountains, as well as watering places such as New York's Saratoga Springs, Virginia's White Sulphur Springs, and Rhode Island's Newport.² By the second half of the century locations such as New Jersey's Long Branch and Cape May as well as Martha's Vineyard on Cape Cod became increasingly popular. In Rhode Island, the wealthier and "more exclusive classes"³ were attracted to shoreline destinations along lower Narragansett Bay and on the Atlantic coastline, particularly Block Island, Watch Hill, Jamestown, and Narragansett Pier, in addition to Newport. Shopkeepers, clerks and factory workers in Providence, Fall River, and other nearby population centers also sought relief from the congestion and summer heat of the industrializing metropolis, spending their days off at beaches and, eventually, amusement parks along Rhode Island's upper Narragansett Bay.⁴ Those who could afford the fare took the train from Providence, Boston, New York and even some Midwestern cities; while working-class passengers were more apt to board a trolley. Some coastal or island destinations were accessible only by steamer, which ensured that steamships accommodated all social classes.



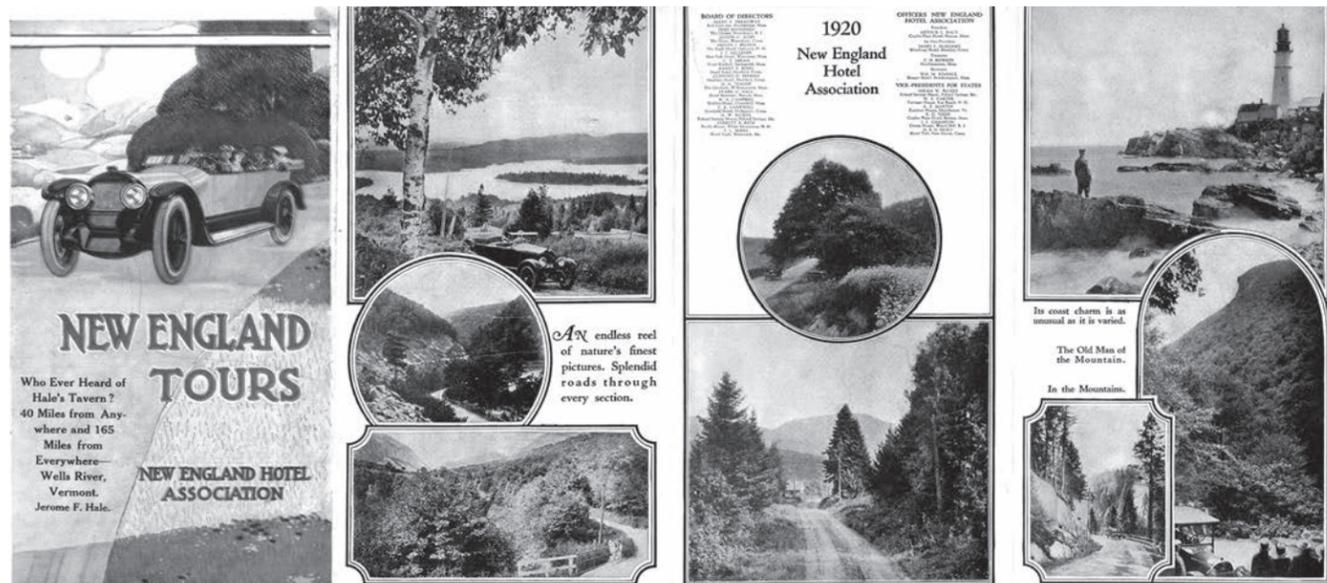
Depending on their means and the amount of leisure time available to them, visitors to Rhode Island had a variety of choices with regard to accommodations. They could return home at the end of the day, camp out by the water, or stay in modest boarding houses. Others booked rooms or suites in lavish hotels. Alternatively, summer residents could rent local cottages—or build their own. Those with larger bank accounts could engage architects to design elaborate summer houses for them in the latest styles.⁵

The increasing number of summer visitors in Rhode Island during the second half of the nineteenth century was in part the result of marketing efforts by private companies and businesses. Resort communities in the state and elsewhere were promoted in a variety of ways. Published travelers' accounts and guidebooks; paintings, lithographs, and stereographs; and illustrated articles appearing in magazines such as the *Christian Review*, the *California Magazine*, *Scribner's Magazine*, *National Magazine*, *Harper's Monthly*, and *New England Magazine* featured summer resorts. Railroads, steamship lines and hotels placed advertisements in local and regional newspapers, guidebooks and histories, and also published separate brochures to publicize locations of potential interest to visitors. Railroad companies, anxious to increase ridership, touted destinations along their routes;

"Seaside House, Block Island." Hotels and businesses promoted tourism in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Advertisement published in Rev. S.T. Livermore, *Block Island: An Illustrated History, Map and Guide* (Providence: Cassius C. Ball, 1901), n.p. Rhode Island Collection, Providence Public Library.

steamship companies posted timetables from major cities to shoreline ports of call, and hotels detailed the region's scenic attractions to prospective guests and enumerated the amenities offered at their establishments.⁶

In those states beginning to attract tourists, state and local government officials left promotional activity in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to the commercial entities likely to profit directly from tourism, such as hotels and transportation companies. However, public officials soon came to recognize that tourism provided economic benefits that extended well beyond these specific enterprises to enrich the community as a whole. In Florida, for example, tourism "accounted for an estimated 4.6 percent of total employment in 1920."⁷ Chambers of Commerce and other local booster organizations began to extol the natural beauty and other salient features of their towns and cities, and one by one, starting around the turn of the century, state legislatures established departments of tourism. Among the first to do so were those in California, Florida and Maine.⁸



**“To Promote the Further Development of the Natural Resources of the State”:
Advertising Rhode Island in the 1930s**

The state of Rhode Island did not begin to actively promote tourism until the 1920s. In 1926 various civic organizations formed the private, non-profit Rhode Island Conference of Business Associations to encourage the use of recreational facilities in the state.⁹ Three years later, the organization surveyed fifteen Rhode Island towns and discovered that summer residents were helping to raise the property tax revenue; furthermore, a Westerly study found that “thousands of girls who go to nearby summer resorts each year bring with them an average of \$100 which they spend in Rhode Island during their stay.”¹⁰ With heightened awareness of the economic benefits derived from summer visitors, the Rhode Island General Assembly established a State Bureau of Information in 1927 within the office of the Secretary of State. The Bureau’s purpose was:

to promote the further development of the natural resources of the state and the collection, preparation, publication and distribution of information and statistics relating to its natural, historical, agricultural and industrial advantages ... and to co-operate with any city, town, organization, corporation or person interested, for the purpose of devising means to advance the attractions and resources of the state ...¹¹

Prior to the 1930s, most advertisements and articles designed to attract tourists were produced by hotels and businesses, not state agencies. Materials created by the New England Hotel Association (1920). Private collection.

The state appropriated minimal funds to attract new businesses and recreational visitors, however, claiming in 1930 that “the best way to advertise the State would be to reduce taxes.”¹² Nevertheless, that same year the Bureau of Information began to churn out informational material. In conjunction with the Rhode Island Conference of Business Associations, the Bureau produced its first tourism booklet, a fourteen-page pamphlet “intended to express the spirit of Rhode Island hospitality.” It was entitled “Rhode Island: A Little Bit of All Outdoors.”¹³ The Bureau also worked with the Conference of Business Associations to publish *The Book of Rhode Island*, a three-hundred-page compendium of Rhode Island information whose subtitle exhaustively disclosed its contents: *An Illustrated Description of the Advantages and Opportunities of the State of Rhode Island and the Progress That Has been Achieved, with Historical Sketches of Many Leading Industries and a Biographical Record of Citizens Who Have Helped to Produce the Superb Structure—Historical, Commercial, Industrial, Agricultural and Recreational—Which Comprises the Strength of This Charming State*. While the book as a whole was directed at businessmen who might relocate in Rhode Island, one section was clearly aimed at tourists. Entitled “Pleasures and Pleasure Spots



in Rhode Island,” this part used some of the same descriptions as the brochure. This whole section was in turn reproduced in its entirety as a separate booklet with the same title, also published in 1930. Later on in the decade, the Bureau produced *Come to Rhode Island for Real Recreation and Hospitality* (1936), only partially revising the text and photographs used in its 1930 publications.¹⁴

The Information Bureau did more than publish print material in the 1930s; it also used new media to promote the state, producing an eleven-minute film in 1930 with the same title as the pamphlet from the previous year. *Rhode Island: Just a Little Bit of All Out-Doors* was photographed by Arthur Rossi, a Providence resident who was a “newsreel cameraman and a movie shooter” in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Rossi later served as a photographer on a full-year scientific expedition into the Brazilian jungle.¹⁵

These early promotional efforts focused upon the shoreline. Rhode Island’s coastal communities had been the primary attraction

Shoreline destinations like Jamestown, Watch Hill and Narragansett Pier attracted visitors in the late-nineteenth century. “Ocean Road and Hotels, Narragansett Pier, R.I.,” 1904. Postcard, Rhode Island Historical Society Collections, Postcards-Box 4-Narragansett Pier Hotels, RHI X17 2836.

for visitors for a century or more. The stunning success of waterfront tourist resorts in the United States in the 1910s and 1920s strongly reinforced the attraction of the seashore for middle-class tourists, who flocked in increasing numbers to beaches up and down the Atlantic Coast and to inland lakeside locations as well.¹⁶ The appeal of these destinations was heightened by a widespread belief at this time in the therapeutic qualities of the sun.¹⁷ Rhode Island’s brochures, along with the 1930 film, capitalized on these attitudes by focusing in text and image on the state’s “glistening white beaches, the invigorating tang of the salt sea air, the boom of the surf, the feeling of the clear, sparkling sea water and the tonic rays of the sun.”¹⁸



INTO THE BREAKERS



SURF ON RHODE ISLAND SHORES

Rhode Island's brochures and other promotional material, created in the 1930s, continued a well-established guidebook tradition of including historical destinations as well as natural attractions. "The search for history joined the quest for nature as a goal of early American tourists," historian Cindy S. Aron writes of early nineteenth-century American travelers.¹⁹ Many tourists at that time combined trips to historic spots such as Bunker Hill or Mount Vernon with visits to natural wonders like Niagara Falls or Kentucky's Mammoth Cave.²⁰ A century later, the literature from the 1930s paints a nostalgic picture of the past, which was common in contemporary history textbooks and other public history narratives. At a time when successive waves of new immigrants had entered the United States, settling disproportionately in southern New England as well as New York and New Jersey, native-born white Americans often felt threatened by these newcomers. To reinforce their social and cultural position, those who could trace their ancestry back to the early colonists highlighted the role played by early English settlers in the formation of the American nation, publicizing this "patriotic orthodoxy" via history books, pageants, civic commemorations, highway markers, and guidebooks.²¹

Those who wrote the text for Rhode Island's tourism brochures and the film script for *Rhode Island: Just a Little Bit of All Out-Doors* regarded themselves as protectors of elite notions of citizenship and nation—and their intended audience, it seems, was composed of white middle-class people like themselves. The colonists are presented as "us," while Native Americans are "them." Potential tourists learned that the state's history was still traced upon the state's geography through the "queer Indian names" of many of its natural features. The 1930 film includes a reenactment of Rhode Island founder Roger Williams's first encounter with Narragansett Indians, who are wearing feather headdresses and standing beside a teepee, both typical of Plains Indians, not Eastern tribes. In this scene the tomahawk-carrying Native

Americans welcome Williams and offer him land on which to settle. Unlike Native Americans, African Americans are virtually erased altogether from the 1930s promotional accounts of Rhode Island's past, except for a description used in several publications that depicted "settlers living in genial comfort on large estates worked by slaves" in colonial South County.²²

Most references to Rhode Island's history in state tourist brochures focus upon early leaders, such as founder Roger Williams; "merchant prince" John Brown; Stephen Hopkins, signer of the Declaration of Independence; Revolutionary War general Nathanael Greene; and Oliver Hazard Perry, celebrated hero of the War of 1812. The sections on Providence include a list of the "palatial mansions" of prominent residents constructed in the Colonial and Early Federal periods as well as the "less pretentious homes," built for other eighteenth-century civic leaders on the "'home lots' of the original proprietors" of the settlement.²³

These promotional brochures produced by the state, and the film, also use history as a marker against which to measure technological progress: viewers of the 1930 film learned that, instead of trudging along the forest paths of Roger Williams's time, present-day residents and visitors alike could drive along "smooth beautiful roads" and "miles of surfaced highways." Likewise, the film and the brochures of the decade comment upon the convenience of the "great new Mount Hope Bridge which replaces the centuries old ferry" that had connected the Rhode Island mainland with Aquidneck Island. The state also promoted its new airport. The movie shows planes taking off at Pawtucket's What Cheer Airport, illustrating that "[w]here Roger Williams walked, [now] we shall fly." Photographs of the airport are also prominently displayed in the print material.²⁴

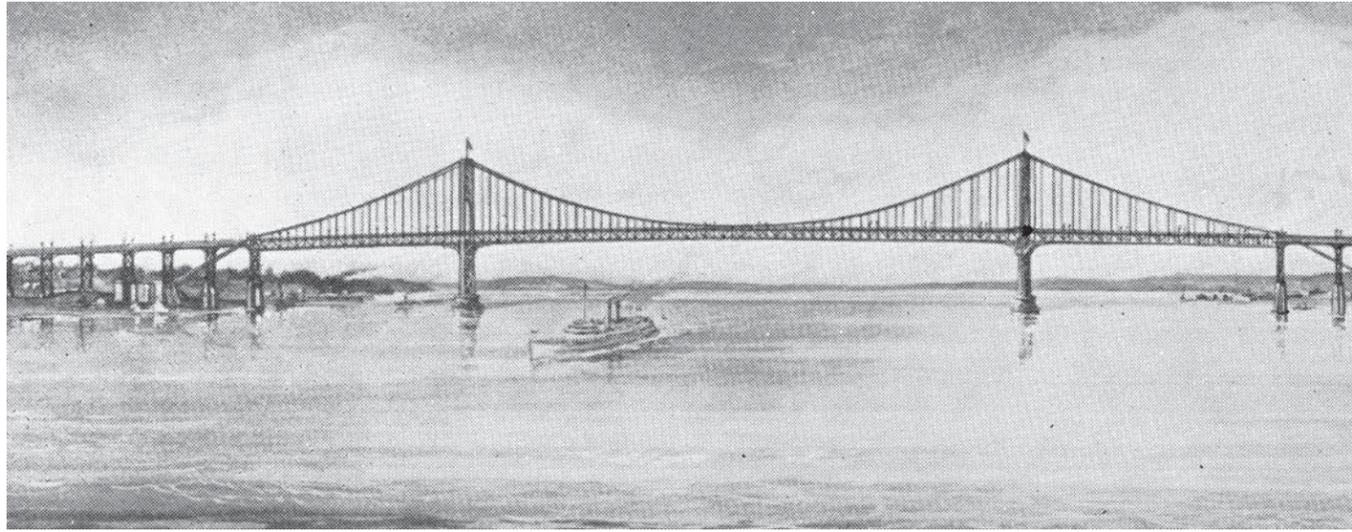
Allusions to modern attractions in the Information Bureau's brochures and film chart contemporary developments in Rhode Island. The state's new Mount Hope Bridge was completed in 1929, just as the Great Depression hit industrial Rhode Island hard. It proved

"Even the Hurricane of '38, 'the worst disaster in Rhode Island history,' had no lasting impact on the state's tourism."

a godsend to Aquidneck Island's burgeoning summer visitor industry as thirties travelers tended to limit themselves to vacations at nearby locations that they could reach within an hour or two. Rhode Island's beaches on Aquidneck Island were ideally situated for this more constricted form of tourism, as they were easily accessible to urban dwellers in Providence, Fall River, and even Worcester following the opening of the bridge. Thus, as Daniel Snyder points out in his account of 1930s Newport, "the tourist trade...continued to flourish, right through the 1930s." He attributes this to the opening of the new bridge, "which brought a new kind of tourist to Newport for a day or the weekend in the family automobile."²⁵

Despite the hardships of the Great Depression, during the 1930s more and more Americans who had jobs began to take vacations, as vacation with pay had been extended to the majority of U.S. industrial workers by the end of the decade. "For a significant proportion of the American populace," Aron writes, "vacationing had by the 1930s become an important component of an acceptable standard of living. The widespread ownership of cars no doubt allowed many of these Depression-era families to continue to enjoy vacations—hard times or not."²⁶ Even the Hurricane of 1938, the "worst disaster in Rhode Island's history,"²⁷ had no lasting impact on the state's tourism. The storm hit New England on September 21, the end of the summer tourist season. Although the proprietor

"Surf and Sun Make Summer Fun." Early literature produced by the State of Rhode Island to attract tourists emphasized the healthful benefits of sun, surf and sea air. From a promotional magazine for Rhode Island tourism published by the Office of the Secretary of State, 1944, p. 6. Rhode Island Historical Society Collections, RHi X17 2832.



The completion of the Mount Hope Bridge in 1929 linked the mainland to Aquidneck Island, providing easier access to beaches for tourists. This image is taken from *Pleasure and Pleasure Spots in Rhode Island*, a publication of the Rhode Island State Bureau of Information. (Providence, R.I.: Office of the Secretary of State, 1930), p. 26.

of Rocky Point amusement park predicted dolefully, “I’ll never get over this,” in fact, by the following May the *New York Times* could report that “New England’s shores and resorts ... are, for the most part, rehabilitated now in anticipation of another large influx of Summer visitors.” And a year later, the *Times* predicted that “[r]ecreational Newport is ready for one of the liveliest Summers it has had in years.”²⁸

Throughout the 1930s Rhode Island distributed its promotional materials in a number of ways. Copies of the state’s information booklets were mailed to hotels and travel agencies “across the country,” and also distributed at the 1939 New York World’s Fair, where the state highlighted its Gilbert Stuart portrait of George Washington in the Rhode Island section of the New England Combined Exhibit.²⁹ Additionally, the state purchased advertising space in a handful of regional newspapers and some national magazines touting the state as a “summer paradise for children and grownups alike,” and assuring prospective tourists that a Rhode Island vacation “suits your budget.”³⁰ It is unclear how state officials distributed copies of its 1930 film, *Rhode Island: Just a Little Bit of All Out-Doors*. However, one assumes it was screened for convention planners considering

Rhode Island for upcoming meetings, as was an earlier film promoting Providence sponsored by a local booster group called the Town Criers.³¹

According to National Park Service estimates reported in the *Providence Journal*, the vacation industry in the state was “growing year by year” and had become a “\$30,000,000 enterprise” by 1939. However, the *Journal* warned, “Rhode Island cannot sit back in its easy chair”: the state’s tourism promotion appropriations weren’t keeping pace with budgets allocated by other states—and Rhode Island’s share of New England’s total vacation dollars was low. With visitors “showering” \$500,000,000 on the six states in the region, Rhode Island’s share was only six percent of the total.³²

Manufacturing had long been the bedrock of Rhode Island’s economy, and it seems that Rhode Island officials were understandably reluctant to embrace tourism as an alternative source of significant revenue even though factory jobs were already moving South, and Rhode Island had begun to experience an economic decline that would last for decades. By the end of the thirties Rhode Island had cut its tourism budget in half. While this may have been partly a belt-tightening measure as the Great Depression wore on, it may also have been the result of a general lack of interest among Rhode Islanders in fostering tourism development. A *Providence Bulletin* columnist observed in 1937 that the “three northern New England states have been in the advertising game for

years and are thoroughly convinced that it’s worth while,” allocating considerably more funds for tourism promotion than did Rhode Island, on a proportional basis. Four years later, the *Providence Journal* returned to this theme in an article entitled “R.I. Bids Tourists, but in a Weak Voice: All Other States Except Two Spend More to Advertise Their Attractions.” Secretary of State Armand H. Cote lamented, “It probably is unfortunate that we don’t have more money to spend ... because one idea I have is that we should make more of an effort to have visitors stop here.”³³

“Rhode Island for your Wartime Vacation”: State Tourism Promotion in the 1940s

Like most states, Rhode Island did not stop promoting tourism during World War II.³⁴ The state of Rhode Island managed to expand its efforts to attract visitors in the 1940s despite lagging behind the rest of New England in terms of state financial support for tourism promotion. In addition to placing advertisements in newspapers as far west as Cincinnati, Rhode Island’s Bureau of Information purchased air time for radio commercials on a dozen stations in the East.³⁵ The state also published a number of tourist brochures during the decade, including *Rhode Island: For a Real Vacation* (1940), *Rhode Island for Relaxation* (1942), *Rhode Island for Your Wartime Vacation* (1944), and *Rhode Island Vacation* (1948). As it had in the previous decade, the Bureau of Information distributed its promotional pamphlets and other literature to hotels and travel agencies and mailed materials to newspaper readers who requested information.

One of the most striking features of the tourism booklets from the 1940s is the degree to which they accentuate vacationers’ presumed gender differences. In his study of post-World War II popular magazine narratives focusing upon tourist travel, Richard K. Popp notes that those articles featuring young women’s travels often included “what at the time was called ‘cheesecake,’ or photographs of pretty young women in revealing outfits.”³⁶ This trend is



GILBERT STUART BIRTHPLACE



OLD SLATER MILL



STEPHEN HOPKINS HOUSE

Gilbert Stuart birthplace (top), Slater Mill (middle), and Stephen Hopkins House (bottom). Beginning in the 1930s, Rhode Island began to stress certain aspects of its history as a means of attracting tourists. Rhode Island Historical Society Collections, “Rich in Historical Lore,” promotional magazine for Rhode Island tourism published by the office of the Secretary of State, 1944, p. 22. RHi X17 2829.

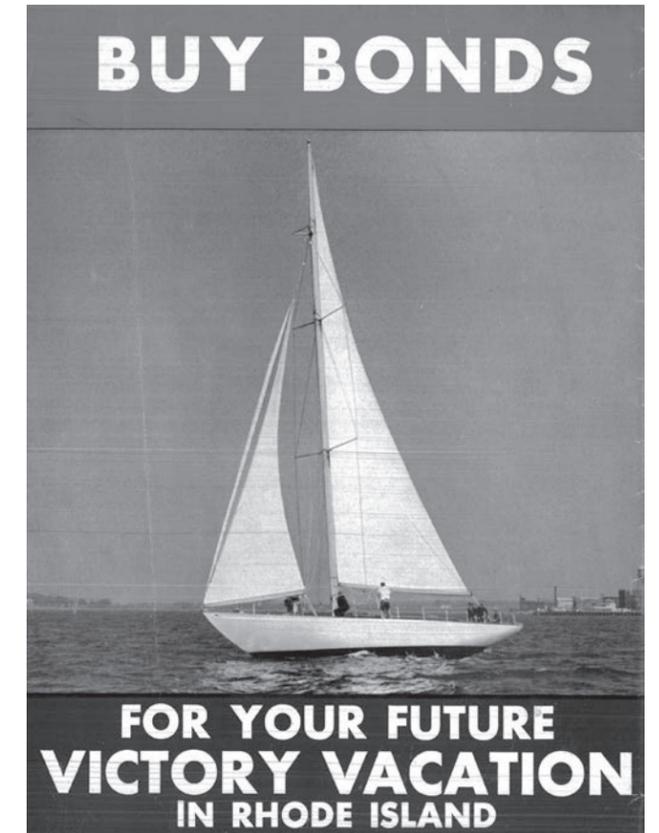
reflected in Rhode Island's promotional material in the forties. In the 1940 brochure, for instance, many snapshots of women depict attractive young females in bathing suits posing for the camera. In contrast, the relatively few photographs of men show fully clothed males engaged in more vigorous activities, such as horse racing or trout fishing. These gendered portrayals are consistent with prevailing mass media images which tended to focus on women's appearance while showing men in action. This was generally the case across the board, whether a publication was directed at a male or a female readership—or targeted a family audience.³⁷

Women were also positioned differently than men in the images included in Rhode Island's tourist brochures. For example, in several of the 1940s brochures the Bureau inserted a photograph of two lifeguards perched high above a group of young women who gaze admiringly at the men above and reach up to hand ice cream cones to the presumably appreciative youths.³⁸ The Bureau had finally shelved the picture by 1951, showing instead a more gender-equal image of young women and a young man setting off on a bicycle trip, but the later brochure nevertheless inserted a number of the inevitable photographs of attractive young women in bathing suits.

All of the people depicted in the tourism snapshots published by the Rhode Island Bureau of Information are white. In the state's promotional material from the 1930s and 1940s—and, for that matter, throughout most of the twentieth century—there is an absence of African-American tourists. While black travelers were prohibited by law in many parts of the South from registering at hotels and tourist homes, eating at restaurants, using restrooms in filling stations, or venturing onto most beaches; those who sought to vacation in the North encountered “persistent racial discrimination” as well.³⁹ As a consequence, African Americans themselves opened hotels, restaurants and other tourist establishments catering to black tourists. In the summer of 1909, the *Baltimore Afro-American* assured its readers that they would find

black-run tourist homes in Newport should they wish to vacation there.⁴⁰ Beginning in 1936 and continuing for the next three decades, traveling African Americans could consult the *Negro Motorist Green Book* to find hospitable establishments.⁴¹ Throughout the 1940s and 1950s and into the early 1960s, the *Green Book* listed accommodations in Newport and Providence.⁴² Rhode Island had enacted legislation in 1885 stipulating that lodging places, public conveyances and places of amusement were open to all regardless of race; yet, African Americans still found themselves unwelcome in many hotels, restaurants and other tourist venues in the state throughout the first half of the twentieth century.⁴³ Thus, while at least some middle-class African-American tourists did travel to Rhode Island for their summer holidays during this period, as we can conclude from the *Green Book's* listings of a handful of establishments accommodating black visitors, many more who set their sights on southern New England undoubtedly headed for Oak Bluffs on Martha's Vineyard, long a summer destination for black vacationers and a place where African Americans could be certain of acceptance.⁴⁴

Tourism booklets produced by the state of Rhode Island during World War II allude to the impact of the conflict upon those on the home front. The title of the booklet, *Rhode Island for Your Wartime Vacation*, makes reference to the war, but the visuals on the front cover could have appeared on the cover of any peacetime booklet. The cover is divided by a diagonal strip; on the left is a scene featuring sailboats in a Rhode Island harbor, and on the right, a picture of pretty girls in two-piece swimsuits running along a beach. The back cover exerts readers to “Buy Bonds For Your Future Victory Vacation in Rhode Island”—but it accompanies this admonition with an image of a yacht peacefully sailing through Narragansett Bay. Some of the text on the inside pages provides advice for wartime travelers to Rhode Island, such as tips on “How to Travel and Save” at a time when gasoline and tires were rationed. The booklet warned prospective visitors to reserve



accommodations early since “wartime conditions” had made it more difficult to find space, a situation exacerbated by the swelling population resulting from the expansion of military bases and stations, most of which were adjacent to tourist areas. Otherwise, the booklet's description of the recreational options in Rhode Island, whether it was “fresh water bathing,” “camps for youngsters,” “picnic areas” or other outdoor pastimes, was no different from that contained in the other 1940s pamphlets issued before and after the war.⁴⁵

While the state's 1944 booklet, *Rhode Island Wartime Vacation*, advised prospective visitors to conserve gasoline by traveling by bus or train, it continued to emphasize the state's beach activities, still the central component in Rhode Island's tourist industry. As in previous state promotional material, the booklets emphasized the “health-giving qualities found in the clear blue water” off Rhode Island's shores.⁴⁶ And, again, the 1940s booklets stressed the state's modernity: Rhode Islanders could “boast of one of the most modern airports in the nation” and also be proud of the “modern safe construction

Left: This image illustrates how state officials chose photographs depicting young women in bathing suits for promotional material aimed at tourists in the 1940s. From the Rhode Island Historical Society Collections, “Rhode Island Vacation,” promotional magazine for Rhode Island tourism published by the Office of the Secretary of State, 1942, p. 3. RHi X17 2831.

Right: Despite the war, tourism promotion continued in Rhode Island. Back cover of “Rhode Island (for your) Wartime Vacation.” Produced and distributed by Armand H. Cote, [R.I.] Secretary of State (1944). Image courtesy of the Rhode Island State Archives.

of our thoroughfares.” Presumably, tourists arriving by car found it comforting to learn that “our State Troopers are just as courteous to the visitor as to the native.” Not all was modernity, though. On the “Historical” page, the visitor was assured that he or she would “find many historical points of interest” in Rhode Island—all from the colonial era.⁴⁷

Remarkably, at no time in the history of the state's promotion of tourism did its brochures emphasize Rhode Island's amusement parks. During their heyday the state could point to “a series of beaches and amusement parks [that] rivaled New York's Coney Island,”⁴⁸ and



Above: Photographs in mid-century tourism brochures produced by the State of Rhode Island depicted men and women in gender-specific activities. This photograph, titled “Newport Lifeguards Need Assistance Here,” is one example. From Rhode Island Historical Society Collections, “Rhode Island for Relaxation,” 1942. Secretary of State, RHI X17 2834.



Postwar Tourist Promotion in Rhode Island: “Half-Hearted Efforts to Sell the State’s Vacation Attractions”

attracted pleasure-seekers from throughout southern New England; yet, the state’s travel booklets did not mention them. While some parks were short-lived, others remained popular for decades, with Newport’s Oakland Beach drawing visitors until 1938, East Providence’s Crescent Park remaining open until 1977, and Warwick’s Rocky Point hanging on until the 1990s. State officials may have concluded that such sites were too commercial to reinforce the image they sought to project: unspoiled beaches and historic sites, not amusement parks, were the attractions they aimed to highlight. The 1930s brochures mention amusement parks only in the context of their clambakes: “as venerable an institution as many a historic legend.”⁴⁹ After the 1930s, these amusement parks are barely mentioned.

Despite all of the state’s promotional activities during the 1940s—its seasonal advertising in the travel sections of large metropolitan newspapers; its radio commercials aired on regional radio stations; its booklets, pamphlets, event schedules, lists of cabins and campgrounds, and maps mailed to prospective visitors and distributed to hotels and elsewhere—Rhode Island remained outspent by other states and was unable to mount a substantial, effective promotional campaign. As a *Providence Journal* reporter remarked in 1941, “The State is so small I think most travelers just fly through it without a stop. If we could convince them we have something to see they would stop.”⁵⁰

With the Great Depression and the war behind it, Rhode Island redoubled its efforts to attract tourists in the 1950s. In 1951, the Secretary of State’s Bureau of Information was replaced by the newly formed Rhode Island Development Council.⁵¹ The Council’s staff seems to have realized that the increase in marriage and birth rates, coupled with postwar prosperity, had boosted the number of young families taking vacations. Rhode Island clearly targeted this sector in its postwar tourist promotion, although the state attempted to attract couples as well. People shown in the visuals from this period are white, middle-class tourists who, by taking a vacation by the shore, had fully embraced the consumerist ethic of the fifties and sixties, which was becoming closely linked to tourism in this period. Scholars have noted of tourists of the era that, “Taking a trip not only meant getting away from home but staking membership in a consumption- and leisure-oriented way of life increasingly equated with American identity.”⁵² State promotional brochures from this period stress the leisure-time activities available to tourists in Rhode Island, but there are few explicit references to such consumerist behavior as shopping in antique and other specialty shops, dining in restaurants, staying in upscale hotels, purchasing souvenirs or “collecting” local sites through amateur photography. The linkage between tourism and consumption would become harder to miss in state promotional literature by the early twenty-first century.⁵³

The Rhode Island tourism experience was also reshaped by postwar transportation developments, notably, the dramatic increase in automobile production and ownership, as well as the construction of the national interstate highway system. In 1976 the Planning Division of the Rhode Island Department of Transportation reported, “In Rhode Island there are now 70 miles of interstate highways, costing about \$300 million... The first part was opened to



Rhode Island state brochures aimed tourist promotional guides at families in the postwar era. This photograph was used by the State of Rhode Island in the 1950s in its tourism materials. Courtesy of the R.I. State Archives.

Tourism agencies in Rhode Island use photographs of outdoor activities similar to this one of kayaking in Newport harbor to attract tourists to the state. Photo ©Billy Black.

traffic in 1957, while the last section was opened in 1975.⁵⁴ I-95 paralleled Route 1 to link the East Coast from Florida to Maine, while I-195 allowed motorists to travel east from Providence toward Cape Cod. With the majority of Rhode Island's tourists hailing from New York, New Jersey, and the southern New England states, I-95 enabled people from these locations to travel to the Ocean State more quickly and easily. Rhode Island wasted no time in taking the opportunity to promote its attractions to motorists arriving on the new interstate highway, opening a tourist information booth near I-95 in Hopkinton in 1966.⁵⁵ Additionally, the Newport-Pell Bridge (1969), which was originally intended to be an extension of I-95 toward Cape Cod, "proved to be a lifeline to Newport [tourism]"—even though, as it happened, the proposed extension was later shelved.⁵⁶ By 1953, "83 percent of vacation trips were made by car."⁵⁷ While some headed for the mountains, others were attracted to the beach, a phenomenon benefiting Rhode Island.

The Development Council hired a consultant in the early 1950s to review Rhode Island's tourism efforts and to recommend ways to increase tourism revenue. The consultant, J. Stanton Robbins, reported in 1953 that the state still lagged far behind other states, including its New England neighbors, in tourism funding. It was time to put more money and effort into tourism promotion, Robbins concluded. With a little more exertion, he predicted, Rhode Island could nearly double its tourist income within the next decade.⁵⁸

Not long after Robbins completed his report, entrepreneurs initiated two annual music events in Newport. The Newport Jazz Festival began in 1954 and the Newport Folk Festival in 1959. While both events would eventually become major tourist draws for the state, they experienced growing pains in their early years, quickly attracting more fans than the promoters could comfortably accommodate—or Newport residents were willing to have streaming into their city. Matters reached a crisis point on the evening of July 2, 1960, when an estimated 12,000 "drunken teenagers" rioted outside the gates of the jazz festival. It required the intervention of state and local police throughout Rhode Island, as well as the assistance of the Air Police, the Shore Patrol and U.S. Marines to subdue the unruly mob.⁵⁹ As a result, the Newport city council canceled the remaining festival performances.⁶⁰ To many, this seemed to be a harbinger of bad times to come for the state's tourist industry as it negatively impacted Rhode Island tourism for the remainder of the season.⁶¹

Although the state's tourism industry did rebound to pre-riot levels the following summer, for most of the rest of 1960s and throughout the 1970s, few could see significant progress in Rhode Island's ability to capitalize on the growth of tourism and tourist revenue enjoyed by the rest of the New England states. By 1963 the *Providence Journal* conceded that Robbins's rosy predictions a decade earlier for tourism growth hadn't materialized. The *Journal* reported that "it is strikingly clear that Rhode Island's tourist

business is far behind the rest of the region and may actually be further behind than it was 10 years ago." Based upon travel statistics for the six New England states, Rhode Island continued to rank "dead last" on all measures. It attributed this sorry state of affairs to a continued lack of a sufficient number of "adequate, modern" accommodations; the absence of an "overall guide or plan to coordinate community, state and private tourist programs"; and little headway in expanding tourist attractions beyond the summer months. In addition, the *Journal* found the funding for advertising and promotion to be inadequate: while the state allocated a "modest sum" on marketing, "communities and the industry spend practically nothing."⁶² It was hardly the approach Robbins had recommended. Subsequent surveys of Rhode Island tourism in the 1960s and 1970s echoed the Robbins report in concluding that the state needed to do more to attract tourists.⁶³ However, Rhode Island seemed incapable of doing so during this period, and, in fact, the state trimmed its tourism budget sharply in the early 1970s, suggesting to the *Providence Journal* the "low priority most Rhode Islanders place on attracting tourists."⁶⁴

Nevertheless, Rhode Island stretched its budget for the promotion of tourism as best it could. In its annual report for 1974–75, for instance, the renamed Rhode Island Department of Economic Development detailed a comprehensive "program of media advertising, publicity, public relations and distribution of information and materials relating to tourism and leisure-time activities," undertaken by its Tourism Promotion Division. During the previous year the Division had placed advertisements in nearly twenty newspapers as far west as Minneapolis and as far south as Richmond and in a dozen magazines, including *Travel and Leisure*, *Mademoiselle* and *TV Guide*. The state was increasingly reaching out to the Canadian market, with ads in Montreal, Ottawa and Quebec newspapers, and also sending traveling exhibits north of the U.S. border. Rhode Island now had four promotional films in circulation, and the Division could boast that they

had “attracted more than 65,000 spectators at more than 1,230 showings during the fiscal year.” Another film was broadcast via the American Cable Network, reaching homes throughout much of the South and Midwest. The state also published a variety of pamphlets, booklets and maps, including a revised highway map, guides to camping, boating and winter recreation, and a “newly-designed ‘Welcome to Rhode Island’ brochure.” In addition to its information center in Hopkinton, the Division opened a new one at T. F. Green Airport.⁶⁵

The Tourism Promotion Division continued to answer requests for information by mail, but it now responded as well to calls via a WATS line, a long-distance telephone service that predated “800” numbers. More of an effort was made to expand Rhode Island’s tourist season by encouraging spring and fall visits. The Division worked closely with convention groups, cooperated with regional tourist promotion agencies, and “conducted three familiarization tours during the year for travel agents and writers” from a number of other countries. Partly due to the growing popularity of the America’s Cup races, held in Newport until 1983, and also the Bicentennial’s Tall Ships ‘76 event, the state redoubled its promotion of yachting and boating in general, and distributed weekly fishing news releases as well as an annual fishing summary.⁶⁶

Tourism in the 1980s: Rhode Island Becomes a “Destination in Its Own Right”

Even with Rhode Island’s many initiatives during the 1960s and 1970s, the state continued to fall behind its neighbors in its efforts to attract tourists—and in presenting the Ocean State as a desirable place to visit. Perhaps the most demeaning article about Rhode Island ever to appear in the national press was published on page one of the *Wall Street Journal* on June 28, 1983. Author Stephen P. Moran asserted, “To many New Englanders,” Rhode Island was “little more than a smudge on the fast lane to Cape Cod.” Although Moran ended with a statement from a Providence bar manager, who said,

“You have everything you want here,” the rest of the article was almost uniformly negative. The state had a high unemployment rate, below-average manufacturing wages and low high school graduation rates. Furthermore, “much of the state has a patina of age and wear,” and, worst of all, Rhode Island was “infested ... with crime and corruption.”⁶⁷ Rhode Island’s lack of tourist attractions were overshadowed by the state’s other failings. The way Moran described the state, there was little to praise.

Despite the negative publicity conveyed by the *Wall Street Journal*’s article, the 1980s was the decade in which Rhode Island’s tourism prospects changed for the better. By 1985, the *Providence Journal* could crow that the state was no longer just a “smudge” but was instead “a destination in its own right.”⁶⁸ State officials had finally realized that tourism could be a significant source of revenue and jobs. Governor J. Joseph Garrahy convened a Governor’s Council on Tourism in 1981 to recommend ways to coordinate tourism promotion. Among other suggestions, the Council urged the state to “declare tourism a major priority ... and establish a budget for tourism 10 percent higher per capita than tourism budgets of other Northeastern states.”⁶⁹ Garrahy’s successor, Edward D. DiPrete, Rhode Island’s governor from 1985 to 1991, did increase the state’s tourism funding, and the budget for tourism promotion climbed rapidly from the mid-1980s through the mid-1990s. DiPrete was able to take advantage of a strong economy to foster tourism growth, and he later asserted that “he used the go-go years of the mid-to-late ‘80s to bring more tourists to Rhode Island, developing a business segment that now brings in more than \$1 billion.” According to DiPrete, “We promoted the state. People had money for discretionary spending, and we capitalized by making tourism the fastest growing industry in the state.”⁷⁰ With more money to spend on luring tourists to the state, Rhode Island opened a new tourist center in 1989 on Route 95 about ten miles from the Connecticut border, closing the smaller one in nearby Hopkinton that had provided tourist information since the 1960s.

“Rhode Island’s tourism revenues continued to rise from over \$1 billion per year in the late 1980s to more than \$2 billion in 1997 and to \$5.4 billion by 2007.”

The state also increased its advertising budget for both print and television ads. Although Rhode Island had previously run an in-state, public-service promotional advertisement “designed to make Rhode Islanders feel good about themselves,” it was not until 1987 that Rhode Island moved decisively into television promotion. It purchased broadcast space in the New York City market and showcased “Rhode Island: America’s First Resort.”⁷¹ The new tourism division also increased its efforts to attract international travelers, and by the mid-1990s David DePetrillo, the state’s director of tourism, could assert that visitors from outside the United States were Rhode Island’s “fastest growing segment of the tourist industry.”⁷²

In 1986 the Rhode Island General Assembly created six regional tourist authorities to promote tourism in local areas. These authorities were financed by a new tax on hotel stays, and the tax revenue was shared with the state’s Department of Economic Development, which marketed tourism throughout the whole state. While some regarded this as a way to better highlight local businesses and attractions, others felt that the creation of so many independent organizations diluted the state’s ability to promote Rhode Island effectively. In the years to come, the *Providence Journal* published a number of opinion pieces on both sides of the issue, with the newspaper itself editorializing that a “state-wide approach would, it is assumed, more effectively draw tourists than the piecemeal promotion of the state’s regions.”⁷³

Beginning in the 1980s, the R.I. Department of Economic Development began to examine its tourism industry more systematically. Throughout the last two decades of the twentieth century and into the early years of the twenty-first century, University of Rhode Island professor Timothy J. Tyrrell conducted annual studies of the economic impact of tourism on the state.⁷⁴ Tyrrell continually emphasized the importance of tourism for the state’s economy, noting in his 1995 report, for example, that tourism had become one of the three largest industries in the state and optimistically predicting that at “present rates of growth ... travel and tourism will be Rhode Island’s largest employer by 2015.”⁷⁵

In addition to tracking the impact of travel and tourism on the state’s economy, the Department of Economic Development also sought professional marketing help in promoting the state to prospective business leaders and tourists. The local firm of Horton, Church & Goff had handled the department’s advertising account from the late 1970s into the early 1980s. However, they concentrated upon industrial development.⁷⁶ When Rhode Island began to focus more of its attention and resources on promoting tourism as a generator of economic growth, it switched to Duffy & Shanley, another Providence-based advertising firm, retaining its services as the primary “agency of record” from 1983 until the late 1990s.⁷⁷

Duffy & Shanley periodically conducted marketing research to determine Rhode Island's target audience and assess what attracted visitors to the state. The firm determined that Rhode Island's tourist destinations primarily appealed to two major groups: "families" and "sophisticates"—more or less the same population sectors that state officials had informally assumed were their target audience for some time.⁷⁸ In promotional efforts to attract these particular groups, Duffy & Shanley noted in a 1994 presentation to the Department of Economic Development that Rhode Island should highlight beaches and "heritage/culture" for families, and present the state as an "uncommercial, unspoiled vacation" destination, thereby "reinforcing Rhode Island's appeal for ecotourism enthusiasts." Sophisticates could be attracted by appealing to their "interest in visiting unique, 'undiscovered' destinations and attractions." Promotional material could also stress Rhode Island's "upscale ambiance and activities such as museums and antiquing" as well as "fabulous restaurants" and "cozy inns."⁷⁹ Subsequent brochures and advertisements followed the consultants' advice. For example, the cover of a booklet distributed at the turn of the century features a glamorous and apparently wealthy couple lounging on the veranda of a waterfront inn and gazing at the sun setting on the bay behind them. Inside the publication, another young couple is depicted enjoying one of Rhode Island's "uncrowded beaches [available] for those who appreciate the sounds of silence."⁸⁰

In 1996 the General Assembly dealt the state's Tourism Division a body blow when, as *Providence Journal* reporter Kathleen Yanity later recalled, Rhode Island "transformed its Department of Economic Development into the quasi-public Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation, and the tourism office's share of the hotel tax reverted to the general fund." A year earlier, "the tourism office [had] received 27 percent of the annual [hotel tax] revenue" and had a total budget of \$3.6 million. Now the tourism division would receive "an annual appropriation as part of the EDC budget." Consequently, the amount of money available

for statewide tourism promotion dropped, and the division's funding slid back down to early-1980s levels.⁸¹ With the reduction in state tourism funding, the Tourism Division could no longer afford to retain a full-service advertising and public relations firm and until recently has utilized only a public relations agent.⁸²

Nevertheless, Rhode Island's tourism revenue continued to rise—from over \$1 billion per year in the late 1980s to more than \$2 billion in 1997 and to \$5.4 billion by 2007.⁸³ Marketing activities undertaken by regional tourist councils made up for some of the state's shortfall. Additionally, the continued growth of tourist activity throughout the United States resulted in an increase in tourism revenue everywhere, even when an individual state's promotional efforts faltered.

Rhode Island Tourism Promotion in the Early Twenty-First Century

By the turn of the century Rhode Island had begun to position itself to attract a relatively underdeveloped convention and meetings market with the construction of the Rhode Island Convention Center, which opened in Providence in 1994, and the erection of several new hotels to accommodate convention goers. Simultaneously, the Division of Tourism highlighted Providence more often than had been the case earlier, and visits to the capital city grew rapidly. A 2002 Providence study found "that after a decade of dramatic growth, the tourism industry 'has become one of the five largest sectors in the city economy.'"⁸⁴ Providence continues to be one of the state's biggest tourist draws, with visitors attracted to the city's theater and art venues, its historic houses and restaurants—and WaterFire lightings. Staged periodically from May through November, the spectacle consists of "nearly 100 bonfires that blaze just above the surface of the three rivers that pass through the middle of downtown Providence" and attracts hundreds of residents and tourists, who "stroll along the river, listening to music and watching performances."⁸⁵



In 1999, Rhode Island became one of the first states to create a tourism website—and, rather than linking the site to the state's official website, the Tourism Division established a separate "dot com" site. By 2009, VisitRhodeIsland.com was deemed the third best state tourism site in the nation. For relatively little cost, Rhode Island used its website as one of its primary promotional strategies. By 2010, according to *Providence Business News*, the state was spending "about \$90,000 a year marketing the website on Web properties across the Internet. Ads for the site appear on the Weather Channel's website and social-networking site Facebook... The EDC also purchases search terms so its tourism website shows up at the top of listings when people search vacation-themed words."⁸⁶

A study of the State of Rhode Island's official tourism website, as well as an examination of recent travel guides, reveals that, in some ways, little has changed since Rhode Island published its first promotional material back in the 1930s and 1940s. Although twenty-first century digital and print information highlights year-round activities in all parts of the state much more frequently than did the early tourist material, a

Sailing in Narragansett Bay is one of the attractions touted by Rhode Island in its online promotional materials. Courtesy of Rhode Island Commerce Corporation/Tourism.

substantial number of the illustrations on the present website and in the 2016 travel guide continue to stress warm-weather, beach-oriented pastimes.

However, there are more differences than similarities in presentation and content between early and recent promotional products. The state has shifted from primarily relying upon print material to publicize Rhode Island's attractions to promoting the state through digital means via website, Facebook, Twitter and other social media. Also, today's promotional material uses color images, not the black and white photographs that illustrated the text of early brochures and pamphlets. Furthermore, the proportion of pictures to text has greatly increased and there is considerably more attention given to layout in contemporary promotional products. The inclusion of advertisements in the *Travel Guides* is also a fairly recent departure.⁸⁷ In addition, as tourism has become a leading component of the state's economy, Rhode Island has developed

an extensive tourist infrastructure that barely existed even twenty-five years ago. The Providence Convention Center, professional tour companies and cruises, boatyards and marinas, wineries, bicycle paths, fairs and festivals and a growing number of hotels, motels and bed-and-breakfasts all cater to tourists today.⁸⁸

In many ways, the nature of the tourist experience itself has changed over time. In early brochures the emphasis was upon outdoor participant sports such as boating, camping, swimming, archery, horseback riding, and fishing, with some attention given to spectator sports like horse racing. Rhode Island still features such activities; however, the state's promotional literature also reflects the fact that consumerism in the form of food and shopping has overtaken outdoor activities, beaches and even sightseeing in rankings of tourist activities. In a 2000 survey, shopping was the number one activity for American tourists and international tourists alike, while dining in restaurants ranked second among international travelers.⁸⁹ In a World Tourism Organization report issued in 2014, the authors note that "it was not until recently that shopping was considered a leisurely activity, not to mention one that could be a driving force behind tourism."⁹⁰ University of Canterbury professor C. Michael Hall has similarly observed that "food has come to be recognized as part of the local culture which tourists consume, as an element of regional tourism promotion, a potential component of local agricultural and economic development, [and] as a differentiated product in a competitive destination market..."⁹¹

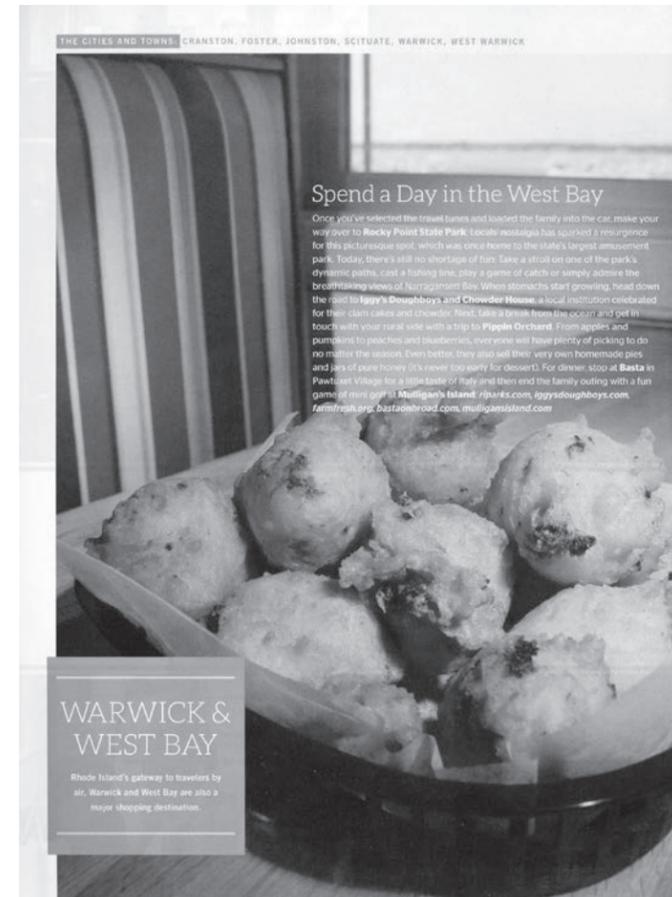
Food and shopping have figured prominently in Rhode Island's promotional literature over the past few decades. For instance, readers are told in the introduction to the state's *Official 2015 Travel Guide*, "If shopping is your thing, you'd better bring extra luggage to take home your finds."⁹² The next page provides an overview of "Local Cuisine," appealing to tourists' quest for authenticity by listing "prototypical Rhode Island" offerings such as calamari, clam cakes and Del's frozen lemonade and asserting,



Rhode Island no longer promotes only outdoor activities to visitors. This image of women shopping in Providence appeared on page 26 of the *Official 2014 Travel Guide*, produced by the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation. Photograph courtesy of Marianne Lee Photography.

"There's no wrong choice for food in Rhode Island, whether dining al fresco by the sea in Newport, at an Italian restaurant on Providence's Federal Hill or at a clam shack in South County."⁹³ The website in 2015 provided even more suggestions for tourists looking for eating experiences in Rhode Island, with a link to "28 Best Seafood Restaurants in Rhode Island" on the homepage and listing nearly five hundred restaurants throughout the state via the main "Eat" link, as well as several wineries and breweries via the "Do" link. Visitors are given less guidance regarding shopping experiences, although a number of art galleries and studios on VisitRhodeIsland.com are listed under "See."⁹⁴

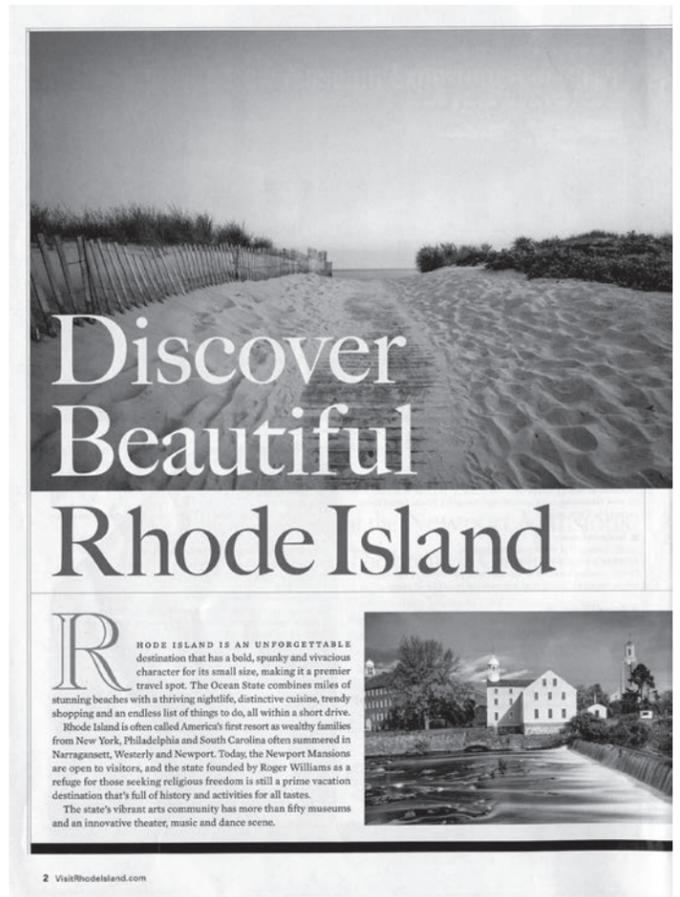
Just as tourist leisure activities have shifted over time, so the very concept of history has become redefined. In history textbooks, interpretations of public history sites, and written accounts and documentaries of specific events and individuals from earlier times, notions of history have become more inclusive, reflecting a transformation in our understanding of the past.⁹⁵ These changes have impacted the types



Left: Rhode Island's distinctive food offerings are now featured in Rhode Island tourism publications and on its website. This image appeared on page 42 of the *Official 2016 Travel Guide*, produced by the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation. Photograph courtesy of Iggy's Doughboys and Chowder House.

Right: A page from the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation's *Official 2015 Travel Guide* featuring photographs of Second Beach in Middletown and the Slater Mill Historic site in Pawtucket. Courtesy Rhode Island Commerce Corporation/Tourism. Photographs courtesy of Cate Brown.

and presentation of historical destinations catering to tourists and the ways in which our past is described in tourism literature. Over the past decade, Rhode Island's travel guides have featured photographs of Civil War reenactors who "recreate the daily life of soldiers and civilians"; encouraged tourists to visit Woonsocket's Museum of Work and Culture, "dedicated to sharing the stories of French-Canadians who immigrated to the state for work and how organized labor shaped Rhode Island"; and suggested that visitors "travel back to the eighteenth century and experience how folks lived on and ran a full tenant farm" at Bristol's



Coggeshall Farm. Nevertheless, just as the amount of beach and bay imagery in promotional material still overshadows inland scenes and activities, so print and digital travel guides highlight colonial and Revolutionary heroes as well as the "industrial glitterati who set up summer 'cottages' in Newport during the Gilded Age" more often than industrial workers, foot soldiers or farmers.⁹⁶

Rhode Island's current promotional literature has less to say about Native Americans than did some of the early guide books; however, it is difficult today to gloss over the subject of slavery, given widespread contemporary knowledge of the role early leaders played in transporting and selling Africans, as well as the contribution of enslaved people in building the Rhode Island economy. Even so, recent tourist guides distributed by the state manage to put a positive spin on Rhode Island's role in the slave trade: "Despite making profits from the slave trade," the text asserts, "Rhode Island was the first colony to prohibit the importation of slaves."⁹⁷

Conclusion

This survey of Rhode Island's promotion of tourism over the past ninety years demonstrates that tourism has grown significantly in economic importance throughout the United States, becoming a major generator of jobs and revenue across the country. Some state governments recognized this trend early on and provided sufficient financial resources to take advantage of the leisure travel phenomenon. However, for many years Rhode Island's leaders discounted tourism's economic potential and underfunded state tourism promotion. Furthermore, the existence of eight regional tourism organizations, each touting its own attractions, hampered efforts to provide adequate funding for a unified and state-wide marketing campaign.⁹⁸ Yet Rhode Island tourism revenue has risen significantly over the past thirty years and its importance to the state's economy continues to grow. According to a study commissioned by the state of Rhode Island and released in 2014, tourism was the fourth largest private sector employer in the state in 2013 accounting for 8.9% of state government revenue that year.⁹⁹

In January 2014, the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation was reorganized as the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation, to be known as Commerce RI.¹⁰⁰ After the election of Gina Raimondo as Governor of Rhode Island in November of that year, the new Governor moved quickly to transfer the bulk of the state's funding for tourism marketing and promotion from the regional groups to Commerce RI. As the *Providence Journal* editorialized in March 2015, this would rectify a situation in which the state had been "spending \$470,000 this year on statewide tourism promotions... [while] funneling more than \$6 million to regional groups that compete for the same tourists and do little or nothing to create a statewide brand."¹⁰¹ The significant increase in funding enabled the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation to hire three new companies in the fall of 2015 to plan and execute a five-million-dollar campaign intended to attract new business as well as more leisure visitors to Rhode Island.¹⁰²



Waterfire, an event that takes place several times a year in downtown Providence, attracts out-of-town visitors. This photograph appeared on page 5 of the *Official 2016 Travel Guide* produced by the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation. Photograph courtesy of N. Millard/Go Providence.

However, early initiatives were not successful. At the end of March 2016, the design team hired by the state the previous autumn unveiled a new logo, displayed an updated website, and outlined a marketing campaign that also included short videos and 30-second spots as well as social media amplification of the new messaging. Even in its first report on the campaign, the *Providence Journal* noted controversy over the logo, which featured an abstract sailboat design accompanied by the words "cooler" and "warmer" to denote Rhode Island.¹⁰³ Over the next week, Rhode Islanders vigorously complained that the message conveyed by the new slogan was obscure, the logo looked as much like a shark fin as a sail, the cost of the promotional campaign was exorbitant, Rhode Island shouldn't have hired an out-of-state marketing firm when there was so much local talent available, and the campaign roll-out had been poorly executed. Furthermore, the new videos included a shot of a skateboarder in Reykjavik, and the website featured chefs who had either moved away from Rhode Island or died.

Within days, the Governor withdrew the slogan and fired the Marketing Director.¹⁰⁴

The first substantial effort since the 1980s to provide sufficient economic resources to the state agency charged with promoting tourism was a failure. However, the incident appeared to have caused no lasting damage to Rhode Island tourism. The *Providence Journal* reported on July 7, 2016, "Tourism is flourishing despite the fact that Rhode Island is still rebuilding its brand for visitors after the 'Cooler & Warmer' campaign flopped."¹⁰⁵ In the short run, though, the General Assembly took about one-million dollars from the state's five-million-dollar tourism campaign for the coming fiscal year and gave the funds to the regional tourism councils. According to House Speaker Nicholas Mattiello, "We want the state initiative to continue, but until it's 100 percent on track we want to make sure the local councils have the resources they need to make sure [they] have a robust tourism season."¹⁰⁶

In reviewing nearly a century of state promotion of tourism, a number of patterns have emerged. Rhode Island brochures, travel guides and other materials reveal shifts in marketing approaches and strategies over time. More significantly, they have also reflected transformations in prevailing attitudes regarding gender and race. Published brochures, films, websites and other media have displayed evolving notions of history and demonstrated the impact of historical events and trends upon travel and tourism. Finally, these materials signal continuities as well as profound changes in the tourism experience itself. An analysis of Rhode Island's promotion of tourism over more than eight decades thus provides insight into our social and cultural values, attitudes and practices.

In a state that long associated prosperity with industrialization, it took considerable time for Rhode Island officials to realize that tourism could become a major economic driver. While other states allocated sufficient resources to promote tourist activity during the first half of the twentieth century, Rhode Island did not start to do so until the 1980s—and reduced the

tourism budget again in the 1990s and early twenty-first century. Over the years, tourism officials promoted the state as vigorously as their budgets allowed, but Rhode Island consistently fell behind neighboring states in budgeting for tourism promotion. Despite the failure of the recent "Cooler & Warmer" campaign, it appears that Rhode Island officials have nonetheless recognized tourism's importance to the state's wellbeing and are willing to provide sufficient funding to encourage the growth of this crucially important economic sector. In a post-industrial era in which factory jobs are unlikely ever to return, it appears likely that the state will continue to stress tourism promotion and growth. ♦

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ARTICLE NOTES

1. Rhode Island began marketing itself as "America's First Resort" in the mid-1980s. William J. Donovan, "Advertising, Marketing: State Recasts Image in New Ad Campaign," *Providence Journal* (September 8, 1985): F6. Prior to that time, Rhode Island referred to itself as "America's First Vacationland" in postwar promotional literature.
2. See John F. Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989) and Cindy S. Aron, *Working at Play: A History of Vacations in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).
3. This was the *Atlantic Monthly's* description of the "solid men of business" and their families who summered at Long Beach. Meanwhile, the "tradesmen, mechanics, and workers" took day

trips to Coney Island, then a “desolate strip of barren sandhills and shingly beach [that] offers no attractions beyond that of the surging of the great Atlantic upon its shore.” “Coney Island” (September 1874): 806.

4. The survey publications produced by the Rhode Island Historical Heritage and Preservation Commission, especially those for Block Island, Jamestown, Narragansett Pier, Newport, Tiverton, Warwick, and Westerly, describe the historical and architectural resources of Rhode Island’s shore communities, including their attractions and accommodations for nineteenth- and early twentieth-century tourists. These are available online at <http://www.preservation.ri.gov/survey/publications.php>, accessed July 16, 2016. See also Aron, *Working at Play*, and Bryant F. Tolles, Jr., *Summer by the Seaside: The Architecture of New England Coastal Resort Hotels, 1820–1950* (Lebanon, N.H.: University Press of New England, 2008), 45.

5. See also George H. Kellner and J. Stanley Lemons, *Rhode Island: The Ocean State* (Sun Valley, Ca.: American Historical Press, 2004), 87–92. At first, accommodations and pastimes were often informal. On page 26 of the Warwick, *Rhode Island Statewide Historical Preservation Report K-W-1* (1981), Robert O. Jones, Jr., notes that “farm people from inland areas and mill hands from the valley villages began the practice of traveling on summer weekends to the Warwick shore, where they camped out, bathed in the bay, and dug clams which they cooked and ate on the spot,” <http://focus.nps.gov/pdfhost/docs/nrhp/text/80000079.pdf>, accessed August 22, 2016.

Given the fact that hotels, cottages and lodging houses were soon built to cater to an ever-growing number of summer pleasure seekers, it is difficult to determine how long the practice of camping out on undeveloped tracts of land survived in Rhode Island. However, Aron points out that this type of camping remained popular throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century and into the first decades of the twentieth century, when the practice became known as “auto-camping.”

Many of those at the upper end of the social scale stayed in resort hotels. By the 1850s, Newport guests, for instance, had six major hotels from which to choose; by the 1870s, wealthy summer visitors could also stay in grand hotels located on Block Island

and in Watch Hill, Jamestown, and, especially, Narragansett Pier, where ten new hotels were constructed between 1866 and 1871. See Tolles, *Summer by the Seaside*, as well as the survey publications for these Rhode Island communities.

6. See Alfred Runte, “Promoting the Golden West: Advertising and the Railroad,” *California History* 70 (Spring 1991): 62–75, and John M. Spivack, “Paradise Awaits: A Sampling and Brief Analysis of Late-Nineteenth-Century Promotional Pamphlets on Florida,” *Southern Studies* 21 (Winter 1982): 429–38. For more information on resort hotel promotion of tourist destinations in the 1880s and 1890s, see Tolles, *Summer by the Seaside*, 13.

7. William B. Stronge, *The Sunshine Economy: An Economic History of Florida Since the Civil War* (Gainesville Fla.: University Press of Florida, 2008), 91.

8. See Spivack, “Paradise Awaits”: 429–38; Stronge, *The Sunshine Economy*, 89–91. Tom Zimmerman, “Paradise Promoted: Boosterism and the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce,” *California History* 64 (Winter 1985): 22–33.

9. “Civil Associations Will Boost State,” *Providence Journal* (November 10, 1926): 1, 4.

10. “Says R.I. Profits by Tourist Trade,” *Providence Journal* (Dec. 13, 1929): 3.

11. An Act Providing for the Establishment of a State Bureau of Information in the Office of the Secretary of State, enacted on April 21, 1927. Chapter 1035 of the 1927 Public Laws of Rhode Island. <http://sos.ri.gov/archon/?p=creators/creator&id=597>, accessed November 11, 2015. See also “RI General Assembly Establishes a State Bureau of Information in the Office of the Secretary of State,” *Providence Journal* (April 21, 1927): 4.

Rhode Island’s early promotion of tourism followed a similar path to Virginia’s and North Carolina’s. A number of private groups, including the Virginia State Chamber of Congress, worked throughout the 1920s to encourage visitors to come to Virginia. In 1926, Virginia established a State Commission on Conservation and Development that included a Bureau of Archaeology and History, and the following year it added a Division of Advertising and Publicity. This division was soon producing “travel guides, maps, billboards, pictures, exhibits, radio shows, films, and tours.” It

also initiated a highway marker program to indicate places of historical interest. “Advertising Virginia: Tourism in the Old Dominion in the Twenties and the Great Depression,” *Virginia Cavalcade* 44 (1994): 32.

North Carolina began publishing guides and established a state park system in the 1920s, with state efforts to attract vacationers intensifying after the election of a new governor in 1928 and then with the onset of the Great Depression, which prompted state officials to look for new sources of revenue. Local businessmen formed The Carolinas, Inc. to lobby for the tourist industry, and finally the legislature created a Division of State Advertising within the Department of Conservation and Development in 1937. The new division quickly published a tourist guide, took out advertising space in magazines and newspapers, and produced a documentary film to promote the state. Richard D. Starnes, “Creating a Variety Vacationland: Tourism Development in North Carolina, 1930–1990,” in *Southern Journeys: Tourism, History, and Culture in the Modern South* (Tuscaloosa, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 2003), 138–153.

12. Rhode Island Finance Commissioner Frederick S. Peck quoted in “Fund To Advertise State Advocated: R.I. Conference of Business Associations Votes to Continue Efforts,” *Providence Journal* (April 24, 1930): 21.

13. State Bureau of Information, *Rhode Island: A Little Bit of All Outdoors* (Providence, R.I.: Office of the Secretary of State, 1930) Beside the Bureau of Information publications discussed in this paper, one other tourist publication appeared in 1930: *Summer in Rhode Island, 1930*. While this sixteen-page brochure was distributed by the [Rhode Island] State Bureau of Information as were the others, this one was published by Haley & Sykes Company of Providence, R.I., a printing company that also produced other works of local interest in the early 1930s. These include *Providence Illustrated Guide: A Handbook for Residents and Visitors* (1931), *George Washington and Rhode Island* (1932) and *Thomas Poynton Ives* (1932). All three of these list John Williams Haley as author. Haley was a local historian who hosted a radio show called *The Rhode Island Historian* on WJAR from 1927 to 1953. Since the text is completely different from that used in the official Information Bureau publications in the 1930s, including the three from the same year that *Summer in Rhode*

Island, 1930 appeared, and since some of its photos are attributed to the *Providence Journal* rather than all being provided by the Bureau of Information itself, it seems likely that the booklet is something of an independent project that was supported by the newly formed Information Bureau while it drafted its own publications. Given the fact that the pamphlet lists the state’s chambers of commerce as well as The Automobile Club of Rhode Island—the same organizations that had formed the Rhode Island Conference of Business Associations four years earlier and was still active into the early 1930s, it is likely that this group was also involved in funding—if not drafting—this publication.

14. Rhode Island State Bureau of Information, *Book of Rhode Island* (Providence, R.I.: Remington Press, 1930); Rhode Island State Bureau of Information, *Pleasures and Pleasure Spots in Rhode Island* (Providence, R.I.: Office of the Secretary of State); Rhode Island State Bureau of Information, *Come to Rhode Island for Real Recreation and Hospitality* (Providence, R.I.: Office of the Secretary of State, 1936).

15. Rhode Island State Bureau of Information, *Just a Little Bit of All Out-Doors*, directed by Harry C. Burnham (Providence, R.I.: Office of the Secretary of State, 1930); “Providence Man Describes Thrills of Brazil Jungles,” *Providence Journal* (November 16, 1931): 13.

16. Vacationers have always had relatively free access to the state’s shoreline. Public right of access dates back to the colonial charter of 1663, and was a carry-over from English common law. Later, the same right was included in the Rhode Island Constitution (Article I, Section 17).

For much of Rhode Island’s history, there wasn’t much of a sense of ownership with regard to the beaches, and people had fairly free access to the shoreline, even when the abutting land was in private hands. Towns with beachfronts began to promote them, although the earliest promotional activity, as we have seen, was carried out by those commercial interests that stood to gain directly from tourism—hotels and transportation companies.

It was not until the 1950s that a sense of private ownership began to develop. The case that established the parameters of shoreline public access used today occurred in 1982, with the decision of the State of R.I. v Ibbison (July 20, 1982, 448A.2D728). This case established a way to measure the mean high tide line. <http://law.justia.com/cases/rhode-island/>

supreme-court/1982/448-a-2d-728.html, accessed July 15, 2016. Meanwhile, towns joined the state in establishing public beaches, making shoreline access even easier. Janet Freedman (R. I. Coastal Management Council), interview with author, July 15, 2016.

17. Tania Anne Woloshyn, “Our Friend, the Sun: Images of Light Therapeutics from the Osler Library Collection, c.1901–1944,” booklet accompanying Osler Library of the History of Medicine exhibition, January to June 2011, Montreal: McGill University. <https://www.mcgill.ca/library/files/library/osler-ourfriendsun.pdf>, accessed November 29, 2015. See also Simon Carter, *Rise and Shine: Sunlight, Technology and Health* (Oxford, GBR: Berg Publishers, 2007), ProQuest ebrary. Web. Accessed November 29, 2015.

18. These statements appear on one of the final (inter)title cards in *Rhode Island: Just a Little Bit of All Out-Doors*.

19. *Working at Play*, 132.

20. Sears discusses several of these popular nineteenth-century natural attractions. In addition to those already mentioned in the text, early visitors also traveled to the Connecticut and Hudson River Valleys; later in the century they ventured west to Yosemite Valley and Yellowstone.

21. David Glassberg, *American Historical Pageantry: The Uses of Tradition in the Early Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 30–33. See also Teresa Bergman, *Exhibiting Patriotism: Creating and Contesting Interpretations of American Historic Sites* (Walnut Creek, Calif.: Left Coast Press, 2013).

As historians Dona Brown and Stephen Nissenbaum have observed, tourists visiting New England in the early twentieth century were often attracted to “the ‘colonial’ architecture of the old seaport towns [that] symbolized a return to a world where the order, stability, and hierarchy they associated with the past still held sway—a place where their own ancestors had held unchallenged authority and where working people had been deferential and contented.” “Changing New England: 1865–1945,” in William H. Truettner and Roger B. Stein, eds., *Picturing Old New England: Image and Memory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 5.

22. *Pleasures and Pleasure Spots in Rhode Island*, 6.

23. See, for example, *Come to Rhode Island for Real Recreation and Hospitality*, 31, 33.

24. *Pleasures and Pleasure Spots in Rhode Island*, 5, 15, and inter(title) cards from *Rhode Island: Just a Little Bit of All Out-Doors*.

25. “The Great Depression in Newport,” *Newport History* 58 (Spring 1985): 47.

26. *Working at Play*, 244.

27. Kellner and Lemons, *Rhode Island: The Ocean State*, 129.

28. *Providence Evening Bulletin* (September 26, 1938): 7; Christopher Janus, “New England Ready” (May 21, 1939): “Newport Season Begins,” XX–1; (June 16, 1940): XX–13. In display ads placed in the *New York Times* throughout the spring and summer of 1939, the Rhode Island Secretary of State’s Office avoided any mention of the effects of the hurricane at all in its appeal to the New York market. Instead, it emphasized the state’s safe highways, seafood, boating, summer theater, affordable prices and convenient distance from New York City. (June 19, 1939): 23; (June 23, 1939): 31; (July 3, 1939): 4; (July 10, 1939): 22; (July 24, 1939): 15.

29. *Official Guide Book of the New York World’s Fair 1939* (New York: Expositions Publications, Inc., 1939), 163.

30. Winston Phelps, “R.I. Ready to Greet Summer Vacationists,” *Providence Journal* (June 25, 1939): S2. Display advertisements in the *New York Times* (June 2, 1938): 18 and (July 3, 1939): 4.

31. “Providence Goes Into Movies and Will be Featured as ‘Star’ at Home and Abroad,” *Providence Journal* (December 4, 1921): S5: 4; *Annual Report, 1959* (Providence, R.I.: Rhode Island Development Council, 1959): 20. See also Lawrence M. Howard, “Tourist Worth Bothering With?” *Providence Bulletin*, (May 6, 1965): 19.

32. Phelps, “R.I. Ready to Greet Summer Vacationists,” S2.

33. J. Earl Clauson, “These Plantations” (January 20, 1937): 2 and Edward J. Kelly, (July 20, 1941): II: 2.

34. One might expect that the federal government would have discouraged unnecessary travel during the war. However, on page 222 of “Travel Strengthens America?” Tourism

- Promotion in the United States during the Second World War,” published in *Journal of Tourism History* 3 (November 2011), Canadian historian Michael Dawson writes that “vacation travel was neither forbidden nor encouraged by [federal] government officials.” Focusing primarily upon the state of Washington, Dawson notes that state officials were anxious to continue to bring in visitors because they had begun to recognize the economic importance of tourism. State promotional campaigns in Washington and elsewhere were “not only remarkably successful in securing guests but also faced little in the way of opposition from federal authorities.” Dawson is basing his statement upon an account provided by Ward Allan Howe in “War Burden Limits Rail Facilities,” *New York Times* (June 13, 1943): SR5. If the U.S. government didn’t actively promote wartime tourism itself, its “ambiguous assessment of wartime tourism helped to create political space for continued state promotional campaigns.” (Dawson, 221, 235.)
35. Information about newspaper advertising, radio commercials, and distribution of state map and booklets reported in “R.I. Bids Tourists, but in a Weak Voice,” *Providence Journal* (July 20, 1941): II: 2.
36. Popp, “‘Domesticating Vacations’: Gender, Travel, and Consumption in Post-War Magazines,” *Journalism History* 36 (Fall 2010): 130.
37. Diane Barthel, *Putting on Appearances: Gender and Advertising* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988), Alice E. Courtney and Sarah Wernick Lockeretz, *A Woman’s Place: An Analysis of Roles Portrayed by Women in Print Advertising* (Cambridge, Mass.: Marketing Science Institute, 1970).
38. When Ercan Sirakaya and Sevil Sönmez examined late-twentieth-century state tourism brochures, they found that women were visually depicted as subordinate to men even in promotional literature distributed at the end of the century. “Gender Images in State Tourism Brochures: An Overlooked Area in Socially Responsible Tourism Marketing,” *Journal of Travel Research* 38 (May 2000): 353–363.
39. Susan Sessions Rugh, *Are We There Yet? The Golden Age of American Family Vacations* (Lawrence, Kans.: University of Kansas Press, 2008), 69. A number of historians have described the prohibitions against using accommodations and facilities in the South throughout the first half of the twentieth century. These include Mia Bay, “Traveling Black/Buying Black,” in Mia Bay and Ann Fabian, eds., *Race and Retail: Consumption across the Color Line* (New Brunswick, N. J.: Rutgers University Press, 2015), 20–26; Meagan Kathleen Monahan, “‘The Green Book’: A Representation of the Black Middle Class and Its Resistance to Jim Crow through Entrepreneurship and Respectability,” undergraduate honors thesis, College of William and Mary, 2013 (Paper 562 <http://publish.wm.edu/honorstheses/562>, accessed November 6, 2015), and Gretchen Sullivan Sorin. “Keep Going: African Americans on the Road in the Era of Jim Crow,” Ph.D. diss., University of Albany, 2009.
- The State of Rhode Island passed civil rights legislation in 1885 guaranteeing access to public conveyances, and licensed inns and places of amusement regardless of “race, color or previous condition of servitude,” Irving H. Bartlett, *From Slave to Citizen: The Story of the Negro in Rhode Island* (Providence, R.I.: Urban League of Greater Providence, 1954), 63. “An Act to Secure All Persons within the State Their Civil Rights” was enacted on April 25, 1885. Chapter 508 of the 1885 Public Laws of Rhode Island.
- Nevertheless, as late as the 1950s and 1960s, African Americans were still being discouraged from patronizing some hotels, motels, motor courts, nightclubs and restaurants in the state—and even explicitly denied service in some of them. See James N. Rhea, “Attitude toward Negroes Gradually Changing Here,” *Providence Journal* (December 13, 1950): 11; and James N. Rhea, “Jim Crow at Home—No. 2: Jobs: ‘No Room for Complacency,’” *Providence Journal* (May 28, 1956): 1, 15.
40. Aron, *Working at Play*, 214.
41. At least a half-dozen different publications aimed at African-American travelers were available in the years prior to the Civil Rights legislation of the 1960s: they included *Smith’s Tourist Guide of Necessary Information for Businessman, Tourist, Traveler and Vacationist*; *The Travelers Guide: Hotels, Apartments, Rooms, Meals, Garage Accommodations, Etc. for Colored Travelers*; *The Go Guide to Pleasant Motoring*; and *The Negro Travel Guide*. Most were short-lived; the most widely circulated, with the longest run, was the *Negro Motorist’s Green Book* (1937–66), which later became the *Negro Traveler’s Green Book*, then the *Travelers’ Green Book* and finally the *Green Book Guide for Travel and Vacations*. Sorin, *Keep Going*, 132.
42. The New York Public Library has digitized its collection of issues of *The Negro Motorist Green Book*. They are available online at <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/collections/the-green-book>, accessed October 2, 2016. The number of Rhode Island accommodations it listed was highest in the 1941 issue, with seven tourist homes and two hotels, available in Newport and Providence. By 1962, the list had dwindled down to two lodging places, one in Newport and one in Providence.
- In “The Celebrity Club: Social Change in Postwar Providence,” Jason McGill observes that changes in the long-time segregation of public venues “were limited by the powerful prevailing tradition of racial discrimination” in the state. It would not be until the 1960s that the civil rights movement would bring about “important, if gradual and piecemeal, alterations in our social attitudes and customs.” *Rhode Island History* 63 (Summer 2005): 44, 46.
43. See “An Act to Secure All Persons within the State Their Civil Rights” (1885).
44. See Jacob Barry, “Claiming a Piece of the American Dream: African American Vacationers in New England, 1930–1964,” an online exhibition produced in conjunction with the Portsmouth Black Heritage Trail, <http://www.historicnewengland.org/collections-archives-exhibitions/online-exhibitions/claiming-a-piece-of-the-american-dream-african-american-tourism-in-new-england-1930-1964>, accessed May 8, 2016. See also Aron, *Working at Play*, 215–16. For over fifty years Shearer Cottage on Martha’s Vineyard welcomed black lodgers, many of whom later bought their own cottages nearby. Jacqueline L. Holland, “The African-American Presence on Martha’s Vineyard,” *The Dukes County Intelligencer* 3, n (August 1991): 21–22. Sorin notes three principal resort locations catering to African Americans in the Jim Crow era: American Beach in Florida, Idlewild in northwestern Michigan, and Oak Bluffs on Martha’s Vineyard (*Keep Going*, 84).
45. All quotations are from *Rhode Island for Your Wartime Vacation*, (Providence, R.I., prepared and distributed by Armand H. Cote, Secretary of State, 1944). The pages of this booklet are not numbered.
46. *Rhode Island for a Real Vacation*, prepared and distributed by the Office of the Secretary of State (Providence, R.I., 1940), pages unnumbered.
47. *Rhode Island for a Real Vacation*.
48. Kellner and Lemons, *Rhode Island: The Ocean State*, 89.
49. *Rhode Island for Real Recreation and Hospitality* (1936), 12. *Pleasures and Pleasure Spots in Rhode Island* does provide an aerial shot of Rocky Point on page 28, captioned “Rocky Point, one of Rhode Island’s popular amusement parks, where clam bakes are served.” *Summer in Rhode Island*, 1930 observes on page 7 that “Rocky Point and Crescent Park, amusement resorts on Narragansett Bay, Island Park, near Tiverton, and Newport Beach are noted for their huge dining halls and ‘bakes’ where thousands enjoy these sumptuous banquets.”
50. Edward J. Kelley, “R.I. Bids Tourists, but in a Weak Voice,” *Providence Bulletin* (June 18, 1951): II: 2.
51. The Rhode Island Development Council was created per 1951 Public Law Chapter 2732. <http://sos.ri.gov/archon/index.php?p=creators/creator&id=207>, accessed October 9, 2016.
52. Popp, “‘Domesticating Vacations,’” 134.
53. Source of this image: Development Council photographs, R.I. Department of Economic Development, available via the R.I. State Archives Catalog. <http://sos.ri.gov/archon/index.php?p=digitallibrary/digitalcontent&id=333>, accessed August 14, 2016.
54. Dieter Hammerschlag, Brian K. Barber, and J. Michael Everett, *Interstate Highway System and Urban Structures: A Force for Change in Rhode Island* (Planning Division, R.I. Dept. of Transportation, July 1976), 7.
55. “At midcentury, the domestic [auto] industry set an all-time record in churning out 6.6 million passenger vehicles alone, a figure the industry would match or exceed with regularity during the 1950s.” Mark S. Foster, *A Nation on Wheels: The Automobile Culture in America since 1945* (Belmont, Ca.: Wadsworth/Thompson Learning, 2003), 44. Originally, I-195 was to link with I-84 to continue west to Hartford, Connecticut; however, this western portion of roadway through Rhode Island was never upgraded to interstate standards and remains a state highway. Interstate-Guide.com. http://www.interstate-guide.com/i-195_ma_ri.html, accessed October 27, 2016.
- According to state officials, the Hopkinton booth would “eventually be replaced by a permanent information center ... [and was] the forerunner of others to be placed on main tourist routes into Rhode Island.” “Tourist Data Booth Opens in Hopkinton,” *Providence Bulletin* (June 20, 1966): 29; “95 Complete Across State,” *Providence Bulletin* (November 19, 1969): 53. A third interstate highway, I-295, traversed the western sections of the Providence metropolitan area, permitting motorists to detour around the city’s center.
56. Kellner and Lemons, *The Ocean State*, 183.
57. *Technology in Postwar America: A History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 110. This content downloaded from 158.121.247.60 on October 29, 2016. “One ubiquitous result of the postwar ‘family’ car and the freeway network was the family vacation,” according to history of technology scholar Carroll Pursell. In the 1950s, automobile ownership climbed above prewar levels and the interstate highway system bound the nation together from coast to coast.
58. “Big Boost Seen Possible In R.I. Vacation Income: Recreation Chief Seeks to Awaken Residents to Opportunity to Bolster State’s Economy,” *Providence Sunday Journal* (May 25, 1952): I: 1, 24. See also J. Stanton Robbins, *Preliminary Report and Recommendations to the Rhode Island Development Council for Increasing Employment and Income from the Recreation and Tourist Industry and Generally Benefitting the State* (New York: Stanton Robbins & Co., Inc., January 1, 1953). This report is available in the archives of the Tourism Division of the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation, Providence R.I.
59. “Police Seal Off Newport as 12,000 Riot at Fete,” *Providence Sunday Journal* (July 3, 1960): 1, 6.
60. John S. Wilson, “Newport Jazz Festival Closed Because of Rioting,” *New York Times* (July 4, 1960): 1. Newport Jazz Festival had begun six years earlier, in 1954 and it would continue every summer through 1971, moving to New York City in 1972. It returned to Newport in 1981 and has been a major tourist draw since then. See, for instance, Ben Ratliff, “50 Years Later, Newport Swings with ‘Real Jazz,’” *New York Times* (August 17, 2004): E1.
- The Newport Folk Festival is an equally popular summer attraction; it held its first event in late July of 1959 and continued annually for about a decade. Like the Jazz Festival, it left Newport in 1972, returning in 1981. See Ronald D. Cohen, *A History of Folk Music Festivals in the United States: Feasts of Musical Celebration*; American Folk Music and Musicians Series, No. 11 (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2008). Today, these two summer festivals are considered “perennials” of tourism events in Newport, along with the Hall of Fame Tennis Championships. “Newport’s Tourism Forecast,” *Providence Journal* (June 16, 2013): Business Section: Edit 01.
61. *Rhode Island Development Council, Annual Report—1960* (Providence, R.I., Rhode Island Development Council), 24. Available in the Tourism Division archives at Rhode Island Commerce Corporation.
62. Lawrence M. Howard, “‘First Vacationland’ Is Last in N.E.” (May 5, 1963): N1, 44.
63. Robbins’s findings and recommendations were largely echoed in 1964 by another study conducted by Don Short, a New York tourism consultant. See “R.I. Tourism: Much to Be Done,” *Providence Evening Bulletin* (January 7, 1967): 3. See also the Short study, *Survey of Tourism in the State of Rhode Island* (New York: Development Counsellors International Ltd, c. 1965). It concluded that “tourism presents the promise of a sound basic factor in the state’s economic future...” (iii). This report is located in the Tourism Division archives at the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation. A 1978 study released by Lt. Governor Thomas R. DiLuglio found that “The state [needs] to do more to lure tourists,” according to the *Providence Evening Bulletin* headline announcing the results of the report on July 27, 1978: A1, A16.

64. Donald D. Breed, "R.I. Tourism Growing despite General Apathy" (February 13, 1972): 1–14.
65. *Rhode Island Department of Economic Development, Annual Report—1974–75* (Providence, R.I.: Rhode Island Department of Economic Development), 18–27. Available in the Tourism Division archives at Rhode Island Commerce Corporation.
66. *Rhode Island Department of Economic Development, Annual Report—1974–75*, 18–27.
67. Stephen P. Morin, "Rhode Island Blues Aren't Going Away, But Summer Is Nice," *Wall Street Journal* (June 28, 1983): 1, 21.
68. Felice J. Freyer, "They Love Rhode Island," *Providence Journal* (June 30, 1985): E1, E4.
69. *Governor's Conference on Tourism: A Summary Report* (April 20, 1983): 27. This report is available in the Rhode Island State Library.
70. William J. Donovan, "DiPrete Gets 'Plus' on Business Climate," *Providence Journal* (April 24, 1990): B–01.
71. M. Charles Bakst, "TV Ads Seek New York City Tourists," *Providence Journal* (February 25, 1987): A15. When the commercial was developed by Duffy & Shanley in 1987, enough footage was shot to make it possible to prepare two more ads later on, and also to prepare a six-minute promotional video to distribute to travel agents, tour operators, and convention planners in the U.S. and abroad. The cinematographer for the project was Providence-based Brian Heller, known as "New England's most omnipresent Aerial Director of Photography," who also created the tracking shots for the NBC TV series *Providence* (1999–2002). http://www.imagenews.com/Archive/2000/MAY_2000/Text/FEATo6.htm, accessed July 18, 2007.
72. "Tourist Data Booth Opens in Hopkinton," *Providence Journal* (June 20, 1966): 29. "Tourism Is a Winner," *Providence Journal* (July 6, 1994): F1.
73. In 1986, only six districts were designated. The Greater Providence-Warwick Convention and Visitors' Bureau and the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council were added later. Marilyn Lewis, "Small Businesses Will Profit Most from Hotel Tax," *Providence Journal* (August 25, 1986): C-01. See also Karima A. Haynes, "The Tourists Are Coming! The Tourists Are Coming!" *Providence Journal* (May 22, 1988): A1; and "Marketing R.I. Tourism," *Providence Journal* (December 4, 2003): B4.
74. A specialist in environmental and natural resource economics, Professor Tyrrell taught at the University of Rhode Island from 1978 to 2005.
75. Tyrrell, *Rhode Island Travel and Tourism Research Report* (Office of Travel, Tourism and Recreation, Department of Resource Economics, University of Rhode Island, August 30, 1995) 12:3, 3–4. Available in the R.I. Tourism Division archives.
76. See Robert Stickler, "Many Strikeouts, Some Hits Involved in Selling of R.I.," *Providence Journal* (September 3, 1978): F1, 12. It appears that Rhode Island's Department of Economic Development later decided to find another company to handle their advertising account soon after Horton, Church & Howe merged with Creamer, Inc. in 1981. At the time of the merger, the firm lost a number of its accounts. Gwynne Morgan, "Creamer/NE 'Bullish' despite Departures," *Providence Journal* (April 18, 1982): F–08.
77. Steve Maurano (former public relations specialist at Duffy & Stanley), interview with author, Providence College, December 11, 2015.
78. See, for instance, *Duffy and Shanley Selected Presentation Highlights* (June 10, 1994) in the R.I. Tourism Division archives. By the turn of the new century, the firm would begin defining the state's tourism market based upon PRIZM social categories coming into wide use by marketers. The greatest proportion of the state's potential tourists, according to the advertising agency, conformed to the characteristics of "Elite Suburbs," followed by "Landed Gentry," "Urban Uptown," and "The Affluentials." See, for example, *Rhode Island Travel Barometer 2000* (Washington, D.C., Research Department of the Travel Industry of America, July 2001), available in the Tourism Division archives. In Rhode Island's case, these rather broad categories of people with above-average financial assets were comprised largely of families, professional couples, and retired people—not too different from the "families" and "sophisticates" that consultants had highlighted earlier.
79. Duffy and Shanley, *Selected Presentation Highlights*, 1994.
80. Rhode Island Tourism Division, *America's First Resort* (Providence, R.I.: Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation, ca. 2000).
81. R.I. Economic Development Corporation created per 1995 Public Law Chapter 370 (95-H-6786A amended, Approved August 7, 1995 — AN ACT MAKING APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE SUPPORT OF THE STATE FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 1996) Article 12 which abolished the Department of Economic Development. <http://sos.ri.gov/archon/index.php?p=creators/creator&id=284>, accessed October 9, 2016; Yanity, "If You Spend, They Will Come—Tourism Industry Says State Needs to Invest More," *Providence Journal* (March 4, 2003): E1; Andy Smith, "Tourism: Piecemeal Strategy," *Providence Journal* (June 24, 2012): A1.
82. Mark Brodeur and David DePetrillo (current and former Directors of Tourism, respectively), interview with the author, RI Commerce Corporation, July 28, 2014.
83. William J. Donovan, "Tourism brings \$2 billion to R.I.," *Providence Journal* (May 8, 1998): F1. "R.I. Tourism Worth \$5 Billion to Economy," *Providence Journal* (May 15, 2008): F1.
84. "Report Touts Providence Tourism Boom," *Providence Journal* (April 4, 2002): B-03. This article reports on a study entitled, "Safeguarding the Providence Renaissance in the Post-September 11th Era," commissioned by the Cianci administration to determine the impact of 9/11 upon the city's economy.
85. Providence Warwick Convention and Visitors Bureau website. <http://www.goprovidence.com/things-to-do/waterfire-providence/>, accessed January 2, 2016.
86. Chris Barrett, "Fight for Travelers Is Now on the Web," posted: Monday, May 10, 2010 6:24 am, http://pbn.com/detail.html?sub_id=2791dac1c5do, accessed November 19, 2015.
87. According to the *Providence Journal*, in 1998 tourism officials began to "sell ads to pay for the state's official, magazine-style travel guide. By 2003, budget cuts meant the entire \$400,000 price tag [for producing the travel guide] was being covered by private companies." Benjamin N. Gegan, "R.I. Map on a Tight Path—Financing for State's Official Map Takes a New Route," (December 20, 2007): F-01.
88. The 1987 *Visitors Guide* stitched together a listing of approximately 250 guest houses, cottages, motels, motor lodges, motor courts, inns, tourist homes, bed-and-breakfasts, camp grounds, trailer courts, and hostels throughout the state, apparently including every lodging place in the state and making "no attempt to grade them." (p. 68) Only a dozen of these accommodations were chain-affiliated; the rest were local, independently operated businesses. By 2016, the state could be more selective and still list substantially more accommodations in its *Travel Guide* than was the case three decades earlier, recommending over four-hundred places to stay, many of which were now chain hotels and motels; at the same time, the number of bed-and-breakfasts and boutique hotels had expanded considerably and become more upscale. [Rhode Island] Tourist Promotion Division, 1987 *Visitors Guide* (Providence, R.I.: R.I. Department of Economic Development, 1987) Rhode Island Tourism Division, *Official 2016 Travel Guide* (Providence, R.I.: R.I. Monthly Communications, Inc., 2016).
89. Based upon figures compiled by Travel Industry Association of America (2001) and cited in Timothy J. Dallen, *Shopping Tourism, Retailing and Leisure* (Clevedon GBR, Channel View Publications, 2005), 70. ProQuest ebrary, accessed December 31, 2015.
90. World Tourism Organization, *Global Report on Shopping Tourism AM Reports*, Volume 8 (Madrid, UNWTO, 2014); http://dtxqtq4w6oxqpw.cloudfront.net/sites/all/files/pdf/am9-shopping-report_v2.pdf, accessed on January 2, 2016.
91. *Wine, Food, and Tourism Marketing* (Binghamton, N.Y.: Haworth Hospitality Press, 2003), xiii.
92. Rhode Island Tourism Division, *Official 2015 Travel Guide* (Providence, R.I.: R.I. Monthly Communications, Inc.), 3.
93. *Official 2015 Travel Guide*, 4.
94. In examining the yearly travel guides from 1999 to 2015, it appears that the guides have featured food and shopping in some years but not others. The listings sections are variously titled as "Lodging, Dining and Fun," "Lodging, Shopping and Fun," "Where to Eat, Stay, Shop and Play," and "Play, Stay & Eat." The *Official 2016 Travel Guide* has dispensed with this listing altogether, highlighting a few attractions in a one-page "See & Do" section and then grouping all the rest of its listings in a catch-all "Experience Block Island" (or "Experience Bristol County," etc.) section. The listings are grouped under such categories as "Arts and Culture," "Great Outdoors," "Heritage," "Stay," and the like.
95. A number of historians have documented this shift. They include Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), and Mike Wallace, *Mickey Mouse History and Other Essays on American Memory* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996).
96. *Official 2015 Travel Guide*, 25, 70; *Official 2016 Travel Guide*, 31; *Official 2015 R.I. Travel Guide*, 3.
97. *Official 2016 R.I. Travel Guide*, 7.
98. See, for example, Smith, "Tourism: Piecemeal Strategy": A1.
99. ISH Consulting, *Rhode Island Tourism 2013* (ISH, Inc., 2014). PowerPoint report, slide 30. <https://www.visitrhodeisland.com/admin/brscms/myuserfiles/file/RITSA2013StateReport.pdf>, accessed December 16, 2015. While tourism is part of a nationwide shift from industry to a service economy, tourism is not measured in standard economic accounting terms, the way that, for example, jewelry or textile manufacturing, Rhode Island's longtime industrial drivers, would be. Consequently, it is difficult to determine with precision just how much "tourism" contributes to the economy. "In an effort to measure the importance of tourism to the Rhode Island labor market," therefore, "the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training has defined a Leisure, Hospitality and Tourism industry cluster. This cluster includes all industries that are heavily dependent on tourists and tourist-related activities." R.I. Department of Labor and Training, *Leisure, Hospitality and Tourism in the Ocean State* (Crans-ton, R.I., R.I. Department of Labor & Training, Labor Market Information Unit, October 2007), 3. <http://www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/pdf/tourism.pdf>, accessed November 2, 2015.
100. <http://sos.ri.gov/archon/index.php?p=creators/creator&id=463>, accessed October 9, 2016.
101. "Selling Rhode Island" (March 12, 2015): 16.
102. Kate Bramson, "Tourism — 3 Firms Picked to Put 'R.I. on Map' Aim Is to Create a Compelling Message to Attract People to Visit, Do Business and Live in Rhode Island," *Providence Journal* (September 30, 2015): 1; Patricia Daddona, "State Picks Three Firms to Create, Disseminate New R.I. Branding," *Providence Business News*, posted September 30, 2015, 9:21 pm. <http://pbn.com/State-picks-three-firms-to-create-disseminate-new-RI-brand-campaign,109204?>, accessed January 5, 2016. The three companies were Milton Glaser, Inc.; Havas PR North America; and Epic Decade. By mid-2016 only Havas PR North America and Epic Decade were retained by the state.
103. Kate Bramson, "Creator of the 'I Love NY' Logo Sees R.I. as Hip, Friendly," *Providence Journal* (March 29, 2016): 6. Rhode Island Commerce Corporation did not grant permission for an image of the "Cooler & Warmer" logo to appear in this article.
104. Edward Fitzpatrick, "Raimondo Tone Deaf on 'Rhode Iceland,'" *Providence Journal* (April 3, 2016): 1. The "Cooler & Warmer" story was picked up by all the local and regional media and was even featured in the *New York Times* and on *CBS Evening News*.
105. Gregory Smith, "Summer Tourism — Destination, R.I.," *Providence Journal* (July 7, 2016): 1.
106. Katherine Gregg, Patrick Anderson and Jennifer Bogdan, "Legislators Backing Tax Break for Retirees—\$9-billion Budget Plan on Way to Finance Committee but No Vote Was Taken Late Last Night," *Providence Journal* (June 8, 2016): 1.



“An Unclean Person” or “A Fit Candidate for a Church Member”: Kingston Pease and Northern Baptist Churches

RICHARD J. BOLES

AT DIFFERENT POINTS IN THE LATE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, predominantly white Baptist churches in Newport and New York City described African-American Kingston Pease in a wide variety of ways. He was called, on the one hand, “our Black Brother” and “a fit candidate for a Church member.” On the other hand, he was derided as a “Heathen Man, and an Adulterer or Fornicator,” “An Unclean Person,” and a “poor man.” How could one individual be all these things? The Second Baptist Church of Newport dramatically changed its opinion of Pease when he professed a desire to marry a white woman, Ann Mackumber, with whom he had cohabitated. This man’s story and his interactions with predominantly white Baptist churches illuminate important realities about race relations in northern churches, Baptist church admittance and discipline practices, and relationships among autonomous Baptist congregations. ¶

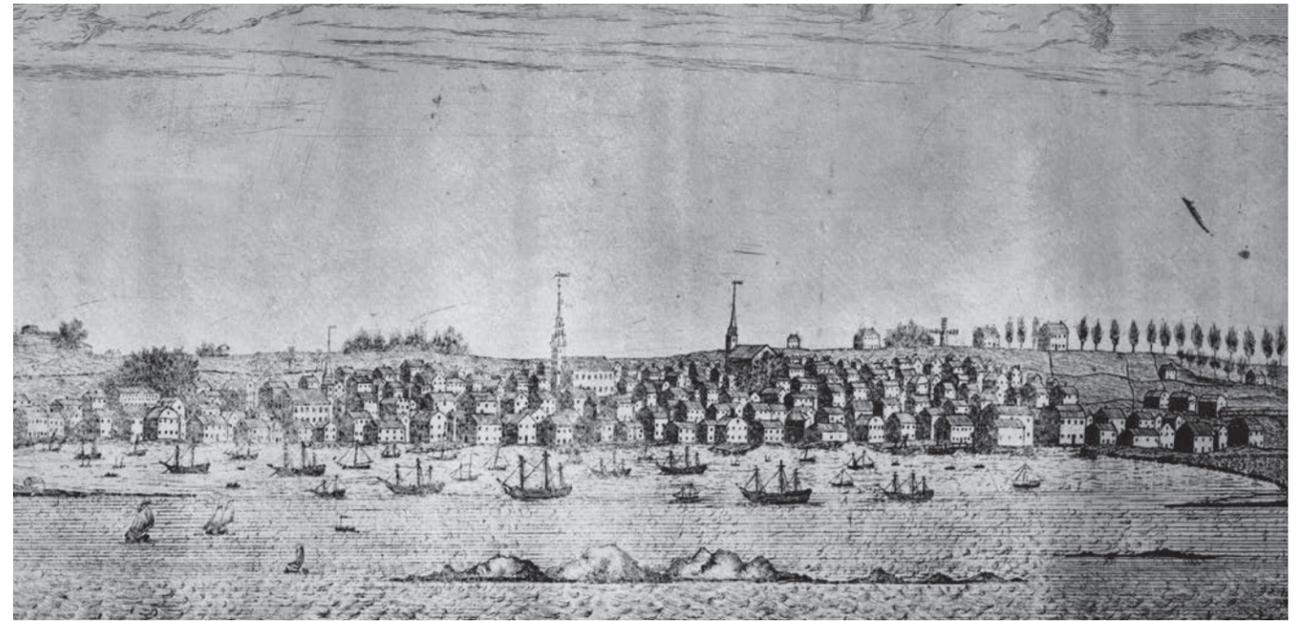
The Second Congregational Church in Newport admitted both enslaved and free African Americans to membership in its congregation in the eighteenth century. The church was built in 1735 and renovated in 1785. Historic American Buildings Survey, Creator, Cotton Palmer, Central Baptist Society, and Ezra Stiles. *Second Congregational Church, 13–17 Clarke Street, Newport, Newport County, RI*. Documentation Compiled After 1933. Pdf retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/r10076/>. (Accessed January 27, 2017).

The circumstances of this case, in fact, provide an exceptional perspective on some of the rarely stated assumptions held by northern Baptists.¹ The transcriptions of two documents from the Newport Historical Society archives are included at the end of this essay because they are unique in shedding light upon northern racism and politics in Baptist churches.

Kingston Pease (sometimes spelled Pees, Peas, or Peares) was a member of the Second Baptist Church of Newport, Rhode Island, but he was certainly not the first black member of this mostly white congregation.² The church's record book states that in May 1769 "Kingston Peares Negro" was baptized and became a member. Although the spelling of the last name differs from later church records, this is likely the same person. Founded in the middle of the seventeenth century, when members withdrew from the First Baptist Church of Newport, the Second Baptist Church was a Six Principle Baptist congregation and their meetinghouse was located on the corner of Farewell and North Baptist streets in the eighteenth century. This church admitted black people to membership at least as early as 1736. Ten people of African ancestry and three Native Americans were baptized and admitted to this church in the 1730s and 1740s. Between 1766 and 1776, according to the Reverend Gardner Thurston's record book and the church records, this congregation

baptized and admitted to membership twenty black persons. The records do not generally state whether these people were enslaved or free, but some were undoubtedly enslaved when they joined the church. Nine more African Americans were admitted between 1780 and 1800, and some blacks were still joining this church into the 1820s. Baptist churches did not baptize infants, so most people were baptized at the same time they were approved by the congregation to be admitted to membership.³

In all likelihood, Kingston Pease was born into slavery in the colonies or was brought as a slave to Rhode Island. Merchants, sailors, and sea captains from Newport, Rhode Island, played a major role in the international slave trade, and most black people living in Rhode Island before the American Revolution were enslaved. In 1755, roughly a quarter of Newport's population was enslaved, and most of them were of African descent. Kingston Pease's name also suggests that he had been a slave, since town names were often given as first names to slaves (Newport Gardner and Salem Poor, for example). It was a common practice for Rhode Island slaves to use their master's or former master's last name, so Kingston seems to have been a slave of wealthy merchant and slave trader Simon Pease. Kingston likely gained his freedom after Simon's death in 1769.⁴

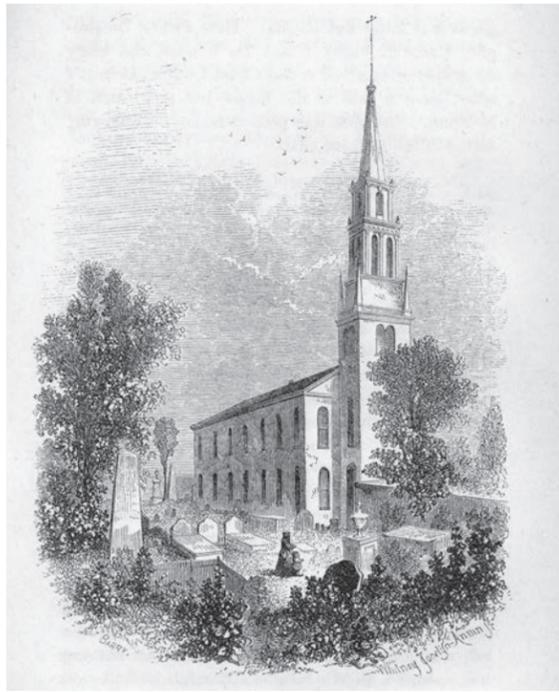


Kingston Pease lived in Newport, R. I. until late 1789. "A south-west view of Newport." Engraving by Samuel King. The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Print Collection, The New York Public Library. New York Public Library Digital Collections. Accessed May 25, 2016. <http://digitalcollections.nysl.org/items/510d47d9-7b1d-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>.

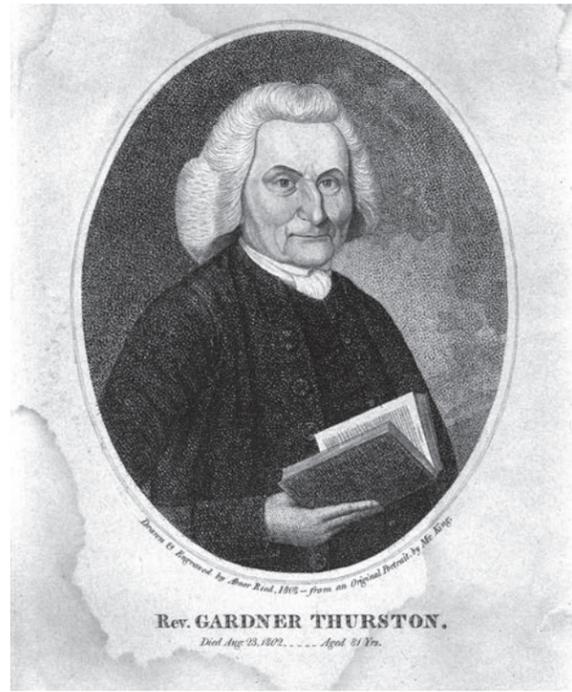
Second Baptist Church of Newport resembled other types of churches in Newport and northern Baptist churches generally in baptizing and admitting to membership numerous black persons. Newport's two Congregational churches and Trinity Anglican Church baptized substantial numbers of black people to membership in the late eighteenth century. Trinity Church baptized far more African Americans than any of Newport's Baptist or Congregational churches. In the 1760s and 1770s, black people were admitted to many northern Baptist churches, including the First Baptist Church of Boston, Mass., the Seventh Day Baptist Church of Newport, R.I., the First Baptist Church of Providence, R.I., the Baptist Church of Upper Freehold, N.J., and the Baptist Church of Scotch Plains, N.J. The number of northern Baptist churches that admitted African Americans increased after the 1770s as they began joining other churches such as the Second Baptist Church of Boston, Mass., the Baptist Church in Tiverton, R.I., the First Sabbatarian Baptist Church of Hopkinton, R.I., the First Baptist Church of North Kingstown, R.I., the Baptist Church in Exeter, R.I., the First Baptist Church in the City of New York, and the Mount Moriah Baptist Church in Smithfield, Pa.⁵

Pease remained a member in good standing of the Second Baptist Church of Newport for more than a decade, but difficulties with this

church began for him in the winter of 1781. At the church meeting on February 1, 1781, the male church members (female church members apparently did not vote in church meetings at this point in time) agreed to order "Kingston Pees a Black Brother to appear at our next Church Meeting to account for his Conduct on Account of his keeping Company with a White Girl and Wanting to Marry her contrary to the Distinctions God has Made."⁶ Although most members of this Baptist church believed that God made all people in his image, that all humans were descendants of Adam and Eve, and that salvation through faith in Jesus Christ was open to all people without distinction, they still maintained that unequal and divinely created "distinctions" (including race) divided groups of people on earth. For at least many of these white Baptists, Kingston Pease made a serious error and sinned by associating with and wanting to marry a "White Girl," Ann Mackumber. While the church members accepted Pease as a Christian brother, they felt that his relationship with a white woman was "contrary to the Distinctions



Left: In the late eighteenth century, Newport was home to many enslaved and free African Americans. Some became members of churches there, including Trinity Church, an Anglican congregation. Trinity Church, engraving, Whitney, Jocelyn and Annin, N.Y., 1845. (RHI X17 2828).



Right: Rev. Gardner Thurston served as pastor at the Second Baptist Church in Newport during the controversy over the membership of Kingston Pease. Engraving by Abner Reed, 1808, from Graphics Collection at the Rhode Island Historical Society, Portrait Scrapbook, p. 118. (RHI X17 2827).

God had Made.” There were strong cultural proscriptions against interracial marriages in this era, but the Rhode Island legislature did not formally outlaw marriages between whites and blacks or whites and Indians until 1798.⁷

Pease appeared at the March 1st meeting as directed, but he was not prepared to accept the majority’s opinion about his personal relationship. In an unusually detailed manner, which is suggestive of the tense nature of this meeting, the session minutes note that “17 Male Members, 6 of them black” were present at the meeting where Pease faced the accusations of misconduct. What portion of these black members objected to Pease’s relationship with Ann Mackumber is unclear, but the clerk felt compelled to note the attendance of six black male church members. The clerk also stated that Pease “did not appear in any Shape to be convinced of any Error in keeping Company with a White Girl,

& wanting to Marry her; Moreover he seem’d rather to blame his Brethren than himself.” Perhaps Pease’s attempt to “blame” others was his way of suggesting that white church members were being hypocritical by calling him a “brother,” but censoring this relationship. A church member who acknowledged a charge against himself without being repentant was often quickly disowned by churches in this era. It is surprising that the church did not immediately excommunicate Pease who was unrepentant and accusatory. However, the male church members decided to allow more time for Pease to consider his actions and respond to the church’s objection to his relationship.⁸

Most predominantly white American churches in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries did not allow black members to vote in church meetings, but some eighteenth-century Baptist churches in New England allowed black people and/or women to vote in church affairs on occasion. In the records of the Second Baptist Church, there is evidence that black members voted. The normal meeting minutes do not include details about who voted or individual votes, but minutes from an 1800 meeting, where the male members were divided, lists individual people and their votes. On October 30, 1800, “Prince Almey Negro” was noted

as one of six men who voted against a change in how ministers were selected, which had the support of eleven members.⁹ Black male members may have had a vote in how Kingston Pease was treated by his church in 1781.

Something changed Pease’s demeanor by the March 28th church meeting. Perhaps he experienced condescension from friends and strangers, or maybe sympathetic persons gently sought to persuade him to repent for his relationship with Anne Mackumber. Judging from his later conduct, it seems likely that Pease highly valued his membership in this church and did not take the prospect of excommunication lightly. Church membership was an important status for many people in the eighteenth century, and membership in a close-knit religious community could facilitate personal and business networks. When Pease again came before the church members, he “confessed his Error in Sining against God and Wounding his Brethren” and Pease expressed a hope that “his Brethren would forgive him and Receive him into Fellowship again.” Evidently satisfied with his repentance, the church officially forgave him and restored him to his membership status, “without one Dissenting Voice.”¹⁰ At this point, it appeared to these Christians that church discipline had accomplished its purpose of protecting the purity of the church and of bringing a wayward believer back into the straight and narrow path.

However, Pease again faced scrutiny from church members in September 1781. He was told to attend the next church meeting because of “his abstaining from the Communion after he was rec’d into fellowship.” Church members were not only disciplined for committing sinful acts but they could also be disciplined for failing to do godly acts, such as attending church services regularly and especially partaking of the sacrament of Communion, also known as the Lord’s Supper. In November 1781 Pease explained that he did not have “any thing against his Brethren that kept him from communion.” Rather, “the cause was in himself” for absenting, and this explanation satisfied the church members.

By October 1782, about eighteen months after his March 1781 confession, it became apparent to the church members that Pease had not ended his relationship with the “White Woman,” now identified as Ann Mackumber, thereby indicating that his stated repentance had not been genuine. Moreover, it appeared to the church that Pease and Mackumber’s relationship had progressed further in the intervening time because now Mackumber was pregnant. Pease wanted to marry her, and perhaps they had chosen to follow a sort of common-law marriage arrangement. The 1782 Rhode Island census recorded Kingston Pease as the head of a household that included two white females between the ages of 22 and 50 and two black persons (of these four people only Kingston Pease was named on the census). At this church meeting, Pease did not deny or repent, and the church swiftly excommunicated him:

At our Church Meeting October 3d A.D. 1782

Present 15, Male Members, Our Black Brother Kingston Pees, Appeared and did not Deny the Accusation brought against him, respecting Ann Mackumber, A White Woman being with Child by him: We therefore by Virtue of the Gospel of our Lord, and Savior, Jesus Christ; and his Apostles; do withdraw all fellowship from him, And Excommunicate him; the said Kingston Pees from us: as an Unclean Person; to have no Name, nor place with us, as a brother but to be treated as an Heathen Man, and an Adulterer or Fornicator.¹¹

This language was harsh, but not abnormal for an excommunication. It appears that Ann Mackumber was not a church member, for if she was a member, she would have also been called by the church to account for her actions.¹²

This church was so intent that its members should have no association with Kingston Pease that it disciplined two other African-American members who had some personal, likely friendly, interactions with him after October 1782. “Black Brother” Primus Smith and Cato Mumford, “a Black Brother,” were both excluded



from communion in 1783 for associating with Pease. Smith apparently responded to these charges with “hauty conduct,” but months later he did “humbly Acknowledge his fault” and was restored to the church. A white church member was also disciplined as part of the fallout from the Pease case, but for a different reason. Brother Ephrim Mackumber admitted in August 1783 to the church that he had wrongly dealt with Kingston Pease regarding a promissory note and in “writing to said Kingston a few Lines in an unchristian Manner.” Despite the same last name, there is no indication in the records that Ephrim Mackumber was related to Ann Mackumber. Apparently it was not acceptable for church members to retaliate on their own against an excommunicated church member, so Ephrim Mackumber was suspended from church communion for a short time.¹³

After such a resolute excommunication, it would not have been surprising in the least if Kingston Pease’s name never again appeared in the church records. However, he was interjected back into the business of the Second Baptist Church of Newport when a letter dated April 1792 arrived from the Second Baptist Church of New York City. The letter asked the Newport Baptists to forgive and reinstate Pease to their fellowship. Thus began a discussion between

After relocating to New York, Kingston Pease applied to join the Second Baptist Church there. The church’s sanctuary on Fayette Street was built in 1795. “Baptist Church Fayette St. (Now Oliver St.) N.Y. 1808, Showing The Buildings Extending To Chatham St.” from vol. 5, Booth’s History of New York, Emmet Collection of Manuscripts, etc., New York Public Library Digital Collections. Accessed May 25, 2016. <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e1-0602-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>.

these two “Second Baptist” churches over the nature of Baptist church governance and of Christian repentance and forgiveness.¹⁴

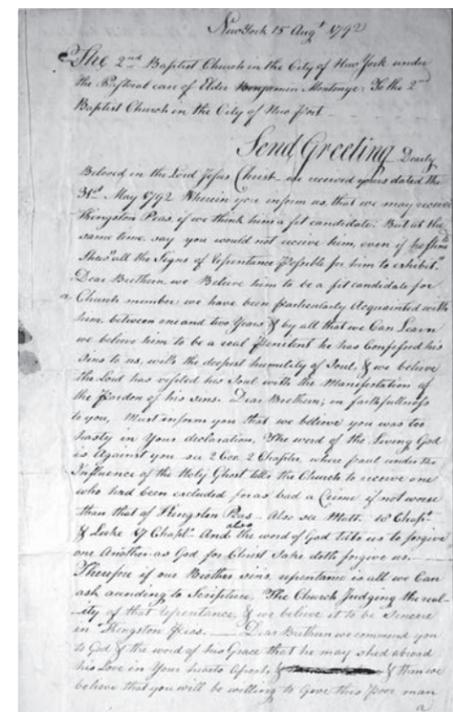
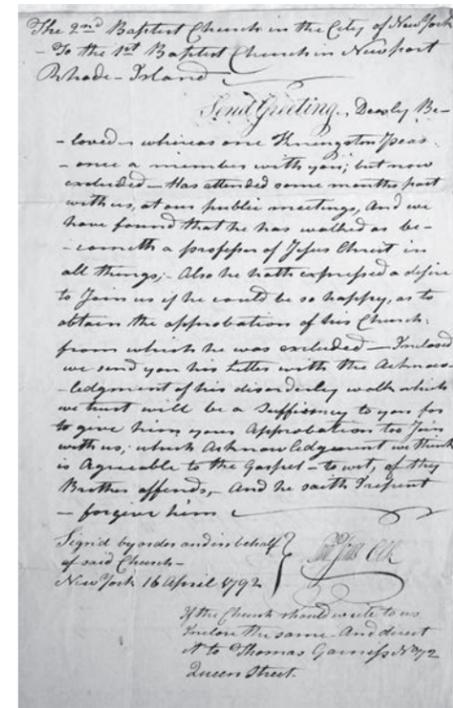
The Second Baptist Church of New York City began in 1770 when fourteen individuals left the First Baptist Church over a dispute about how to conduct singing in public worship. Between 1789 and 1791, more people withdrew from First Baptist New York and joined the Second Baptist Church, but First Baptist protested that Second Baptist was improperly receiving people who had been excluded from the fellowship of First Baptist. A negotiated settlement between these churches was reached during the 1790 meeting of the Philadelphia Baptist Association, but the experience likely made Second Baptist cautious about admitting people to membership who had been excluded from other Baptist churches. A division occurred in the Second Baptist Church in 1791, and a part of that church became Bethel Baptist Church. Among the leaders of Second Baptist New York during this era were Jeremiah

Dodge, the Reverend John Dodge, Thomas Garniss, Samuel Jones, and Ezekiel Archer. Second Baptist built a sanctuary on Fayette Street in 1795 and a larger one on the same spot in 1800. The congregation began using the name Fayette Street Baptist Church by 1804 and became the Oliver Street Baptist Church in 1821 when the city changed the street’s name.¹⁵

Pease moved to New York City near the end of 1789 and began attending the predominantly white Second Baptist Church of New York City soon thereafter. By August 1792, Second Baptist New York had “been particularly Acquainted with him, [for] between one and two Years.”¹⁶ Before his move, Pease was a member and officer of the African Union Society of Newport, which was a subscription-based benevolent organization that free blacks organized as early as 1780. The Union Society provided him with a letter in November 1789 that attested to his character to help his transition to a new city. The letter reads as follows:

These are to Certify that the bearer hereof, Kingston Pease, Esq’r, is one of the Principal Members of the African Union Society, and held the office of Vice President thereof, whilst he resided in said Newport amongst the free Africans, for the use & benefit of the Sick of said Society, and other good purposes, and that he has behaved himself as a good, faithful member of this said Society, and as such, we recommend To all our Friends abroad.¹⁷

From the Union Society records, we also learn a few more aspects of Pease’s life in Newport and New York. He maintained a correspondence with the Union Society for several years after his departure and stated his intent to remain a member of the Society. In December 1790, Pease wrote that “my family [are] all well, both my wife & children recovered very well of the small pox, after a short confinement.” (I have not been able to ascertain if Pease married Ann Mackumber, if their child survived, or if Pease had children from any previous relationship.) It appears that a son named Arthur



The Second Baptist Church in New York sent this letter to the Second Baptist Church at Newport in April 1792, inquiring about Kingston Pease’s standing in the Newport congregation. The letter was mistakenly addressed to the “1st Baptist Church in Newport.” (Newport Historical Society, “Old Baptist Documents,” Box 1, Folder 1792, N 2d).

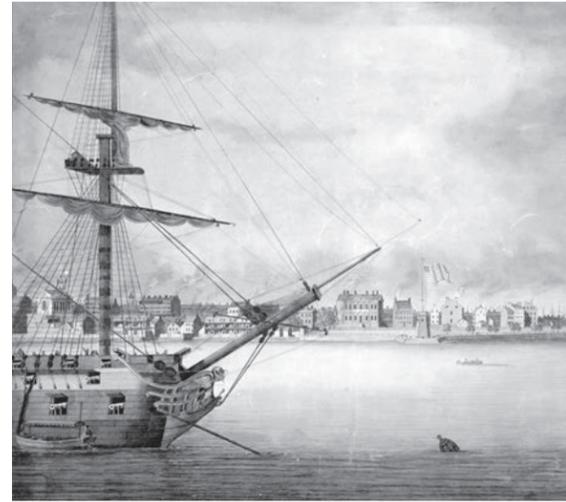
Dissatisfied with Newport Second Baptist’s response to their April 1792 inquiry about Kingston Pease, the Second Baptist Church in New York wrote a second letter in August. (Newport Historical Society, “Old Baptist Documents,” Box 1, Folder 1792, N 2d).

Pease remained behind in Newport because the Union Society wrote in March 1791 to Kingston Pease in New York “respecting the Situation of your son, Arthur who is now very sick, by information, said to be in a poor, distressed Condition, almost destitute of the Necessaries of Life.” Around 1792, Pease also requested that members of the Union Society manage renting out of his land and house in Newport, implying that he continued to own property in that city.¹⁸

After attending Second Baptist New York for a period of time, Pease took steps to seek membership in this church. Perhaps he first approached church leaders or the pastor to share his spiritual and personal history, testing the water to see whether or not they would be willing to accept him as a member. We will never know exactly what Pease shared about his life, but Second Baptist New York knew that he had been excommunicated and they likely knew the nature of the offense that caused his excommunication from Second Baptist Newport. Nevertheless, many of the members of this predominantly white congregation were willing to admit him as a member of their church.

In their first letter to the Second Baptist Church of Newport, dated April 1792, the members of Second Baptist New York stated that Kingston Pease, “Has attended some months past with us, at our public meetings, And we have found that he has walked as becometh a professor of Jesus Christ in all things.” Furthermore, they stated that “he hath expressed a desire to Join us if he could be so happy, as to obtain the approbation of his church, from which he was excluded.” Apparently, they also sent a letter from Pease in which he acknowledged “his disorderly walk.” The New York Baptists reminded their Newport brethren that his confession was sufficient and that forgiveness is “Agreeable to the Gospel—to wit, if thy Brother offends, And he saith I repent—forgive him.”¹⁹ The Newport Baptists did not agree, however, that Pease’s confession was sufficient.

At a meeting of the Second Baptist Church of Newport in 1792, “Elder Thurston” presented the New York Baptists’ letter, “Respecting a



Kingston Pease moved to New York City sometime in late 1789. “New York. View from the south man-of-war at left.” Engraving by Alexander Robertson, 1793. The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Print Collection, The New York Public Library Digital Collections. Accessed May 25, 2016. <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47d9-7b15-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>.

Negro Man that is to say Kingston Pees who was excommunicated for living with a White Girl.” The members of the church likely discussed the case, and perhaps consulted their records. “After due consideration,” they concluded, “that the Church remains unreconciled unto the said Man, and the Clerke is ordered to write accordingly.”²⁰ The letter that Newport’s Second Baptist Church sent to New York in May 1792 has not survived, but it is clear that they were not willing to grant forgiveness or to reinstate Pease to their membership in order to regularly dismiss him to the New York City church. Since Pease had deceived them once in person, how could they trust only a written statement from him?

In August 1792 New York Baptist sent another letter to the Second Baptist Church of Newport, and this one contained stronger language requesting them to forgive, readmit, and regularly dismiss Pease. The Newport church members had said that they “would not receive him, even if he Should Shew ‘all the Signs of Repentance Possible for him to exhibit.’” However, they told the church in New York to proceed in an irregular acceptance of Kingston Pease as a member, if they “think him a fit candidate,” without a dismissal from Newport. Newport’s response went against common



Few details are known of Kingston Pease’s life circumstances after he moved from Newport to New York City in 1789 aside from his quest for admission to membership in the Second Baptist Church there. “[A view of Broad Street, Wall Street, and the City Hall.]” Joseph Holland, 1797. The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Print Collection, New York Public Library Digital Collections. Accessed May 25, 2016. <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47d9-7b2c-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>.

church membership practices among Baptists, who avoided admitting as members people excommunicated from other Baptist churches. The New York members also felt that their failure to forgive was unchristian. These New York Baptists told their Newport brethren that they had been “too hasty” and that “The word of the Living God is Against you.” The New Yorkers argued that the gospel required that Christians forgive and accept repentant sinners back into the fold. Individual churches, they argued, were empowered to discern whether or not repentance was genuine, and they “believe[d] it to be Sincere in Kingston Peas.” Second Baptist New York pointed to Second Corinthians chapter 2, the Gospel of Matthew chapter 18, the Gospel of Luke chapter 17, and other scriptural passages, which command “us to forgive one Another as God for Christ sake doth forgive us.” This church felt “pitty [sic] to this poorman,” Kingston Pease, and they again asked Second Baptist Newport “to Give this poor man A Dismission that he may Join a Church that his soul may be Comforted.”

Baptist churches all functioned independently of one another. There was no higher authority to dictate to individual congregations

or that could authoritatively settle disputes among churches. However, Baptist churches sought to respect the spiritual judgement of other Baptists by readily accepting individuals who wanted to transfer their membership from one Baptist church to another and by not accepting as a member any person who had been excommunicated by other Baptists. As the Pease case shows, however, these Baptist principles could make relations between congregations challenging.

Judging from the fervor of their letters and what is known about African-American members of New York City’s Baptist churches, it seems more likely than not that Kingston Pease was admitted to the Second Baptist Church of New York City. Second Baptist’s meeting minutes, membership lists, and other records from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries have been

lost. Pease does not appear in the extant church records kept at the New-York Historical Society, and he does not appear on the 1835 published list of church members.²¹ Between 1805 and 1812, the Second Baptist Church of New York City did receive letters of dismissal from the First African Baptist Church in Philadelphia, the “Baptist Church at Bachlich,” the Baptist Church of Mount Pleasant, the Baptist Church of Norfolk, Virginia, and one other church when five African Americans each sought to join Second Baptist after relocating to New York. The First Baptist Church in the City of New York admitted thirty-four African Americans to membership between 1791 and 1808.²² If the Second Baptist Church of New York City followed First Baptist’s example, then they likely admitted multiple African Americans and Kingston Pease.

A “Kingston Pease” appears in New York City directories from 1795 to 1805. In 1795, he was listed as a “labourer,” but he was otherwise identified as a “blackball-maker.” For most of this period, he resided at 8 Fayette Street, in close proximity to the Second Baptist/Fayette Street Baptist Church.²³ He was identified by the same spelling in the 1800 federal census as the head of a household that included five non-white free persons. Otherwise, the later years of Kingston Pease’s life seem to have not made any marks on the surviving historical record.²⁴

* * *

The case of Kingston Pease and his relationship to these two predominantly white churches illustrate some important information about northern Baptists in the 1780s and 1790s. Many Baptist congregations were willing to accept African Americans as members of their religious communities, and some African Americans found these churches spiritually fulfilling and valued their connections to these mostly white congregations. Kingston Pease’s desire to be a member of these churches can be read in comparison to the written accounts of African-American Baptists in the North, such as those by Bostonian Chloe Spear and Rhode Islander Cato Pearce, who also had satisfying



A s.w. view of Baptist Meeting House, Providence, R.I. In the eighteenth century, there was no central authority in the Baptist Church to resolve disputes. The First Baptist Meeting House in Providence, built in 1774-1775. Engraving by Samuel Hill (ca. 1766-1804). Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, digital file, LC-USZ62-31769.

spiritual experiences in interracial Baptist churches.²⁵ The letters between the Newport and the New York churches also show how much Baptist congregations could differ from one another in respect to the processes and practices of admitting people to membership. Without any recourse to a higher ecclesiastical authority, Baptists only relied on their words, expressed in letters between congregations or published pamphlets, when trying to win over individuals and churches to their perspectives.

These sources, while raising more questions than can be answered, outline the contours of a black man in the early Republic who endeared himself not only to an independent African-American organization but also to two predominantly white churches. These records also suggest that Pease stood up to the powers that be at his Newport church and refused to

accept the meaning and restrictions that white Christians ascribed to darker skin color, despite knowing that he would lose his membership. As a vice-president of the African Union Society of Newport, he was a leader of the early free black community, but he also built relationships with white people through relatively small, intimate Baptist congregations in Newport and New York City. Like many Americans of that era, Pease appears to have valued affiliations with religious and civic organizations, but not at any cost. He was a person whom the historical record ought not to neglect.

Pease’s story also show in stark relief the limits of the equality of all believers in some congregations (Newport’s censor of an interracial relationship) and an occasion when one congregation decided not to hold a transgression of racial boundaries against an African-American man. As much as these Baptist churches accepted significant numbers of African-Americans as members, they usually did not treat them as equal to white members. African Americans in predominantly white Baptist churches could at least sometimes vote in church affairs, but they could not hold leadership positions and they had to sit in the least desirable seats during services. As Second Baptist Church of Newport made clear, at least many congregants believed “the Distinctions God has Made” precluded close relationships between whites and blacks, and they did not doubt the social superiority of whites over blacks. At least in this case, actions of the Second Baptist Church of New York seem to suggest that they were not as concerned about the distinction of skin color as was common among northern Christians.

* * *

To the Second Baptist Church, Newport, Rhode Island, 16 April 1792

The 2nd Baptist Church in the City of New York
—To the 1st [2nd] Baptist Church in Newport Rhode Island.

Send Greeting, Dearly Beloved, whereas one Kingston Peas, once a member with you; but now

excluded, Has attended some months past with us, at our public meetings, And we have found that he has walked as becometh a professor of Jesus Christ in all things; Also he hath expressed a desire to Join us if he could be so happy, as to obtain the approbation of his church, from which he was excluded. Inclosed we send you his Letter with the Acknowledgment of his disorderly walk which we trust will be a Sufficiency to you for to give him your Approbation too Join with us, which Acknowledgement we think is Agreeable to the Gospel—to wit, if thy Brother offends, And he saith I repent—forgive him.

Sign’d by order and in behalf
of said Church— Sam’l Jones Clk
New York 16 April 1792

If the Church should write to us Inclose the same. And direct it to Thomas Garniss No. 72 Queen Street.

* * *

To the Second Baptist Church in Newport, 15 August 1792

New York 15 Augt 1792. The 2nd Baptist Church in the City of New York under the Pastoral care of Elder Benjamin Montonge: To the 2nd Baptist Church in the City of Newport.

Send Greeting, Dearly Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ, we received yours dated the 31st May 1792 Wherein you inform us, that we may receive Kingston Peas, if we think him a fit candidate: But at the same time, say you would not receive him, even if he should shew “all the Signs of Repentance Possible for him to exhibit.” Dear Brethren, we Believe him to be a fit candidate for a Church member: we have been particularly Acquainted with him, between one and two Years & by all that we Can Learn we believe him to be a real Penitent he has confessed his sins to us, with the deepest humility of Soul, & we believe the Lord has visited his Soul with the Manifestation of the Pardon of his sins. Dear Brethern, in faithfulness to you, Must inform you that we believe you was too hasty in Your declaration, The word

of the Living God is Against you, see 2 Cor. 2 Chapter, where Paul under the Influence of the Holy Ghost tells the Church to receive one who had been excluded for as bad a Crime if not worse than that of Kingston Peas—Also see Matt. 18 Chapt & Luke 17 Chapt. And also the word of God tells us to forgive one Another as God for Christ sake doth forgive us—Therefore if our Brother sins, repentance is all we Can ask according to Scripture. The Church Judging the reality of that repentance, & we believe it to be Sincere in Kingston Peas. Dear Brethren we commend you to God & the word of his Grace that he may shed abroad his Love in Your hearts Afresh & then we believe that you will be willing to Give this poor man A Dismission that he may Join a Church that his soul may be Comforted, And we hope what we have said will be taken in Love & Affection, as it flows from Love to

God & towards you & pity to this poorman, May the Lord Jesus Christ Guide you by his Spirit in all your deliberations & bless you with his presence. Is the Hearty prayer of your Brethern in the bonds of the Gospel.

Signed by order and in behalf of said Church— Sam'l Jones, Clk.
New York Augt 15, 1792.
To Mr. Parker Hall Clk

An Answer to this would be very Acceptable.
Sam'l Jones.²⁶

Richard J. Boles is an assistant professor of early American history at Oklahoma State University. He received his doctorate in 2013 from the George Washington University.

ARTICLE NOTES

1. “Second Baptist Church Six Principle 1 and 2 (1656, 1657),” Records of the Second Baptist Church of Newport, Rhode Island, Newport Historical Society (hereafter NHS), pp. 67–69; Old Baptist Documents, Box 1, Folder 1792 N 2d, NHS. Throughout, original spellings and capitalizations have been maintained as well as could be transcribed from handwritten records.
2. For consistency the standard spelling of “Pease” has been used except in direct quotations that contain an alternate spelling.
3. Bert Lippincott III, “Gardner Thurston’s Baptisms,” *Rhode Island Roots: Journal of the Rhode Island Genealogical Society* 39 (June 2013): 97–103; “Second Baptist Church Six Principle 1 and 2 (1656, 1657),” 183–200; Second Baptist Church Record that begins ca. 1800, Records of the Second Baptist Church of Newport, NHS.
4. Elaine F. Crane, *A Dependent People: Newport, Rhode Island in the Revolutionary Era* (Bronx, N.Y.: Fordham University Press, 1985), 25, 56, 132; John Wood Sweet, *Bodies Politic: Negotiating Race in the American North, 1730–1830* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 180–181, 436; Christy Mikel Clark-Pujara, “Slavery, Emancipation and Black freedom in Rhode Island, 1652–1842” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Iowa, 2009), 56.
5. Stanley Lemons, ed., *Baptists in Early North America, First Baptist, Providence: Baptists in Early North America Series*, vol. 2 (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 2013); Ilou M. Sanford and Don A. Sanford, ed., *Newport Seventh Day Baptist Trilogy, Entering into Covenant, Membership Records, Mother Hubbard’s Cupboard* (Bowie, Md.: Heritage Books, Inc., 1998), 78–81; “First Baptist Church Boston, Massachusetts Church Records 1665–1797,” microfilm, Pub. No. 461, Andover Newton Theological Library; “Boston 2nd Baptist Church Records 1743–1787, 1 Vol.” microfilm, Andover Newton Theological Library; “Boston Second Baptist Church Records 1789–1793,” microfilm, Andover Newton Theological Library; James N. Arnold, *Vital Record of Rhode Island 1636–1850, First Series, Birth, Marriages and Deaths, A Family Register for the People, Volume XI, Church Records* (Providence: Narragansett Historical Publishing Company, 1900), 249;
6. “Second Baptist Church Six Principle 1 and 2,” NHS, page 67.
7. Sweet, *Bodies Politic*, 181.
8. “Second Baptist Church Six Principle 1 and 2,” NHS, page 67; McLoughlin writes: “In every case of discipline which came before a church, if the sinner demonstrated sincere penitence and was willing to confess his crime and to make amends for it, he was forgiven and continued in good standing. Only the recalcitrant or stubborn sinner was ‘dealt with’—usually by pronouncing a censure which prohibited him from taking communion.” William G. McLoughlin, *New England Dissent 1630–1883: The Baptists and the Separation of Church and State* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), 2: 754.
9. Upper Freehold Baptist Church Records, 1766–1805, Monmouth County Historical Society Library; Scotch Plains Baptist Church, Scotch Plains, N.J. Records, 1747–1809, MG 968, New Jersey Historical Society; “First Baptist Church Records & Minutes from 1762 to 1812,” Records of the First Baptist Church in the City of New York (in church’s possession).

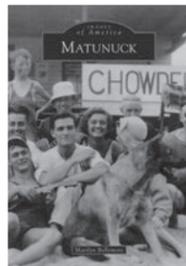
9. “Second Baptist Church Six Principle 1 and 2,” NHS, p. 125; As another example of African Americans voting in a Baptist Church, see Lemons, *Baptists in Early North America, First Baptist, Providence*, pp. 125–126.
10. “Second Baptist Church Six Principle 1 and 2,” NHS, p. 68.
11. “Second Baptist Church Six Principle 1 and 2,” NHS, p. 72.
12. “Rhode Island Census of 1782,” *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, 127 (1973): 4–5, 13; For church discipline of premarital sex and interracial common-law marriage, see McLoughlin, *New England Dissent*, 2: 759, 764.
13. “Second Baptist Church Six Principle 1 and 2,” NHS, pp. 73, 76, 77.
14. McLoughlin has described the excommunication of Pease in print, but he does not address the fact that New York Baptist sought to admit him to their church. McLoughlin, *New England Dissent*, 2:764–765; Sweet incorrectly (I believe) identifies Pease as a member of Samuel Hopkins’s Second Congregational Church, but in a footnote he does note that a New York Baptist church later accepted Pease as a member. Sweet, *Bodies Politic*, 180, 436 n. 65.
15. Baptist Associations could make recommendations and approve statements, but they were not automatically binding on individual Baptist congregations; George H. Hansell, *Reminiscences of Baptist Churches and Baptist Leaders in New York City and Vicinity, from 1835–1898* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1899), 7–9; Jonathan Greenleaf, *A History of the Churches, of all Denominations, in the City of New York, from the first Settlement* (New York: E. French, 1846), 230–236; Orrin Judd, ed., *The New York Chronicle, A Monthly Report and Permanent Repository of Religious Intelligence and Useful Knowledge*, vol. 1—1849 (New York: Holman & Gray, 1849), 139–141.
16. Old Baptist Documents, Box 1, Folder 1792 N 2d, NHS.
17. William H. Robinson, ed., *The Proceedings of the Free African Union Society and the African Benevolent Society* (Providence, R.I.: Urban League of Rhode Island, 1976), 32; No “Kingston Pees” or “Kingston Pease” appears

18. Robinson, *Proceedings of the Free African Union Society*, 22, 24, 32, 34, 36–40, 53, 54, 61, 64, 72, 77, 96, 98, 102, and 103; Searches for Kingston Pease, Arthur Pease, and Ann Mackumber on Ancestry.com and Americanancestors.com resulted in no additional information, apart from what is included in the text of this essay.
19. Old Baptist Documents, Box 1, Folder 1792 N 2d, NHS.
20. “Second Baptist Church Six Principle 1 and 2,” NHS, p. 99.
21. The extant records date from 1793 to 1862, including many letters of dismissal from various Baptist churches dating from 1793 to 1821, correspondence, agreements, and miscellaneous papers dating from 1795 to 1862, and bills and receipts dating from 1800 to 1848. The church changed its name several times in the 19th century; “Baptist Church records, 1793–1862” (Oliver Street Baptist Church, Fayette Street Baptist Church, Macdougall St. Baptist Church, Second Baptist Church in New-York), 2 boxes, New-York Historical Society Mss Collection, New-York Historical Society; Oliver Street Baptist Church, New York, N.Y., *Names of members of the Baptist Church meeting in Oliver Street, N.Y.* (New York: s.n.; 1835).
22. “Baptist Church records, 1793–1862,” box 1, folders 3, 4, and 5; “First Baptist Church Records & Minutes from 1762 to 1812,” pp. 48, 135–264, and “Meeting Minutes Book B,” pp. 8–34, Records of the First Baptist Church of New York City (in church’s possession).
23. John Low, *The New-York Directory, and Register for the Year 1795* (New-York: Printed by T. and J. Swords, 1795), 165; John Low, *The New-York Directory, and Register for the Year 1796* (New-York:

- Printed by John Buel, 1796), 140; Longworth’s *American Almanac, New-York Register, and City Directory for the Twenty-second Year of American Independence* (New-York: D. Longworth, 1797), 265; Longworth’s *American Almanac, New-York Register, and City Directory for the Twenty-Four Year of American Independence* (New-York: D. Longworth, 1799), 316; Longworth’s *American Almanac, New-York Register, and City Directory for the Twenty-Fifth Year of American Independence* (New-York: D. Longworth, 1800), 297; Longworth’s *American Almanac, New-York Register, and City Directory for the Twenty-Six Year of American Independence* (New-York: D. Longworth, 1801), 249; Longworth’s *American Almanac, New-York Register, and City Directory for the Twenty-Seventh Year of American Independence* (New-York: D. Longworth, 1802), 288; Longworth’s *American Almanac, New-York Register, and City Directory for the Twenty-Eighth Year of American Independence* (New-York: D. Longworth, 1803), 233.
24. Alice Eichholz, C. G. Eichholz, James M. Rose, eds., *Free Black Heads of Households in the New York State Federal Census, 1790–1830* (Detroit: Gale Research Co., c1981), 198; 1800 Census, New York Ward 5, New York, New York, Series M32, Roll 23, Page 780, Image 161, Family History Library Film 193711; A “Kingston Pease,” married to a woman named Jane Pease, does appear in New York City in the 1850 and 1855 censuses. This Kingston Pease was born around 1796 or 1800, was identified as an African American, and could be a son of the elder Kingston Pease, but the evidence is inconclusive; 1850 Census, New York Ward 5, New York, New York, Roll M432_537, p. 212A, Image 430; New York State Census, 1855 [database on-line], Provo, Utah, US, Ancestry.com.
25. *Memoir of Mrs. Chloe Spear, a Native of Africa, Who was Enslaved in Childhood, and Died in Boston, January 3, 1815 ... Aged 65 Years by A Lady of Boston [Rebecca Warren Brown]* (Boston: James Loring, 1832); *Cato Pearce, Jailed for Preaching: The Autobiography of Cato Pearce, a Freed Slave from Washington County, Rhode Island, with an historical introduction by Christian M. McBurney* (Kingston, R.I.: Pettaquamscutt Historical Society, 2006).
26. Old Baptist Documents, Box 1, Folder 1792 N 2d, NHS.

Rhode Island Book Notes

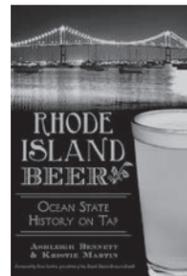
WINTER / SPRING 2017



Matunuck

MARILYN BELLEMORE
Charleston, S.C., Arcadia, 2015

A history of the area in coastal South County known as Matunuck. Bellemore traces the story of Matunuck from its earliest Pettaquamscutt settlers to its popularity as a summer vacation resort after the Civil War, up to the present day.



Rhode Island Brew: Ocean State History on Tap

ASHLEIGH BENNETT
AND KRISTIE MARTIN
Charleston, S.C., History Press, 2015

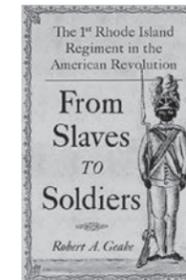
A history of the production and consumption of beer in Rhode Island.



In Danger at Sea: Adventures of a New England Fishing Family

CAPT. SAMUEL S. COTTLE
Camden, Maine: Downeast Books,
e-book, 2007.

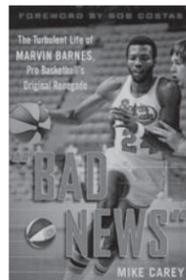
Recollections of working life at sea by a member of a Point Judith-based family of fishermen. A paperback edition was published in 2014.



From Slaves to Soldiers: The 1st Rhode Island Regiment in the American Revolution

ROBERT GEAKE
Yardley, Pa., Westholme
Publishing, 2016

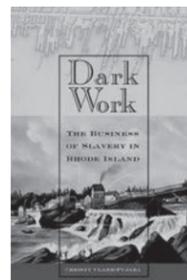
A history of the first African-American regiment to serve in the Revolutionary War. Its efforts in the battle of Rhode Island in 1778 are legendary. The regiment also fought elsewhere during the American war for independence.



"Bad News": The Turbulent Life of Marvin Barnes, Pro Basketball's Original Renegade

MIKE CAREY
New York: Sports Publishing, 2016

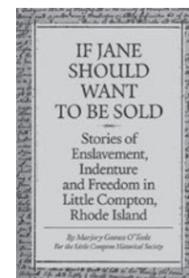
A biography of Marvin Barnes, a Providence native and All-American stand-out basketball player at Providence College, who went on to play professional basketball. Throughout his life, Barnes suffered numerous problems that marred and finally ended his spectacular career.



Dark Work: The Business of Slavery in Rhode Island

CHRISTY CLARK-PUJARA
New York: New York University
Press, 2016

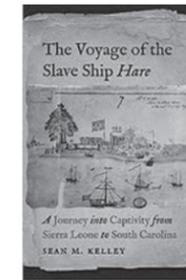
The author describes how the “business of slavery” in Rhode Island—distilling of rum, barrel making, raising agricultural products for export to the West Indies, and numerous other money-making ventures—shaped the lives of enslaved people and free blacks, as well as the entire population of the colony. The volume covers the period from the founding of Rhode Island in the seventeenth century until slavery ended in Rhode Island in 1842.



If Jane Should Want to Be Sold: Stories of Enslavement, Indenture and Freedom in Little Compton, R.I.

MARJORY GOMEZ-O'TOOLE
Little Compton, R.I.: Little Compton
Historical Society, 2016

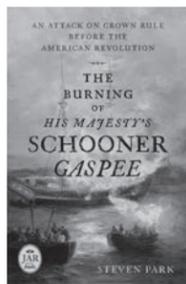
A study of slavery and indenture in Little Compton and environs through a compendium of narratives of enslaved and indentured people and the story of three slaver captains from Tiverton. The author has used newspapers, wills and other legal documents as well as personal papers and material culture to frame her research.



The Voyage of the Slave Ship Hare, from Sierra Leone to South Carolina

SEAN M. KELLEY
Chapel Hill: University of North
Carolina Press, 2016

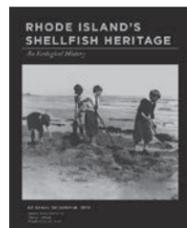
The author chronicles the voyage of the *Hare*, out of Newport, that sailed to Africa in 1754 and arrived in Charleston, S.C., with enslaved Africans on board in 1755. Every detail of the grim transit is examined, especially the experience and lives of the Africans who were captured and sold into bondage.



The Burning of His Majesty's Schooner Gaspee: An Attack on Crown Rule Before the American Revolution

STEPHEN PARK
Yardley, Pa.: Westholme Publishing, 2016

An account of Rhode Islanders' attack on the British customs schooner *Gaspee* in Narragansett Bay in 1772. Prominent Providence citizens were never charged for their roles in the affair.



Rhode Island's Shellfish Heritage: An Ecological History

SARAH SCHUMANN
Kingston, R.I.: University of Rhode Island, 2016

A history of shellfish and shellfishing in Rhode Island. The book grew out of the 2014 Rhode Island Shellfish Management Plan. It explores the history of oysters, quahogs and other shellfish species that grow in Rhode Island waters. The author interviewed shell fishermen, growers, conservationists, artists, and others as part of her research for the book.



The Last Good Heist: The Inside Story of the Biggest Single Payday in the Criminal History of the Northeast

TIM WHITE, RANDALL RICHARD AND WAYNE WORCESTER
Guilford, Conn.: The Globe Pequot Press, 2016

A narrative of the notorious 1975 theft of 148 safe-deposit boxes in Rhode Island belonging to an organized crime syndicate. The contents of the boxes were worth millions of dollars.

RIHS

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RHODE ISLAND HISTORY is a peer-reviewed journal published two times a year by the Rhode Island Historical Society at 110 Benevolent Street, Providence, Rhode Island 02906-3152. Postage is paid at Providence, Rhode Island. Society members receive each issue as a membership benefit. Institutional subscriptions to RHODE ISLAND HISTORY are \$25.00 annually. Individual copies of current and back issues are available from the Society for \$12.50 (price includes postage and handling). Our articles are discoverable on EBSCOhost research databases. Manuscripts and other correspondence should be sent to estevens@rihs.org.

Below: *[On the beach at Narragansett Pier]*. 1900. W. T. Smedley, Artist. Image retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2010718015/>. (Accessed February 16, 2017).

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