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KENT COUNTY JAIL SIGN

This remarkable wood-carving of a handcuffed man once hung over the door of the Kent County Jail in East Greenwich, R. I. It has been in the Rhode Island Historical Society's collection for many years and has recently been installed among the museum exhibits on the ground floor of the ell in John Brown House, the Society's home.

ISSUED QUARTERLY AT PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

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## RHODE ISLAND HISTORY

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HENRY D. SHARPE, President		HOWARD W.	WILSON, Treasurer

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> The Judgment of History on American Business

Condensed from a talk before the Newcomen Society

by STANLEY PARGELLIS, Librarian The Newberry Library, Chicago

What is the judgment of American historians today upon American business? Let me start (as a historian should) with a volume of documents compiled by H. S. Commager of Columbia University, which has been used in schools and colleges for ten years and is the favorite book of its kind among teachers. Called Documents in American History, it purports to give "the fundamental sources"; it is said to be a "larger and better-balanced collection than any predecessor." It includes the great speeches, the famous papers, Supreme Court decisions, the important political platforms. For the three-quarters of a century since the Civil War, years which mark the phenomenal industrial development of this country, this volume contains the Resolutions of the National Grange, the Preamble of the Constitution of the Knights of Labor, Henry George on the Single Tax, the Platform of the Populist party, Coxey's - of Coxey's army - program, Bryan's Cross of Gold speech, Theodore Roosevelt on the Trusts, the Social Creed of the Churches, the platforms of the Socialist and the Progressive parties in

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1912, excerpts from the 1915 Pujo committee report on monopoly, Wilson on the New Freedom, the Preamble of the Industrial Workers of the World, LaFollette's platform of 1924, the leading decisions in industrial or labor matters since *Munn* vs. *Illinois*, the various Acts of the New Deal—and *not one single document* which gives the attitudes, the arguments, the economic and political philosophy of business men.

If an uninformed but intelligent stranger, ignorant of American or other history, should read the story in these documents alone, he would necessarily have to deduce, from such apparent unanimity of opinion, that the enemy against which all these different groups were arrayed, i.e., corporate wealth, was, in the words of the Springfield grange of 1873, "detrimental to the public prosperity, corrupting in [its] management, and dangerous to republican institutions"; he would have to admit that the various adjectives used to describe this "invisible and intolerable power," such as "poisonous," "plundering," "merciless," "unprincipled," "extortionate," "cruel," "greedy," were justified by the noticeable absence of any defense.

This is the type of document which college students read to get the flavor of the past. They read text books to get a connected story and an interpretation of facts. For the most part the text books agree upon one general interpretation. This is it: America once was a land of promises that men could enjoy the kind of living each wanted and was able to earn. In the 1870's and 1880's farmers and laborers pinned the responsibility for the failure of such promises on the new titans of business. In the 1900's the progressives, with irrefutable proof, laid bare the enemy as the trusts. The Square Deal of Roosevelt I, the New Freedom of Wilson and the New Deal all invoked, in increasing ratio, the powers of government, and with the support of the majority of the population, took necessary steps to crush or restrain that enemy and to return America to Americans. . . . That is the theme on which the text books are written.

I don't for a moment say that all histories or so-called historical articles are of this sort. There are some text books, especially those written by economic historians, which tell the sober story of technological change and increase in thermodynamic efficiency, of production figures, wage scales and the internal organization of a modern corporation. There is at least one text book which recognizes that a cross section of business men is a cross section of humanity.

... There are some histories of business, and some studies of certain phases of business, which are accurately and impartially done; there are even some which err in the opposite direction and paint business as flawless and above reproach.

The record of business, as far as statistics of output, quality, of goods or of performance is concerned, is available for anyone who wants it. But it is not enough by itself; results are not enough.

This leads us to the central point of this paper: the history of corporations is not dead and buried.... It is a part, and a large part, of the living present. The fact that the history of corporations may be distorted has nothing to do with the influence it exerts. What men believe about the past influences their actions in the present. One needs no profound psychological knowledge to see that men do not act only upon emotions and impulses which may be incited by a direct and persuasive appeal. They act also upon underlying and not always apparent assumptions and convictions which, however imperfectly thought out and contradictory they may be, are both inherited from the past and reinforced by men's understanding and interpretations of the past.

I suggest that the scores of American historians who write about the unfulfilled promises of American life are creating, or have already created, a conviction about American business in the minds of those who read their books, or come in some other way within the circle of their influence. The historians themselves of course possess that conviction, support it by documents, reinforce it by logic and by art.

Its ingredients might be summarized as four: - Business today, as for the last 75 years, is guided by but one

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motive, which is not, save indirectly, the public welfare; business exercises now, as it did then, a disproportionate and sinister influence on courts and government officials; business is still wasteful, immoral, corrupt, vicious and scheming, and the common man needs protection against it; business must therefore be compelled by political action to change its ways or it will stand, as it has always stood, in the path of the plain people. . . .

These are hard words; perhaps they are too hard. But a conviction about business, if one is being formed in this country, needs to be bluntly described. For by "conviction" I mean an attitude of mind which admits of no questioning, which is beyond any argument except one of ridicule or of fists. That person is moved by conviction who, when asked "What do you really think about big business?", replied as a matter of course, "It stinks!" I would warrant that such reactions are more common than most of us believe or would like to believe. Conversations with all kinds of people—newspaper editors, novelists, school teachers, working men—conversations which a plain man may have but are denied the executive, confirm me in this suspicion.

For years business men have thought the effective and silencing answer to criticism was accomplishment. They have argued that the fact that business turned out goods and sent them promptly where they were needed spoke for itself. The achievement of business in this war would seem enough to clinch any argument. By itself, it does not clinch it. The myth about business men can be as strong as, if not stronger than, business' record in the war. Myth has proved often in the past, and will prove often again, to be stronger than fact; to be, and this is no quibble on words, a fact itself.

Now let us return to the historians. Those of them who have painted an unflattering picture of American business need some discussion. They cannot be dismissed as having no influence. They have enormous influence, and not merely over college students. Their books are the basis for high school and even grade school histories. Their words reach an incalculably large audience. Nor can they be dismissed as intentionally unfair, prejudiced individuals who let emotion warp scholarly judgment. For their conversation, and for the books they have written I have great respect. In their devotion to the standards of an exacting profession, in their allegiance to canons of accuracy and of faithfulness to the record, I don't believe that they need yield to anyone.

What then is the answer? Why are well-trained and honest historians so grossly one-sided in their judgment? The answer is a ridiculously simple one. These men have told their story as they have because that is the only story which the documents available to them let them tell. The papers of hundreds of Farmers' granges are open to the historian; the arguments of the muckrakers are spread in scores of articles and books; the files of congressional committees are heavy with information; the Congressional Record and the debates in state legislatures are open to him; he can comb newspapers and journals from all over the country. But he cannot get into the records of a great corporation. They are not open for him to use.

If he should summon his courage to get an appointment with a responsible officer of a corporation, and ask permission to examine all the existing documents, the letters of presidents and treasurers, the board minutes, the reports, the daybooks, the ledgers, he may confidently expect one of several replies. He may be told, as the kindest answer, that the company simply has no records as far back as the period asked for, or that no one knows where they are and in any event they would not be of the slightest use to him, and that if he wants the history of the company he should read the booklet prepared by some employee which contains all essential facts. Whatever the answer he gets, the historian is apt to leave with his suspicion confirmed that the company has something to hide.

Now what, I wonder, has any company to hide, even one with disreputable incidents in its past, that can call forth stronger language than historians already use? It sets a limit. Anything less would be palliative, soft moderating words.

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I do not believe that every man who built or ran a large business was a Dan Drew or a Jim Fiske. For every Drew there were hundreds of reputable business men who scorned to follow his practices. I do not believe that in the fifty years between the Civil and the World Wars, when the growth of corporations dominated the history of America as the frontier dominated the fifty years before the Civil War, the ablest men and the keenest minds in this country, who were found in business, should all have been corrupt, unprincipled and irresponsible. . . .

Corporations should place confidence in historians, not necessarily in any man who calls himself a historian, but in those trained in a rigid school and adhering to the rules and standards of their profession. This is not a suggestion that corporations proceed to hire a historian to write up their histories; the good historian is not for sale, and any book written under such conditions would carry no more weight among reputable historians than a statement issued by any organization believed to be prejudiced. Such statements are read and accepted only by the members of the organization itself; however accurate, however sound they may be, they issue from a source regarded as not disinterested and therefore are discounted even before they are read. A historian cannot be hired; if he is interested in corporation documents at all, it is because he wants to find out exactly what happened, and to write a book about it which will enhance his own position and standing among his colleagues in the scholarly world. Like the reputation of a good doctor, a historian's reputation depends upon his intellectual integrity and scrupulous impartiality. He is equally jealous of it.

I propose, therefore, that corporation executives consider seriously the making available to historians of documents in their possession which are no longer alive. That entails, on a firm's part, the assembling together of papers which are apt to be scattered and the depositing of them in, or the presenting of them outright, if no legal barrier prevents, to some institution where scholarly research is carried on. Such safeguards as are customary in all responsible libraries can be imposed, that no unqualified person is permitted access and that qualification among other things, means the acceptance by the librarian or department in charge of a comprehensive plan of research. The essential point in such an arrangement is that the men who have the chief responsibility in determining qualifications are men who will apply the normal and accepted standards of the historical profession itself.

Much has been done. Professor N. S. B. Gras of the Harvard Business School tells me that he and his staff have more requests to write histories of companies than they can handle. Banks, once the most mystical of businesses, have begun to let scholars into their files. J. P. Morgan & Company is willing to assist historians in any way it can, saving only its confidential relations with its clients. Various firms in New York have cooperated to an unusual degree in putting their records into shape for scholars, and consulting with scholars on what should be kept and what destroyed. The Burlington railroad's records for the entire period of its independent existence-down to 1901-some nine hundred feet of shelves of them, both central-office and land-grant, are now open to qualified scholars. The great mass of Illinois Central railroad papers are available under similar terms. The Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad records, minutely catalogued, have been open for some time to the general public. Some large corporations, General Motors among them, are considering ways and means of making their records available, or of having their history written by historians. In one great industry, traditionally as secretive as banking, the chemical industry, a non-profit History Committee has been incorporated to bear the expenses of preparing a multi-volumed history, and practically every company in the industry has given the author unrestricted access to its records. The Newcomen Society, its membership largely composed of corporation officers, has recently set up a Research Policy Committee to forward in whatever ways it can the study of American eco-

nomic and technological history. All this begins to assume the proportions of a movement. If it continues, and there is no reason to question its continuance, the time may come when we see the past more candidly and more sympathetically than we do now. Such an understanding cannot do otherwise than influence our opinions and actions as a people, and prevent us from sanctioning developments which in the long run are bound to be detrimental.

A few copies of Mr. Pargellis' complete address are still available and can be had by applying to the Director, Mr. Roelker.

## What the Scholar asks of Business by Shepard B. Clough

Professor of Economic History, Columbia University. In the American Historical Review

In any business history the scholar wants to learn (1) what goods or services the company offered for sale, (2) what the technological development of these goods or services were, (3) how the goods or services were marketed, (4) what the financial aspects of the business were, including data on profits and loss, (5) what the management was and what special problems it encountered, (6) how the company's activity stood in relation to the industry of which it was a part, and (7) what the interplays were between the company and the entire economic development of the sum of the book does not deal adequately with these issues, and any other special problems of the business, it adds little to the scholar's store of knowledge.

## The Providence Cable Tramway

### by Albert W. Claflin

The history of the Providence Cable Tramway is so interwoven with the general history of the traction system in Providence that no story of the cable cars can be complete without considering their relation to the horse cars and later the electric cars, and so this article will consider briefly all phases of the traction system from its inception until 1914 and its relation to the Providence Cable Tramway.

Prior to March, 1864, horse-drawn omnibus service, more or less dependable, constituted the only means of public transportation in the city of Providence and there was no really dependable service to Pawtucket. Demand for a horse-car line to Pawtucket culminated with the granting by the General Assembly on March 14, 1861 of a charter to the Providence, Pawtucket and Central Falls Railroad Company for a horse railroad between Providence and Pawtucket, and between Pawtucket and Central Falls. More than two years later, on May 11, 1863, the company was formally organized with a capital stock of \$100,000, with H. H. Thomas as president and Olney Arnold, treasurer. On May 29, 1863 an act was passed granting the company the right to lay rails on the "turnpike" and construction took place in the summer and fall of 1863. The line was opened in March, 1864, and the distance of four and one-half miles was covered in forty-five minutes. The line started at Market Square and proceeded by Canal, Smith, Charles, Randall, and North Main Streets in Providence, "along the Pike," and then through Pine and Main Streets to the Pawtucket terminus where it connected with the horse cars for Central Falls. Half-hour time was maintained with fifteen-minute time during the more popular travelling hours of the day. This line was profitable and popular from the start and continued its successful operation as an independent line until absorbed into the Union Railroad system in 1872.

The Union Railroad Company was a merger of five

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#### THE PROVIDENCE CABLE TRAMWAY

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separate horse-car companies and the rights of a sixth, chartered but never organized. Two of these were chartered on March 14, 1861 and four on June 3, 1864 but because the center of the city was vital to them all they were consolidated into one company by act of the General Assembly on January 20, 1865 with a capital "not to exceed \$700,000." The Union Railroad Company held its first meeting on February 2, 1865, fixed its capital stock at \$515,000 and chose Amasa Sprague president and George M. Daniels secretary and treasurer. George H. Smith was the first superintendent. Three weeks later the first of the lines to Olneyville was opened to the public, the exact date being February 22, 1865. All the other lines except the South Main Street were opened during that year.

The six companies originally chartered separately and the routes they were to cover are listed here as a matter of record only, as they were merged into the Union Railroad Company before they began operations. Charter dates are also given:

1. Olneyville & Providence Railroad Company. March 14, 1861.

Never organized and under ordinance adopted on November 8, 1864 the Broadway & Providence Railroad Company and the Providence and Cranston Railroad Company received authority to lay its rails.

*Route:* Providence to Olneyville via Westminster and High Streets.

2. Broadway & Providence Railroad Company. March 14, 1861.

*Route:* Providence to Olneyville via Broadway. (Amended June 3, 1864, to extend lines into North Providence.)

3. Providence and Cranston Railroad Company. June 3, 1864.

*Final Route:* Market Square, Westminster St., High St. to Hoyle Tavern, at present junction of Westminster and Cranston Sts., then branching to Olneyville on the north fork and to Cranston Print Works on the south fork.

4. Elmwood Horse Railroad Company. June 3, 1864.

*Route:* Providence to Elmwood via Broad St. and Elmwood Ave. (This line was extended to Roger Williams Park in 1876.)

5. Providence and Pawtuxet Horse Railroad Company, June 3, 1864.

Route: Providence to Pawtuxet via Broad Street.

6. South Main Street Horse Railroad Company. June 3, 1864.

*Route:* South Main St. to Wickenden St. to Hope St. to Dexter Asylum. (Note the dividing of the East Side section into the Brook St. (to Hope Reservoir) and the Governor St. (to Blackstone Park) took place in 1876, at which time tracks on Hope St. were removed. The extension to East Providence was also a later development.)

Fares were originally established at six cents each, children three cents each, with twenty adult tickets sold for a dollar. Double fares charged on long runs such as to Cranston were ten cents each. A combination office building and waiting room about one and one-half stories high, if the writer's memory of the second building is accurate, was erected over the river on the north side of Market Square. This was destroyed by fire in 1875 but was later rebuilt and used for about twenty years before being permanently removed.

Providence citizens have always been conservative and in closing the story of what may be termed the Pre-Cable Tramway period it should be mentioned that there was considerable opposition to the horse-drawn public cars because of the noise they made on the tracks and because - wheels of other vehicles sometimes caught in the tracks and were broken or the vehicle overturned. As the people learned to drive across the rails at a broad angle—grooved rails were a much later development—these accidents diminished but in the beginning they were not infrequent. As to the noise of the cars which under today's conditions would be deemed quiet, we learn from a letter to the editor published in the August 24, 1865 edition of the *Providence* 

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Journal that an elderly family living on one of the horsecar lines had so completely broken down nervously due to the recurrent shocks to their nervous systems that their physician advised them to move away. Before they took any action, however, they were all down with "liver complaint" and, I quote, "it was nothing in the world but them horse cars that did it."

On the other hand, Union Railroad officials were ever on the alert for improvements in their service. In 1873 the General Assembly passed an act allowing the Union Railroad Company to use any motive power it pleased for the operation of its cars. At that time the company was experimenting, according to Henry V. A. Joslin, secretary, with a car propelled by a 4 h.p. gasoline engine. The power was transmitted to the wheels by gears, and while it worked, it was found not to be commercially practical as the power was insufficient and the cost of operation prohibitive. In June, 1890, two trial electric cars run by storage batteries were tried out on the Elmwood line and their operation was also found to be unsatisfactory, as they frequently broke down and had to be brought back by horses. They were finally returned to their builders. In 1887 the Union Railroad Company petitioned the City Council for the right to install poles and wires for a trolley system as we know it today on the Elmwood line but after several hearings and opposition both by individuals and the Providence Telephone Company the petition was denied. But improvements cannot be indefinitely postponed and it remained for the City of Newport to lead the way when on March 5, 1889 they passed an ordinance allowing the trolley system with its poles and wires to be installed in that city. Providence followed two years later when poles and wires were authorized for the Broad St.-Pawtuxet route on May 20, 1891. The first electric car was operated on the Broad St. line on January 20, 1892 and thereafter electrification was rapid. Henry V. A. Joslin, secretary of the Union Railroad Company, states in his article published in 1897 that he was specifically hired in June, 1890, to develop "electric pro-

pulsion" for the railroad company and that the last horse car was withdrawn from the streets of the City of Providence on April 24, 1894. A *Providence Journal* editorial of November 25, 1938 gives another date and states that Amos E. Wilcox "brought his horses to a halt at the foot of College Hill on April 10, 1894 for that was the last Horse Car trip to be made in Providence and it was the signal for the beginning of the age of speed."

Car rails originally were 16 to 18 lb. weight girder type but by 1897 Mr. Joslin reports "T" rails for electric power of 90, 70, and 58 lbs. Car speeds were approximately horse-car speed at first but, after elimination of the horses, increased rapidly. As usual, the public, however, had to get used to these changed conditions, as a report in the Providence Journal of March 3, 1895 clearly shows. It states that the Mayor of Brooklyn, N. Y., called a conference of presidents of the various electric roads of that city in the office of the Police Commissioners and stated that a checkup revealed that trolley speeds of 12 and 15 miles per hour were common and in one instance 191/2 miles per hour had been noted. He further stated "that this terrific speed has caused most of the accidents" and ordered maximum speed reduced at once to 10 miles per hour or he would order the arrest of the presidents of the roads.

During the twelve years from 1865 to 1877 the Union Railroad Company had grown and prospered, absorbing the Providence, Pawtucket, and Central Falls Railroad Company on February 3, 1872. Approximately 60,000,000 passengers had been carried by the company from February, 1865, to March, 1877, and by 1893 had reached nearly 300,000,000. The Union Railroad Company report of 1877 showed that at that time there were seventeen lines of horse cars in operation and over forty miles of track. Equipment and personnel totalled 110 cars, 600 horses and 350 employees. All parts of the city were well served except the best residential section, the East Side, situated upon and east of College Hill, where also stood Brown University. This large section was reached by the horse cars

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only by the long, circuitous route of South Main St. to Wickenden St., then dividing into Brook St., north to Hope Reservoir and Governor St., which reached Blackstone Park (Butler Ave. at Irving Ave.) by Waterman St., Gano . St., Angell St. and Butler Ave. Efforts had been made to have the Union Railroad Company give a direct line over College Hill but the 15% grade was too much for horses and the cost of an elevator to raise the cars to the level of Prospect St. and connect by a trestle was studied and declared prohibitive. A vehicular tunnel was also considered and the plan discarded for the same reason. However, it became a common complaint that the residents of the East Side "had to go downtown by way of Warren" and the Union Railroad took the attitude that there was no solution to the problem that was financially practicable.

That the East Side had direct transportation service from 1890 to 1914, when the present trolley tunnel was opened, was due almost entirely to the vision and energy of Walter Richmond, who first put the problem up to the Union Railroad Company and, upon becoming convinced that they would do nothing, turned his efforts toward organizing the Providence Cable Tramway Company. Mr. Richmond made many trips for information and examined every cable line from Alleghany City, Pa., which was the nearest to Providence, to Omaha, Neb. Engineers were brought into the picture and plans and specifications drawn, with the final result that an application was made for a charter and a franchise to build the road. The charter was granted by the General Assembly on April 25, 1884, with a capital stock of \$300,000, and was amended to \$400,000 on April 28, 1887. Insofar as the writer knows, the Providence Cable Tramway Company, built at a cost of \$250,000, was the only cable traction line ever operated in New England the major part of which was horizontal street-level operation. Engineering News, January 12, 1893, p. 31, lists it as the only cable road operating in New England at that time.

The petition for the franchise gave the route from Market Square over College Hill to Red Bridge via Prospect,

Angell, South Angell and East River Streets, returning by Waterman and Prospect Streets to College Hill and Market Square. Furthermore, it asked the right to draw its cars by horses from Market Square up Westminster and High Streets to Olneyville over the tracks of the Union Railroad Company. Naturally this project was opposed by the Union Railroad Company, whose most profitable line ran up Westminster Street. There was a long and bitter struggle and from first to last there were 32 public hearings on cable road affairs. Eventually the city granted the right requested, after an agreement was reached between the Cable Tramway Company and the Union Railroad Company that employees and horses of the latter should be used for the trips from Market Square to Olneyville and return.

The cable road was built in 1889 according to patents owned by Harry Lane of Cincinnati. A conduit extended the whole length of the line, 3.20 miles, and the roadbed was made up of cast iron U-shaped yokes, weighing approximately 400 lbs. each, upon which were mounted angle bars to form the "slot" which presented to the street surface a slot of about 1 inch width with broad smooth steel bars each side about 21/2 inches each in width. Two rails were fastened to the outer edges of the vokes at standard gauge from each other to receive the car wheels. The longitudinal space between the yokes which formed the ceiling of the conduit and supported the street surface was filled with three-inch creosoted North Carolina pine and paved on top of them with cobblestones set in sand, thus filling the space between rails and the steel bars forming the slot and creating a durable street surface. The whole structure rested upon a concrete footing in which the bases of the vokes were embedded, this concrete forming the bottom of the conduit and containing a trough to drain away surface water. In it were set at suitable intervals broad flanged wheel-like rollers grooved in the center and shaped V-like towards the groove, to carry the cable and keep it from touching the sides or the base of the conduit. Above each roller was a manhole cover set flush with the street surface, for these rollers had to be greased each day. At corners like Prospect and Angell Sts., and at bends in the road such as Governor and Waterman Streets, special equipment was installed properly to change the direction of the cable. At Market Square, where the cable changed direction to return up the hill, it passed around a 12-foot diameter sheave placed horizontally in a large stone vault connecting both coming and returning conduits. At the power house, which still stands at 169 South Angell St. as Plant No. 2 of the American Emery Wheel Works, the cable was turned in by a special sheave to a broad grooved drum around which it passed many times before being returned to the street. Proper equipment maintained the tension and it was the revolving of this drum, with its many turns, that gave to the cable the power to do its work out on the road. The cable was spliced, presenting an endless steel cord about 11/2 inches in diameter and 3.20 miles in length, and when it broke, as it occasionally did, it had to have the broken ends drawn together and spliced before it could be used again. The original speed was 61/2 miles per hour but this was successively increased until it was 9 miles per hour after the first year. At first, due to inexperienced grip men failing to release the clutch on the grip car at necessary points, there were many interruptions in service caused by breakage of the cable. In fact, records show that the first cable, replaced after six months service, had 17 splices in it when removed. There were few such troubles after the first three months, but breaks occurred occasionally throughout the life of the system.

The cars were composed of a grip car (see illustration) with a seat facing out on each side to hold five persons each, and two seats on the front and two on the back holding two persons each, a total of 18. In the center stood the grip man operating a long lever to clutch the cable and a second lever with a ratchet that stopped the grip car when desired by pressure of the brakes on the tracks—not the wheels.

When it became necessary to warn traffic of the approach of the grip car and trailer, the operator sounded a large gong



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on the roof over his head by pulling a round leather strap which swung loose in front of him. The grip man had no protection whatever from the weather on the original grip cars. The closed passenger cars were painted a cream white, ran on four wheels, had five windows on a side, and seated 16. The open passenger cars, used only in warm weather, had seven seats holding five passengers each, total 35. If the writer's memory is correct, there was also a fixed running board on the open cars on which a number of passengers could and did stand when the car was crowded during rush hours. Original running time was every fifteen minutes, with extras at rush hours, but for the greater part of the five years of operation cars were operated every five minutes with extras between 5:30 and 6:15 P. M.

The grip car, which derived its power by clutching the cable running in the conduit below street level, pulled the passenger cars around from Market Square to Red Bridge and back to Market Square, where it crossed over from the down-hill (south) track to the up-hill (north) track, leaving the passenger car to be taken to Olneyville by horses, while in turn it coupled on to the car that the horses had just brought from Olneyville to be taken over the hill. This meant that the grip car "changed ends" every time it came to Market Square, and it was vital that its apparatus for clutching the cable be disengaged from that cable and pulled up into the bottom of the grip car before the switch over to the north track. The power for the change-over was obtained by gravity, as both grip and car stopped on the incline of the hill just before crossing South Main Street and applied their brakes. They were then uncoupled and the grip car, sometimes aided by an instant's contact with the cable, released its brakes and crossed over the switch to the north track. This switch had two extra raised rails and they engaged specially installed wheels in the grip car that lifted the entire car just sufficiently to disengage its track wheels while on the switch. The passenger car had no such wheels and as soon as the grip car was out of the way, the hand brake was released and the incline of the hill fur-



MARKET SOUARE AND WEYPOSET BRIDGE Note station at left, horse-car at center approaching grip car at extreme right.

#### NEWS - NOTES

nished sufficient power to cause it to roll forward to where the horses were waiting for it. As the passenger car lacked the special wheels with which the grip car was provided, it ignored the special cross-over switch the grip car took and continued forward to the south track on the horses.

(To be continued)

## News - Notes

One of the most important publications of Rhode Island interest to appear recently is "Letters of Sullivan Dorr," edited by Howard Corning, in *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, LXVII (October, 1941—May, 1944), 179-364. The material here presented, consisting of a large number of letters written from Canton in the early days of the China Trade, will be reviewed in a future issue of *Rhode Island History*.

The New England Historical and Genealogical Register for January, 1946, contains the conclusion of an article by G. Andrews Moriarty on "The Coggeshalls of Halstead and Hundon." It deals with the English ancestry of the family from which the Coggeshalls of Rhode Island sprang.

The same issue carries a note by Walter E. Thayer of Oxford, Mass., which reveals that the father of Commodore Abraham Whipple of Rhode Island, the Revolutionary War naval officer, was Noah Whipple, who died, probably at Ashford, Conn., some time before 6 July 1784.

The Society of Colonial Wars in the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations issued, as a memento of its December, 1945, meeting, a booklet entitled *Williams' Answer to Easton*. The 37th publication of the Society, it is a new transcription of an important Roger Williams manuscript which was given to the Rhode Island Historical Society two years ago by Frederick S. Peck. The transcription and the introduction were prepared by Bradford Fuller Swan.

## The Providence Plantations Canal

#### By WILLIAM GREENE ROELKER

#### (Concluded from RHODE ISLAND HISTORY, Vol. V, p. 25.)

#### [Advertisement]

The Providence Gazette, Saturday April 2; United States Chronicle, April 7, 1796.

#### SUBSCRIPTION FOR A CANAL

In Consequence of a Resolution of Committees of Conference from the Citizens of the State of Rhode Island, and of the County of Worcester, in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, a Subscription will be opened in the State House in Providence on the 21st Day of April next, and to continue open until Six o'Clock on the 23rd, for the purpose of making a navigable Canal, from the navigable Waters near the Town of Providence, to the most eligible and convenient Part of said County, near the Town of Worcester; under the Authority of an Act of Incorporation, passed by the Legislature of the State of Rhode-Island, in Favour of certain Persons therein named, and their Associates, for the Purpose of making and extending said Canal in the Direction aforesaid, to the Line of the said State of Rhode-Island.

Said Subscription to be opened for 4000 Shares, of 100 Dollars each, on the following conditions, viz.

To be paid, Five per Cent. on the Amount subscribed at signing; Five per Cent. at the Expiration of six Months; and Five per Cent. at the Expiration of every Quarter thence following the aforesaid term of six Months.

And in case more than 4000 Shares shall be subscribed, all Subscriptions over Two Shares to be reduced in Proportion to the Amount subscribed so as to leave in the whole Amount a Subscription of 4000 Shares. A Subscription has been agreed to be opened at Worcester, at the same Time, and on the same Conditions.

It was also agreed upon and resolved, that a Meeting should be held at the State-House in Providence, of such as may become Subscribers on Wednesday the 11th of May next, at Two o'Oclock, *P.M.* for the Purpose of organizing the Association, and appointing its Officers, in order that the necessary Measures may be adopted to carry the Work into Execution, without unnecessary Delay.

Providence, March 26, 1796.

#### THE PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS CANAL 55

#### Editorial, Providence Gazette, Saturday April 16, 1796.

The Plan for connecting the Waters of this State with those of Connecticut River, by Means of a navigable Canal, does Honour to the enterprising and patriotic Projectors—and with Pleasure we observe that it is highly and universally approved. The Advantages that must result from a Completion of this Arduous Undertaking will certainly be many and great, and it is expected that the Subscription for carrying it into Effect will be filled in a few hours from the Time of opening, which will be on Thursday next, at the State-House in this Town, and at Worcester.

#### \* \*

Extract of a Letter from a Gentleman in Congress to his Friend in this Town, dated April 6.

"The very enterprizing Project for connecting the Waters of Connecticut River with those of Weybosset, excites the Admiration of all who hear of it. It is truly the most arduous and important Attempt of the Kind which has been made in the United States. It will, if successful, be at the same time the most useful to the Country at large, particularly to Providence and its Vicinity."

#### \* \* \*

Editorial, Columbian Centinel, Saturday April 16, 1796.

Though apparently pregnant with disadvantage to Boston, her citizens have too much magnanimity not to accord in any enterprise which will eventually benefit the Commonwealth, or our common country. They therefore, hear with pleasure of the projected Canal from Worcester to Providence, the subscription for which, at 100 dollars a share, will be opened at Worcester and Providence, on Thursday, and will be closed on Saturday next. Five per cent on each share to be paid on subscribing. To accommodate those at a distance who wish to interest themselves in the undertaking, subscriptions will be received, by written proxies, addressed to any of the gentlemen whose names have been mentioned in the advertisements, which have appeared in the CENTINEL. On the terms proposed, the subscription may not all be paid in under five years.

#### \* \* \*

#### The Providence Gazette, Saturday April 23, 1796.

On Thursday, pursuant to Notice given a Subscription was opened at the State-House in this Town, for the Purpose of cutting a navigable Canal, to Connect the Waters of this State with those of Connecticut River, by way of Worcester. It will consist of 4000 Shares, of 100 Dollars each, and we have the Pleasure to Learn that it is rapidly filling. One Gentleman of this Town [John Brown], long distinguished by his Patriotism in promoting Plans of public Utility, has subscribed Four Hundred Shares.

\* \* \*

The United States Chronicle, March 17, 1796.

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#### CANAL NAVIGATION

As the Inferior Court of the County of Worcester is to meet at Worcester, on Tuesday the Twenty-Second of March instant, which will of Course bring together a Number of the respectable Inhabitants of that great County, it has been proposed that a meeting of all those who wish to promote the great Design of digging a navigable Canal from this Town to Connecticut River, through Worcester; should meet at the Court-House in this Town, MONDAY next, at 2 o'Oclock, P.M. in Order to consult and advise on the most proper Method to begin the said Business according to the Charter of Incorporation granted by the Honorable the General Assembly of this State at their last Session in this Town, and to appoint a Committee to meet Committee at Worcester, which will be appointed to meet at said Time and Place, to confer jointly on the most suitable Time and Manner to open the Subscription to carry on said Work. Providence, March 16, 1796.

#### The United States Chronicle, Thursday May 12, 1796.

#### CANAL to WORCESTER

[That the Advantages which may be expected from the proposed Canal from this Town to Worcester, may be properly appreciated here, perhaps the republication of the following Extracts from a Boston Paper of Tuesday last [May 10] will be useful;— and altho' we do not with those Writers suppose, that the Canal will "ruin Boston," or "reduce it to a Fishing Town," yet we are of Opinion, that no Event can take Place which would so much increase the Prosperity of that Important Business.]—

"I am a friend to the progress of useful experiments; but I am a friend to my native Town. A Canal between Worcester and Providence has been projected: and the Town of Worcester has chosen a Gentleman for its Representative this year, purposely to give effect to the Bill for incorporating that Canal Company, in its progress through the House. He is a Lawyer, a man of eloquence, science, and well versed in the necessary art, to carry a point.—If that Canal is not counteracted by some similar enterprise in this Town (which I am told is in contemplation) Boston will be in a few years reduced to a *Fishing Town*."

"A Subscription has been filled to unite the town of Providence with Connecticut River. If this is executed, it will be the ruin of Boston; more than half the trade that we enjoy, will be carried to another quarter. The subject will be brought before the General Court at their first session, and the western counties will be almost entirely in favor of the plan."

## New Light on Newport Tower

Frederick J. Pohl, writing in the December, 1945, New England Quarterly,<sup>1</sup> gives those who puzzle over the mystery of the Newport tower something more to think about. After discussing certain architectural features of the structure which make it well fitted—if not purposefully designed—for defense against the savages, Mr. Pohl presents excerpts from a document found among the papers concerning Sir Edmund Plowden's Province of New Albion, a huge tract of land which took in the southern coast of New England, Long Island, and parts of New Jersey and the middle Atlantic States as far south as Maryland and Delaware.

In a paper dated 1632 and entitled "The Commodities of the Island called Manati or Long Isle within the Continent of Virginia," there is a proposal that 30 soldiers be garrisoned "in a rownd stone towre" to trade with the savages and keep watch on them. Mr. Pohl points out that no other such tower has ever been found in the New Albion territory, and he properly emphasizes the fact that the mention is of a "rownd stone towre"—which is, he says, "a peculiar specification when unaccompanied by any details as to its construction."

Mr. Pohl concludes, after reviewing evidence which makes it unlikely that the backers or settlers of New Albion had built the tower, that they had found it standing.

Thus is produced another item of evidence in support of the theory that the enigmatic structure at Newport was a fortified church of Norse origin.

B. F. S.

<sup>1</sup> Vol. XVIII, No. 4, pp. 501-506, "Was The Newport Tower Standing in 1632?"

ORDER TURE CABINET-MAKER, EWPORT OF. BILL.

## A Note on the Cover Illustration

Just why a jail should need a trade sign is not quite clear; perhaps it was merely some decorative sense which inspired those who placed the Handcuffed Man, depicted on the front cover of this issue, above the door of the Kent County Jail.

At any rate the wood-carving was hardly designed to popularize the services of the jail. It seems rather that the little statue had a moral purpose, for it is extremely realistic in its depiction of what the felon looks like by the time the law has caught up with him. His hair is long and shaggy, his clothes tattered—note the ragged holes in the knees of his trousers—and his expression haggard.

Technically one of the most interesting things about the figure is that the handcuffs, too, are carved from wood, and not wrought iron. The paint is in reasonably good condition, considering the age of the sign. B. F. S.

## For Sale

Correspondence of Esek Hopkins . . . transcribed from the original manuscript . . . a companion volume to the Letter Book of Esek Hopkins. 101 pp. Providence, R.1.H.S., 1933. \$5.

The Letter Book of Esek Hopkins . . . transcribed from the original . . . 155 pp. Providence, R.I.H.S., 1932. \$5.

The Letter Book of James Browne of Providence, Merchant, 1735-1738..., from the original manuscript..., xiv, 66 pp. Providence, R.I.H.S., 1929. \$5.

The Letter Book of Peleg Sanford of Newport, Merchant . . . 1666-1668 . . . from the original manuscript . . . vi, 84 pp. Providence, R.I.H.S., 1928. \$5.

A Providence Episode in the Irish Literary Renaissance, by Horace Reynolds. 39 pp. Providence, Study Hill Club, 1929, \$5.

Rhode Island Land Evidences, v. 1, 1648-1696. Abstracts. 246, xxv pp. Providence, R.I.H.S., 1921, \$5.

Rhode Island Privateers in King George's War, 1739-1748, by Howard M. Chapin. 225 pp. Providence, R.I.H.S., 1926, \$5.

Sachems of the Narragansetts, by Howard M. Chapin. 117 pp. Providence, R.I.H.S., 1931, \$5.

Theodore Foster's Minutes of the Convention Held at South Kingstown, Rhode Island, in March, 1790 . . . transcribed . . . vi, 99 pp. Providence, R.I.H.S., 1929, \$5.

#### ANNUAL MEETING

## The 124th Annual Meeting

The 124th annual meeting of the Rhode Island Historical Society was held January 21, 1946. The following officers were elected:

Henry D. Sharpe, president; Richard LeB. Bowen and Westcote H. Chesebrough, vice-presidents; M. Randolph Flather, secretary; Howard W. Wilson, treasurer; and Harold H. Kelly, assistant treasurer.

Membership Committee: Mrs. James C. Carmark, chairman; Albro N. Dana, Mrs. Colt Anthony, Mrs. William Grosvenor, Roy W. Howard, Chester A. Files.

Library Committee: Albert E. Lownes, chairman; W. Easton Louttit, Jr., Roger T. Clapp, Mrs. Henry C. Hart, Mrs. C. K. Rathbone.

Lecture Committee: William Davis Miller, chairman; Mrs. Charles D. Cook, James H. Hanley, Dr. Dudley A. Williams, J. Walter Wilson.

Publication Committee: Paul C. Nicholson, chairman; J. J. Bodell, Dr. Madelaine R. Brown, Bayard Ewing, Mrs. Hugh F. MacColl.

Committee on Grounds and Buildings: A. Livingston Kelley, chairman; Arthur B. Lisle, Henry B. Cross, R. Lindley Murray, Charles B. McGowan.

Committee on Necrology: Joseph G. Henshaw, chairman; Mrs. William H. Eddy, Miss Gloria N. McAuslan, Mrs. J. P. Thorndike, G. Andrews Moriarty.

Finance Committee: Albert H. Poland, chairman; Foster B. Davis, Charles B. Rockwell, S. Foster Hunt, Everett S. Hartwell.

Audit Committee: Charles J. Hill, chairman; Godfrey B. Simonds, J. Cunliffe Bullock.

Executive Committee: The officers, chairmen of committees, Charles B. Mackinney and Addison P. Munroe as members-at-large, and Miss Grace M. Sherwood, State Librarian, and William G. Roelker, *ex-officio*. The nominations were submitted by a committee consisting of Claude R. Branch, chairman; Mrs. Henry F. Lippitt, Mrs. G. Pierce Metcalf, Dr. Bruce M. Bigelow, and Robert H. I. Goddard.

L. Newton Hayes, reporting as chairman of the Membership Committee, announced that there had been an appreciable gain in the number of members for the third successive year, with the result that a new "high" was reached and, with 1192 members as of that date, the Society's membership was the largest in its history. Mr. Hayes said 113 new members had been enrolled during the year, that 24 were lost by death, 10 resigned, and 10 more were dropped for various reasons. The result was a net gain of 69 members.

As evidence of the healthy state of the membership, Mr. Hayes pointed out that only eight members had failed to pay their dues for 1945.

He thanked Mrs. Colt Anthony, Mrs. Bradford H. Kenyon, Mrs. Lewis A. Meader, Albro N. Dana, Christopher Del Sesto, and Harry B. Sherman for their services on the committee; several of them are retiring this year.

Outstanding in the report of Charles C. Remington, chairman of the Library Committee, was the announcement of the addition of Clifford P. Monahon to the staff, as assistant librarian, with the resultant changes in the ell of the building, where Mr. Monahon and his family have been installed in an apartment and a start has been made on the transformation of the old kitchen and other first floor rooms into museum space. The two large exhibition cases have been moved from the dining room to the room which was the kitchen, and two other smaller cases have been set up in a room farther back in the house. This has not only provided exhibition facilities in the museum rooms but has improved the appearance of the dining room.

Cataloguing and rearrangement of the library was proceeding satisfactorily, Mr. Remington reported. The outstanding accession of the year, he said, was the Ward Papers, purchased with funds raised especially for that purpose. Three exhibitions, of Providence sketches by

#### ANNUAL MEETING

#### RHODE ISLAND HISTORY

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Edward L. Peckham, Sandwich glass from the Zoe Wilbour Collection, and rarities in the Society's possession for the inspection of the Walpole Society, were held during the year.

Mr. Remington recommended as most urgent an improvement in the lighting of the stacks and the work-rooms. The report of the Lecture Committee, Prof. Theodore Collier, chairman, showed that 668 persons attended the nine meetings of the Society, 790 attended 30 meetings held in the building by patriotic societies, and 93 attended four meetings of a miscellaneous nature. The director-librarian, Mr. Roelker, spoke at seven places in the State during the year.

The report of the Publication Committee, Paul C. Nicholson, chairman, pointed once more to the need for indexing the first five volumes of *Rhode Island History*.

The need for more funds to pay for repairs and painting of the fence around the property was outstanding in the report of the Committee on Grounds and Buildings, A. Livingston Kelley, Jr., chairman. A sum has already been subscribed, but it is not enough, and it is imperative that the painting and repair-work be done this year.

Joseph G. Henshaw submitted the report of the Committee on Necrology and Charles J. Hill gave the Audit Committee's report.

William G. Roelker, making his fifth report as director and librarian, remarked upon the splendid service rendered by the Membership Committee under the leadership of Mr. Hayes and expressed his gratification that Mrs. James C. Carmark had consented to take over the work. He suggested that an effort be made to interest returned servicemen in becoming members, pointing out that "it is logical to expect that some of the veterans of World War II will want to help perpetuate the one Rhode Island institution devoted to the preservation of military records."

The retirement of Mr. Remington, Professor Collier, Charles B. Mackinney, the president, and George L. Miner, the treasurer, were all noted by Mr. Roelker and he extended thanks to them for their services through the years. In remarking on Mr. Miner's final report as treasurer, Mr. Roelker said the statement (which is printed elsewhere in this issue) "speaks for itself."

"For 1945," Mr. Roelker said, "we had planned a budgetary deficit of \$1650; our actual deficit was less than \$1000, after meeting extraordinary expenses in maintenance of the grounds."

Mr. Roelker said that an expansion of the staff was desirable, the need being for someone who can devote his or her entire time to the work of cataloguing and arranging manuscripts, books, etc. There is also a need for more space, Mr. Roelker said, calling attention to the proposed addition which was discussed at the previous annual meeting.

Among the bequests and gifts received during the year and reported by Mr. Roelker were a \$9000 bequest from the estate of George T. Paine; a gift of \$15,000 to be known as the Charles Wilbour and Mary Soule Wilbour Fund, the income only to be used for general purposes; and a bequest of \$25,000 from Miss Anna H. Chace, in memory of her father, Jonathan Chace, the income to be used for the purchase and care of books dealing with the Society of Friends.

The plan to interest business concerns in taking out corporate membership in the Society has resulted, the director said, in 12 firms contributing \$1025 and a number have begun to deposit inactive records with the Society and to send us certain publications of value as historical source material.

Resolutions thanking Mr. Mackinney and Mrs. Charles D. Cook, chairman of the entertainment committee, for their services were passed.

In a brief talk upon his assumption of the office of president, Mr. Sharpe pointed out that the Society's record of accomplishment in the past, as shown by the reports just heard, was obviously based on a cooperative effort which functioned mainly through the committees. He expressed the hope that a similar cooperative effort would continue to further the interests of the Society during the year.

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B. F. S.

## RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Treasurer's Report - Year 1945

REC	FIPTS - Operating		
Ducs	-friends	\$6,252.00	
State of Rho	de Island Appropriation	5,000.00	
Interest and	Dividends	3,429.34	
Sale of Publ	lication	465.67	
Contribution	ns for general use		
	cipts		
REC	EIPTS - Non-Operating		\$17,770.98
Request Go	orge T. Paine	\$ 9 122 11	
Contribution	n for Ward Papers	3,857.00	
Contribution	n for Peck Collection		
		1,000.00	
	ld or called		
	to purchase newspapers		
Sundry rece	ipts	133.76	
20 E	10	_	24,555.11
	Interest on current account		45.01
Cash on han	d January 1, 1945		21,115.71
			\$63,486.81
	ENDITURES — Operating	410 114 26	
Salaries	$\mathbf{D}^{*}$		
Librarian's J	Discretionary Fund	563.22	
Office suppli	es, light and telephone	1,098.82	
Committee:	Membership		
	Library	1,099.25	
	Lecture	354.28	
	Publication (4 "R. I. History")	1,411.22	
	Grounds and Building	3,110.64	
Audit		40.00	
Insurance		809.87	
			\$18,737.35
Exp	ENDITURES - Non-Operating		
	eck Collections		
Rhode Islan	d Newspapers	431.83	
Securities p	urchased	6,865.91	2
Restoration	of Ell	2,665.96	
		· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	
and the second s			15,754.04
Cash on han	d December 31, 1945		28,995.42
			\$63,486.81

Property:		
John Brown House	\$50,000.00	
Library, books and Mss.	50,000.00	
Museum	1.00	
Furniture	1.00	
Land: Devil's Foot	1.00	
Land: Jirah Buli	1.00	
Land: Queen's Fort	1.00	
Land: Great Swamp Island		
1		100,006.00
Securities:		
Bonds and Stocks	\$72 567 68	
Wilbour Savings Accounts		
8	103011111	87,878.87
Cash:		01101010101
Checking and Petty Cash	\$15,542,11	
Temporary Government Bonds		
Temporary Savings Deposits	306.06	
Awaiting Investment		
		28,995.42
Accounts Receivable		45.32
Total Assets	-	216 925 61

#### LIABILITIES:

General Endowment	\$182,266.04
Reserves for Special Uses	25,560.62
Surplus and Profit on Securities	9,098.95

\$216,925.61

GEORGE L. MINER, Treasurer

Examined and found correct

CHARLES J. HILL Chairman Auditing Committee

## New Members of the Rhode Island Historical Society

Since January 1, 1946

Mr. Hector Asselin Warren, R. I. Mr. David H. Atwater, Jr. Mr. Edgar E. Baker Mr. George H. Baldwin Bristol, R. I. Mr. Alfred S. Brownell Mr. C. Warren Bubier Francis H. Chafee, M.D. Mr. John S. H. Chafee Mr. Franklin R. Cushman Mr. Chester A. Files Mrs. M. Randolph Flather Mr. William C. Fry Boston, Mass. Mr. Horace M. Grant Mrs. Hazel A. Greenleaf Cranston, R. I. Mr. Andrew S. Hamilton East Greenwich, R. I. Mrs. Ralph S. Hamilton

Mrs. Nathanael G. Herreshoff Bristol, R. I. Mr. Robert L. Lincoln Mrs. Augustus M. Lord Mrs. W. Ogden McCagg Miss Hope T. Nicholson Mr. William G. Richards Mr. Henry W. Rigby East Greenwich, R. I. Lt. (jg) Henry D. Sharpe, Jr. U.S.N.R. Miss Katharine Shedd East Greenwich, R. I. Dr. Joseph A. Streker Mr. Earl C. Tanner Mr. Richard Thorndike Cowesett, R. I. Mrs. William B. Thurber Milton, Mass. Mr. John Turnbull, Jr. Mr. George F. Whalen

This brings the Society's membership to 1,207

## Wanted

Antiques, v. 29, January, 1936, through v. 46, December, 1944.

R.I.H.S. Collections: v. 12, no. 4, October 1919.

v. 13, no. 1, January 1920; no. 3, July 1920; no. 4, October 1920.

v. 15, no. 2, April 1922; no. 3, July 1922;

no. 4, October 1922.

v. 16, no. 2, April 1923.

v. 17, no. 4, October 1924.

v. 19, no. 1, January 1926.

Rhode Island History: v. 2, no. 1, January 1943; no. 3, July 1943.