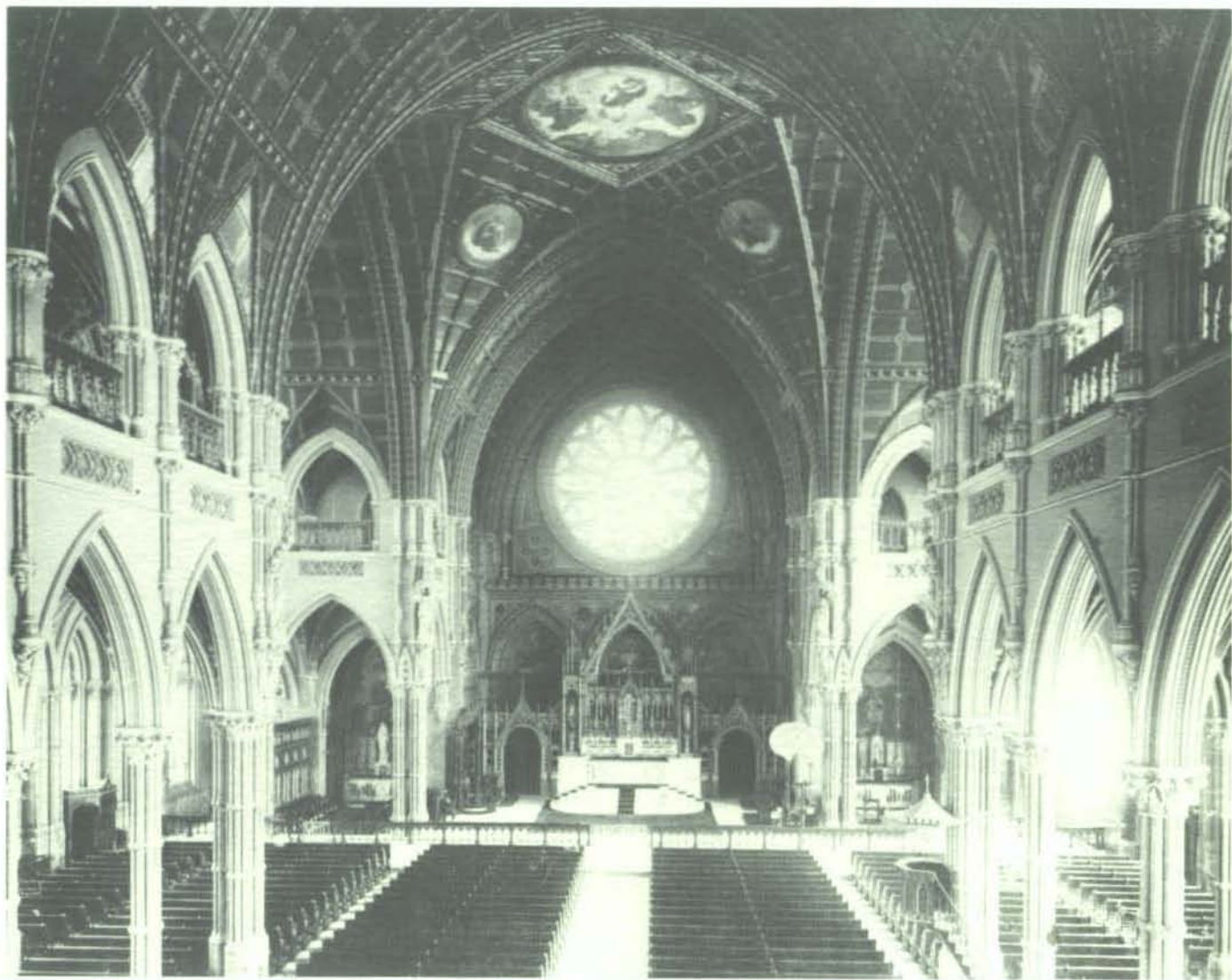


# RHODE ISLAND HISTORY



VOLUME 38:2    MAY 1979



*Art Work of Providence, 1896*

*Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul, Providence, consecrated 1889.*



# RHODE ISLAND HISTORY

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

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

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VOLUME 38 NUMBER 2 MAY 1979

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Historical Society Collections* (1918-1941) and *Publications of the  
Rhode Island Historical Society* (1893-1901) are available in micro-  
form from Xerox University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Road,  
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plete information. Articles appearing in this journal are abstracted  
and indexed in *Historical Abstracts* and *America: History and Life*.



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"A true and Exact Chart or map of the Bounds and limits of the Colony of Rhoad Island and Providence Plantations" by John Mumford, 1720 (detail). Tiverton, near the lower (eastern) edge of the map, became part of Rhode Island in 1746.



## Tiverton's Fight For Religious Liberty, 1692-1724

by William G. McLoughlin\*

Joseph Anthony and John Sisson, tax assessors of Tiverton, and John Akin and Philip Tabor, tax assessors of Dartmouth, on May 25, 1723 were arrested and put in the Bristol County jail for civil disobedience. They had refused to assess taxes levied upon their towns by the legislature. It was not the first time this had happened; in 1708 tax assessors of the same towns had been jailed for the same reason. But while seen as criminals by the majority of people in Massachusetts, these tax assessors were heroes in the eyes of their fellow townsmen, and so should they be viewed by their descendants today. Incarcerated for the principle of religious liberty, they and their fellow townsmen, by thirty years of persistent resistance to intolerance, brought about a major victory in the long struggle for separation of church and state in New England.

Although Tiverton did not become a township until 1694 — when it separated from the town of Dartmouth — and although it did not become part of the colony of Rhode Island until the king settled the long-standing boundary dispute with that colony in 1746, the people who settled in western Plymouth had much more in common with the followers of Anne Hutchinson and Roger Williams than they did with the Puritans and Pilgrims. Predominantly Quakers and Baptists, they had settled on the outskirts of Plymouth colony, cheek to jowl with the Wampanoag Indians, because in that frontier region the authorities allowed considerable tolerance. Despite some desultory efforts by the Plymouth magistrates to promote orthodox Congregationalism in the western area, few Congregationalists settled there. When the king merged Plymouth into the Massachusetts Bay colony by the charter of 1692,

the more strict and domineering Puritans of Boston sought to bring these outlanders into the Congregational fold. They did not reckon with the dissenters' stubborn determination to sustain liberty of conscience; nor have most historians given the dissenters the recognition they deserve.

Quakers established their first meetings in Dartmouth and Tiverton in the 1690s and became part of the Rhode Island Monthly Meeting. Leading Tiverton Quakers in those years were Joseph Wanton, Amos Sheffield and Richard Borden. Stephen Wilcox, John Tucker, Nathaniel Howland and Deliverance Smith were prominent Quakers in Dartmouth from 1690 to 1724. John Cooke was founder of the Baptist movement there. As a boy, he came over on the Mayflower but was expelled from the Pilgrim church at Plymouth in 1654 for "the error of Anabaptistry." He moved to the frontier in Dartmouth, joined John Clarke's Baptist church in Newport, and in 1684 organized a group of his Dartmouth followers into a church. Worship services were held at a central point on the line between Dartmouth and Tiverton. After Cooke died in 1695 the leading members (and lay preachers) of the church were Hugh Mosier or Mosher, Aron Davis, John Morse or Morss, Daniel Gold, Jacob Mott, and Thomas Taber, Jr.

The General Court passed a law in 1695 requiring every Massachusetts town to hire and support an "able, learned, and orthodox" minister of the gospel. By learned the magistrates meant a man educated in Greek and Latin (at Harvard, or after 1701, at Yale) and by orthodox they meant a Calvinist who adhered to the doctrines and practices of the Puritan churches.<sup>1</sup> But the majority of Tiverton and Dartmouth inhabitants, being Baptists

\*William G. McLoughlin is professor of history at Brown University and the author of *Rhode Island: A History* (1978).



and Quakers, did not want to pay religious taxes to build a Congregational church and support a minister. They had their own worship services with their own lay ministers. Although they gladly supported their churches by voluntary gifts and voluntary church attendance, they believed that if the ecclesiastical order of the colony's established church ever got a stranglehold on their communities, Baptists and Quakers would find themselves forced not only to pay taxes supporting Congregationalism but also liable for fines, imprisonment, the stocks and whipping for not adhering to the law requiring regular attendance at a Congregational church. Massachusetts authorities blamed the dissenters' reluctance to conform with established worship upon spiritual ignorance and unwillingness to pay taxes. But as the people of Tiverton and Dartmouth declared to the General Court in one of their frequent petitions against paying taxes to support Congregationalism: "[we] dare not do it for fear of Offending God, for wee are firmly perswaded that many of our people who are religiously sincere and upright before God cannot for Conscience sake pay any Tax or rate raised for that use."<sup>2</sup>

For three years the people of Tiverton and Dartmouth ignored the 1695 law, but in 1698 the judges of the Bristol County court, led by Nathaniel Byfield, hauled the selectmen of the two towns before them "for not having a minister according to law." The selectmen told the court they did have ministers: the Quakers had regular weekly meetings and the Baptists had formed a church led by two lay ministers, ordained by the members, but who pursued their vocations as farmers during the week. Technically, the Society of Friends did not ordain ministers over its congregations, but the selectmen used this term in court to imply that they were not without spiritual leaders and ecclesiastical organizations. The court asserted, however, that such ministers and churches did not conform to the laws of Massachusetts and ordered the selectmen to return home and to take immediate steps to acquire "able, learned and orthodox" ministers, to build churches at town expense, and to assess taxes for their support.

So the selectmen informed the town meetings of the court's order. But the towns did nothing about it. A year later, the selectmen were again brought before the county court. Again they

claimed they had the kind of ministers and worship they wanted. Again the court said this was not sufficient. And again the towns did nothing. The same scenario took place in 1700, 1701, 1702 and finally, in 1703, the county court decided to take matters into its own hands. In a letter to the president and fellows of Harvard College, the court requested ministers willing to serve as pastors in Tiverton and Dartmouth and as deliverers of true religion to the obstinate nonconformists. The court also ordered the Dartmouth town meeting to levy an ecclesiastical tax of eighty pounds a year on its inhabitants to provide the salary of whatever minister Harvard worthies might send them, and it ordered Tiverton — a smaller and poorer community — to levy a tax of fifty pounds to pay a minister.

Still the towns refused to assess or levy the taxes. Finally in 1708, two able, learned and orthodox Congregational ministers were found in Boston to bring true religion to the recalcitrant communities. The Reverend Samuel Hunt was sent to Dartmouth, where he was welcomed by a handful of Congregational families; the Reverend Joseph Marsh appeared in Tiverton, where he found five Congregational families ready to hear him.<sup>3</sup>

The ministers, however, had no salary. Because the towns would not levy taxes in town meetings, the legislature added appropriate sums to its provincial (i.e., colony-wide) taxes: sixty pounds were added to Dartmouth's provincial tax in 1708, thirty pounds to Tiverton's. This act, though justified by a law passed in 1706 to meet such emergencies, undermined the principle of home-rule. Throughout New England's history ecclesiastical taxes, like school taxes, had always been levied in town meetings.

Tiverton reacted by passing a resolution on August 20, 1708, authorizing two of its most eminent citizens, Joseph Wanton and Richard Borden — both Quakers — to petition in Boston against this unjust usurpation of local authority. Dartmouth also sent a petition to the governor and so did the Rhode Island Monthly Meeting. Meanwhile, Congregationalists in both towns wrote letters of thanks to the governor for sending Hunt and Marsh.

When town assessors refused to assess the extra provincial taxes, they were arrested: Richard Borden went to jail from Tiverton; Deliverance



Smith, a Quaker, and Thomas Taber, Jr., a Baptist, went to jail from Dartmouth. Demonstrating that they were not intimidated, Tiverton's voters sent two local law enforcement officials to ask the Reverend Mr. Marsh what he was doing in their town. After talking to him, they exiled him from their community on the grounds that he was a vagrant with no visible means of support. Outraged by this disrespect, Marsh departed.

Meanwhile the Reverend Samuel Hunt in Dartmouth, concluding it would hardly endear him to the townspeople if he insisted upon being paid by ecclesiastical taxes, petitioned the General Court to reconsider its position. For the time being, he wrote, he would live on the voluntary contributions of those who came to hear him. He hoped that eventually he would convert the majority to his views and then they would be willing to levy taxes for his salary. With Marsh gone and Hunt conciliatory, the General Court backed off. The assessors were released from jail and matters went on as before. The Boston clergy did not give up so easily. Cotton Mather, among others, was furious about the whole business and filled his diary with diatribes against "miserable Tiverton" and equally "wretched" Dartmouth.

Fourteen years went by. Samuel Hunt's congregation in Acushnet Village had grown slightly but it was not sufficiently large enough to provide him with a decent voluntary salary. His auditors petitioned the legislature for help. Prompted by Mather and other established clergy, the legislature decided it was time for a showdown. Obtaining the services of the Reverend Theophilus Pickering, the General Court sent him to Tiverton. Then the legislature again levied extra provincial taxes upon the two recalcitrant towns for the support of Hunt and Pickering.

Again the towns refused to comply and again their assessors were jailed. In 1708, when matters had reached an impasse, the people of Tiverton and Dartmouth had considered an appeal to Queen Anne against the intolerance of Massachusetts. This plan was dropped when the legislature backed down. Now the plan was revived. In 1723 Tiverton and Dartmouth sent a Quaker, Thomas Partridge, to London to present their grievances to the king in council. Partridge was assisted by the London Yearly Meeting, governing body of the Friends.

Massachusetts authorities had their own agent in London to defend their actions. After hearing both sides, the king concluded the Puritans were wrong. What right had Congregationalists, themselves dissenters from the king's church, to lay taxes in the king's name upon other dissenters? He ordered Massachusetts to release the Tiverton and Dartmouth tax assessors. He also sustained the two towns in their refusal to levy the religious taxes assessed by the legislature for Hunt's and Pickering's support.

It was a stunning defeat for the Puritan establishment. Faced with the king's decision, the Massachusetts General Court passed a series of new laws between 1727 and 1731 which, for the first time since the founding of Massachusetts, exempted Quakers, Baptists, and Anglicans from religious taxation to support established Congregational churches. The long battle over ecclesiastical taxes in Tiverton and Dartmouth was a significant turning point in the history of separation of church and state. The victory was not complete, however, for it often proved difficult for dissenters to gain the exemption granted them by law. Not until 1833 did Massachusetts finally abolish the last vestiges of its system of religious taxation for the support of Congregationalism.<sup>4</sup> Still, the people of Tiverton and Dartmouth deserve to be better remembered for their contribution to New England's struggle for religious liberty.

An earlier version of this article was given as a lecture at the Amicable Congregational Church in Tiverton, May 9, 1976.

1 Details of this story can be found in Susan Reed, *Church and State in Massachusetts* (Urbana, Ill., 1914). Additional sources include Massachusetts Ecclesiastical Archives, State House, Boston; Town Meeting Records of Dartmouth and Tiverton; and the minutes of the monthly and yearly Quaker meetings of Rhode Island.

2 Petition in Massachusetts Ecclesiastical Archives, vol. 113: 473.

3 For the history of the Congregationalists in Dartmouth and Tiverton see William J. Potter, *The First Congregational Society in New Bedford* (New Bedford, 1889) and Orin J. Fowler, *Historical Sketch of Fall River* (Fall River, 1841).

4 Isaac Backus, *History of New England*, ed. David Weston (Newton, Mass., 1871) and W. G. McLoughlin, *New England Dissent: The Baptists and the Separation of Church and State* (Cambridge, Mass., 1971).



REV. SAMUEL HOPKINS, D.D.

Engraving by Abner Reed, 1803.

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## Samuel Hopkins and the Revolutionary Antislavery Movement

by Joseph Conforti\*

Prior to the American Revolution, slavery existed virtually unchallenged in the colonies. But the struggle against Great Britain led many Americans to believe that slavery was a sin — a transgression for which divine providence punished them by holding the threat of British slavery over their heads. During the Revolution slavery also came to be seen as a political inconsistency. British officials, for example, accused Americans of hypocrisy for asserting their natural rights against the mother country while denying these same rights to Africans in the colonies. In raising awareness that slavery was both a sin and a political inconsistency, the Revolution encouraged the development of an antislavery movement for the first time in American history.<sup>1</sup>

Samuel Hopkins, pastor of the First Congregational Church in Newport from 1770 to 1803, was one of the leading antislavery reformers in revolutionary America and later a heroic figure to many antislavery reformers in nineteenth-century New England. Born in 1721 in Waterbury, Connecticut, Hopkins graduated from Yale in 1741, studied under the brilliant evangelical theologian Jonathan Edwards in Northampton, Massachusetts, and became an ordained minister at Housatonic (renamed Great Barrington in 1761), Massachusetts in 1743. Hopkins served his western Massachusetts parishioners until 1769, when dwindling financial support led him to request dismissal from his church. A year later he settled in Newport, where he crusaded against slavery for the rest of his life.

Befitting a disciple of Jonathan Edwards, Hopkins was a productive and highly original theologian. He completed his most important theological work during his first years in Newport. In the *Nature of True Holiness*, published in 1773, Hopkins formulated his influential doctrine of disinterested benevolence. True virtue or holiness, he argued, consists in disinterested benevolence toward God and mankind. From this simple definition, he advocated a radical view of Christian social ethics. A Christian's love of mankind should be so disinterested, Hopkins insisted, that he ought to be willing to die, if necessary, for the good of his fellow-man. A Christ-like, sacrificial love of God and mankind comprised the central element in Hopkins's doctrine. A true Christian must lead a life of self-denial, avoiding not only the selfish pursuit of worldly things but also the selfish pursuit of his own salvation. Disinterested benevolence required a Christian to lose himself in a cause higher than his own salvation — namely, the temporal and eternal well-being of others.<sup>2</sup> Once Hopkins recognized slavery's sinfulness, the moral imperatives of his doctrine obliged him to make a wholehearted commitment to the Revolutionary antislavery movement.

Before settling in Newport in 1770, Hopkins expressed neither disapproval of nor moral uneasiness with the slave trade or slavery. His theological mentor, Edwards, had owned a slave, and for several years during Hopkins's residence at Great Barrington, a black female servant lived in his household. The theologian's transformation into a

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*Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758). Samuel Hopkins studied with Edwards after graduation from Yale.*

dedicated antislavery reformer occurred between 1770 and 1773, the period during which he developed his doctrine of disinterested benevolence. But Hopkins's new-found antislavery identity was not simply a logical deduction from his theology. It evolved from his earliest experiences in Newport. For the first time in his life the backcountry minister confronted the slave trade's grim reality. Chained Africans were sometimes unloaded in Newport and sold before his eyes. Undoubtedly he heard horrific stories of this traffic in human flesh — accounts of suffering and wholesale death from disease while crossing the Atlantic and gruesome tales of slave insurrections at sea necessitating mass slaughter of the valuable human freight.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, Hopkins's moral awakening to slavery in the early 1770s was influenced by emerging opinions that slavery was at worst a sin and at best a policy inconsistent with the American struggle for liberty against Great Britain.

Perhaps as early as 1771 Hopkins preached to his parishioners on the slave trade's iniquity. By 1773 he denounced the slave system itself. Circumstances surrounding these early sermons would be romanticized by nineteenth-century abolitionists and admirers of Hopkins, creating a heroic myth of the impassioned, idealistic minister "rising up before his slave-holding congregation, and demanding, 'in the Name of the Highest, the deliverance of the captive, and the opening of prison doors to them that were bound.'"<sup>4</sup> Although there were slaveowners in Hopkins's church, the vast majority of his parishioners were not wealthy enough to possess such a fashionable luxury. Of those who did own slaves, few held more than one. Newport's major slaveowners and slave traders did not belong to Hopkins's small and relatively poor church; rather, they were members of the larger and wealthier Second Congregational Church or of Newport's non-Congregational churches.<sup>5</sup> While Hopkins invited enmity of the seaport's slaveowners and slave traders by his outspokenness, he did not risk his pastorate by becoming an antislavery reformer.

By the time he emerged as a vigorous foe of slavery many other voices were being raised against the oppressive institution. Several of his theological followers in Connecticut published antislavery essays in the years immediately preceding American independence.<sup>6</sup> At the same time both the Rhode Island General Assembly and the Continental Congress took action against slavery and the slave trade. In 1774, the General Assembly enacted a law henceforth freeing all slaves imported into the colony. While this legislation did not restrict Rhode Islanders involved in the slave trade beyond the colony's borders, the actions of the First Continental Congress did. The congressional delegates agreed in 1774 to prohibit the slave trade and they called for boycotts of any merchants who defied the order.<sup>7</sup>

By attacking slavery in the early 1770s Hopkins was hardly a voice in the wilderness. Although it took moral courage to defy slave owners and traders in Newport, his importance as a reformer does not stem from an heroic solitariness. Hopkins's importance derives from his sweeping moral indictment of slavery and from his indefatigable efforts, which lasted until the end of his life, to secure social justice for black Americans.<sup>8</sup>



In 1776 Hopkins published *A Dialogue Concerning the Slavery of the Africans*, the first of two major antislavery works. Dedicating the lengthy tract to the Continental Congress, Hopkins sought assurance that the congressional resolution of 1774 against the slave trade issued "not merely from political reasons but from a conviction of the unrighteousness and cruelty of that trade and a regard to justice and benevolence." He prayed that the congressmen were "deeply sensible of the inconsistency of promoting the slavery of the Africans, at the same time we are asserting our own civil liberty, at the risk of our fortunes and lives." Hopkins, in his *Dialogue*, urged the Continental Congress to establish a morally virtuous political course and to ensure the Revolution's success by "bring[ing] about a total abolition of slavery in such a manner as shall greatly promote the happiness of those oppressed strangers, and [the] best interest of the public." Explaining that degradation of both enslaved and free blacks resulted from racial prejudice, Hopkins insisted that arguments favoring the natural inferiority of the African race could not be legitimately used by true Christians as excuses for holding blacks in bondage or for permitting them to live in a state of freedom but inequality. Social equality would become a reality for blacks when every one saw them as true Christians did — "by nature and by right, on a level with our brethren and children, and . . . our neighbors."<sup>9</sup>

Endorsing the view that British oppression was a providential punishment for American sins, he argued that the enslavement of the African race stood first among American transgressions of divine law. "And I take leave here to observe," he warned, "that if the slavery in which we hold the blacks is wrong, it is a very great and public sin; and therefore a sin which God is now testifying against in the calamities he has brought against us." Slavery must be abolished, he prophesied, "before we can reasonably expect deliverance or even sincerely ask for it."<sup>10</sup>

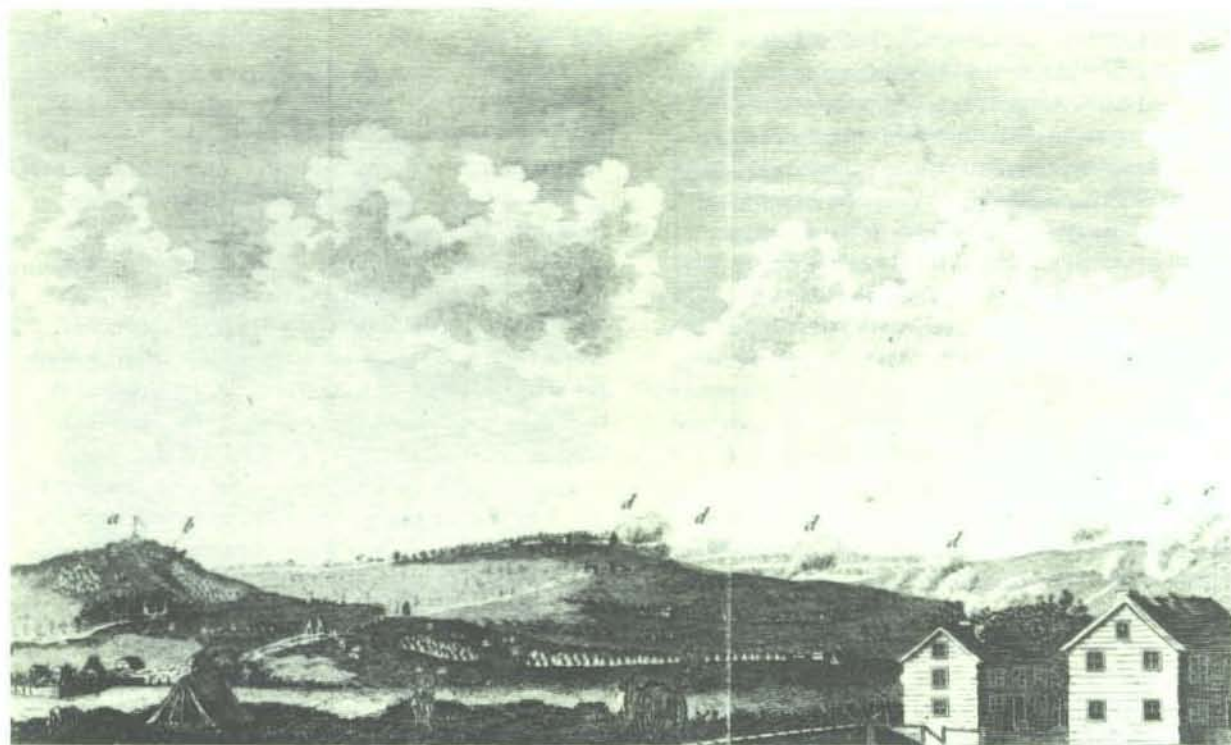
With the lifestyle of Newport's wealthy merchant class undoubtedly in mind, Hopkins challenged the American people not only to abolish slavery but also to reform all their selfish, indulgent behavior and to commit themselves to disinterested benevolence toward God and their neighbors. By concentrating on slavery's evil, he

did "not mean to exclude other public, crying sins found among us, such as impiety and profaneness — formality and indifference in the service and cause of Christ and his religion — and the various ways of open opposition to it — intemperance and prodigality and other instances of unrighteousness, etc." Slavery and all other American sins, Hopkins pointed out, were "the fruits of a most criminal, contracted selfishness."<sup>11</sup>

Since slave owning, slave trading, and other sinful modes of behavior were so common in Newport, Hopkins came to believe during the Revolution that the British occupation of Newport was God's visitation of a special affliction upon the seaport's residents commensurate with the gravity of their evil ways and with the radical reformation needed to establish disinterested benevolence among such hardened wrongdoers. Shortly after the publication of his *Dialogue* in 1776, Hopkins left Newport to escape a British onslaught. Throughout 1775 the king's warships had crowded Newport harbor, threatening the seaport's destruction. Sometimes the British released hatred of the defiant Americans by directing cannon balls to shore or by firing upon privateers in Narragansett Bay. In the fall of 1775 American soldiers were dispatched to Newport to prevent British confiscation of livestock to feed their troops. A mass exodus of apprehensive Newporters began. Ezra Stiles, pastor of the Second Congregational Church, left early in 1776, and Hopkins became a refugee when the British army occupied the city toward the close of the year.<sup>12</sup>

For the next three years he supported his family by filling vacant pulpits in Massachusetts and Connecticut. In the meantime war brought destruction to Newport. The British finally ended their occupation of the seaport in October 1779. A month later Hopkins visited the city and found it in devastation. Hundreds of buildings had been leveled and once fashionable homes had become charred ruins. Both Hopkins's church and the Second Congregational Church were heavily damaged. "I have not yet found more than four or five families of your congregation," Hopkins informed Ezra Stiles, the recently installed president of Yale. "They with those of mine are rather low spirited, and without courage, which I suppose to be in a great measure the effect of their being so long under the taskmasters, and their present





*The SIEGE OF RHODE ISLAND, taken from M<sup>r</sup>. Brimley's House.  
on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August 1788.*

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*The siege of Newport, 1778, an engraving from Gentleman's Magazine. Hopkins saw the British occupation as God's punishment for Newport's involvement in the slave trade.*

poverty." During the war more than half of Newport's population had fled to safety into the countryside. Only a few had returned, Hopkins reported to Stiles, because most feared the British might sail into port again.<sup>13</sup>

While the First Congregational Church and the city of Newport attempted to recover from the effects of the war in the early 1780s, the Revolutionary antislavery movement began to realize modest but concrete results. Even before the war's official end in 1783, Newport and other Rhode Island merchants had resumed their involvement in the slave trade. In December of that year many of the state's Quakers, under the leadership of Providence's Moses Brown, petitioned the General Assembly to abolish slavery and to

prohibit Rhode Islanders from trafficking in slaves. Responding to this plea, a committee of deputies designed a bill requiring the manumission of all slaves born after March 1, 1784, and recommending that they be Christianized and educated. The proposed legislation also provided for the gradual emancipation of many blacks who were then enslaved. Males were to be freed at twenty-one and females at eighteen. Masters who freed slaves at a younger age were required to prevent them from becoming public charges. The bill reasserted the 1774 Congressional resolution prohibiting the slave trade and stipulated that owners of all Rhode Island vessels sailing for Africa post a bond of one thousand pounds as a guarantee against their involvement in the evil



traffic.<sup>14</sup>

The assembly overwhelmingly defeated the bill early in 1784 and in its place passed a milder, amended version. The new bill endorsed the plan for gradual abolition but overlooked earlier proposals for imposing fines on violators. Furthermore, the amended bill did not outlaw Rhode Island residents from participating in the slave trade outside the state.<sup>15</sup>

By 1784 five northern states had taken legal action against slavery — three of them, including Rhode Island, passed gradual emancipation acts.<sup>16</sup> The Rhode Island law, however, proved unsatisfactory to Hopkins and other members of the state's antislavery movement who continued to work for more effective legislation.

Hopkins had remained on the periphery of this first major antislavery confrontation in the Rhode Island General Assembly, relying on Moses Brown to keep him posted about the progress of the benevolent cause in the assembly. Brown apprised Hopkins on March 3 that his brother, the wealthy and influential John Brown, "was days in opposition" to the original bill and was instrumental in securing its defeat. Moses was not disheartened, however, and he hoped to raise a groundswell of public indignation over continuation of the "Unnatural and Unchristian practice of [slave] trading." In line with this objective, he encouraged Hopkins to make a public statement protesting the ineffective action of the assembly.<sup>17</sup>

While considering Brown's suggestion, Hopkins persuaded the members of his church to take an official stand against slavery and the slave trade. Using Quakers as a model, some evangelical churches began in the mid-1780s to prohibit members from owning or trading slaves. In March 1784 Hopkins's church voted "that the slave trade and the slavery of the Africans, as it has taken place among us, is a gross violation of the righteousness and benevolence which are so much inculcated in the gospel; and therefore we will not tolerate it in this church."<sup>18</sup> As with his sermons against slavery in the early 1770s, he did not heroically challenge a slaveholding congregation in urging this antislavery resolution's passage. Nevertheless, the First Church's action was significant, for after a burst of idealism in the mid-1780s, Protestant denominations withdrew hastily from the antislavery cause. In December 1784, for

example, the Baltimore Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church decreed that members who failed to comply with state antislavery laws would be excommunicated. Only a year after its passage, this antislavery rule was abandoned by the Methodist church, which — like other Protestant denominations — pursued a cautious policy by placing the slavery issue in the hands of individual churches.<sup>19</sup> Hopkins's church continued to adhere to its antislavery resolution of 1784.

With his congregation firmly on his side, Hopkins took a bolder step in publicly denouncing the assembly's gradual emancipation law by drafting a long letter to the editor of the *Newport Mercury*. Despite personal threats from Newport slavers for publishing earlier antislavery material submitted by Hopkins, the printer agreed to insert the letter in the paper's edition for May 1, 1784. Hopkins's letter attacked the legal and political arguments the deputies had used to explain their failure to prohibit Rhode Islanders from engaging in the slave trade outside the state. The deputies had claimed this trade was carried on at sea or in other states and was beyond the assembly's jurisdiction. It was inappropriate, they argued, for Rhode Island to take further action on the slave trade since Congress was considering an anti-slave trade petition from the Quakers. Hopkins brushed aside legalities and political considerations and stressed that the issue was a moral one. Although he praised the assembly for moving in the right direction, he maintained that the gradual emancipation law did not go far enough and he feared Rhode Islanders were missing the best opportunity "to wash our hands, as far as possible, from the blood that otherwise must be found on them and prevent impending wrath [from] bursting on our heads."<sup>20</sup>

From 1784 to the ratification of the federal Constitution with its clause protecting the slave trade for twenty years, few Americans, perhaps not even the tireless Moses Brown, exceeded Hopkins in the amount of time and energy devoted to the antislavery cause. Hopkins did not confine his efforts to Rhode Island. Increasingly in the 1780s local groups of antislavery reformers in the northeast communicated with each other, passed articles, correspondence, and local information from hand to hand, and forged a supportive antislavery network and common consciousness



that cut through regional and religious differences. By the decade's close, Hopkins's contributions to this antislavery movement had won him recognition as a reformer comparable to the reputation he had already achieved as a theologian.

In 1785 the newly formed New York Abolition Society (one of only two such societies then in existence in America) reprinted Hopkins's antislavery *Dialogue*, written nearly ten years earlier. The society used 2,000 published copies in a campaign to end the slave trade in New York. The *Dialogue* was distributed to all the members of Congress and to all New York legislators. For the next several years the society's corresponding committee informed Hopkins of their efforts and sought information on antislavery activities in New England.<sup>21</sup>

During these years Hopkins repeatedly urged fellow ministers in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island to organize clergy in a united front against the slave trade. Early in 1786 Moses Brown reported that dissenting clergy and a number of Quakers in England had begun to unite and launch efforts to end slavery in the British colonies and outlaw the slave trade. "I could wish the influence of the American clergy were more United and Engaged in this Business," Brown wrote. Less than a month later Hopkins began working to unify clergy against the slave trade. "Would it not be worth while," he suggested to his friend the Reverend Levi Hart of Preston, Connecticut, "to attempt to get the convention of Clergy in Boston, the general Association of Connecticut, and the Synods of New York and Philadelphia to remonstrate against it to Congress or [in] some other way to bear testimony against it."<sup>22</sup> Hart in the eastern section of the state and Jonathan Edwards, Jr., in New Haven became Hopkins's allies in promoting such a plan in Connecticut. Several months later Hopkins reported to Moses Brown that the clergy in Boston had taken a public stance against the slave trade and he hoped that the clergy in every state would openly protest the oppression of blacks. "I am attempting to promote this," he notified Brown. He labored, in 1787, with little apparent success, to organize first the ministers of Newport and then all the clergy of Rhode Island to petition the assembly to suppress the slave trade.<sup>23</sup>

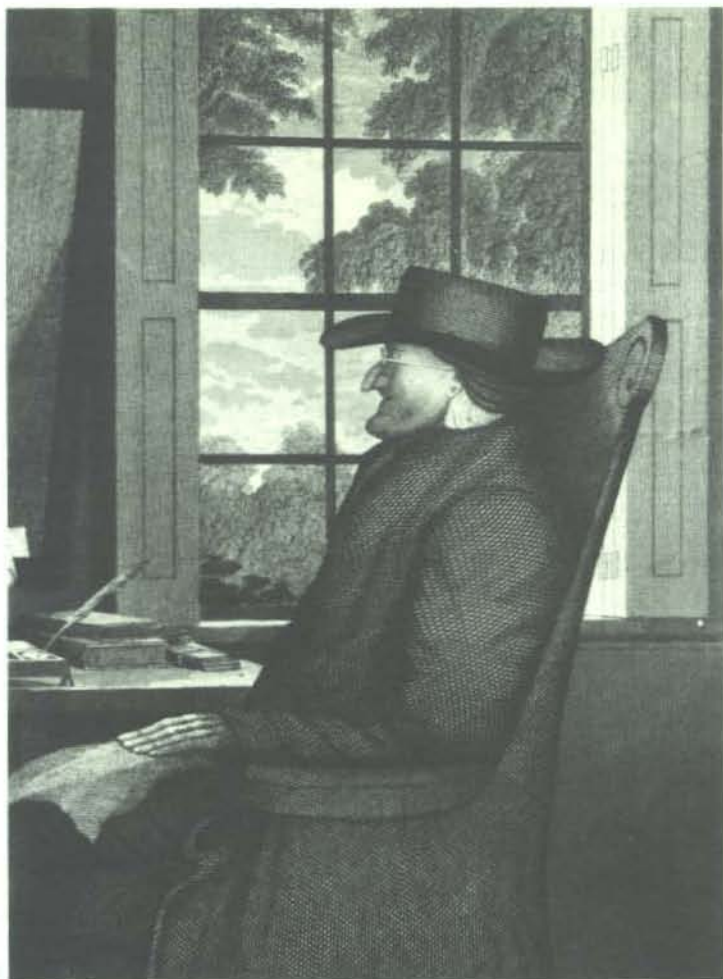
While keeping his hand in several local anti-

slavery efforts, Hopkins began writing a new essay calling once again for a radical reformation of American behavior. Although he hoped it would be published in the *Newport Herald*, Hopkins reported to Moses Brown that the printer had decided against publication because many of his subscribers were involved in the slave trade. As a result, Hopkins sought Brown's help to publish the essay in Providence.<sup>24</sup>

The essay — signed "Crito" — appeared in two installments of the *Providence Gazette and Country Journal* on October 6 and 13, 1787.<sup>25</sup> Hopkins drafted the essay while the constitutional convention was still in session in Philadelphia. Although he did not dedicate the work to the convention, his message was clearly directed toward the members of that body who had just completed their deliberations by the time the essay appeared. "Crito" hoped that the delegates would devise a constitution giving the national government power to prohibit American citizens from participating in the slave trade. While the Revolution had launched antislavery efforts, Hopkins stressed that in continuing to oppress blacks the American people had failed to absolve themselves of "a national sin, and a sin of the first magnitude — a sin which righteous Heaven has never suffered to pass unpublished in this world."

In fact, "Crito" insisted, the social and political turmoil of the 1780s — the disorder of the so-called Critical Period, culminating in Shays's Rebellion in 1786 — was clearly divine punishment for the failure of Americans to reform their selfish, unchristian ways. The persistence of the slave trade and of slavery stood out for Hopkins as a signal that the Revolution had failed to reform thoroughly Americans' indulgent, self-centered behavior and to reconstruct the social order on the basis of disinterested benevolence toward Being in general. Having forsaken their Revolutionary commitment to simplicity and frugality — symbolized by "homespun" clothing — Americans were spending their money "for foreign luxuries or unnecessaries, and those things which might have been manufactured among ourselves." For Hopkins, nothing less than moral redemption of the Revolution and salvation of America lay in the convention delegates' hands. By suppressing the slave trade, the convention could rekindle Revolutionary idealism and dedication to disinter-





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*Moses Brown led Rhode Island's Quakers in the antislavery movement. Engraving by W. J. Harris, 1839.*

ested benevolence and begin anew America's sweeping reformation. If the delegates failed to complete their moral task, "Crito" warned, greater providential scourges would descend upon America.<sup>26</sup>

Hopkins's essay was widely distributed. He sent a copy to Levi Hart, who persuaded newspapers in Norwich and Hartford to publish it free of charge. The New York Abolition Society used the work in a new petition effort to end the slave trade in that state. Shortly after publication of the essay in Providence, Moses Brown had fifty copies printed and distributed to General Assembly members who were then considering a new law against the slave trade.<sup>27</sup>

Hopkins's work was published just as the states began to debate the new constitution that prevented congressional interference with the slave trade until 1808 — a provision that deeply disappointed many antislavery reformers. "How does it appear in the sight of heaven, and of all good men, well informed," Hopkins wrote to another reformer, "that *these states*, who have been fighting for liberty, and consider themselves as the highest and most noble example of zeal for it, cannot agree in any political constitution, unless it indulge and authorize them to enslave their fellow men." Such a policy, he feared, would "bring a curse so that we cannot prosper."<sup>28</sup>

Though the Revolutionary campaign to sup-



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*First Congregational Church (center), where Samuel Hopkins preached for over thirty years. Detail of a lithograph (1864) by J. P. Newell, copied from a 1740 painting of Newport.*



press the slave trade on a national level continued, the ratification of the Constitution placed an almost insurmountable legal obstacle in its way. At least the new government could not prohibit action by individual states against the traffic. Hopkins's disappointment with the results of the Philadelphia convention was partially offset in the fall of 1787 when the General Assembly approved a strong bill outlawing the slave trade. The deputies barred Rhode Island citizens and residents from engaging in the slave traffic. Violators would be punished by fines of one hundred pounds for every slave transported and one thousand pounds for each ship involved in the illegal trade.<sup>29</sup>

Soon Hopkins shifted his attention to Connecticut, where Rhode Island slavers secretly carried on trading activities. He tried to impress Levi Hart and Jonathan Edwards, Jr. with the urgency of prosecuting their earlier plan to organize a clerical protest against the slave trade in Connecticut as the first step in a campaign to achieve legal suppression of the abominable traffic in that state. In the fall of 1788 the clergy of Connecticut united and created a committee to draft a petition requesting the General Assembly to follow Rhode Island's example and outlaw the slave trade.<sup>30</sup>

Rhode Island citizens, however, continued to traffic slaves in Connecticut and some boldly defied the anti-slave trade law at home. Rhode Island officials failed to enforce the law adequately or punish violators. Moses Brown and Hopkins agreed in the fall of 1788 that the time had come for establishing an abolition society in the state. For a number of years both antislavery reformers had been corresponding with the two existing abolition societies in Philadelphia and New York. Indeed, Hopkins had worked so closely with these two reform groups that both societies conferred honorary membership on him in 1788. Earlier, Hopkins and Brown had discussed the prospect of establishing a local abolition society. When Hopkins first heard of the New York society's formation in 1785 he had written to Brown expressing the hope that "similar societies will be formed in other states." Was "it not worthwhile to try one in this State?" he asked Brown.<sup>31</sup> It took more than three years, however, before a voluntary society was established in Rhode Island. By the close of 1788, continued violations of the state's anti-slave

trade law convinced local reformers of the need for an antislavery society. Such a local organization came to be viewed as a necessity to encourage enforcement of the state's anti-slave trade legislation by elected officials.

In February 1789 Rhode Island's antislavery reformers met and established the Providence Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade. The following month Hopkins wrote to Moses Brown displeased with the title of the new organization, which he found "too confined." He recommended that the society's name "be extended to the whole state." Furthermore, he suggested, neither in its title nor in its activities should the new society "be confined to the Abolition of the Slave Trade. It ought to promote the freedom of those now in slavery, and to assist those who are free, as far as may be, to the enjoyment of the privileges of freeman and the comforts of life."<sup>32</sup> Despite his objections and his early refusal to sign the organization's constitution unless the changes he proposed were made, Hopkins joined the new Providence-based society shortly after its formation.

With the abolition society's appearance some Rhode Island merchants geared up pro-slave trade presses for a concerted attack on the organization. John Brown, under the pseudonym "A Citizen," conducted a lengthy public campaign against the society in Providence newspapers.<sup>33</sup> Opposition was so intense in Newport that Hopkins told Moses Brown he saw no prospect of the society establishing a corresponding committee there: "no committee formed in this town would be able to do much; and if there should be any prosecutions, they must be carried on in Providence."<sup>34</sup>

Hopkins had grown accustomed to segments of the Newport community opposing his antislavery efforts. In the 1780s local slave traders sometimes expressed more hostility toward Hopkins than his theological foes, who for years had attacked his strict Calvinist doctrines. Several contemporaries' recollections suggest that, in the words of one Newport resident, Hopkins's "ultra-Calvinism was taken advantage of by the slave traders . . . and he was grossly calumniated and his sermons and speeches were wickedly perverted." As a youth in the late eighteenth century, this Newporter heard such stories about Hopkins that he "was afraid of him as I should be of some mon-



ster."<sup>35</sup> Undeterred by local hostility, Hopkins not only continued but expanded his reform activities in the last decade of his life. In 1801, two years before his death, for example, he founded the Missionary Society of Rhode Island "to promote the gospel in any part of the State where there may be opportunity for it and to assist Africans in coming to a knowledge of the truth in any way which may consist with our means and advantages."<sup>36</sup> At age eighty Hopkins was installed as the society's first president.

Although the Revolutionary antislavery movement fell far short of its goal to end slavery and the slave trade in America, it did lay much of the groundwork for nineteenth century abolitionism. Samuel Hopkins was a major link between these two phases of the antislavery movement in America. In the 1840s and 1850s New England reformers recalled (sometimes romantically) Hopkins's antislavery efforts. William Ellery Channing credited Hopkins with awakening him to the slave trade's evils. "I am grateful to this stern teacher," Channing wrote in 1840, "for turning my thoughts and heart to the claim and majesty of impartial universal benevolence." John Greenleaf Whittier in 1847 published a vignette of Hopkins that memorialized the theologian as an antislavery reformer and hailed the Newport minister "as the friend of all mankind — the generous defender of the poor and the oppressed." Similarly, Harriet Beecher Stowe, in her historical novel *The Minister's Wooing* (1859), saluted Hopkins for his contributions to the antislavery cause. "The only mistake made by the good man," she observed, "was that of supposing that the elaboration of theology was preaching the gospel. The gospel he was preaching constantly, by his pure unwordly living . . . and by the grand humanity, outrunning his age, in which he protested against the then admitted system of slavery and the slave trade."<sup>37</sup> In the midst of this "rediscovery" of Hopkins by New England abolitionists, his antislavery writings were reissued in a volume entitled *Timely Articles on Slavery by the Reverend Samuel Hopkins*. Through his doctrine of disinterested benevolence, through personal example, and through his writings, Hopkins bequeathed an important religious legacy to nineteenth-century antislavery crusaders.



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William Ellery Channing (1780-1842) was one of several nineteenth-century reformers influenced by Samuel Hopkins. Sculpture by Herbert Adams.

- 1 David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770-1823* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1975).
- 2 Samuel Hopkins, *An Inquiry into the Nature of True Holiness* . . . (Newport, 1773), esp. 11, 16. See also Oliver Wendell Elsbree, "Samuel Hopkins and His Doctrine of Benevolence," *New England Quarterly* 8 (Dec. 1935): 534-550, and Joseph A. Conforti, "Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity: Theology, Ethics, and Social Reform in Eighteenth-Century New England," *William and Mary Quarterly* 34 (Oct. 1977): 572-589.
- 3 Lorenzo J. Greene, *The Negro in Colonial New England, 1620-1776* (1942; rpt. Port Washington, N.Y., 1966), 25-33, 86-88; Edmund S. Morgan, *The Gentle Puritan: A Life of Ezra Stiles, 1727-1795* (New Haven, 1962), 116.
- 4 John Greenleaf Whittier, the Quaker poet-abolitionist, in an essay on Hopkins published in 1847 and later reprinted in Whittier, *Works* (Boston and New York, 1889) 6: 130-140. See also Harriet Beecher Stowe's highly dramatic description of Hopkins's early antislavery efforts in *The Minister's Wooing* (New York, 1859), chap. 15; and Edwards A. Park's equally romantic analysis in his *Memoir of the Life and Character of Samuel Hopkins, D. D.* (Boston, 1854), 116.
- 5 On the development of the two Congregational churches in Newport see Charles E. Hammett, "A Sketch of the History of the Congregational Churches of Newport, R. I., Compiled from the Records and Other Sources," typescript, Newport Historical Society.



- 6 For instance, Levi Hart, *Liberty Described and Recommended* (Hartford, 1775).
- 7 Donald L. Robinson, *Slavery in the Structure of American Politics, 1765-1820* (New York, 1970), 78-79.
- 8 Two recent essays analyze aspects of Hopkins's career as an antislavery reformer: David S. Lovejoy, "Samuel Hopkins: Religion, Slavery, and the Revolution," *New England Quarterly*, 40 (June 1967): 227-243, and David E. Swift, "Samuel Hopkins: Calvinist Social Concern in Eighteenth-Century New England," *Journal of Presbyterian History*, 47 (Mar. 1969): 31-54.
- 9 Hopkins, *A Dialogue Concerning the Slavery of the Africans; Showing it to be the Duty and Interest of the American Colonies to emancipate all their African Slaves . . .* (Norwich, Conn., 1776), iii, 34.
- 10 Hopkins, *A Dialogue*, 5.
- 11 Hopkins, *A Dialogue*, 52. See also Edmund S. Morgan, "The Puritan Ethic and the American Revolution," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 24 (Jan. 1967): 3-43.
- 12 Stephen West, ed., *Sketches of the Life of the Late Rev. Samuel Hopkins, D. D. . . .* (Hartford, 1805), 77; Morgan, *The Gentle Puritan*, 278-279.
- 13 Hopkins to Stiles, 10 Nov., 1779, Yale Univ. MSS. See also Franklin Bowditch Dexter, ed., *The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles, D. D., LL.D.*, (New York, 1901) 2: 390.
- 14 Elizabeth Donnan, "The New England Slave Trade after the Revolution," *New England Quarterly*, 3 (Apr. 1930): 251-278; Mack Thompson, *Moses Brown: Reluctant Reformer* (Chapel Hill, 1962), 177-181.
- 15 Thompson, 182.
- 16 Robinson, chap. 1, and Davis, chap. 7.
- 17 Brown to Hopkins, 3 Mar., 1784, Moses Brown Papers, RIHS-Library.
- 18 First Congregational Church Records, Jan. 30, Mar. 5, 1784, Newport Historical Society.
- 19 Davis, 202-209.
- 20 *Newport Mercury*, 1 May, 1784. See also Hopkins to Brown, 29 Apr., 1784, Moses Brown Papers.
- 21 Hopkins to Moses Brown, 16 Mar., 1785, Moses Brown Papers; Hopkins to Levi Hart, 10 Feb., 1786, and 22 Jan., 1787, Historical Society of Pennsylvania MSS (hereafter cited as HSP MSS).
- 22 Brown to Hopkins, 20 Jan., 1786, Moses Brown Papers; Hopkins to Hart, 10 Feb., 11 Apr., 1786, and 27 Nov., 1787, HSP MSS.
- 23 Hopkins to Brown, 16 Sept., 1787, 13 Aug., 1787, Moses Brown Papers.
- 24 Hopkins to Brown, 13 Aug., 1787, Moses Brown Papers.
- 25 The essay was reprinted under the title "The Slave Trade and Slavery" in *Timely Articles on Slavery by the Rev. Samuel Hopkins* (Boston, 1854), a collection of Hopkins's antislavery writings. I have used this edition.
- 26 Hopkins, "The Slave Trade and Slavery," 614-615, 619, 620-621.
- 27 Hopkins to Moses Brown, 5 Jan., and 25 Feb., 1788, Moses Brown Papers; Hopkins to Levi Hart, 27 Nov., 1787, HSP MSS.
- 28 Hopkins to Levi Hart, 29 Jan., 1788, New York Historical Society MSS.
- 29 Donnan, 253; Thompson, 102.
- 30 Hopkins to Hart, 27 Nov., 1787, and 8 Sept., 1788, HSP MSS; Hopkins to Moses Brown, 5 Jan., and 24 Sept., 1788, Moses Brown Papers.
- 31 Thompson, 194-195; Hopkins to William Rogers, 22 Sept., 1788, HSP MSS; Eben Hazard to Hopkins, 10 Dec., 1788, Yale Univ. MSS; Hopkins to Brown, 16 Mar., 1788, Moses Brown Papers.
- 32 Hopkins to Brown, 7 Mar., and 17 Aug., 1789, Moses Brown Papers. See also Pennsylvania Abolition Society to Hopkins, 9 Mar., 1789, HSP MSS.
- 33 Hopkins to Moses Brown, 30 Mar., 1789, Moses Brown Papers; Thompson, 196-200.
- 34 Hopkins to Brown, 17 Aug., and 18 Nov., 1789, Moses Brown Papers.
- 35 Wilkins Updike to E. A. Park, n.d., Yale Univ. MSS. See also William Ellery Channing to Park, 14 Feb., 1840, Yale Univ. MSS; George Channing, *Early Recollections of Newport, R. I., from the year 1793 to 1811* (Boston, 1868), 87-89; William Patten, *Reminiscences of the Late Rev. Samuel Hopkins D.D., of Newport, R. I. . . .* (Providence, 1843), 117-125.
- 36 *Connecticut Evangelical Magazine*, 5 (1806): 393-397.
- 37 Channing to E. A. Park, 14 Feb., 1840, Yale Univ. MSS; Jack Mendelsohn, *Channing. The Reluctant Radical* (Boston, 1971), 226; Whittier, 144; Stowe, 8.



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*James Cardinal Gibbons (center) at the 1904 consecration of the Church of the Blessed Sacrament, Academy Avenue, Providence.*



## The Providence Visitor and Nativist Issues, 1916-1924

by Donna Thomas\*

The years 1916 to 1924 were a time of considerable instability in American society and politics and, as so often happens, troubled Americans looked for a scapegoat. They found one in the alien — the immigrant whose cultural or religious traditions were at variance with those of old-stock Americans. Since so many of the newer immigrants were Catholic, the church in America viewed both direct and indirect attacks on the alien as especially dangerous. The church fought back defending itself and its foreign-born faithful as being completely compatible with the noblest American values. At the vanguard of the church's defense was the Catholic press. Close examination of a diocesan newspaper, particularly one in a diocese with a large foreign-born population, reveals much about the church's concerns and policies during a crucial period in its history. The *Providence Visitor*, official organ of the Diocese of Providence, is such a paper; its editorials and news stories cast considerable light on attitudes among the Catholic hierarchy in Rhode Island during World War I and the immediate post-war period.

Hardly new to American society of the 1910s and 1920s, bigotry reached new heights of stridency against all things viewed as alien. Historian John Higham has studied these anti-alien impulses — which he calls "nativism" — and has traced them back to early days of the republic. He defines nativism as "intense opposition to an internal minority on the ground of its foreign (i.e., 'un-American') connections. He concludes that three strains of nativism twist throughout our history: fear of the Catholic as agent of a foreign and

hierarchical religion, fear of the foreign radical, and exaltation of the Anglo-Saxon "race" as the world's superior people. From the days of preparedness parades to the era of severe immigration restrictions under Coolidge, all three strains of nativism manifested themselves, and an unusually powerful tide of bigotry swept the country.<sup>1</sup>

Events of the period show ways in which nativism affected Americans. The Red Scare of 1919 stands as a monument of wide-spread fears that overt "radicalism" could evoke. Notions of Anglo-Saxon supremacy espoused by the powerful Ku Klux Klan demonstrated the appeal of racial superiority as an issue among many working- and middle-class Protestants. Arguments against "mongrelization" of old-stock Americans through intermarriage with immigrants affected a number of intellectuals and would-be intellectuals. The popularity of Madison Grant's *Passing of the Great Race*, which lamented Anglo-Saxon decline in pseudo-scientific detail, reflected the fact that racial superiority was a concept accepted by many who were neither uneducated nor of the working class. Anti-Catholicism was visible in many forms, including discriminatory legislation in several states and vigorous campaigns against the church by the Klan, whose aims and propaganda were avowedly anti-Catholic.<sup>2</sup>

Between 1916 and 1924, the Catholic church in America found itself bucking powerful forces. Not only were Catholics attacked for their religious belief, but many of the faithful — the foreign-born — were attacked also as undesirable and potentially dangerous aliens. To a church that drew

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much of its strength from persons of Irish, Italian, German, French, and Eastern European backgrounds, the dimensions and the urgency of the problems posed by nativism were obvious. An examination of the ways in which the church responded to nativism during these years of stress clarifies both the history of American nativism and the history of the Catholic church in the United States.

That the church chose to attack the problem of nativism squarely is not surprising. Self-interest alone dictated that political rights of Catholics be protected and that a lenient immigration policy be supported. The way in which the attack was made seems unusual at first glance. The church employed a strong nationalistic spirit to prove both the "American-ness" of Catholics and Catholicism and the "Catholic-ness" of American ideals and culture. On the intellectual front, this spirit was neatly expressed in the historical view of "America — Land of Destiny," by Lawrence J. Kenny, S. J.:

*Without the design of any man, our land was named America in honor of one of God's saints, Emeric or Amerigo, who died rich in far-off Hungary, but whose name means self-government or Liberty; a Christbearer discovered the land; the arms of Mary protected him in his work. Surely the new-born land, over which Heaven took such care, is meant for glorious days.*

*To Spain, when her Catholicity was her life, this nation owes her birth; to old Catholic France, her emancipation from servitude to a foreign state.<sup>3</sup>*

On a political level, the church's defenders noted that every conflict since the Mexican War was marked by an ecclesiastical call to Catholics to rally around the flag. James Cardinal Gibbons, dean of the American hierarchy, expressed this clearly in April 1917, claiming that all Catholics accepted "wholeheartedly and unreservedly" the declaration of war against Germany. During the war, Gibbons and the hierarchy continued their support of the conflict. In his capacity as chairman of the League of National Unity, Gibbons wrote to President Wilson: "We are working to the end that our countrymen may see the folly and grave disobedience of unjust and ill-tempered criticism of national policies."<sup>4</sup>

In essence political dissenters became the com-

mon enemy that many church spokesmen denounced, in hopes that Catholics and Protestants could unite as loyal citizens for the duration of the war. "It is not surprising to find Anarchists, Socialists, and IWW firebrands active in their opposition to conscription. The nation has hitherto been indulgently tolerant. There is a limit, however," declared the *Providence Visitor* in this spirit. This feeling survived beyond Armistice Day, since it demonstrated the loyalty of Catholic Americans. A 1919 comment on immigration laws reflected a patriotic view: "The people of this country will give their approval to any reasonable immigration measure that will protect their country from dangerous revolutionaries and social pirates." As Dorothy Dohen concludes from studies of the nationalistic impulse in American Catholicism, the church adopted a stance of "my country, right or wrong" in times of national stress, carefully emphasizing the compatibility of the church with American democracy and stressing its power to mobilize immigrant opinion for national aims.<sup>5</sup>

Catholic clergymen adopted this stance in response to militant American nationalism, but events within the church itself helped develop the socially conservative nature of Catholic nationalism. In the late nineteenth century, several American archbishops, led by Gibbons and John Ireland of Saint Paul, Minnesota, proposed that the church try to convert more Protestants through establishment of friendly relations with rival denominations, to show Americans they had nothing to fear from the church. The archbishops planned to stress American features of Catholicism as a way to show that the faith fit well into the mainstream of American life. The majority of the American hierarchy, however, opposed this scheme as damaging to the purity of the church and as endangering the souls of American Catholics. These conservatives were dominated by German-Americans, for whom parochial schools served as a means for transmitting German language and culture to their American-born young, and by native-born converts, many of whom were originally drawn to the church by its rigidity and dogmatism. Until the conservatives gained an audience among the Curia — dominated by European ultramontanes — liberal "Americanizers" had their way. In the years after 1890, when Rome's reaction came, conservatives were vindi-



cated. Although liberal Americans were not condemned, the principles of those European liberals who had built upon the Americans' ideas — these Europeans, significantly, called their program "l'Americanisme" — were declared heretical. The condemnation was a clear signal to American liberals to temper their views on coexistence with Protestants; this they indeed did. All that remained of the liberal movement was the propensity to appeal to nationalistic impulses of American Catholics; it was a way both to protect and to promote the church. Cardinal Gibbons said in 1917: "The primary duty of a citizen is loyalty to country." His statement best summarized the patriotic and conservative stance adopted by the church before the coming of the Great War.<sup>6</sup>

Intellectual battles meant little had not the views of the church hierarchy been widely publicized among the American faithful. The bishops, in keeping with the need to publicize the church's positions on many issues, had urged establishment of a strong and outspoken Catholic press since the 1880s. Fear of Protestant-oriented "Sunday papers," which often attack faith and morals," led bishops to promote diocesan newspapers, "but one paper for each Province." By 1911, when the Catholic Press Association was founded, this goal had been largely reached. When nativism reemerged with such great force in 1916, a vigorous Catholic press was ready to editorialize in defense of the church and its faithful. Founded in 1873, the *Providence Visitor* was typical of the Catholic press, both in the nature of the diocese it served and in the fact that its editor, Edward J. Cooney, became first president of the Catholic Press Association, placing the *Visitor* in the mainstream of both Catholic life and of the press establishment of the church.<sup>7</sup>

Providence's diocese — actually encompassing the state of Rhode Island — had many characteristics typical of other urban dioceses of the 1910s and 1920s. It ministered to large numbers of foreign-born persons, many from Catholic countries. In 1910, the diocese and state had 178,025 persons of foreign birth residing within their borders; despite natural attrition and sharply reduced immigration during the war, 173,499 residents born abroad were listed in 1920. In 1910, the largest of the traditionally Catholic groups were, in order of size: French-Canadians, Irish, Italians, Poles, and

Portuguese. By 1920 Italians were the most numerous group among the foreign born. To these figures must be added large numbers of second- and third-generation Americans who retained strong ties to their ancestral homelands.<sup>8</sup>

Despite the sheer numbers of French-Canadians and Italians in the diocese, the *Visitor* and the church hierarchy remained Irish-dominated. Throughout the period, the *Visitor* eagerly followed reports of Irish bravery in the British expeditionary force on the battlefields of France, the 1916 Easter Rising in Dublin, and establishment of the Irish Free State. Early in 1920 the *Visitor* summarized its view of the Irish question: "There will be no permanent peace until Ireland's claims are satisfied. Not so much because four millions of people are denied the right of self-government, but rather because Ireland's cause is the cause of freedom." The *Visitor* took a sour view of the League of Nations after it appeared that the Treaty of Versailles would not establish Irish independence. Its editorials and news items revealed an orthodox Irish paper.

Despite its Irish bias, the paper occasionally bowed to other ethnic groups: The growing power of Italians, especially during the 1920s, warranted mention. The *Visitor* correctly linked the newest immigration restriction bill with nativist enmity against Italians, concluding: "We have felt the force that would drive from us the spiritual values, and so we enact a law against the Italian in whom resides the high culture of Christian civilization." Occasional news items touched upon church activities, especially in war relief in Poland and other eastern European nations. But even the Poles, a sizeable group, received only one mention, in a column commending the immigration bureau for refusing to deport two Polish girls.<sup>9</sup>

Curiously, French-Canadians received no editorial mention in the *Visitor* during this period. Despite the size of the French-Canadian community, only items of a social nature appeared in local columns under Woonsocket parish activities. The French-speaking community did, however, have its own papers, including the important *La Tribune*. Perhaps the sense of being a separate, albeit devoutly Catholic entity — as Jacques Ducharme, a French-Canadian writer, has suggested — explains their absence from the pages of



the *Visitor* even on the eve of the *Sentinelle* movement, in which leading French-Canadians challenged the diocese's authority over their community. Certainly French-Canadians were more conservative than the *Visitor* on some issues, especially labor. While the diocesan paper supported moderate union activities, *La Tribune* denounced unionism in the wake of the 1922 textile strike, offering its own solution to industrial problems:

*Le malaise actuel commune les craints pour l'avenir seraient vite dissipés, si tous les patrons et tous les ouvriers étaient catholiques et suivent humblement et pieusement ces retraites saintes comme les suivent nos travailleurs franco-américains.*<sup>10</sup>

Even questions raised by the legislature's passage of the Peck Bill — designed to curtail school

instruction in languages other than English — did not bring the *Visitor* to champion the French-Canadian cause. Since the French-speaking community had much to lose by the 1922 law, the diocese might have attempted to rally all Catholics against it as a discriminatory measure. Rather than that approach, the paper attacked the Peck legislation solely as another form of dangerous governmental "centralization," saying nothing about either French-Canadians or other groups whose cultural heritage was endangered by the law.<sup>11</sup>

Providence's diocese, counting more than 275,000 members in 1916, was not united on all issues. The *Visitor* purported to speak for all Rhode Island Catholics but it spoke with an Irish brogue. Despite heavy emphasis on Irish-American concerns, and real disagreements with French-Can-



Church of the Precious Blood (right) and grammar school, Woonsocket. Rhode Island's French-Canadian community was threatened by the 1922 Peck Bill, which attempted to prohibit school instruction in languages other than English.



dians on some issues, the paper did noticeably broaden its base on issues of a nativist nature. The role of Catholics in World War I, immigration policies, the threat of the Klan and to a lesser extent prohibition were heatedly discussed in its editorial pages. These were issues before which Catholics closed ranks, and splits within the diocese itself were forgotten when these issues dominated discussion.

World War I received vast amounts of coverage in the *Visitor*. Here the phenomenon of Catholic nationalism, expressed so well by Cardinal Gibbons, was clearly visible. Early the paper put itself on record in favor of preparedness, both in boasting Providence's efforts as "second to none in its enthusiasm, numerical proportions, and patriotic spirit," and in mocking foes of preparedness. Representative Frank Clark of Florida, a notorious supporter of immigration restriction, was lampooned for stating that he would oppose preparedness if it interfered with any federal money scheduled to be spent in his district. The *Visitor* wryly summed up his stand as "patriotism is just 'pork.'" <sup>12</sup>

Support for preparedness, however, did not prevent the paper from considering the morality of the conflict. It warned against American travel on armed merchantmen. "Sometimes it is right to forego our right," it stated, and it quoted the opinion of Cardinal Gibbons on the need for caution in the face of wartime danger. Beyond the relatively simple issue of travel in wartime lay the explosive "hyphenate problem" — the fear, held by many old-stock Protestants, that naturalized Americans could not be counted on to defend America, since their loyalties would always remain with the old country. The church sensed that the hyphenate problem contained much anti-Catholic, as well as super-patriotic, feeling. The *Visitor* countered that by stressing the loyalty of Catholics (as in its praise of the manhood of America answering the draft call) and concluding that, with the coming of war, "the hyphenate has ceased to be upon this Western Continent." At the same time, it condemned Providence's anti-draft agitators as "traitors and near-traitors," a striking contrast to loyal naturalized Americans. Even as troops prepared for the front, the church felt obligated to discuss the central question of morality, and of loyalty, whether Catholics were justified in killing their

fellow Catholics in battle. A news item, circulated to the Catholic press as a whole, proclaimed: "Catholic Church Champion of Liberty Under Flag — No Question of Divided Allegiance When Patriots Were Needed in the Hour of the Nation's Peril — Liberty and Equality the Heritage of Catholic Teaching." The *Visitor* reiterated these points in a lengthy editorial on "Catholicity and War:"

*The ethics of war has been set forth time and again by the theologians of the Church. A contention carried on by force of arms by sovereign states may be just, and then it is right for the State to call upon its citizens to enforce its claims. The civil authority, by divine sanction, has the right to be obeyed. The private citizen may presume that its country is right, and this presumption is sufficient to induce him to heed the command of his lawful superiors.*

*In view of these facts it is easy to reconcile the apparent anomaly of Catholics kneeling at the same altar on one day and fighting each other to the death on the next. Though the Church prays to be delivered from wars, she recognizes that there may be some greater evils in the world, and for the avoidance of these she justifies the State, when it is necessary, for the settlement of disputes, to have recourse to the final arbitrament of the sword.* <sup>13</sup>

The editorial described the war effort in terms of the Catholic concept of the just war and used Catholic theology to attest Catholic patriotism.

The *Visitor* vigorously defended the patriotism of ethnic groups. When the Irish were accused of harboring secret sympathies for the Kaiser, the paper reminded its readers of thousands of Irish and Irish-Americans fighting bravely in the Allied armies. The paper did not overreact to the loyalty issue, which became sadly apparent when Walter Ranger, the commissioner of education, called for an investigation of Providence parochial schools to determine whether or not Catholic children learned "German propaganda" along with the usual curriculum. "The German propaganda could hardly be expected to exist," the *Visitor* sneered, "in a class-room that can report a perfect record of one hundred per cent efficiency in all that it has been called upon to do in aid of the Red Cross," and noted that the public schools' Red Cross records were poor by comparison. <sup>14</sup>





In a 1906 Federal Hill parade of Holy Ghost Church's mutual aid society, the American flag is carried alongside the Society's banner.

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If Catholic home front activities were lauded and defended, Catholic military contributions were praised to the skies. Catholic battle deaths and Medal of Honor winners, Knights of Columbus in uniform, and Catholic chaplains at the front occupied page after page during 1917 and 1918. The paper struck a proud local note: "A service flag bearing 1131 stars was raised at the Church of the Holy Ghost. The Federal Hill district is evidently one hundred per cent American."<sup>15</sup>

Old animosities, even toward Protestants, were buried in the nationalistic fervor of wartime. The Y.M.C.A., once accused of plotting to lure unsuspecting Catholic lads away from the faith, now received the *Visitor's* praise for its war work in France. The paper even defended the Protestant organization in the face of a threatened congressional investigation immediately following the Armistice.<sup>16</sup>

With the coming of peace, however, religious battles resumed once more. The *Visitor* accused the Y.M.C.A. of robbing unsuspecting French peasants of their Catholic faith under the guise of relief work. Alarmed over anti-Catholic feeling, the paper reminded its readers "that it is a notable fact that a wave of anti-Catholic bigotry preceded every war in which the United States was engaged," recalling the prewar heyday of *The Menace*, a viciously anti-Catholic paper that had attracted a wide circulation. But of the post-war period, the *Visitor* explained, "unlike other periods, the latest bigotry did not end entirely at the declaration of war. The sights of hundreds of thousands of Catholics offering up their lives for their country was not sufficient evidence of Catholic patriotism. And we behold the sad sight of legislatures enacting laws inimical to the Church, insulting the memory of every Catholic



soldier who died in the cause of his country." Unfortunately subsequent events proved that this was hardly an overstatement.<sup>17</sup>

The *Visitor* was also concerned with the nativist threat implied by prohibition, a favorite reform of many nativists who associated drinking with undesirable immigrants from traditionally Catholic countries. Although the "sons of cold water" had gained considerable support by 1916, the paper still mocked them, suggesting that prohibitionists form a political party with "pacifists and suffragists" and nominate William Jennings Bryan, the *Visitor's* symbol for all that was ludicrous in fundamentalist Protestantism. "A further suggestion might be in order," it continued, "that politics is a man's game, and the above-mentioned would do well to keep out of it altogether." By the eve of World War I, the paper warned against politicians who claimed that prohibition would "reform the world"; the editorial implied that prohibitionists had become an important political force.<sup>18</sup>

With wartime austerity came increasing demands that prohibition be adopted as a war measure. The *Visitor*, with restraint, pointed out that prohibition's main problem "has always been that it didn't prohibit, and that difficulty bids fair to persist even in the face of war." It became shrill and excited, however, when Oklahoma passed a law that did not exempt altar wines from prohibition. The paper even praised its old foe, William Jennings Bryan, for his stand against the Oklahoma law, which he had called an infringement upon organized religion. "It is precisely such action as has been taken in Oklahoma," the paper warned local "drys," "that periodically gives rise to the suspicion that the prohibitionists are against the Church." Questions and complaints raised by the *Visitor* centered around sacramental wine, rather than the laity's beer and whiskey, as revealed in a 1918 editorial that continued the paper's opposition to prohibition but stated that "a constitutional assurance written into the law of the land" in the interests of religious liberty would ease Catholic suspicions regarding this "serious question." One wonders if the laity felt the same.<sup>19</sup>

During 1917 the *Visitor's* attack on prohibition shifted to religious grounds alone. It scored a Cincinnati proposal to tax church property to make

up for revenue lost under prohibition: "One might imagine that the prohibitionist party would have learned by this time that the cause is not helped by antagonizing the Church." When the Eighteenth Amendment finally did become law, the paper was silent; communion wines had been exempted. Rhode Island — notorious for its vote against the Volstead Act and its laxity toward prohibition enforcement — finally passed a state enforcement act in 1922, to which the paper merely replied: "'Obey the Law' is the proper footing for our recent enforcement act." Quebec's prohibition debates of 1922 evoked comment from the *Visitor* about America's "great mess of our attempts at prohibition."<sup>20</sup>

Two years later, with Al Smith — a Catholic opponent of prohibition — in the field for the presidential nomination, the paper became bolder, questioning the morality of the Volstead Act by claiming that irregularities in the pairing of opponents and supporters contributed to its passage in Congress. Never did the *Visitor* even hint, however, that the law was not morally binding for any reason. In the end, the hierarchy's and the *Visitor's* interests as "good Americans" were better achieved by remaining fairly restrained on the prohibition issue, regardless of the laity's opinion of the ban on alcohol.<sup>21</sup>

A more direct threat to Rhode Island's Catholic community was immigration restriction. Historian John Tracy Ellis has said that immigration restriction laws "made a direct contribution to the maturity of the church in the sense that during the last generation its faithful has for the first time had an opportunity to become more or less stabilized."<sup>22</sup>

The *Visitor* of the postwar years, however, did not have the benefits of Ellis's hindsight. Instead, it saw immigration restriction as an attempt to bar its readers' Old World relatives from the possibility of a better life in America. Obviously a source of continuous Catholic growth would likewise be curtailed by any restrictions. Rather than thinking in terms of consolidation of the laity already in the United States, the paper never stopped crusading against the schemes of restrictionists.

In 1916 the *Visitor* denounced as "biased legislation" the Burnett Bill, designed to establish literacy tests and other restrictions on immigration,





*The Catholic Church in Rhode Island by Rev. Thomas Cullen*

*Bishop William Hickey, the Irish-American Bishop of Providence from 1919 to 1933.*

and when a similar bill passed the House of Representatives later in the year, it pointed out that the Chinese and Japanese governments successfully protested the bill's clauses relating to Orientals, forcing amendment of the bill. "Why shouldn't the Caucasian races be shown as much consideration?" the *Visitor* needled. The paper consistently argued that the only just restrictions were those that banned the mentally retarded, the dangerously ill, prostitutes and sex offenders, and the "socially unfit," the paper's term for anarchists, socialists, and other radicals.<sup>23</sup>

The *Visitor* argued passionately against literacy tests:

*The immigration committee has found it difficult to frame a bill which will protect us against*

*the peril of European agitators and not exclude emigrants who come with honest purpose to the land of opportunity. No one knows better than the immigration committee that the illiterates are not the most undesirable and in the words of former Speaker Cannon, "highly cultured men and women in some of the American colleges have strange ideals on social questions."*

*Advocates of the literacy test overlook the fact that ability to read and write is not an essential qualification. The most dangerous and undesirable applicants are too often those who have acquired and misapplied an education and who come solely for the dissemination of ideas that are destructive to American institutions and principles that are dangerous to social welfare.*<sup>24</sup>

By heaping scorn on the dangerous alien radical, the *Visitor* served both patriotism and the cause of the immigrant.

The paper did not limit its defense to European immigrants. It editorialized against a 1919 attempt by some senators to pass a bill effectively barring the "asiatic people" from American citizenship through a type of grandfather clause. In a similar manner, a long editorial of 1921 criticized Americanization attempts that treated immigrants and their children as lesser beings. "Speaking by and large, immigrants are the best blood of Europe," the paper noted, and it pointed out that their coming was the result of "honest ambition," not any "lack of enterprise."<sup>25</sup>

The *Visitor* was silent, however, on the Rhode Island Americanization Act of 1919, which made night classes in English compulsory for persons aged sixteen through twenty-one who did not meet state standards of literacy in that language.<sup>26</sup> There were probably many reasons for its silence. The Americanization issue had nationalistic overtones for many Americans, and it was potentially dangerous to the church hierarchy for that reason. Most likely the Irish-oriented paper was unwilling to tackle an issue of limited importance to Irish-Americans despite that issue's impact upon "newer" immigrants who were directly affected. The paper's silence, moreover, could have been an attempt to please conservative, nationalistic sentiment both within the church and outside it. It was far safer to criticize any congressional action, especially on restriction, than to battle on the local level over potentially explosive

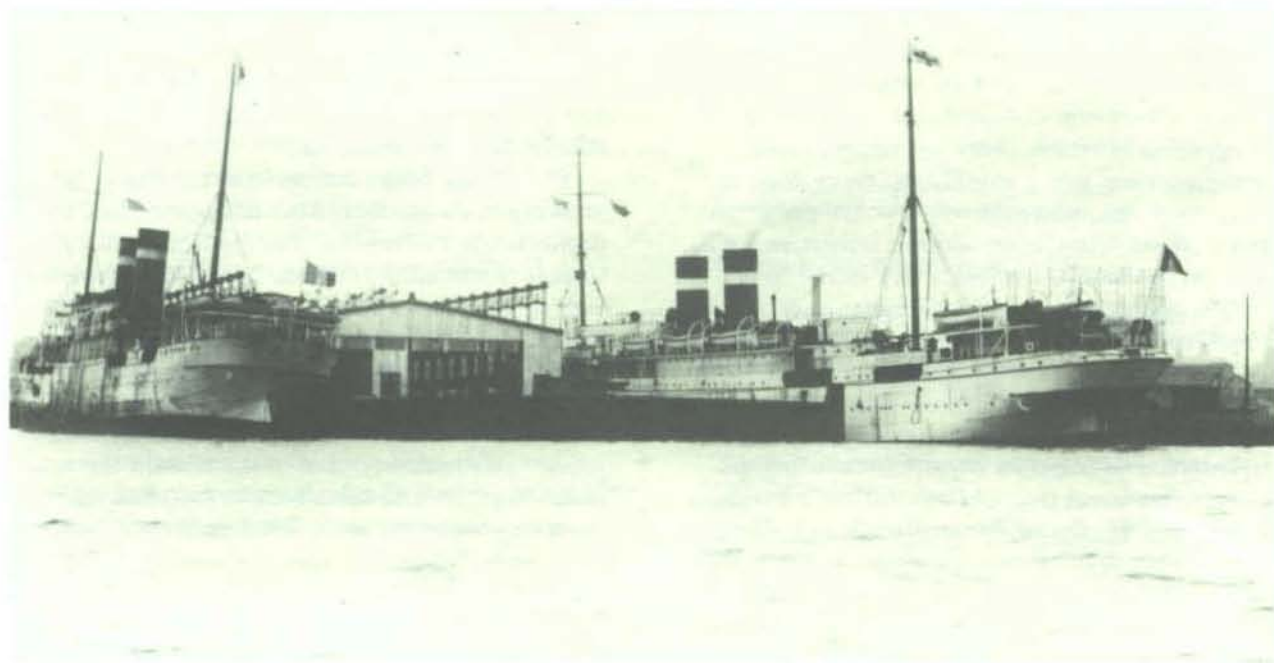


issues such as Americanization. The church was doubtless sensitive that attacks on Americanization would appear to be attacks on attempts to instill American values and culture into recent immigrants, leaving Catholicism open to severe criticism from the Protestant majority.

The restriction issue continued to draw the paper's fire. The *Visitor* expressed shock over Secretary of Labor James J. Davis's article on the "social detriments" of the foreign-born that first appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1923. Three months later the *Visitor* was still attacking "circulation getters" and "'patriotic' outpourings" against immigrants. "The so-called 'Alien' can give a pretty good account of himself during the past decade of years without pointing to his war record or recalling the names of distinguished men of any race." When the Restriction Act of 1924 passed Congress in April, the *Visitor* denounced it as "a sop to labor, balm to the prejudiced, and the first practical measure proclaiming an ascendancy of the Anglo-Saxon race" and cast it in terms of light versus darkness. The new law,

however, did not receive thorough evaluation until September, when figures compiled by Catholic editor and historian Dr. E. C. McGuire appeared to demonstrate how drastically immigration from Catholic countries had been restricted. The law indeed had "fangs," but it took the paper nearly five months to discover their dimensions. Because restriction was such an important issue, and because the *Visitor* had shown such concern over it, today it is difficult to understand why the paper did not fully analyze this crucial legislation much earlier.<sup>27</sup>

Immigration restriction provided only one manifestation of ferocious bigotry that marred the early 1920s. Catholics, often the target of hatred in the past, maintained a vigil against developing hate campaigns such as those led by the Ku Klux Klan. Like the Catholic press in general, the *Visitor* had long been concerned with prejudice and vigilante activities, always aware that an attack on other groups could expand into anti-Catholicism as well. During the war the paper demanded removal of anti-Semitic passages from



The Fabre Line operated between Providence and southern European ports from 1911 to 1934. Above, two Fabre steamships at State Pier #1.

Philadelphia Commercial Museum

the *Manual of Instructions* issued to army medical examiners. It also rebuked the American Legion — an organization it usually approved — when the legion took the law into its own hands against radicals. With its record of concern over prejudice and extralegal activities, the *Visitor* naturally viewed the Klan — an organization that combined vigilantism, anti-Semitism, anti-Catholicism, and racism with a heaping amount of xenophobia — as its mortal enemy.<sup>28</sup>

The church as a whole vigorously condemned the Klan, and the Catholic press circulated Klan stories far and wide. The first major Klan story the *Visitor* printed concerned the organization's growth in Illinois. Although rather small in Rhode Island and the rest of New England, the Klan provided just enough of a threat to justify the bitter attacks upon it. In 1921 only one kleagle recruited in all of New England, but in 1922 New England Grand Goblin A. J. Padon claimed that Rhode Island contained 2,000 Klansmen. Historian Kenneth Jackson estimates total Rhode Island Klan membership for the period 1915 to 1944 at 5,000 with about 3,000 members residing in the Providence metropolitan area during those years.<sup>29</sup>

The frenzied attacks of the *Visitor* are easily understood when one examines the Klan's propaganda. An undated broadside was typical of Klan views: "Every criminal, every gambler, every thug, every libertine, every girl ruined, every home wrecker, every wife beater, every dope peddler, every moonshiner, every crooked politician, every papist priest, every shyster lawyer, every K. of C., every brothel madam, every Rome controlled newspaper, every black spider — is fighting the Klan. Think it over. Which side are you on?"<sup>30</sup>

Quoting William Allen White, the famous Kansas editor, the *Visitor* called the Klan "moral idiocy" and an "un-American invisible government." In response to Imperial Wizard William J. Simmons's statement that all Catholics were excluded from the Klan, the paper retorted that "Catholics are not paying \$10 for the privilege of wearing a fool's cap and making mock of the Constitution of their country." It snickered at the Klan's sex scandal that involved the organization's chief promoters, Edward Y. Clarke and Elizabeth Tyler. It also trembled at the opening of "the door to dangerous possibilities" that the Klan posed for Catho-



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Ku Klux Klan in Providence.

lics, Jews, and blacks alike.<sup>31</sup>

The *Visitor* took comfort from the Klan's poor showing in Rhode Island but underestimated the organization it feared so greatly. "The striking feature of the Klan in Rhode Island is that there isn't such an animal," the paper stated late in 1923. "About one per cent of our citizens are said to be fit subjects for membership," it reported — certainly a gross oversight of the old Yankee stock in the state. A 1924 editorial represented the paper's contradictory view of the Klan in the state: "Catholics have nothing to fear. But we must be ever on the alert. We must not misjudge or underestimate the power of ignorance and prejudice."<sup>32</sup>

During the election campaign of 1924, both parties in the state denounced the Klan by name, a sure sign that the organization's appeal had peaked in Rhode Island. By this time there were clear signs that the Klan's grip on areas it had



once dominated was weakening. The *Visitor* exulted that "convention after convention has pronounced against it in terms that admit of no misunderstanding," and summed up the local situation:

*Here in Rhode Island both parties stand in formal opposition to the organization. It has been examined and found bad. Henceforth all of its words and acts are the words and acts of an outlaw. The Ku Klux Klan in Rhode Island can rightfully claim no other standing.*<sup>33</sup>

In pronouncements on wartime loyalty, prohibition, immigration restriction, and the Klan, the *Visitor* came as close as it was to come into politics. During the period 1916 to 1924, it did not endorse candidates for either state or national office. Only once did it appear to slip into Democratic partisanship natural to an Irish-dominated paper. In 1922, the paper commented on the appeal by some of Oregon's Democratic legislators for religious toleration, "a principle which has always been a cardinal doctrine of Democratic faith." The *Visitor* followed Al Smith's campaign for the 1924 Democratic nomination with interest but with emphasis only on the right of any Catholic to be considered for the presidency. It was disgusted that neither national party had denounced the Klan by name in its platform. Both Republicans and Democrats "have unmistakably proven that they have not the strength and wisdom necessary to the management of the great ship of State." That was far more grievous, in the paper's eyes, than Smith's defeat at the Democratic convention. As loyal Americans, Catholics did not have to depend on Catholic politicians to defend the rights of the faithful.<sup>34</sup>

The *Visitor* responded to several nativist issues in ways that stressed both the nationalistic feelings of Catholicism and a lurking fear of the dominant Protestant environment. In this sense it responded in a pattern that has been quite common in American Catholicism. In Boston, many of the same issues and responses emerged during the age of World War I and Harding-Coolidge "normalcy." Earlier, before the Civil War, a similar pattern was visible in New York.<sup>35</sup>

In the issues stressed — the Catholic role in the war, prohibition, immigration restriction, and the Klan — the *Visitor* attempted to unite the diverse elements of the diocese and protect the position of

the church in Rhode Island vis-a-vis the Protestant elements with which it coexisted. By stressing national issues, sometimes at the expense of local issues directly related to "newer" immigrants, the Irish-American hierarchy and its diocesan newspaper proclaimed that Catholics were loyal Americans and that Catholicism was compatible with American society.

So the church made its peace with a politically and socially conservative society during an era of disturbing change. But there was a price for this peace. A consistently conservative stance on issues of the day, while pleasing old stock Protestant forces, also contributed to the growth of the right wing within the Catholic Church in the United States. At least one historian has traced the fanatically anti-communist impulses among some Catholic leaders during the 1950s back to the nationalistic stance of the church in the early twentieth century.<sup>36</sup> During the 1960s and 1970s, as during the 1910s and 1920s, decisions over what to render to Caesar and what to render to God remain serious questions for American Catholicism to answer.

1 John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New York, 1974), 4-11.

2 Higham, 222-223, 286-299, 155-157, 270-277.

3 *Catholic Mind*, 25 (Sept. 8, 1927): 321-340, excerpts from 324 and 334 quoted in Dorothy Dohen, *Nationalism and American Catholicism* (New York, 1867), 90.

4 Dohen, 147-148.

5 *Providence Visitor*, 8 June, 1917 (editorial); 31 Oct., 1919 (editorial); Dohen, *passim*.

6 Robert D. Cross, *The Emergence of Liberal Catholicism in America* (Cambridge, Mass., 1958), 22-70, 88-105, 182-205; John Tracy Ellis, *American Catholicism* (Chicago, 1969), 138.

7 Appollinaris W. Baumgartner, *Catholic Journalism: A Study of Its Development in the United States, 1789-1930* (New York, 1967), 37-38, 60-62, 27.

8 Kurt B. Mayer and Sidney Goldstein, *Migration and Economic Development in Rhode Island* (Providence, 1958), 56.

- 9 *Providence Visitor*, 19 Mar., 1920 (editorial); 19 Sept., 1919 (editorial); 23 Jan., 1920 (editorial); 24 Apr., 1924 (editorial); 14 Oct., 1921 (editorial).
- 10 Jacques Ducharme, *The Shadows of the Trees* (New York, 1943), 78-84. "The current malaise, as well as fear for the future, will be dissipated fast if all the owners and all the workers would become Catholics and follow humbly and piously the holy refuge, as do our Franco-American workers." *La Tribune*, 18 Mar., 1922 (editorial).
- 11 *Providence Visitor*, 21, 28 Apr., 1922 (editorials). A good study of the dispute is Robert Mendillo, "The Peck Bill Controversy of 1922" (unpublished paper, University of Rhode Island, 1976).
- 12 *Providence Visitor*, 28 Apr., 1916; 2 June, 1916 (editorial); 21 Jan., 1916 (editorial).
- 13 *Providence Visitor*, 10 Mar., 1916 (editorial); 8 June, 1917 (editorials); 13 Apr., 1917; 17 Aug., 1917.
- 14 *Providence Visitor*, 28 Sept., 1917 (editorial); 8 Mar., 1918 (editorial).
- 15 *Providence Visitor*, 6 Sept., 1918 (editorial).
- 16 *Providence Visitor*, 25 Feb., 1916; 27 Nov., 1918 (editorial).
- 17 *Providence Visitor*, 6 June, 1919 (editorial); 11 Apr., 1919 (editorial).
- 18 For background on the prohibition movement, see James H. Timberlake, *Prohibition and the Progressive Movement, 1900-1920* (Cambridge, Mass., 1963). *Providence Visitor*, 28 Jan., 1916 (editorial); 23 Feb., 1917 (editorial).
- 19 *Providence Visitor*, 8 June, 1917 (editorial); 28 Dec., 1917 (editorial); 18 Mar., 1918 (editorial).
- 20 *Providence Visitor*, 3 Jan., 1919 (editorial); 5 May, 1922 (editorial); 19 May, 1922 (editorial); 15 May, 1924 (editorial).
- 21 *Providence Visitor*, 15 May, 1924 (editorial).
- 22 Ellis, 129.
- 23 *Providence Visitor*, 21 Jan., 1916 (editorial); 12 May, 1916 (editorial).
- 24 *Providence Visitor*, 31 Oct., 1919 (editorial).
- 25 *Providence Visitor*, 26 Dec., 1919 (editorial); 25 Feb., 1921 (editorial).
- 26 Frank V. Thompson, *Americanization Studies: The Schooling of the Immigrant* (Montclair, N. J., 1971), 322; Edward George Hartmann, *The Movement to Americanize the Immigrant* (New York, 1967), 242-243.
- 27 *Providence Visitor*, 29 Nov., 1923 (editorial); 14 Feb., 1924 (editorial); 24 Apr., 1924 (editorial); 19 Sept., 1924 (editorial).
- 28 *Providence Visitor*, 15 Mar., 1918 (editorial); 26 Dec., 1919 (editorial).
- 29 *Providence Visitor*, 24 June, 1921; Kenneth T. Jackson, *The Ku Klux Klan in the City, 1915-1930* (New York, 1967) 181, 281, 237, 239.
- 30 Jackson, 19.
- 31 *Providence Visitor*, 9 Sept., 1921 (editorial); 7 Oct., 1921 (editorial).
- 32 *Providence Visitor*, 13 Dec., 1924 (editorial); 21 Feb., 1924 (editorial).
- 33 *Providence Visitor*, 3 Oct., 1924 (editorial).
- 34 *Providence Visitor*, 6 Oct., 1922 (editorial); 15 May, 1924 (editorial); 26 June, 1924 (editorial).
- 35 Robert H. Lord, John E. Sexton, and Edward T. Harrington, *History of the Archdiocese of Boston*, 3 v. (New York, 1944) 3: 583-636; Jay P. Dolan, *The Immigrant Church: New York's Irish and German Catholics, 1815-1865* (Baltimore, 1975), 163-166.
- 36 Donald F. Crosby, "The Politics of Religion: American Catholics and the Anti-Communist Impulse," in Robert Griffith and Athan Theoharis, eds., *The Specter: Original Essays on the Cold War and the Origins of McCarthyism* (New York, 1974), 18-38.



## From the Collections

Photographer Avery Lord captured scenes of concentration and comic relief at the construction, fifty years ago, of Mount Hope Bridge. Lord (1894 - 1967) was one of Rhode Island's first aerial photographers and, during the 1920s and early 1930s,

was a feature writer for the *Providence Journal*. The Library's collection of over a thousand original glass plate and film negatives by Avery Lord includes both professional work and pictures of family, friends, and local events.





